Entanglements: Before and After NAFTA

A critical and transhistorical analysis of NAFTA through the lens of contemporary art

June 4–September 27, 2019

The International Studio & Curatorial Program announces the opening of Entanglements: Before and After NAFTA, a group exhibition organized by resident curator Bárbara Perea Legorreta.

In the wake of the recent and tense renegotiation of the three-way North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Canada, the United States, and Mexico, the growing humanitarian immigration crisis, and new draconian United States border policies, this exhibition presents a critical and transhistorical analysis of economic exchange in North America through the lens of contemporary art practices. The featured artists explore a range of issues including links between Canadian mining interests and organized crime, the effects of Big Sugar on the post-NAFTA diet, the necropolitical instrumentalization of populations in service to drug trade, and other entangled undercurrents that are related to this pact. Currency and exchange value, resource extraction, oil trade, raw materials and shifts in agricultural patterns and food sources, are addressed by eleven artists in a complex interrelated multi-media installation marked by objects, symbology, appropriated imagery and audiovisual narratives.

Artists in the exhibition are Alejandro Gómez Arias, Gina Arizpe, Patricia Carrillo Carrera, Virginia Colwell, Arcángel Constantini, Iván Edeza, Fritzia Irizar, Jason Mena, Roy Meuwissen, Yoshiua Okón, and Miguel Rodríguez Sepúlveda. Of the eleven artists, eight are from Mexico, two from the United States, and one from Canada.

Highlights from the exhibition include:

Virginia Colwell’s rendering of police chief Arturo “El Negro” Durazo’s mansion provides a point of entry to the intricate relationship between Mexico’s corrupt power structure and the illicit drug trade with the United States, which began in the late 1970’s. During the Reagan administration, the CIA brokered several covert gun-running and drug-trafficking operations to bolster guerrillas fighting in Central America for which it relied on Caro Quintero, one of the key operatives in this scheme, who in turn was closely linked to his protector and business associate, the then chief-of-police of Mexico City, “El Negro” Durazo. Durazo amassed a fortune from his illicit dealings, allowing him to build a home modeled on the Parthenon. Incidentally the artist’s father was the FBI agent responsible for Durazo’s eventual capture in Puerto Rico.

Miguel Rodríguez Sepúlveda offers a glimpse into current government structures linked to criminal activity. Using die-stamp letters, he inscribes the aspirational phrase “I do deserve abundance” on one peso coins. The phrase was handwritten hundreds of times in a notebook by the wife of the now jailed former governor of...
About ISCP:

Founded in 1994 and celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, ISCP is now the fourth-largest visual arts residency program in the world and a global leader in the field of visual arts residency programs. ISCP supports the creative development of artists and curators, and promotes exchange through residencies and public programs. Housed in a former factory in Brooklyn, with 35 light-filled work studios and two galleries, ISCP is New York’s most comprehensive international visual arts residency program. ISCP organizes exhibitions, events and offsite projects, which are free and open to all, sustaining a vibrant community of contemporary art practitioners and diverse audiences.

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