

Moviendo la Fe





from the series Lucky
analog pictures, variable sizes, 2014 - 2017

Moviendo la Fe

Migrating perspectives on Venezuela

Alealonso
Martín Allais
Valentina Alvarado
Elisa Bergel Melo
Eva Marina Burckhardt
JoseJosé
Carlin Díaz
Denis Faneites
Ivonne Gargano
Leonardo González
Rolando González
Luis Lestón
Edgar Martínez
Angyvir Padilla
Virginia Ramírez
Cristina Sitja Rubio

“Venezuela, será lo que debe ser, porque ya una vez ha sido.
Su decadencia, línea descendente de sus hijos dentro y fuera de su
lindero geográfico, la velocidad del descenso no implica extinción.
Sigue esa raya tremenda, [...] en demanda del vértice lejano”.
José Rafael Pocaterra, *Memorias de un venezolano de la decadencia*.
“Y ya no hay nexo, línea, mano que una la dispersión.”

Ida Vitale.

In the reminiscence of perceiving a collective exhibition one usually struggles with a unifying collective narrative, that could bring or collect all the different levels and senses of experience, into a unified body of thought and sense. Curatorial practices struggle with assembling this order of knowledge, and not only by its exhibition format or form, but it seems, mainly through its writing. Pieces scattered now and there, giving us a sense of the field of what is there to sense. A sense-field: writing. In the case of an exhibition that procures to work with artists who have chosen a migratory life, out of the Venezuelan tropics it can seem to bring a certain confusion and dispersion of experiences, as the subject theme is of nothing but conflictive and disperse nature in information. Even though that through many artworks one collects an idea and sense of new life choices and difficult ones left behind, memories and sensibilities all strained through different political hardships, linked or inked by some sort of invisible thread. A familiarity with the subject coloring the experience, in some way. But in this particular case, we're interested in demarking, in a certain speculative writing, some broad lines that might only bring more knots to this already difficult thread, trending or not. Wild strokes, not direct hits, but maybe one that gives us some recount of a way of unfamiliarizing events and facts. Hopefully, this has some strange familiarity, but in a highly estranged and abstract way, with the usual surprising ways people from Venezuela recount their life-stories and quotidian horrors, in a certain shocking and stupified awe to the unfamiliar listener. A broad and wild dispersive line, la raya tremenda, demanding the faraway vortex.

Given the fact that our case is a way of thinking through the recent phenomenon of migration and what is now coming to be named as a Venezuelan diaspora, our case of study is of a profoundly political nature. We're speaking of a scattered fact that circles through global media, and in the everyday of Venezuelan livelihood: the ever increasing numbers of vene-

Memories of dispersion

zuelans choosing to migrate; their becoming a diaspora. A phenomenon, constantly denied by official state institutions in Venezuela, denying its statistical nature in all sorts. There is a political nature to the studies of migration in Venezuela, to which we must attest, but also, understand hopefully another outline of a certain venezuelan politics to come from this perspective as well. As it is a speculative piece, it works on different fictional and critical levels: an attempt to think of a being-in-dispersion, holding onto the phenomenology of this movements, and the becomings of different practices and ways of attesting to them, through migration and diaspora. I must also underline on some sort of speculative nature to this piece, since from where can one reconstruct diasporic histories, its unknown and possible becomings, and due to the fact of the trope that we're working with, since becoming-diaspora is an event with open-endings. There's no conclusive feat on its nature, or of its ending processes, and its diverse narratives of genealogy and archaeology become only a way of thinking through the future, meddling presence with whatever past. For theorists such as Kodwo Eshun, in his *Notes on Afro-futurism*, when writing on afro-futurity and black diaspora through the Atlantic, for him afrofuturism is science fiction itself. Their existence as phenomenon are writerly imbricated. The fact of abduction, slavery, exploitation, poverty, alienation, theft – all present in extraterritorial experiences and precisely characteristics of the genre– are precisely what constitutes alienhood, and in current enduring experiences, alien citizenship. The migrant itself, between alien choices of life is amidst these different ways of perceiving time and its making. There is a speculative vortex tied to the thought of diaspora that here we're seeking to struggle with it. The diasporic subject has stories of origin, memoirs of becoming others and othering identity processes, but his destiny is not in the past, but through ever reconstructions of it in some kind of future present *tense*. A tension that always marks his or her stories.

The usual philosophical culture of western modernity privileged and romanticized some experience of exile. Hannah Arendt, critically engaged with this modern theme of experience and brought forth constantly the concept of the refugee, as the vanguard of the people. They're always the first to move and bring-forth in their embodiment experiences of social and political crisis. Diasporic dispersion, hopefully, if we ourselves are not romanticizing it by overtheorizing it, brings forth the refugee, the exiled, the immigrant („a mover of movements“ as T.J Demos would claim in *The Migrant Image*, in his examination of documentary artistic practice in contemporary global crisis). Our main concern here would not be to overtheorize it, but to exhaust the discourse, saturate the phenomenon in its current reality as an opaque and „poor image“, as all poor images must bring to us the reflection of its current media circulation, conditions of distribution and production, and of course, our visual bond to this reality structuring the image, as was brilliantly theorized by Hito Steyerl. And we must ask, if not a visual comradery, at least what

kind of audio and visual bond is currently in construction, out of the disperse but incredibly connected and networked diasporic venezuelan community? A present tense guiding this scattered notes, seeking the relationship of dispersion, migration, and mediums of artistic practice. Could we state a state of diaspora, here and now? What is needed to make such a claim when the main producer of this phenomenon denies its all too bare nature? This fact is itself of a disperse nature and not only because more than 7% of 31.57 mill. by 2016, of the venezuelan population has left their native country, but because these cyphers are constantly being excluded from the public agenda of the Venezuelan government.

In 1927 José Rafael Pocaterra wrote *Memories of a Venezuelan in Decadence*, a memoir-testimonial novel of exile and of political brutality during the regime of Juan Vicente Gomez. It exposed the torture and horror during this regime. A regime that as some venezuelan intellectuals claim, it is only after the death of Gomez in 1931, that Venezuela entered the 20th Century. A regime that for some, as well, structures the characteristics and signs of political disappearance and invisibility that is endemic to Venezuelan political history. Not only did the appearance of Oil and the disappearance of agro-industrial economy, characterize this regime, but the torture and persecution of students, political dissidents, workers and the venezuelan people at large as a political subject. One should not be too quick to think of cycles and repetitions structuring venezuelan history, as Pocaterra himself warned not to, but understand the allegorical nature of events in our history in order to capture and seek a sort of dialectical image striking through its unredeemed events.

There's a need to disperse of the cyclic concept of history that seems to circle around the political imaginary of an oil-nation. We'd like to see in this continental movement, *dispersion* to name the phenomenon again, centrifugous forces and differential energies, precisely energy capitals, against a conception of history that gives us a history of venezuelan mechanical repetitions, a crypted and crippling fable of history, 'once a nation of immigrants, now a nation of emigrants'. On the contrast, different allegories of this processes of becoming whirlpool through undifferentiated forces with all the reserve of energies that reside in them. This is a speculative work, if nothing else, and is constantly at work in the everyday, and in here for us may lay its importance, as a set of different sorts of fuel to combat the ever-extinct fuel capital that motorizes venezuelan global politics.

We could not think of a memory of decadence nowadays, especially in contrast to the totality of narratives and images structured by all sorts of media in and out of Venezuela. The disperse imagery that characterizes venezuelan political events, must be brought out in its varied landscape, as we come to see and analyze how dispersion is itself its truth, maybe

materially and critically, blocking and escaping substantial identities, control practices, and seeking to rearrange in its redistribution the field of the sensible and of movement itself. But, this disperse image itself speaks and shows all the structuring conditions that surrenders it true, and is of vital importance to understand its force, or precisely, its movility.

