



José Carlos Martinat. *Exercise 2*, 2010. Megaphone, motor, controller, sensor, audio plays, artistic manifests extracted from the web. Variable dimensions.

— inside a vortex — and nothing remains static. A permanent tremor has been bestowed upon the rendered space; the drawing is a gushing of streaming strokes. The use of butterfly wings can be interpreted as a reference to the transient nature of beauty and the mystery of metamorphosis.

Cristina Martínez is not particularly interested in the mythic origins of the butterfly. However, it is impossible not to see here the symbolic correspondences between the soul (Ancient Greece), salvation (the Christian world), and — in more general terms — the world of dreams and chimeras. But to Martínez, this solely represents a graphic element that she employs as a sort of formal vocabulary that splashes the white paper surface with fragments of brownish-grey butterfly wings. On the center of the piece, we find an *in situ* installation that consists of ink drawings, which is inspired by and bears the same title as the renowned calligram poem by Stéphane Mallarmé's renowned calligram poem, "Un Coup de Dés Jamais n'Abolira le Hazard (A Throw of the Dice Will Never Abolish Chance)." Here, Martínez transforms the spatial disposition of the text into abstract images, but maintains the original's title, as the dark areas (blacks) and light areas (white dots) echo and replace the phrases and their words. Cristina Martínez respects the words of the poem and

actually installs it in front of her visual interpretation of this poem. By ratifying both the conceptual — title/chance — and formal — the constellations — the artist creates a new work, a visual duplicate of Mallarmé's poem. We find ourselves before an esthetic, tactile, and audible evocation of the poem.

The second exhibition room contains an installation especially designed for the space entitled *Trait de Lumière (Stroke of Light)*, 2010, 19.70 feet by 8.20 feet). Occupying the wall at the back of the room with an imposing and radiant aura, it is the successor of another installation presented in 2006 entitled *Trait d'Ombre (Stroke of Shadow)*. The blank space at the center of the composition — like a path of light — twinkles as it contrasts with the hundreds of paper disks — each 2 to 4 inches in diameter, drawn with Indian ink, and impregnated with touches of marbled ochre — that are scattered over one or the other side of the virgin surface. Here, Martínez stresses the absence of symbology, as she describes the installation as essentially graphic. On the lateral walls, there are other works associated with nature, such as *Forêt (Forest)*, 1982), *Buisson-Sphère (Thicket-Sphere)*, 1984), *Arbre (Tree)*, and *Déplacement (Movement)*, 1983), among others. In these, the elements merge to create moving and trembling universes of soft colors dominated by internal vibrations and resonant modulations.

Present for some years now, Martínez's affirmation of a coherent artistic discourse — both conceptually and formally — enables a search and a sensibility through which invented lines are linked with each other, one after the other, one over the other, at the service of the gesture of the moment, and to form a ball and web that are musical and formal. Cristina Martínez loves nature and is able to capture it in its most abstract dimension, with what only the most intimate of gazes can elicit. It is as if we observe nature through a magnifying glass straight through to its heart. Martínez subtly weaves images that are apparently fragile and that allude to an art that is ephemeral.

Christine Frérot

LIMA / PERU

José Carlos Martinat

Revolver Gallery

A self-taught vanguardist, Peruvian artist José Carlos Martinat (1974) presented the

exhibition entitled *Ejercicios de Abstracción y Substracción para Distracción (Exercises of Abstraction and Subtraction for Distraction)*. Speaking about the name of the exhibition, Martinat had this to say: "I decided to create a series of somewhat basic addition and subtraction exercises, in order to give new meaning to certain things or actions."¹

Concurrently with this exhibition, Martinat also presented an installation at the Museo de Arte in Lima to mark the reopening of the museum. With 10,000 visitors during the first week after the opening, the exhibit broke the museum's attendance record.

In the exhibition at the Galería Revolver, Martinat included four kinds of works that are markedly different from each other: an installation; a cement sculpture with broken glass; a megaphone suspended from a pendulum, and graffiti images taken from Lima's street walls. This show is by no means homogeneous, as the essence of Martinat's work is precisely to surprise and challenge viewers. What is art? Who is the artist? Is the artist the person who envisions the work, or the person who executes it? There is no doubt that the answer is the person who — like Martinat — envisions the work.

