MAURICIO KABISTAN
(SELECTION)
2009-2014
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Mauricio Kabistan 2014 ©
Since last year, I began to develop a new project that involves sound on its configuration, the idea emerged when I visit the "Monument to Memory and Truth", a memorial place from victims of El Salvador's civil war, located in Cuscatlán Park in San Salvador; never files to impress the number of names printed on the 40 greenish black plates that are in that place, more than 60,000 known deaths (without counting the unknown deaths) in 12 years of conflict.

The first thing I noticed in this big set of plates was the accumulation of names, the geometrical arrangement as a whole, to realize that I don’t see the names anymore, I began to see a spectrogram, a diagram used for record a sound like music or human speech; then I asked myself the question: Will be there a digital program that could transform an image into sound?.

Did those accumulation of names will issued some kind of sign?, Any particular sound?, Could talk dead people from a computer program? Would be nice? How to approach this from art?... What are the ethical implications through art focusing in this part of the history so painful?

What is the sound at all this? How it affects us?

Mauricio Kabistan
San Salvador, 2011.
2014 Videoinstallation. Variables measures.

Acknowledgments: Federico Krill.

Large scale projection of the names that conforms the Monument to Memory and Truth located in Cuscatlan Park of San Salvador which commemorates the missing and murdered people during the Salvadorian civil war.
Sound generated by computer, iPod, and headphones.

Acknowledgements: The Fire Theory, Ernesto Bautista.

Graphic sound generated from the random arrangement of dots separating the names of the victims of the salvadorian civil war, on black granite plates, located in the Monument to Memory and Truth, in the Cuscatlán Park of San Salvador. From a process that involves the drawing as subtractive resource, generated a musical score that is read by a computer program. The result is a metaphor about the acoustics of the silence, the space between the names, the new meaning of a grammatical element that generates a speech about the components forgotten and lost in the chaotic and painful whole at the situation that surround the war, missing persons and their collateral victims.
2014
Object.
Variable Measures.
A book made up from transparencies where were printed forward and backwards the pages of 1980's Salvadorian Military Forces document known as “Yellow Book”, where is filed nearly two thousand people as political opponents and enemies of the state.

Yellow Book is a redefinition of a document recently declassified and shared on Internet by the National Security Archive of United States with the help of University of Washington Center for Human Rights and the Human Rights Data Analysis Group. The report known as “Yellow Book” is a document made by Salvadorian Military Forces in the 1980's which compiles the photos and file number of all the persons classified as opposition and insurgency and therefore were enemies of the state. According to the analysis of these institutions almost half of these individuals mentioned in this document were disappeared, tortured and killed during the civil war.

The redefinition I made began with the printing of the document. Printed in transparencies forwards and backwards the information overlaps and becomes intelligible, creating this feeling of not being able to read clearly the information contained in it. This feeling of failing to find something you are looking for, compare with the feeling of someone who has a disappeared and murdered brother, a son or a relative. This kind of frustration is I want to show.
2014
Installation.
Variables Measures.
Intervention in the floor with five thousand cup ears made from unfired clay of the Town of La Palma and a hammer on a pedestal.

Acknowledgments: Walterio Iraheta, Melissa Guevara, Federico Krill.

“Vaccinating” for the Kaibil soldiers meant that a group of instructors would be in charge of rounding up a small group of people, tearing a piece of every man, woman and child’s garments, blindfolding them and handing them over to another group of soldiers, who stood by the well. These soldiers would lift a heavy sledgehammer that they had found among the water buckets, scattered around the well, I and smash their skulls.”

In this case I play with the semantic of the object, “ears” or “ear” is a pejorative term that means snitch or informer, in war times been a snitch from one side or another was described as treason and therefore executed. As the cows when they get slaughtered, the people of Dos Erres where killed from a blow to the head with a sledgehammer. This sound when something break It’s what to heard when people step on the ears cup on the floor, that act of complicity when something is muted by default.
MEMORY CYRCLÉ

Impression of the footprints of several people on a circle made with clay powder on the floor of the gallery.

Photo: The Fire Theory ©
2014
Variables Measures.
Action. Sound record of a meeting with members of COMADRES and invited artists.


Circle of remembrance is an action that makes use of a cathartic dynamics to generate empathy.

With the help of COMADRES (an association of mothers of disappeared and murdered people during the Salvadoran Civil War), it was decided to conduct a testimonial dynamics where is shared the stories of these mothers and grandmothers who has suffered to find the truth about their children, brothers and husbands who disappeared during the civil war. This information was shared with invited people expecting to replicate the information.
DISCERNMENT

2014
Video Installation.
Video in which gradually fall over the water hundreds of ears cups made of unfired clay, until the image become darker.

Discernment is a work on the same line as ONOMATOPOEIA, but in this case using the element that serves to shape the clay. The purpose is simple. The ability to discern of a person is atrophying as he repeatedly exposed to an image. So this image with the time became invisible.