These arguments are not in order to push forward a notion of a post-truth politics, but to understand the migrant nature of truth, the identity formation processes that structure it, and perhaps, to think of not only different counter-memories as in the case of Pocaterra –who in our quote believes that once the energies of a democracy where there, a line of continuity can still burst, be redeemed- but to understand the scattered nature of our politics. As we find in the phenomena of what-is-scattered, can itself be the phenomenon of „the politics of politics“ (Geoffrey Winthrop-Young), it is of importance to understand how there's no centering to this phenomenon of dispersion to constituted political institutions. Different levels of participation of the migrant in other lands, its second and tertiary conditions of citizenship, the relationship that he or she still constitutes with his or her homeland (through remesas, different technologies of communication and their use of media-outlets, which have become not only the scape valve but the main landscape and arena of political discussion and participation in and out Venezuela, accompanying different forms of political crisis and protest), the futuricity of venezuelan history and its news geographies, the ways text, images, audios and communications all circulate bringing different short-cuts to a reserved conception of politics, or at least to whom upholds it. A new political geography of Venezuela is being cartographed in its current diaspora and its of clear importance to understand the dispersed nature of its mediations and remediations. Here we could think in this exhibition of *Moviendo la fe*, in the work of Elisa Bergel Melo and Valentina Alvarado, playfully landscaping and coloring new sentimental geographies and visual poetics.

This moving reservoir of forces, that can come to be in a gesture, a movement, an artwork, a form of life, all have some political enervation, hatched in full of possibilities to redistribute and move others forms of sensibility, and in the case of diasporic dispersion, its a multiplicity that brings in the familiar and the strange, the native and the foreigner to a critical dialogue.

Reconfiguring the trending light and sensibility of images and languages, is at sight in Ivonne Gargano's video-loop and her mechanographed text. By reworking with old video recorders, migrating from its original source and giving it a new context, full in its natural opacity it dialogues with the same opacity of languages found in the poem of *Killing me with your luz* - and its diverse cultures of translation – translation as a me-

taphor for interpretation, for light- redistributing feelings and ways of speaking, this as a new reconstitution as a subject of foreign languages.

In Angyvir Padilla and Virginia Ramirez's installation, *An imaginary of displacement*, a tension of distance and ways of gesturing community and a communication, longings of home are brought forth into being in their dialogue. A communication between the two artists, through diverse media instils in the spectator a landscape of estrangement, nostalgia and desire for their means of communication. A recorded dialogue, a dispersion of texts, statements, as building blocks, compressing a centripetous force monumentalizing itself and *pressing* into being a publication of chosen images by them. A publication, a public of their recorded dialogue, is *pressed* into being.

The migration of political media, from classical institutions and means, to digital ones, is not only clear in the venezuelan case, but also presents itself in different practices of art, the recycling former ecologies of media into new ones. The newspapers, in *An imaginary landscape*, resonate with some with the fact of newspapers being a scarce resource materially in Venezuela and where also content is coopted by state media outlets. TJ Demos in his *The Migrant Image*, examines where the migrant itself not only documents new ways of image making through documentary practices of video and film, but also criss-crosses stagnant ways of thinking representation and participation. Migration itself becomes the key theme as I'd like not only to discuss subjectivity of the migrant but also the migrant character of media, artistic practice, and ethical assemblies that come to be in works of art, as they also migrate from media and place.

New circuits of distributing and crossing media paths, ways of producing and footage recycled, exhibit us with how to analyze its dispersion as a truth, maybe materially in an allegorical way. We can critically deploy this allegory, when thinking of Oil as the main political substance in Venezuela, and the administrative power the nation by whom has its redistribution control. A fuel economy, tending to burn and accelerate its machinery, the revolution, this new cycle of revolution, constantly spoke of its different motors as levels of progress; now it speaks of Poles, as a different network, a cosmic-spatial one, with a transcending command 'post-oil', post-fuel, where the eternal commander of the revolution still directs his forces, reminding us comically of a new extra-terrestrial subjectivity, in its mock-fake news with the work *Venezuela to outer-space* by Rolando Gonzalez.

We must admit that the current state of news of Venezuela in the global media landscape, its reception, production and sudden outbreak is con-

stantly linked to the fact of the current diaspora of venezuelans crossing borders, leaving the country and settling residencies in new lands. The dispersion and difficult analysis that are constantly attempting to make sense of events, political upheavals and different crisis constantly present us with the same situation of its populace. Individuals, groups and even entire families, uprooted and settling somewhere else, in others alone and disperse, scattered around, usually western and if not spanish at least english speaking countries. Migratory capitals have helped different groups relocate in other countries, and every immigrant has a type of capital that helps him or her relocate, but also emigrant capital constantly creates a network of solidarity with those who have stayed in the motherland. This source of foreign income is a key component to the everyday survival of livelihood in Venezuela.

We must conclude with a question, that opened up the broad and wild strokes of this speculative piece. If the speed of descense –and decadence– does not imply extinction, yet, as Pocaterra remarks, not conceptual nor physical of the territory, then, what could we think of the speed of actual dispersion of Venezuela? Of its diaspora and its migrant culture, we don't see a substantialist nature, nexus or line unifying this dispersion, but forms of artistic practice, of life and longing, from where to rethink different foundations, where the stranger, the alien, the foreigner and unfamiliar, in its disperse extra-territorialization are able to question foundations and modes of citizenship and commonality. Nothing it seems in this disperse mode of being as more important that can help us rethink the past, present and future of venezuelan becomings.

Text: Alberto Morreo

Alberto Morreo (1986), born in La Paz, Bolivia. Studied Sociology in Venezuela, Philosophy and Social theory in Melbourne, Australia. Essayist, interested in latin amerian conceptualist writing and artist-publications, currently exploring different media theories and discourses on nature, political ecology, aesthetics and information.

Moviendo la Fe
Migrating perspectives on Venezuela

There are truths that are only true the day after tomorrow – and those that are true at no point in time.

(Carl Gustav Jung, The Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious)

The claim that truth can neither be explained nor defined leads to the assumption that a generally acknowledged consensus for what we hold to be true cannot be established. Our perception of reality works analogously: That we can only ever speak of a known reality, in most cases one constructed by us, precludes the possibility of a “real” reality. But what does the concept of reality mean in a country where apparently only constructed realities are circulated?

Moviendo la Fe (engl. Moving Faith) is a play of words that references the Venezuelan global hit Moliendo Café (engl. Grinding Coffee) and refers to a fundamental debate among the exhibiting artists: Having emigrated mostly to foreign European countries, they are both observers of an economically and socially escalating situation in their home country and confronted with a highly controversially arranged prerogative of interpretation. The artists' answer to the political frustration at home is to move faith – in people's heads as well as across borders.

The art works on display address the relation between truth and reality, as well as the ascriptions to these concepts, and examine collective (mythic) narratives in view of the current state of Venezuela. The works contribute to a dialogue by reacting to current political developments and the discrepancy between reproduced truth in the (international) media-scape and lived reality of young Venezuelans both at home and abroad. At the same time, ensuing questions regarding nativity, migration and identity in relation to one's own re-orientation and an increasingly fading memory of the home country are also addressed by the exhibit

Text: Annika Hirsekorn (Curator)

Moviendo la Fe
Migrating perspectives on Venezuela

*Es gibt Wahrheiten, die erst übermorgen wahr sind, und solche, die noch
gestern wahr waren– und solche, die in keiner Zeit wahr sind.
(Carl Gustav Jung, Die Beziehung zwischen dem Ich und dem
Unbewussten)*

Die Behauptung, dass Wahrheit weder erklärt noch definiert werden kann, führt zu der Annahme, dass ein allgemein anerkannter Konsens, für das, was wir als wahr empfinden, nicht festgeschrieben werden kann. Analog verhält sich unsere Empfindung von Wirklichkeit: Da wir immer nur von einer gewussten, in den meisten Fällen von uns gestalteten Wirklichkeit sprechen können, schließt sich die Möglichkeit einer „wirklichen“ Wirklichkeit aus. Was aber bedeutet der Wahrheitsbegriff in einem Land, in dem scheinbar nur konstruierte Wahrheiten verbreitet werden?

Moviendo la Fe (dt. den Glauben bewegen) ist ein Wortspiel, das sich auf den venezolanischen Welthit Moliendo Café (dt. Kaffee mahlen) bezieht und auf eine grundlegende Auseinandersetzung der ausstellenden KünstlerInnen verweist: Zumeist ins europäische Ausland emigriert, sind sie BeobachterInnen einer wirtschaftlich und sozial eskalierenden Situation in ihrem Heimatland und gleichzeitig konfrontiert mit einer sich äußerst kontrovers gestaltenden medialen Deutungshoheit der Ereignisse. Die Antwort der KünstlerInnen auf die politische Frustration im Heimatland ist es, den Glauben zu bewegen. In den Köpfen, sowie über Ländergrenzen hinweg.

