



MAGIC BLOCK – Contemporary Art from Chile

with

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Produced by Kunstthall 3.14

17.01.-02.03.14

Relations between the visible and the invisible operate as an underlying question and theme within artistic production. As Merleau-Ponty suggests, often the drive of art is to make visible what is often unseen, overlooked or under-appreciated. Such fundamental views though find additional expression in strategies of secrecy, camouflage, dematerialization and covert occupation, reminding of the tensions inherent to visibility. At times when the freedoms of expression central to artistic work come into conflict with prevailing ideologies, invisibility may become a question of survival. By the same token, in the case of Magic Block, we exhibit artists whose aim has been to stress erasures, suppressions or the impossibility of representation, through a play of phantasmic appearance.

Magic Block seeks to explore these relations, specifically highlighting artists working in Chile over the last 35 years. *The example of Chile offers a compelling view onto the power plays of visibility and disappearance. The dictatorship of Pinochet, from 1973 to 1989, brought forward a difficult structure under which many artists struggled. And even now, in recalling its current traces. In doing so, questions of what was permissible or not lent to experimental approaches, and often the issue of what can be shown, and how or what can be seen, provided a challenging backdrop to the arts. This led to performative, ephemeral and conceptual approaches, inspiring artists to work directly in public space, while also turning inward to the experiences of private life, to gauge the politics of silence and silencing.

Examining these methods and histories, the exhibition focuses on aspects of magic, the phantasmic and the imaginary, drawing these out through works that often search for ways around the weight of history and its forgetting. Currently, these issues have led to an incessant revisit by artists onto historical matters, often relating these to individual memories, or those still not fully recalled or recovered. Explored through a constellation of issues that span from the unperceived and the missing, the life of the secret and the hidden, or towards their fantasy presence, and the impossibility to fully grasp or tell, currents in contemporary Chilean art may be appreciated as pointing toward new forms of poetic and political agency.

impressions continually mark themselves onto consciousness, writing and over-writing memories, a permanent trace of an that has come before remains. If we imagine one hand writing upon the surface of the Mystic Writing Pad while another periodically raises its covering sheet from the wax slab, we shall have a concrete representation of the way in which I tried to picture the functioning of the perceptual apparatus of our mind."

Touring

BLOCK MÁGICO

Museo de Solidaridad Salvador Allende, Chile

10.10.2014 - 25.01.2015

[\[http://mssa.cl/exposicion/block-magico\]](http://mssa.cl/exposicion/block-magico)

18.01.14

The Invisible Seminar: Magic

13:30 - 17:00

with Alena Alexandrova (Amsterdam), Soledad García Saavedra (Santiago de Chile), Brandon LaBelle (Bergen), Michelle-Marie Letelier (Berlin)

The seminar is in collaboration with Bergen Academy of Art and Design.

The seminar seeks to investigate the operations of visibility by highlighting the unseen, the camouflaged, the immaterial and the erased as particular aesthetic strategies. If the visual arts historically have relied upon the seeing subject as its partner, functioning to give representation to the imagination or world events, what forms of critique, protest and poetics have been developed by occupying the space of the invisible? How has media culture, and what Camiel van Winkel terms the "regime of visibility", contributed to the contemporary imperative to visualize and expose? Can notions of the invisible be used to deepen perspectives on the power dynamics of the gaze and image production? And importantly, how might invisibility contribute to rethinking modes of collectivity and political agency?

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06.02.14

Lecture:

"By Reason or By Force" by Valentina Montero

In Chile, in recent years there have been renewed forms of demonstration and protest. Through the occupation of public space (physical and virtual), social movements have used creative and poetic practices for disturbing public order, questioning the neoliberal model implemented during the dictatorship, deepened by recent governments and the democratic crisis. One of the important features of these manifestations is the appropriation of resources, strategies and aesthetic borrowed from advertising, film and pop culture in general, along with the use of technology and media.

The lecture will show some of the most representative examples of these actions, trying to understand them within its political context and its symbolic dimension, tracing their connections to conceptual practices carried out since the 70's and 80's in Chile and Latin America.

Lecture text:

[Disobedient Poetics From kisses to megalomaniacs strategies of demonstrations on streets >>>](#)

[\[khib.azurewebsites.net/norsk/aktuelt/2014/02/3,14-by-reason-or-by-force-with-valentina-montero\]](http://khib.azurewebsites.net/norsk/aktuelt/2014/02/3,14-by-reason-or-by-force-with-valentina-montero)

[\[www.bookdepository.com/By-Reason-or-by-Force-Valentina-Montero/9780988937505\]](http://www.bookdepository.com/By-Reason-or-by-Force-Valentina-Montero/9780988937505)



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