[ CLICK TO WATCH ONLINE ]
The evolution of attitudes as a possible renewal of human nature shows that envelop forms of reconstruction in these actions, daily philosophies, promises and expectations. It is natural that human beings always progress towards its reconstruction from destruction processes of memory.

The pieces in room, Exercise 1, Exercise 2 and Exercise 3 are products of internal review process specifically involving the destruction of a statue of himself (Exercise # 3), the burning of the work done during the first stage of the artist's life (Exercise # 2). The revision of the houses in which he has lived since moving to the country and gathering of audio for each one (Exercise # 1), form a project involved in nostalgia and resignation.

It’s a fantasy that everyone can be disengaged from its component platforms for new possible ways of forms. There are projections of our being that are anchored to the memories of our past identities, as a presence that is ours but that also does not recognize us. The resignation, as an alternative is impossible but rather at the destruction and the search for a new identity. The search for these new memories and the rearrangement of the forces that drive us as human beings (confronted with the spoil of the construction of social identity) are intensified as necessary, as life goes on and we are confronted with our mechanical and repetitive nature.

In this regard, it is eventually ask about the needs and the ways of motion we handle and direct us. As we choose and how we can recreate our current identity through these “change skin” or poetic rituals that make up the rest of our lives.

DC/TFT

Taken from the solo show curatorial text of “Exercises of Detachment”, presented at the Museum of the City (MUTE, in spanish), on 2012.
EXERCISE 2

2012
Action Register.
Acknowledgements: Victor Rodriguez, Xochilt Ortez, Ernesto Bautista.

Action to burn the work done during the first stage of the artist’s life.

[ CLICK TO WATCH ONLINE ]
2012
Action Register.
Acknowledgements: Xochilt Ortez, Ernesto Bautista.

Action to destroy a self-portrait made in marble.
EXERCISE 4

2011-2012
Action Register.
Acknowledgements: To the people who helped me dismantle the house.

Register of the last action performed in the artist’s home, as part of the abandonment of the site due to adverse conditions because of the crime phenomenon that prevails in the residential housing where it was located.

[ CLICK TO WATCH ONLINE ]
WHAT MY NEIGHBORS LEFT BEHIND

2012
Photographic record of found objects.
Variable Measures.

Acknowledgements: ESFOTO12,
Proyectos 3738, Claudia Benitez,
Walterio Iraheta.

Photos property of Mauricio Kabistan taken by Walterio Iraheta ©.
This series is a project of photographic record of objects recovered from abandoned houses and looted in a suburb of San Salvador. The exhibition centers on the forced displacement due to the phenomenon of crime and all aspects that involve a sudden migration. In this case the story told by the objects left by the people in their haste to leave the place. Objects that were part of its owner, who acted as witness, that was what he liked, what their interests, memories they built around them and ultimately left behind.
PREVIOUS PROJECTS

Isolated projects made between 2009 and 2014

Photo: Antovelly Cisneros ©
2009

Register of action.
Chamomile tea, water and acrylic container.

Acknowledgements: Dalia Chevez and Antovelly Cisneros.

Cup made of tea inside a clear acrylic container filled with water. Action taken at the opening of the exhibition “Truce for boredom, first and last exhibition” Collective Artifice, in Gallery 123.
The work is based on the compilation of the art section pages, from Blur Magazine, which publishes biweekly in La Prensa Gráfica of El Salvador. The project is a fundamental premise of the construction of public image and legitimacy of the processes developed in our society. Through a process of search, rescue and collection of copies of the magazine in question, the pages are subtracted from the art section, arranged chronologically, and then be pasted and processed in a book. Consequently these pages acquire new value, activates legitimation processes related that history given to written and visual record, being a book rebuild a new preset image on the magazine, being a book you can study, criticize and refute the information contained, at the end the information presented “is another vision of the society”, such as claimed by the slogan of this publication.

Photos: First and second one: Antonio Romero © Third one: Christian Gonzalez ©
In the month of June 2014 I traveled to Santo Domingo de Guzman (known as Witzapan in Nawat language), a small town in the western part of El Salvador. My mission: record an indigenous voice. It was the first time a field like an anthropologist taking care about what to say with people who have suffered a lot of molestations since the repression of their culture after the slaughter perpetrated in 1932 during the government of General Maximiliano Martinez.

The situation of Nawat language is in danger, only 300 peoples, most of them very elderly are the only ones who still talking their original language, the young generations are not interested in learn the language of their grandparents, so when a senior died like my guide said to me “all the knowledge about the language died with him”.

The memory is an abstract manifestation of thoughts that sometimes become in material objects. But what happened when this manifestation involves only the voice or the voices of many people? A language is the base of the understanding of a whole culture, without it, it is impossible to understand the way of thinking or how they see the world. The language is an organic field that moves and adapt depending of the circumstances of the environment and the psychology of the people that supported.