Die gezeigten Arbeiten widmen sich dem Verhältnis von Wahrheit und Wirklichkeit, den Zuschreibungen an diese und untersuchen kollektive (Mythen-)Erzählungen im Hinblick auf das aktuelle Venezuela. Die in den Dialog gebrachten Arbeiten reagieren auf das aktuelle politische Geschehen und die Diskrepanz von reproduzierter Wahrheit in der (internationalen) Medienlandschaft und einer gelebten Wirklichkeit junger VenezolanerInnen im In- und Ausland. Gleichzeitig werden die sich daraus ableitenden Fragestellungen zu Heimat, Migration und Identität in Bezug auf die eigene Neuverortung und im Hinblick auf die immer mehr schwindenden Erinnerungen an das Heimatland in den Werken aufgegriffen.

Text: Annika Hirsekorn (Kuratorin)

AleAlonso



fragment; untitled
glazed ceramic plates, 1 of 8, different sizes, 2017

Moviendo la Fe is a platform for AleAlonso to illustrate particularities of Venezuelan pop culture including the Changa Tuki dance and the Gangster Cult of La Corte Malandra. However, many of the colourful wooden panels and ceramic plates also display crime and the experience of violence in his homeland. Thus, his graphical commentaries portray a story that is ambiguous, changeable and allows space for reordering. The final momentum of the exhibition shows a departing airplane leaving the space of the illustrations – a narrative that the artist, under different circumstances, would like to reverse.

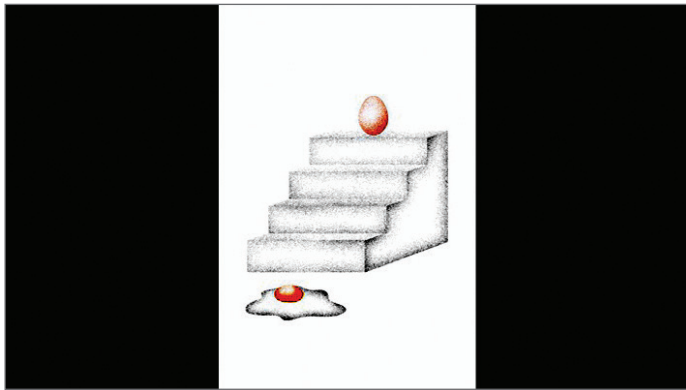
Carachaos & Malandro



installation view: Carachaos & Malandro
acrylic on wood, variable size, 2017

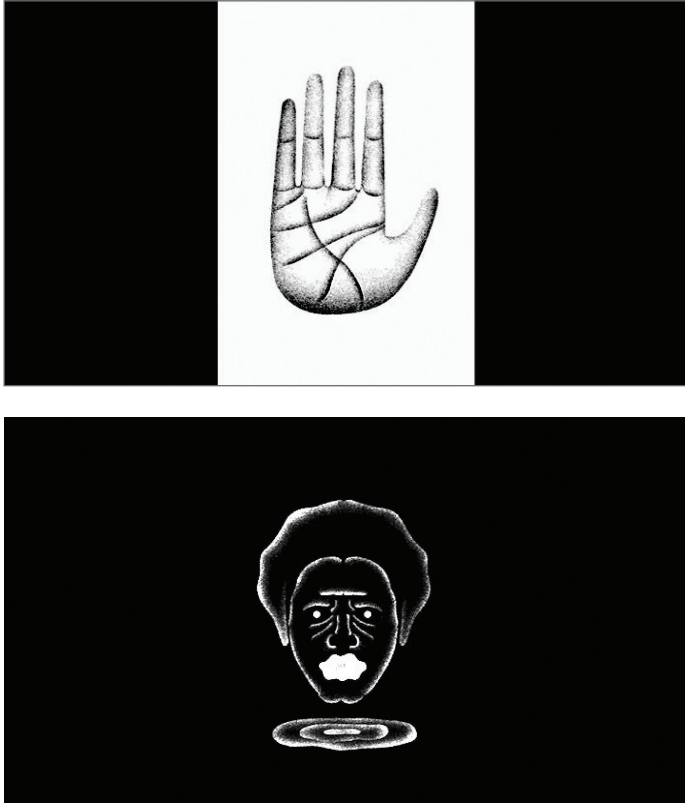
Für *Moviendo la Fe* illustriert Alealonso Phänomene der venezolanischen Populärkultur wie den Changa Tuki Tanz oder den Gangster Kult La Corte Malandra. Dabei thematisieren viele der farbenfrohen Holztäfelchen und Keramiken auch Gewalterfahrungen und Kriminalität in seinem Heimatland. Trotzdem erzählen diese grafischen Kommentare eine Geschichte die wandelbar ist, in die eingegriffen werden kann und deren Szenarien sich neu anordnen lassen. Im Momentum der Ausstellung fliegt das Flugzeug aus der Darstellung hinaus, ein Narrativ, dass der Künstler unter anderen Voraussetzungen gerne umkehren würde.

Martin Allais



La vida Study on my memoself #1 is an exploration of ideas of identity and selfhood, based on personal memories and the collective symbols with which one grows up in Venezuelan society. In the animation for *Moviendo la Fe* surrealist characters encounter images of our media society and crossing the artist's self-portrait in endless repetition.

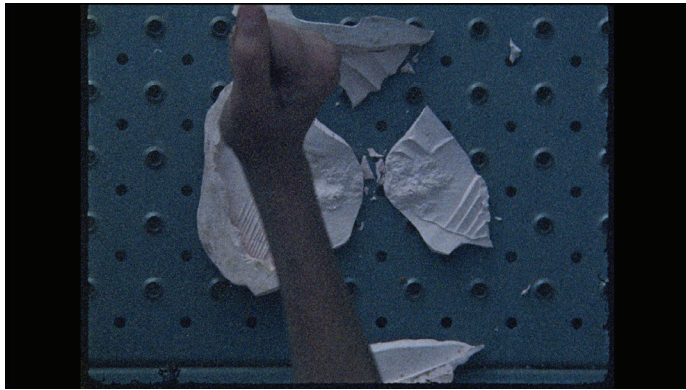
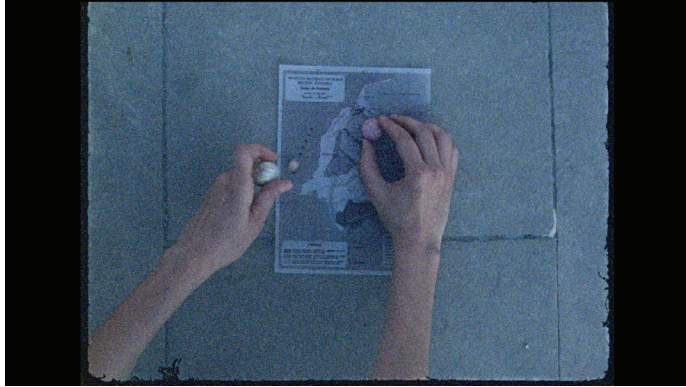
La vida – Study on my memoself #1



still frame: La vida - Study on my memoself #1
video animation 1:45 min, 2017

La Vida Study on my memoself #1 ist eine Auseinandersetzung mit Konzeptionen von Identität, basierend auf persönlichen Erinnerungen und kollektiven Symbolen der venezolanischen Gesellschaft. In der Animation für *Moviendo la Fe* treffen surrealistische Zeichen auf Abbilder unserer Mediengesellschaft und durchkreuzen in endloser Wiederholung das Selbstbildnis des Künstlers.

