MEXIKANISIERUNG: DAS KUNSTWERK ALS SOUVERÄNE REPRODUKTION VON STRAFE

MEXICANIZATION: THE WORK OF ART AS A SOVEREIGN REPRODUCTION OF PUNISHMENT

2016

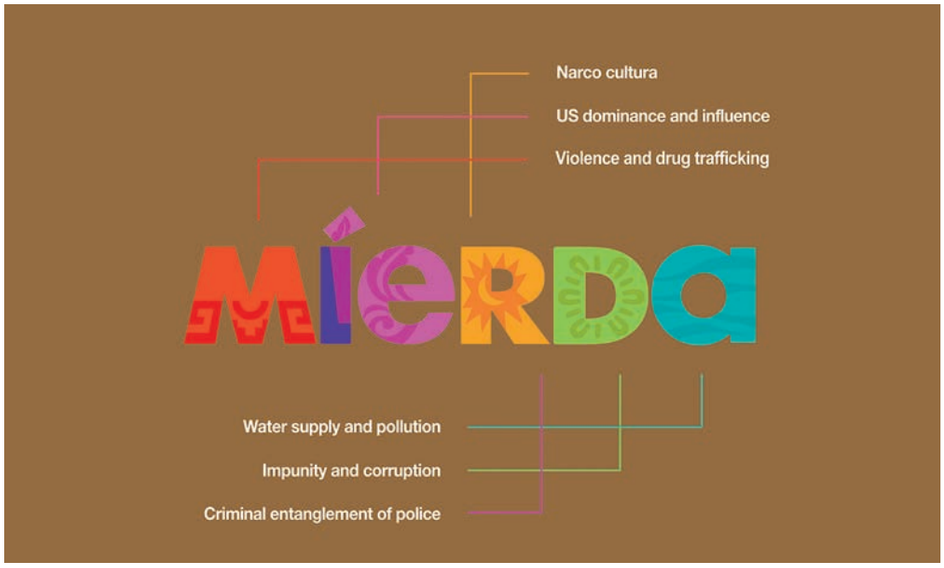
Mehrteilige Installation bestehend aus:
México / Mierda
Fahne, Farbdruck, 140 × 245 cm.
Banana Press Society
Bananenblätter, Siebdruck, 200 × 300 cm.
Patrulla
Dodge Charger, präpariert: Blaulicht, Kuhfänger, Klebefolien, Autoradio/DVD: Musikvideos (Narco Corridos).
Ohne Titel
Musikperformance, Organilleros, 20 min.

Multi-part installation consisting of:
México / Mierda
Flag, color print, 140 × 245 cm.
Banana Press Society
Banana leaves, silkprint, 200 × 300 cm.
Patrulla
Dodge Charger, prepared: flash lights, bullbar, adhesive foils, DVD player: videos (Narco Corridos).
Untitled
Music performance, Organilleros, 20 min.

OBEN | ABOVE:
MÉXICO / MIERDA, FAHNE, 2015.
MÉXICO / MIERDA, *FLAG, 2015.*

SEITE 103 | ***PAGE 103:***
OBEN | *ABOVE:*
MÉXICO / MIERDA AUF UND **ORGANILLEROS** VOR DER CASA DEL LAGO. ***MÉXICO / MIERDA*** *ON TOP AND* ***ORGANILLEROS*** *IN FRONT OF THE CASA DEL LAGO.*

UNTEN | *BELOW:*
MÉXICO / MIERDA, COLLAGEN, 2016.
MÉXICO / MIERDA, *COLLAGES, 2016.*



2016 erhält Christoph Faulhaber eine Einladung des Goethe-Instituts zu einem künstlerischen Beitrag für das deutsch-mexikanische Kulturjahr. Faulhaber entwickelt vor Ort ein Projekt bestehend aus vier Arbeiten, die sich mit unterschiedlichen Aspekten der Sicherheitspolitik des Landes auseinandersetzen. Die Ergebnisse werden in der Casa del Lago UNAM in Mexiko ausgestellt.

So steht auf dem autonomen UNAM-Gelände in der Casa del Lago ein Auto der Bundespolizei (Policia Federal), das von dem Künstler erworben und trügerisch realistisch bearbeitet und manipuliert worden ist. Zugrunde lag dem Erwerb eine ausgiebige Feldstudie über die zahlreichen unterschiedlichen Polizei-Formationen im Land und vor allem über den Handel mit Polizeiautos, die ebenso als Monumente der Korruption und Gewalt gelesen werden können.

Mit einer Collagen-Serie großformatiger Siebdrucke evoziert Faulhaber die Bildsprache einer Gesellschaft, deren Körper ständig expliziter Gewalt oder Sexualisierung ausgesetzt sind. Faulhaber druckt Motive aus den Titelseiten mexikanischer Boulevardzeitungen auf Bananenblätter, die mit der Zeit vermodern und zerfallen.