In the case of the record I made, I choose something that I think is the best testimony of the complexity of a culture. A song, a simple song composed by a nawat speaker that described the daily life of many people, a song that described when sunrise is approaches and men left their houses to work in the fields to be harvested and have corn for tortillas.
UNTITLED

Photo: The Fire Theory ©
2014
Hand lines of different people engraved on stone.
Variables Measured

A stone is a result of decomposition and erosion from various environmental elements, there are objects that walk their own way far from its main lode to the place where they are deposited; but in this moment of pause they don’t stop moving, they are still marked by the influences around it, then when they are expelled again by the same elements that originated, back to the road to continue their journey. According to chiromancy in the lines of a hand is written the destiny of a person, also is written the memory of individuals on its way through the world. They reflect the kind of person it is, what they lived on and the people who has been related. In the union of these symbolic elements I just looking to explore the memory, the vestige as well the desire to transcend beyond death.
MAURICIO KABISTAN

Managua, Nicaragua. 1980.
Lives and produces in El Salvador.
Ex-member of Artificio Collective, he currently works in The Fire Theory.


[ CV ] [ REEL ]
"Nevertheless, it has developed since the signing of the Chapultepec a rich new political activity across the ideological spectrum. This seems to confirm that Salvadoran society has definitely chosen the democratic channels to resolve their conflicts and differences. But it will be very important for current and future generations to remember that peace and nascent democracy that exists in the country have taken a lot of effort and sacrifices and took too much time. Will strengthen and protect both the great commitment of Salvadorans of tomorrow."


Highlighting ironically these lines, I would like to comment first stage through a book in El Salvador have been taught as a first academic approach to history for over 20 years. Mauricio Kabistan retake on more than one occasion the texts on the history of the education system as part of their imagination to create various pieces and layers and mainstream projects beyond history.

How to talk about the war without saying things that have already been talked about before? Rethink history mapping intended most often take cognizance of it. Now, match the mythology of local history with fiction in our knowledge of it, requires a trial and not a sign declared intellectual development. That takes irony to keep a critical mood, while evoking reflection through the healing of madness.

However, as a generation, assuming the right to comment on the story becomes a besieged by the myth of meritocracy operation. Say “I can” at the end is a right that gives you pain conferred by your historical role, not social history upon which you build your own. That is, a post-war generation is understood to have no right to comment on it but has lived. If art and intellectual sector acquire a right in this voice, because fewer people will do it everyday. One of the undercurrents telonean sample from the deliberate desecration principle is that these premises inferred from the time you access the works.

The project, based entirely on artistic research that the artist began to develop the last four years, called “Essay on silence” Memorial of the Victims of the Civil War in El Salvador. Kabistan mentions: “The country has gone through the last decade, a generation that does not yet understand its immediate roots. Talk of war is never just talk about the war or just war in a country. You talk about the pain of the unseen. . From the solitude and dissociation have inherited the consequences. “The artist proposes thus a historical on what in some way are the inevitable language of war remark: the victims.

There is a dialogue between the works reveals a mysterious black halo statement, as in the case of Requiem (whose names the piece shown), which is not without some cheeky humor. If someone wants to keep the veil of sepulchral solemnity solemn homage that has nothing, Kabistan takes names as signs themselves, stripping them of their individuality while recognizing them. Clearly an ironic but necessary to highlight an invisible status reviews.

Parts more testimony related to creating visual relationships permeate and sign material through the rest of the exhibition. For Yellow Book, we see an evocation of lucidity as critical to the economy of truth, which come from being voters since the war ended. Using a reconsidered literariness of a sign as it is transparent and above all, the value of information as a human system within situations of individual presence between collective tragedies; and not least, as a capital balance (defined information war). Here Onomatopoieia, does unless you open another question, which is evident by our passing this information we consume about history, and especially our complicity by omission, by refusing to participate. What is our true relationship, lucid, with a possibly called “historical guilt”? The imagination takes us through proposals that lie between the provocation, the ritual and the desire for the lost and the Circle of Remembrance. And as a fair sample epilogue framing Discrimen find a video that ponders the end, in the artist’s words about “the ability to discern a person to be atrophying as he repeatedly exposed to an image. Whether that makes natural, everyday and therefore invisible."

The exhibition offers a different range of formats, all of them as projects that portray relationships between past and future, reasons and consequences but above all, inevitable portraits of people with names that were also there. Where can we find a very strong confrontation with the actual information about the 80s, as well as a series of narrative veins the same artist proposes to rethink the past and reality. Understanding that we present ourselves as the architects responsible for a generation that elerewe silently toward tomorrow, but at the same time also seems to forget that we are the direct result of a past forgotten and that has implications for our present.