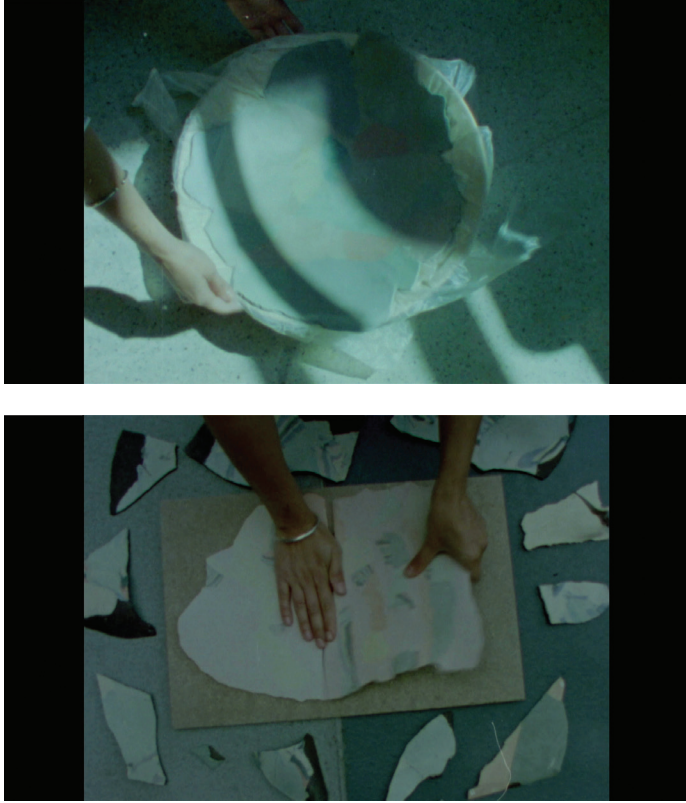
Valentina Alvarado



still frame; Cruce postal
16mm Telecine HD 4:54 min, 2014

The video work *La cruce postal* depicts in short sequences a moment in Valentina Alvarados's life just after she left Venezuela. The artist's interaction with fragments that determine homeland as a territorial as much as a social construction mixes with her thoughts to form a work of visual poetry. While borders of different materiality create resistance in this work, they are being realigned and united in her most recent work *Levantamiento de una isla*. It is a realignment that transforms preceding layers of meaning, which are derivative of words, into a meditation on movement, light and colour.

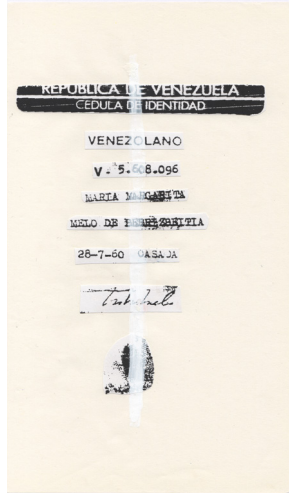
La cruce postal / Levantamiento de una isla



still frame: Levantamiento de una isla
super 8 Telecine HD 5:27 min, 2017

Die Videoarbeit *La cruce postal* beschreibt in kurzen Sequenzen einen Moment im Leben Valentina Alvarados, in dem sie Venezuela gerade verlassen hat. Interaktionen der Künstlerin mit Fragmenten, die Heimat als territoriale sowie soziale Konstruktion bestimmen, verbinden sich mit ihren Gedanken zu einem Werk visueller Poesie. Während Grenzen verschiedener Materialität in dieser Arbeit Widerstände bilden, werden sie in *Levantamiento de una isla*, ihrer jüngsten Arbeit, neu geordnet und zusammengeführt. Eine Neuordnung, welche vorausgegangene, an Worte gebundene Bedeutungsebenen transformiert in eine Mediation auf Bewegung, Licht und Farbe.

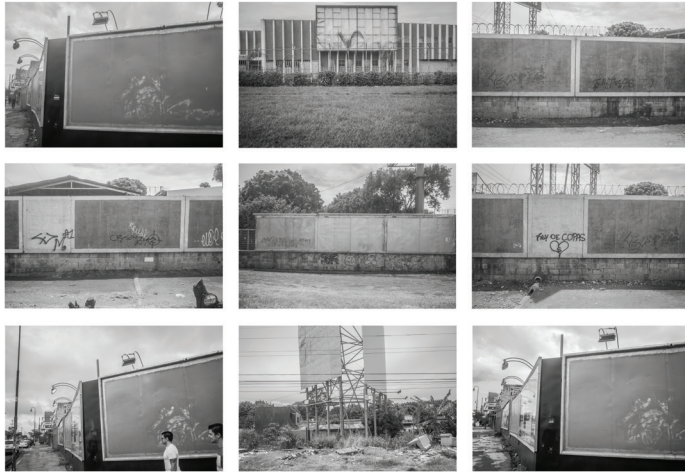
Elisa Bergel Melo



scan; Del origen y la distancia
Journal Pages, mixed media on paper, 2014

A search for movement, memory and its artistic implications from a perspective of migration is initiated by way of various different languages. Tautological images depict the possibility of a subjective landscape – regenerated in repetition. They are joined by an artist journal carrying creative influences beyond photography; exploring topics such as identity and geographical boundaries.
(Text: Elisa Bergel Melo)

Del origen y la distancia

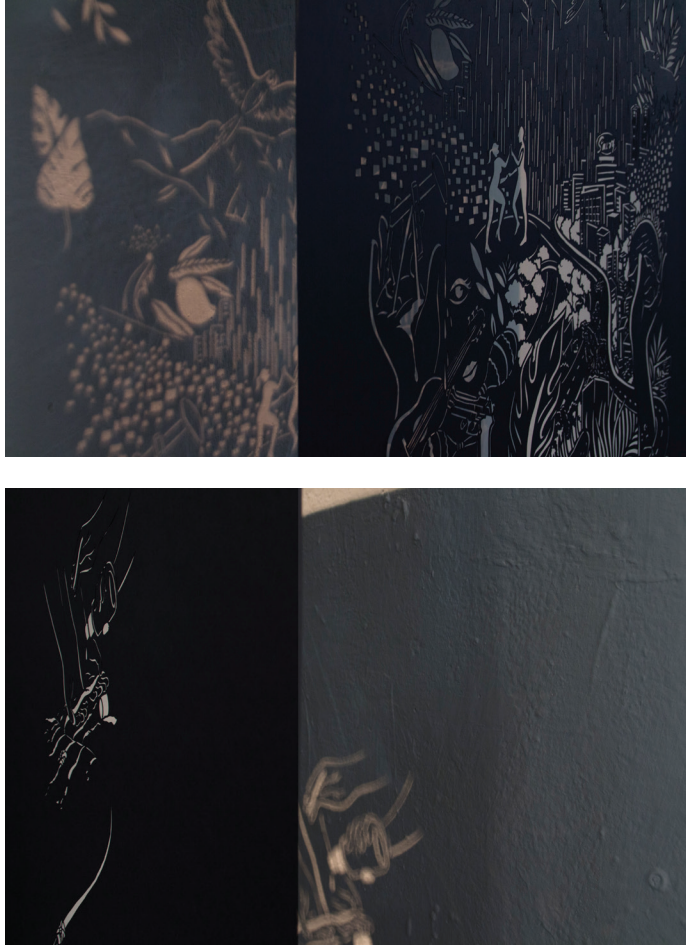


Del origen y la distancia
digital photo grid, 2014

Die Suche nach Bewegung, Erinnerung und ihre künstlerischen Implikationen aus der Perspektive von MigrantInnen ist auf unterschiedlichsten Sprachebenen initiiert. Tautologische Bilder stellen die Möglichkeit einer subjektiven Landschaft dar – erneuert durch Wiederholung – und werden in einem Künstlermagazin zusammengestellt, um die kreativen Einflüsse jenseits von Fotografie zu vereinigen und sich Themen wie Identität und geografischen Begrenzungen anzunähern.

(Text: Elisa Bergel Melo)

Eva Marina Burckhardt



detalle; Pasado Mañana / Antes de Ayer
papercuts, 100cm x 70cm, 2017

The silhouettes created by Eva Marina Burckhardt for *Moviendo La Fe* juxtaposes the metaphorical shadow of the past with one of the future. While the former depicts Venezuela as a heavenly paradise, the latter presents a minimalistic image of a society in need of healing. Vanishing memories of the homeland are contrasted with the current situation in Venezuela. The artist chooses silhouettes as a medium whose spatial depth and multi-layered interpretability, both positive and negative, imply not only a political dimension but also her personal migration background: As a Venezuelan of Swiss descent, she migrated to Switzerland, a country where silhouettes are a traditional handicraft.