The installation entitled *Ejercicio 1 (Mentir-Verdad)* (Exercise 1 [Lie-Truth]) is one of the most interesting pieces I have seen. It reflects real life; its meaning resides in and is built into the installation. Viewers cannot access the exhibition room because the installation occupies the entire space; thus, it can only be viewed from the door. The room is divided into two levels, with a wooden floor raised halfway from the floor to the ceiling that covers the entire room and becomes the division between these two sections. On this second level and at the center of this floor, the upper part of the word *Mentir* (Lie) protrudes, as if the rest of the word could be hidden underneath it. But the spectator's vantage point reveals that, actually, the bottom half of the word *Verdad* (Truth) is visible from underneath the division. While the second level with *Mentir* has been completely painted white and appears to be a finished piece, the lower level containing *Verdad* seems to be still under construction, with parts of the floor missing and bare walls exposing structural layers, such as the support beams. This mid-floor is supported by unpainted wooden beams. Thus, what does the finished nature of the section with the word *Lie* versus the unfinished nature of the section with the word *Truth* mean? Is this a

reflection of the society we live in? Of course, but also, it reflects our personal lives, for each thing that we say is part of these two realities. Concerning this installation, Martinat has said that "it is a metaphor that is repeated around the world: the lie as something perfectly pre-constructed, and the truth as not quite finished, but instead, in a constant process of development. In the end, each is fashioned from the other."²

The concrete piece entitled *Ejercicio 2* is a walk-like structure with hollow sections where there were bricks at some point that were removed after the work was finished. There are pieces of broken glass at the top of the structure, very much like those used as a safety measure on the walls of many houses in Lima. This work is not visually pleasing, but it is precisely this — its simplicity, materials, and geometry — that makes it appealing. Each one of Martinat's works is created with a very specific idea, and according to the artist, "this piece is like an x-ray of Lima, like the skeleton of a city that, after been left without the bricks from its walls, only consists of concrete and a precarious security system often used in the Peruvian Capital."³

The piece entitled *Ejercicio 4* consists of a megaphone attached to a pendulum that moves mechanically and repetitively as it hangs from a window frame. It plays audio taken from artistic manifestos found on the Internet, but these are rendered inaudible because the pendulum continually oscillates toward the outside of the window. It is as if the manifestos only serve as decorations. The visual elements in this piece are of little importance. Here, the concept of the work is what is important. The pendulum is mechanical, the megaphone electrical, and the two elements are not really aesthetically pleasing. But the importance of the work resides precisely in that it lacks visually appealing attributes. It is a very personal work. Just as Martinat does not rely on any parameters to create his work, the audios of the artistic manifestos serve no apparent purpose, and the artist recounts this here. The piece was executed by two assistants and supervised by Martinat.

Graffiti is a serious problem in Lima. It is everywhere, and Martinat appropriated some of these wall drawings through the use of a resin, and made them his own. While the quality of the original graffiti resided in their aesthetic beauty and ephemeral nature, Martinat immortalized them by appropriating

them for his own work. The images are not framed; there is only the image with resin hanging on the wall. The images range from caricatures, skulls, and women's faces to those of aliens and clowns. Martinat also borrowed graffiti words from political ads placed on street walls and employed these to form the word *Mentira*; he then placed this on a wall facing the beach and left it there. With these actions, Martinat's work is aggressive: he has vandalized works by vandals and has appropriated images by unknown artists without any artistic merits and made these his own. It is a very unique artistic proposal that resorts to innovative materials and ideas that, in turn, become the source of such originality.

Martinat works in a very peculiar and vanguardist manner. He approaches his pieces thoughtfully, develops them using a 3D-rendering computer program, and then — guided by measurements and specifications — he delegates the completion of the work to others who work under his supervision. Although these appear inconceivable, this is a reality of our times. The best part of Martinat's work is the work per se and its materials, not their esthetic appeal. Nevertheless, his works end up being so interesting that even their aesthetic elements can be appreciated, as also occurred with works by Duchamp.

NOTES

1. Interview with the artist, June, 2010.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*

Augusto Chimpen

Ricardo Yui. Untitled, 2010. Inkjet print on Hahnemühle paper, from monochrome film. 41 x 51 in. (104 x 130 cm.).



Ricardo Yui

Luis Miro Quesada Garland Hall

In 2008, young artist Ricardo Yui (1983) graduated in photography from the Centro de la Imagen — an institute of higher learning equivalent to a university of photography. This is Yui's second solo exhibition. It is entitled *Espacios Intermedios: Los Talleres SNCF 2008 (Intermediate Spaces: The 2008 SNCF Workshops)* — SNCF being the French acronym for the French National Railways. To create this series, Yui spent four months completing an artistic residence at the École Nationale Supérieure de la Photographie (ENSP) in Arles. He sought artistic beauty in the remains of the forsaken buildings and in the ruins of the SNCF dating back 160 years. The series is entitled *Espacios Intermedios* because Yui emphasizes the architecture of the place, a space with interior and exterior sections that are in transition because of the intermediate time in which they are found, a lapse of time that will only lead to even more deterioration.

Yui searches for and relies on natural light to reinterpret the ruined buildings with his photographs. While it is true that beauty can be found everywhere, it is through an artist's gaze that we are able to see this. Yui succeeds with this series because there are photographs for every taste, printed in large, medium, and small formats. The majority of the photographs are in black and white, although a few of them are also in color. While all of these photographs reveal the neglect and erosion of the buildings, there is also beauty to be found in them in the treatment of the natural light.

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