Zuletzt entwickelt der Künstler ein Logo für eine Fahne, die das Marketing von Mexiko als verheißungsvolles Reiseziel parodiert. Zur Eröffnung seiner Ausstellung spielt feierlich-fröhlich eine Gruppe von Drehorgelspielern auf. Verschlüsselt bleibt hingegen der Titel des Projektes: **Mexikanisierung: Das Kunstwerk als souveräne Reproduktion von Strafe.** (SMS)

2016 Christoph Faulhaber receives an invitation from the Goethe-Institute for an artistic contribution to the German-Mexican Cultural Year. Faulhaber develops a project consisting of four works that deal with different aspects of the specific security policy of the country. The results will be exhibited at Casa del Lago UNAM in Mexico.

On the autonomous UNAM site at the Casa del Lago he places a deceptively realistic car belonging to the Federal Police (Policia Federal), which the artist acquired and manipulated.

The acquisition was based on an extensive field study of the many different police formations in the country and especially of the trade in police cars, which can also be read as monuments of corruption and violence.

With a collage-series of large-format silkscreens, Faulhaber evokes the visual language of a society whose bodies are constantly subjected with explicit violence or sexualization. Faulhaber prints the relentless motifs from the front pages of Mexican tabloids on banana leaves, which decay over time.

Finally, the artist develops a logo for a flag that parodies the marketing of Mexico as a promising travel destination. For the opening of his exhibition a group of organ grinders performes festively and cheerfully. The title of the project, ***Mexicanization: The Work of Art as a Sovereign Reproduction of Punishment,*** *however, remains encoded.* (SMS)




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OBEN UND MITTE | *ABOVE AND CENTER:*
BANANA PRESS SOCIETY, 2016, CHRISTOPH FAULHABER BEI DER BILDMONTAGE FÜR DEN SIEBDRUCK AUF BANANENBLÄTTERN.
BANANA PRESS SOCIETY, *2016, CHRISTOPH FAULHABER MAKES MONTAGES FOR SCREEN PRINTING ON BANANA LEAVES.*

UNTEN | *BELOW:*
DIE BEDRUCKTEN BLÄTTER TROCKNEN UND ZERSTÖREN SICH SELBST.
THE PRINTED LEAFS GET DRY AND START DESTROYING THEMSELVES.

SEITE 105 | ***PAGE 105:***
BANANA PRESS SOCIETY, PRÄSENTATION IN DER CASA DEL LAGO, 2016.
BANANA PRESS SOCIETY, *PRESENTATION AT CASA DEL LAGO, 2016.*







SEITE 106 | ***PAGE 106:***
PATRULLA VOR DER CASA DEL LAGO, MEXIKO STADT, 2016.
PATRULLA *IN FRONT OF CASA DEL LAGO, MEXIKO CITY,* 2016.

SEITE 107 | ***PAGE 107:***
OBEN | *ABOVE:*
FOTOCOLLAGE.
PHOTO COLLAGE.

UNTEN | *BELOW:*
BEIM KAUF EINES DODGE CHARGER IN MONTERREY.
DIE NÄCHTLICHE FAHRT NACH MEXIKO STADT.
SCHROTTPLATZ IN MONTERREY.
SCHROTTPLATZ IN MEXIKO STADT.
BUYING A DODGE CHARGER IN MONTERREY.
DRIVING BACL TO MEXICO CITY AT NIGHT.
JUNKYARD IN MONTERREY.
JUNKYARD IN MEXICO CITY.




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MEXICANIZATION: THE WORK OF ART AS A SOVEREIGN REPRODUCTION OF PUNISHMENT

Víctor Palacios Armendáriz

The presence and intervention of Christoph Faulhaber in Casa del Lago took shape on different levels and through different supports. Nevertheless, the common denominator of his work within the framework of "Mexibility" (FN: project of the German Mexican Year 2016/17) was the creation of works and circumstances with strong critical content in sociopolitical and esthetic terms.

The first element that came into play was the controversial issue of security in the local context: namely, in the Zona Metropolitana del Valle de Mexico (the Metropolitan Zone of the Valley of Mexico, or ZMVM). Mobility and security constitute an inseparable binomial in contemporary societies. Everything passes through it, everything is determined by this pact–whether tacit, moral, or legal–which governs what it is possible to move, displace, or traffic. Who delimits, oversees, or regulates this relation between security and mobility in a sociopolitical context subject to violence and corruption, as in contemporary Mexico? The question is a thorny one, the answer doubtlessly complex. One complicated aspect is logically the mission and performance of those security forces organized by the State to guarantee social order and the wellbeing of citizens, such as the police and the army. Faulhaber focused from the beginning on the different types of police forces that are ubiquitous in the ZMVM: Policía Federal, Policía Bancaria e Industrial, Policía Municipal, Policía Preventiva, Protección Ecológica y Medioambiental, Policía Judicial, Policía Auxiliar, Policía Militar, Policia de Mando Único, Policía de Proximidad, and the Gendarmería Nacional, created in 2014 by the President of Mexico, Enrique Pena Nieto, among others. Unfortunately, the proliferation of these different police forces and the consequent increase of armed agents on the streets has not been in proportion to any reduction in crime and insecurity: paradoxically, quite the contrary. The more police there are on the streets, the less safe they are, while ordinary peoples' sense of oppression, preoccupation, and paranoia grows.