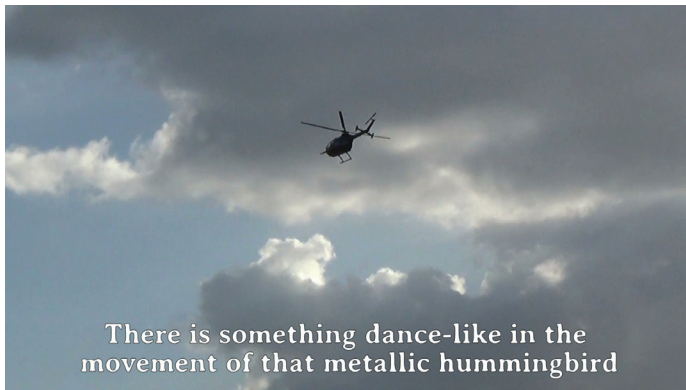
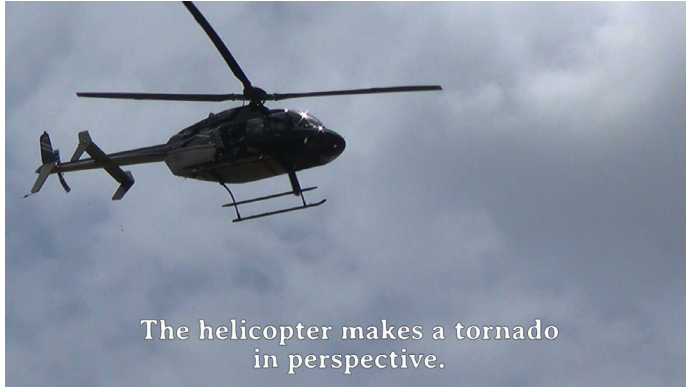
Antes de Ayer / Pasado Mañana 2017



installation view: Antes de Ayer
papercuts, 100cm x 70cm, 2017

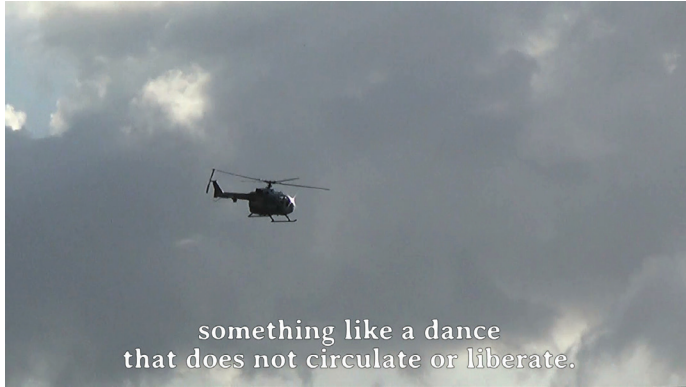
In Scherenschnitten für *Moviendo La Fe* stellt Eva Marina Burckhardt dem metaphorischen Schatten der Vergangenheit, einen Schatten der Zukunft gegenüber. Während ersterer von einem paradiesisch anmutenden Venezuela erzählt, umreißt der zweite ein minimalistisches Bild einer Gesellschaft, die geheilt werden muss; Schwindende Erinnerungen an das Heimatland werden mit dem aktuellen Blick auf Venezuela konfrontiert. Die Künstlerin wählt das Medium Scherenschnitt, dessen raumgreifende Dimension und vielschichtige Lesbarkeit von negativ und positiv eine politische Ebene impliziert und außerdem auf ihre eigene Migrationsgeschichte verweist: Als Halbschweizerin wanderte sie zum Studieren in die Schweiz aus, wo Scherenschnitt ein traditionelles Handwerk ist.

JoseJosé



The artist duo JoseJosé condenses its examination of current events in their native country to a helicopter flight. The vertical perspective of contemplation implies the notion of a place outside of reality, while the movement of the helicopter - likeness of the vision of a birdlike flying machine - signifies that reality can only ever be faced from continually changing points of departure. The interpretive layers of the video essay *Panóptico Celeste* become interwoven in a narrative without protagonists, in which the helicopter acts as a witness and messenger at the same time: a disenchanting look at a society whose time and dances are perceived as static.

Panóptico Celeste



still frame: Panóptico Celeste
video 8:49 min., 2017

Die Auseinandersetzung mit dem aktuellen Geschehen im Heimatland konzentriert das Künstlerduo JoseJosé auf einen Hubschrauberflug. Die vertikale Distanz der Betrachtung impliziert die Vorstellung eines Ortes außerhalb jener Realität, die sich am Boden befindet, während die Bewegung des Hubschraubers, ein Abbild der Vision eines vogelgleichen Flugapparates, bedeutet, dass Realität stetig mit neuen Ausgangslagen konfrontiert werden muss. Die Deutungsebenen des Videoessays *Panóptico Celeste* werden verwoben in ein Narrativ ohne Protagonisten, der Hubschrauber fungiert als Zeitzeuge und Bote zugleich, in einer Zeit die als statisch empfunden, deren Tänze als mechanisch beschrieben werden.

Carlin Diaz



The good, the bad and the immigrant
digital illustration on analog pictures, 2017

In his latest work *Presidential Dinner*, Carlin Diaz transposes the political examination of the current situation in Venezuela from the showroom to the public sphere. The omnipresent image of Chávez, as part of Venezuela's collective memory, is converted into the likewise instrumentalized presentation of his successor and new president Maduro. It is a critique that references the widespread tradition of political murals in Latin America, which addresses a broader public beyond the gallery space. Juxtaposed to this work is the series *The good, the bad and the immigrant*. The interior functions here as a symbolic mirror of personal conflict precipitated by the challenges of reorientation with regards to territorial and social change.

The good the bad and the immigrant / Presidential Dinner



mural; Presidential Dinner
acryl, spray paint, 2017

Mit seiner jüngsten Arbeit *Presidential Dinner* überführt Carlin Diaz die im Ausstellungsraum vorgeschlagene, politische Auseinandersetzung mit der aktuellen Situation Venezuelas in den öffentlichen Raum. Die Omnipresenz des Abbilds Chávez als Teil der kollektiven Erinnerung in Venezuela wird hier überführt in eine ebenso propagandistisch ausgeführte Darstellung seines Nachfolgers und neuen Staatspräsidenten Maduros. Eine Kritik die in Form des politischen Murals auf eine weitreichende Tradition in Lateinamerika zurückgreift und eine Öffentlichkeit auch außerhalb der Galerieräume adressiert. Dieser Arbeit gegenübergestellt ist die Serie *The good, the bad and the immigrant*. Der Innenraum fungiert hier als sinnbildlicher Spiegel persönlicher Konflikte die die Herausforderung einer Neuverortung im Hinblick auf Territorium und Gesellschaft mit sich bringt.

Denis Faneites



Santa Harina de Coromoto
mixed media, 2017

Tocuyito, a town in southwestern Venezuela, mostly conjures mental images of one of the country's most infamous prisons. Tocuyito is the hometown of Denis Faneites' family. Shortly before preparations for this exhibition, they informed him that they had to erect a wall around their house. It is concrete evidence of Venezuela's decreasing safety and the reason why the artist, who grew up in Germany, can hardly visit his family anymore. For him, this wall not only stands for the country's political and social plight, but also presents a symbolic incongruity to the nearby prison, whose inmates seem to be freer than his family. Since he cannot paint his positive perspectives for the future onto the wall on location, he asked his family what they would like to see when looking outside and conveyed this reality into the work on display for *Moviendo la Fe*. The altar *Santa Harina de Coromoto* is a comment on the food crisis in Venezuela, mixing the trademark face of Harina Pan (most popular flour brand for the traditional dish Arepas) and the Patron Saint of Venezuela Santa Maria de Coromoto.

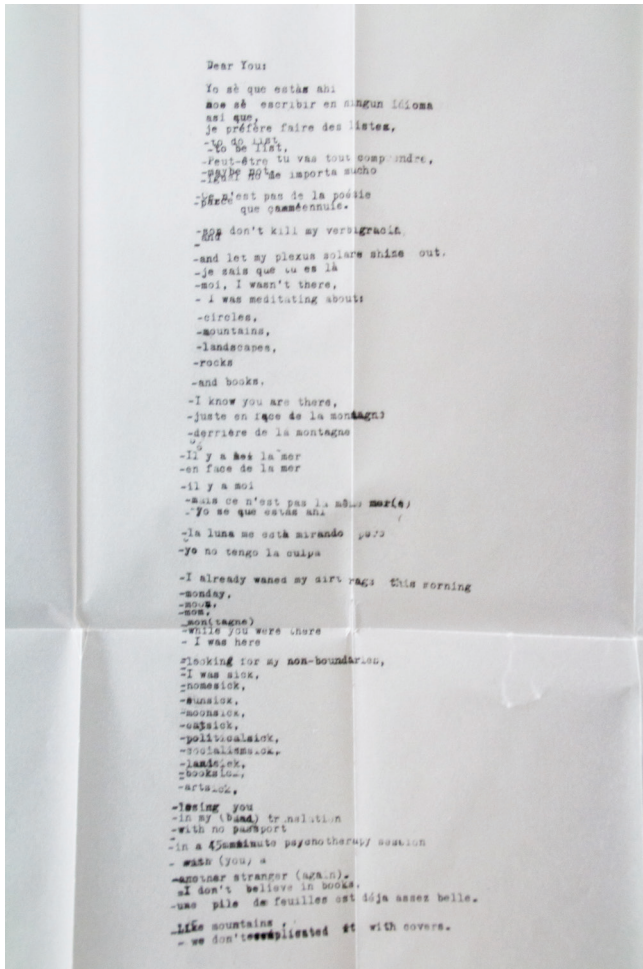
My heart is on a wall in Tocuyito



My heart is on a wall in Tocuyito
acrylic on wood, 150cm x 80cm, 2017

Tocuyito, eine Stadt im Südwesten Venezuelas, ruft bei dem Ortskundigen vor allem Bilder eines der berühmtesten Gefängnisse des Landes auf. Tocuyito ist die Stadt, in der die Familie von Denis Faneites lebt. Kurz vor Beginn der Ausstellungsvorbereitungen berichtet sie ihm, dass sie um ihr Haus eine Mauer errichten musste. Ein konkretes Zeugnis der sich zunehmend verschlechternden Sicherheitslage in Venezuela und ein Grund, dass es für den Künstler, der in Deutschland aufgewachsen ist, momentan fast unmöglich ist seine Familie zu besuchen. Die Vorstellung dieser Mauer impliziert für ihn nicht nur die gesellschaftliche und politische Misslage des Landes, sondern auch eine sinnbildliche Diskrepanz zu dem sich in der Nähe befindenden Gefängnis, deren Insassen dort scheinbar freier als seine Familie sind. Da er selbst nicht vor Ort sein kann, um die Mauer mit positiveren Zukunftsperspektiven zu bemalen, fragte er seine Familie, worauf sie gerne blicken würden und überträgt diese Wirklichkeit in die in der Ausstellung gezeigte Arbeit. Der Altar *Santa Harina de Coromoto* ist ein Kommentar zur Nahrungsmittelkrise Venezuelas und verbindet das Gesicht der Harina Pan (Maismehl) Verpackung mit der Abbildung der heiligen Maria de Coromoto, der Schutzheiligen von Venezuela.

Ivonne Gargano



detail: Meditating Moon(day)
impression laser on transparent paper, Ao, 2017

On transparent paper, Ivonne Garagano addresses *Meditating Moon(day)* to the anonymous reader and introduces her series Kill me with your Luz by way of this letter.

„While you were au bord de la mer(e) [≈ both at the sea and at the edge of mother]

- I was here

- looking for my non boundaries“

Constituted by the characteristic competition of languages in migrant societies, the artist locates herself in relation to her unknown opposite. A clear conflict between the translatability of her thoughts and the questioning of her own position determines the syntax and leads towards a defragmentation of the written. *Meditating Moon(day)* is accompanied by the video *Retrograde Exhale* that could be read as a coordinate in this struggle. Before her relocation from Venezuela to Belgium, the artist had to decide which (few) things she would take to her new place of residence. The Super 8 footage of her grandfather was one of these mementoes, yet lay dormant for six years in the artist's luggage before she could come to terms with it in the context of *Kill me with your luz* – a series of rituals, in Ivonne Garagano's words, to find light.

***Kill me with your luz:
Meditating Moon(day) Retrogade Exhale***



still frame; Retrogade Exhale
super 8mm to digital, 0:48 min., 2017

Auf transparentem Papier richtet Ivonne Gargano *Meditating Moon(day)* an den anonymen Leser und leitet mit diesem Brief ihre Serie *Kill me with your Luz* ein.

„While you were au bord de la mer(e)

- I was here

- looking for my non boundaries“

In einer Verfassung, der für Migrationsgesellschaften charakteristischen Konkurrenz von Sprachen, verortet sich die Künstlerin in Relation zu ihrem unbekanntem Gegenüber. Ein deutlicher Widerstreit zwischen der Übersetzbarkeit ihrer Gedanken und der Hinterfragung der eigenen Position bestimmt die Syntax und führt zur Defragmentation des Geschriebenen. *Meditating Moon(day)* wird begleitet durch die Videoarbeit *Retrogade Exhale* die als Koordinate in dieser Auseinandersetzung gelesen werden könnte. Vor ihrem Umzug von Venezuela nach Belgien, musste die Künstlerin entscheiden, welche (wenigen) Dinge sie mit an ihren neuen Wohnort nehmen würde. Die Super 8 Aufnahmen ihres Großvaters gehörten zu diesen Erinnerungsstücken, doch ruhten sie sechs Jahre im Gepäck der Künstlerin bis sie im Rahmen von *Kill me with your Luz* – einer Serie von Ritualen um, wie Ivonne Garagano beschreibt, Licht zu finden - aufgearbeitet werden konnten.

Leonardo González



Gimme Shelter
digital illustration, 2017

The omnipresent situation in his homeland is portrayed in Leonardo González' illustrations by means of pungent cartoons which he defines as Tropical Punk. His work gained wide popularity in social networks and thus currently belongs to the most renowned graphic commentaries on Venezuela's political situation. The presented selection of his artwork shows the artist confronted with a barely manageable coverage on the current situation in Venezuela which he needs to come to terms with in his newly chosen domicile Berlin. He is surrounded by the despots Chávez and Maduro whose power and influence are criticized and playfully deconstructed.

Gimme Shelter / Mea Culpa



Mea Culpa
digital illustration, 2017

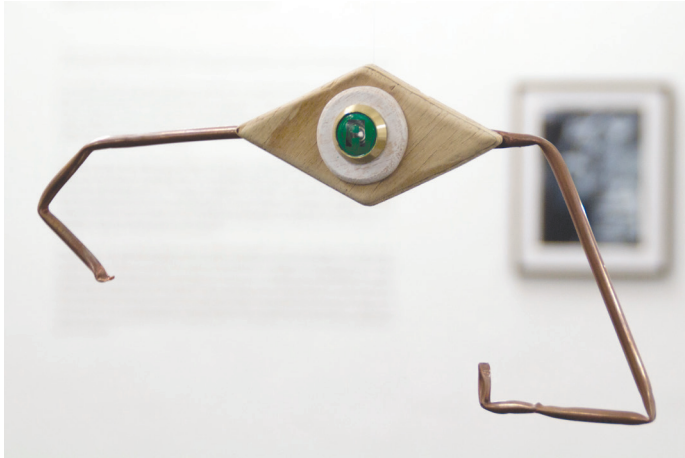
Die omnipräsente Situation im Heimatland schlägt sich in den Illustrationen Leonardo González als beißende Karikaturen nieder, die er selbst als Tropical Punk bezeichnet. Seine Arbeiten verbreiteten sich rasant in den sozialen Netzwerken und gehören wohl zu den bekanntesten grafischen Kommentaren zur politischen Situation in Venezuela. Die gezeigte Auswahl der Arbeiten zeigt den Künstler selbst, konfrontiert mit einer kaum überschaubaren Berichterstattung der aktuellen Lage vor Ort, deren Dringlichkeit in die Realität am neu gewählten Wohnort Berlin übergreift. Er wird umringt von den Despoten Chávez und Maduro deren Macht und Einfluss in seinen Darstellungen in Frage und spielerisch dekonstruiert wird.

Luis Lestón



Spread around the gallery space, visitors encounter spyholes that combine to form the word Realidad. With this installation, the artist Luis Lestón references both the problematic nature of the concept of reality and the necessity to depict it from multiple perspectives. Consequentially, all artworks on display at *Moviendo la Fe* become integral aspects of this attempt at representation. As the immediate visual axes of *Mirones* they are not only unavoidable if the installation is to be experienced as a whole, but at the same time they are partially constitutive of the work and what it attempts to capture: reality as it is lived and experienced by Venezuelan artists grappling with the current politics, culture and art as well as the migration movement in their home country.