Within this broad and yet intricate panorama, the artist focused on the consequent proliferation of police cars and official vehicles used by the members of each of these corps. Not only do the models, colors, and emblems of the vehicles vary from one corps to another, but also their state of conservation. Some of them are new and impeccably maintained, while others are run-down, without valid license plates and with incomplete or illegible insignia. Still others are simply in a "normal" state. What is happening with all these police cars in commercial terms? For whom does the state, or the city, or the municipality in question purchase them? What is the process by which an official vehicle is declared obsolete for its specific function and retired? Who can acquire these retired vehicles and how? What do they contain and transport? From the field work and documentary research undertaken by Faulhaber during his visits to Mexico, there emerged irrefutable evidence of corruption in the processes of purchasing, retiring, and reselling these vehicles. This was clear not only from published news reports in several newspapers about the enormous 'corralones', or impoundment lots, in 'Estado de Mexico', where hundreds of police vehicles were parked for months without being used, but also from what happened when the artist and the cultural institutions involved in the project sought to acquire one of these hundreds of vehicles which, once they are retired as functioning squad cars, are sold by the authorities to private individuals. Predictably, not just anyone can acquire one of these vehicles. The market is controlled by large and powerful distributors who hold an exclusive monopoly over this million-dollar business. The more vehicles are purchased by the authorities and the more are retired still in good condition, the fatter the profits for all involved, intermediaries included.

In spite of this adverse panorama, Faulhaber persisted in his efforts to purchase a former police car. His initial intention, his basic wish, was to restore it, once acquired, to its former appearance as an official vehicle and to drive it around on the streets of Mexico City. Although this turned out to be impossible, precisely on grounds of safety and legality, it was possible to acquire a vehicle that had served as a police car from a small distributor in Monterrey, Nuevo León. The artist himself traveled to Monterrey and returned to Mexico City driving the vehicle in question: a Dodge Charger. This model, manufactured by the German consortium DaimlerChrysler Motors, was introduced into the Mexican police corps at the beginning of former president Felipe Calderón Hinojosa's six-year administration and can therefore be taken as something of a symbol of the catastrophic "drug war" undertaken by Calderón. Upon arrival at Casa del Lago, the Charger was reconverted into a police car of the Policía Federal with all the elements characteristic of such a vehicle, and it was parked in the central roundabout of the gardens, to one side of the entrance to the historic building. The gesture involved, among many other elements, a sort of breach of the autonomy of the UNAM, since no police corporation or corps is permitted to enter the premises of the university, which has its own security force, called Auxilio UNAM.

Alongside this work, the artist conceived and produced three more. He executed a set of silkscreen prints on banana leaves, a flag (which was hoisted on the Casa del Lago flagpole), and a discreet video. The large- and medium-format silkscreen prints consisted of collages made up of a selection of clippings from several national newspapers about politics and violence. The natural quality of the support used and the fact that it was not treated with any kind of substance that might prevent its decomposition or transformation due to the passage of time and the environment of the exhibition hall lent these works a processual meaning, highlighted by the marked contrast between the actual nature of the banana leaves and the grotesque sociopolitical content of the images and texts reproduced on them. The pieces underwent a clear transformation in the course of the exhibition.

Meanwhile, the video place in the lobby of Casa del Lago showed the rhythmical waving of the enormous Mexican flag located in the Zócalo of Mexico City. As for the flag in Casa del Lago, the artist proposed a radical intervention into the logotype of the Ministry of Tourism. Instead of the word MÉXICO, with its ornate and colorful folkloric typography, the flag bore the word MIERDA ('shit'). The typography remained the same: all that changed was the word, printed on a brown background that recalled or alluded to the color of the uniforms of certain corps of the armed forces.

In conclusion, the work performed by Christoph Faulhaber built up a solid critical discourse about Mexico's present circumstances while at the same time seeking plastic and esthetic experimentation through the confrontation of languages, techniques, and materials: the police car as a sculpture or a monument to corruption and crime, the press and its discourse about everyday "reality" as a natural organism in a state of decomposition, and the foremost symbol of national identity (the Mexican flag) transformed into a categorical and definitive sentence: MIERDA (SHIT). (CS)

Text contribution for the exhibition: Christoph Faulhaber, ***Intervention,*** *Casa del Lago, Mexico 2016.*