Mirones



installation view; Mirones
series of 8; mixed media, 2017

Im Galerieraum verteilt, finden die BesucherInnen Türspione vor, die bei der Durchsicht zusammengenommen das Wort Realidad ergeben. Der Künstler Luis Lestón verweist mit der Installation *Mirones* auf die Problematik des Begriffs Wirklichkeit und die Notwendigkeit einer Darstellung aus multiplen Perspektiven. In der Konsequenz werden alle in *Moviendo la Fe* gezeigten Kunstwerke unmittelbarer Bestandteil dieser Lesart. Als direkte Sichtachsen von *Mirones* sind sie nicht nur unumgebar um die Installation in ihrer Gesamtheit zu erfahren, sondern gleichzeitig konstitutiver Bestandteil der Arbeit und ihres Beschreibungsversuchs: Einer erfahrenen und gelebten Wirklichkeit venezolanischer KünstlerInnen im Widerstreit mit der aktuellen Politik, Kultur und Kunst sowie Migrationsbewegung ihres Heimatlandes.

Rolando González



From Venezuela to outer space tells the story of Franklin Machado, the first Venezuelan cosmonaut on the moon. His critical examination of news production, specifically in social media, drove the artist Rolando González to become a media representative himself. The founding of the newsportal Newsprox enabled him to share news, like that of the first Venezuelan on the moon, with the viewer and, together with them, sound out the relevance, reach, as well as responsible handling of media and their distribution. According to the artist, the case of Franklin Machado is particularly charged because it allows for straightforward analogies with Venezuela's current wave of migration.

Editor's note: According to a study published in mid-June 2017 by the Internet security firm Trend Micro, public opinion influencing fake news campaigns, which are likely to destroy trust in institutions, can be ordered via so called "service providers" in the "Darknet". According to examples given by Chinese, English and Russian providers, it cost up to 400.000 USD to influence an election, up to 200.000 USD to provoke protests and up to 50.000 USD to discredit a journalist. (Source Wikipedia)

From Venezuela to outer space



still frame; From Venezuela to outer space
video HD 2:05, 2017

From Venezuela to outer space erzählt die Geschichte von Franklin Machado, dem ersten venezolanischen Raumfahrer auf dem Mond. Die kritische Auseinandersetzung mit der Produktion von Nachrichten, insbesondere in den sozialen Medien, veranlasst den Künstler Rolando González selbst zum Medienschaffenden zu werden. Die Gründung des Nachrichtenportals Newsprox erlaubt ihm Neuigkeiten wie die, des ersten Venezolaners auf dem Mond, direkt mit dem Betrachter zu teilen sowie Relevanz, Reichweite aber auch den verantwortungsvollen Umgang mit Medien und ihrer Verbreitung gemeinschaftlich auszuloten. Der Fall von Franklin Machado ist seiner Meinung nach vor allem daher brisant, da sich direkte Analogien zur aktuellen Migrationsbewegung in Venezuela herstellen lassen.

Anmerkg. der Autorin: Nach einer Mitte Juni 2017 von der Internet-Sicherheitsfirma Trend Micro veröffentlichten Studie können die öffentliche Meinung beeinflussende Fake-News- Kampagnen, die geeignet sind, das Vertrauen in Institutionen zu zerstören, bei „Dienstleistern“ im „Darknet“ bestellt werden: Eine Wahlbeeinflussung kostete nach Beispielen von chinesisch-, englisch und russischsprachigen Anbietern bis zu 400.000 US-Dollar, die Provokation von Protesten bis zu 200.000, die Diskreditierung einer Journalistin beispielsweise bis zu 50.000. (Quelle Wikipedia)

Edgar Martínez



Edgar Martínez is the only artist on display here who currently lives and works in Venezuela. His series *lucky* is a photo reportage that was shot over a period of three years (2014-2017) in La Rinconada, a horse racecourse in Caracas. The facility is renowned both as the most important one in Venezuela and for its exemplary architecture. Today, it partially provides makeshift accommodation for families that lost their homes to severe weather. The informal structures of its parallel use are by now inscribed into the gradually decaying buildings of the racecourse. The artist's attentive and longstanding observations manifest these two realities of the racecourse: there are the horse racing punters, looking for luck and distraction, at a time when Venezuela's inflation rate exceeds several hundred percent, as well as there are the asylum seekers living under precarious circumstances. *lucky* documents the coexistence of these realities while also drawing analogies to the current state of Venezuela as a whole: the dystopian perception of a country overshadowed by the oil boom and crumbling progress.

Lucky



from the series *Lucky*
analog pictures, variable sizes, 2014 - 2017

Edgar Martinez lebt und arbeitet momentan als einziger der gezeigten KünstlerInnen in Venezuela. Seine Serie *lucky* ist eine fotografische Reportage, die er über den Zeitraum von 3 Jahren (2014-2017) in La Rinconada, einer Pferderennbahn in Caracas, aufgenommen hat. Die Anlage gilt als die wichtigste Venezuelas und beispielhaft für ihre moderne Architektur. Heute wird sie in Teilen als Notunterkunft von Familien bewohnt, die aufgrund von Unwettern ihre Häuser verloren – eine parallele Nutzung, die sich in Form informeller Strukturen in die allmählich verfallende Substanz der Rennbahn eingeschrieben hat. Die aufmerksamen und langjährigen Beobachtungen des Künstlers manifestieren diese zwei Realitäten der Rennbahn: die der BesucherInnen eines Pferderennens, auf der Suche nach Glück und Zerstreung, in einem Moment in der die Inflationsrate Venezuelas mehrere hundert Prozent beträgt, sowie die der Asylsuchenden, die unter prekären Bedingungen dort leben. *lucky* dokumentiert die Koexistenz dieser Wirklichkeiten und stellt gleichzeitig Analogien zur Lage Venezuelas als Ganzes her: Die dystopische Wahrnehmung eines Landes im Schatten von Ölboom und zerfallendem Fortschritt.

Angyvir Padilla & Virginia Ramirez



The installation *An Imaginary of Displacement* documents a multi-year dialogue between the artists Angyvir Padilla and Virginia Ramirez and retraces a possible movement of their individual realities in relation to each other. Interrogations of the concept of home, its meaning as well as the possible forms it may take, which result from the artists' migrant background, blend over into an examination of loss and its possibilities of representation. The installation thus mirrors a landscape of ephemeral and lasting elements whose arrangement appears both growing and dissolving. The notion sketched in *La Frontera* of one only physically, and one only mentally accessible reality, together with the attempt to mutually communicate these, is translated into the sound journal *AV*: the artists' voices, talking about the loss of a body and the loss of a place, convey themselves only in parallel and only simultaneously. It is an exchange that tries to overcome the distance or boundary (*La Frontera*) that Angyvir Padilla and Virginia Ramirez locate at the intersection between material and immaterial reality.

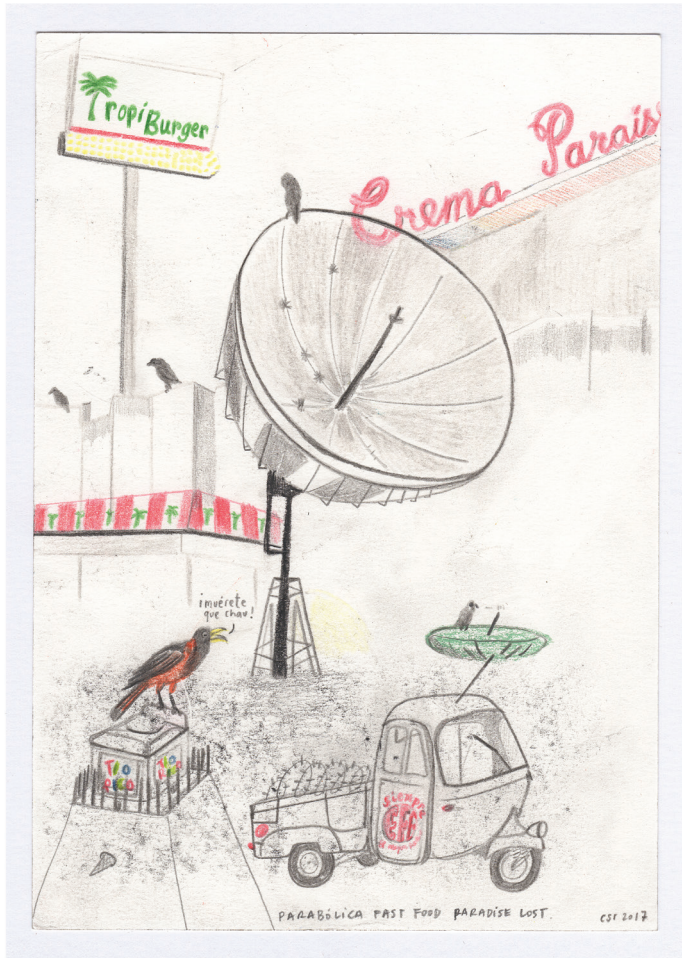
An Imaginary of Displacement / La Frontera / AV



installation view: *An imaginary of displacement, AV, La frontera*
cassette player, newspaper, mural, mixed media, 2017

Die Installation *An Imaginary of Displacement* dokumentiert einen mehrjährigen Dialog zwischen den beiden Künstlerinnen Angyvir Padilla und Virginia Ramirez und beschreibt eine mögliche Bewegung ihrer individuellen Wirklichkeiten zueinander. Fragestellungen nach Heimat, ihrer Bedeutung und ihrer möglichen Formen, die sich aus dem Migrationshintergrund der beiden Künstlerinnen ergeben, gehen über, in eine Untersuchung der Materialität von Verlust und ihrer Darstellungsmöglichkeiten. So spiegelt die Installation eine Landschaft ephemerer und dauernder Elemente, deren Anordnung gleichermaßen wachsend wie sich auflösend erscheint. Die in *La Frontera* skizzierte Vorstellung einer physisch, sowie einer gedanklich erfahrbaren Realität und der Versuch sich diese gegenseitig mitzuteilen wird in das Tonjournal *AV* übersetzt: Nur parallel und nur gleichzeitig vermitteln sich die Stimmen der Künstlerinnen, die über den Verlust eines Körpers und den Verlust eines Ortes sprechen. Ein Austausch der die Distanz oder Grenze (*la Frontera*) zu überwinden sucht, die Angyvir Padilla und Virginia Ramirez an der Schnittstelle zwischen materieller und immaterieller Realität lokalisieren.

Cristina Sitja Rubio



In this series of new drawings for *Moviendo la Fe* Cristina Sitja Rubio confronts the fairy tale landscapes of her children's books with street scenes of Caracas. Snapshots like the one of a popcorn seller whose car is inscribed with Psalm 23 *Nada me faltará* "I shall not want", or the one of the restaurant entrance whose gate is formed by a Christmas lights decorated metal detector, appear surreal in a city-scape populated by human, animal and fairy tale creatures on an equal footing. Subtle and yet unambiguously, the artist thus depicts the cracks of a society that has been protesting for months against insufficient provisions of basic foodstuffs as well as inflation, corruption and its concomitant violence. Cristina Sitja Rubio collages her observations during recent visits to Caracas with memories of her home town dating way back. Today, palm trees that merrily advertise "Tropiburgers" from rooftops and satellite dishes that indicate one of Latin America's most promising national economies compete with doubt: regarding, for example, the Bolivarian Revolution which, like its patron saint, depicted here as a yellow balloon, seems to be running out of steam.

Sancocho Nostálgico



from the series Sancocho Nostálgico
watercolour on paper, sizes vary, 2017

In dieser Serie neuer Zeichnungen für *Moviendo la Fe* konfrontiert Cristina Sitja Rubio die fantastischen Landschaften ihrer Kinderbücher, Welten in denen alles möglich ist, mit Straßenszenarien Caracas. Momentaufnahmen wie die eines Popcornverkäufers, auf dessen Wagen der Psalm 23 *Nada me faltará* „Es wird mir an nichts fehlen“ geschrieben steht, oder die eines Restauranteingangs, dessen Pforte ein Metalldetektor, dekoriert mit Weihnachtsbeleuchtung bildet, wirken surreal in einer von Menschen, Tieren und Fabelwesen gleichberechtigt besiedelten Stadtlandschaft. Subtil und doch unmissverständlich beschreibt die Künstlerin mit diesen Bildern die Brüche in einer Gesellschaft, die seit Monaten gegen Mangelversorgung mit grundlegenden Nahrungsmitteln, Inflation, Korruption und die mit ihr einhergehende Gewalt protestiert. Cristina Sitja Rubio collagiert Beobachtungen ihrer letzten Reisen nach Caracas mit lang zurückliegenden Erinnerungen an die Heimatstadt; Palmen die vergnügt von Häuserdächern für „Tropiburger“ werben und Satellitenempfänger als Boten einer der wohl erfolgversprechendsten Volkswirtschaften Lateinamerikas, konkurrieren heute mit dem Zweifel: Beispielsweise an der bolivariischen Revolution, der gleich ihrem Namenspatron, hier als gelber Ballon dargestellt, die Luft auszugehen scheint.



"The Homeland is an invention."

...Just like that, the blade of Sr. Martín slashes his son Hache's question: "Don't you miss it? Didn't you ever have the desire to come back?" And so the father twists the knife: "That whole 'missing' thing, the nostalgia, that's all a verse. One doesn't miss a country. One misses a neighborhood, in any case. But one also misses it if you move ten blocks away. Whoever feels patriot, whoever thinks that they belong to a country is", his words, not mine, "a mental retard!". And after estranging himself from everyone on equal measure, he sentences what I have been hoisting as a personal flag: "Your country are your friends and that you do miss it."¹

But since several years, it is at half-mast. Perhaps the homeland was never meant to be a portion of land doodled on a map with landscapes, harvests and heroes; yet its destiny was neither to be ashes dispersed all over.

The exodus has burned down to the ground the possibility to relive the memories that make our identity a whole and with it the homeland. There is no place to come back to when your friends are also gone.

One more diegetic speech might not contribute to an historical archive; it might not answer how we failed to achieve a prosper economy in a land replenished in oil and mineral resources, or why we annually burry more victims of violence than Iraq, a nation still at war. It is not the flogging of a dead horse as many, including myself, would think it at times, but if I may speak it shall be from my own song of experience.

I was 20 when I started filming *Caracas, ciudad de despedidas* motivated to materialize an idea that gave me long hours of sleeplessness. The homeland for me became a farce when every passing year there was more goodbye parties than any other occasion to "celebrate". The homeland was a failure to our youth when hopes were hauled to sweep the dirt of a government that would not take responsibility for the rampage delinquency and the consequential ever-growing fear. Living in gated communities as a compulsory alitention, learning absurd getaway methods in case of threats of violence, swimming against normalized tides of anarchy to complete ordinary tasks, having to swallow the mediocre "at least you are alive" consolation every time you became part of the statistics...All of this belonged to the degraded concept of freedom that we followed but knew it should not be... and yet *we* were the lucky ones.

The sentiment was present, the words were easy, the focus was limited and private, and it was mostly understood within its context. Suddenly, what I intended to be a small compilation of desires, concerns and memories of how was life from where and with who I was standing,

The homeland is an invention

while in this state of constant departure, became an infamous and viral allegory of classes, ignorance and cheeky privilege. This was a perfect opportunity for the public to let flow twenty years of state-promoted resentment and social hypocrisy and for the government and media feast on the ongoing polarization.

Venezuela prided itself on its generosity, receptiveness and cultural mixture as consequence of the waves of immigrants during the World War II and later with the right-wing dictatorships of Latin America. For some time now, we've been confronted with the fact that, the incompetence and the viciousness of a system that has divided us into friends and enemies of the governing party, made my generation to seek for exile, even if sometime meant a metaphorical isolation within the borders. This means a shift in our national DNA and coping with such changes can't be easy for a country that its dignity relies lately on fake notions of freedom, wealth, justice, order, safety... and well, if you believe Martín Sr. like I do, now that the friends are all gone, also the idea of homeland.

Text: Ivanna Chávez Idrogo

Ivanna (1990) addressed vincreasing migration already in 2011 and published a much discussed and widespread video on the topic.

Impressum

Moviendo la Fe
Migrating perspectives on Venezuela
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Eine Gruppenausstellung durchgeführt von der Galerie neurotitan
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Annika Hirsekorn

Projektleitung / Project Management:

Eva Marina Burckhardt, Denis Faneites, Rolando González

Texte / Texts:

Annika Hirsekorn, Ivanna Chávez Idrogo, Alberto Morreo

Übersetzung / Translation:

Gerrit Haas, Melanie Klein

Design: Sara Radonja

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@medicenrolando

Weitere Abbildungen / other images:

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from the series Lucky
analog pictures, variable sizes, 2014 - 2017

Migrating perspectives on Venezuela

