



On view until August 3rd 2013
Durango 204 Colonia Roma
www.houseofgaga.com

WAR PICKLES

Bill Hayden
Mathieu Malouf
Sam Pulitzer
Antek Walczak

Gaga Arte Contemporáneo is pleased to present "War Pickles," a collaborative group exhibition involving the respective efforts of Bill Hayden, Mathieu Malouf, Sam Pulitzer and Antek Walczak. Integrated into the conventional group exhibition format and its value-generative tracings—namely social networks tied to particular localities of epoch and place, the creative affinity of 4 men from New York City—are two additional contextual uses. One is evident and very much on display, the other latent like an ASCII graphic inauspiciously inscribed onto a gallery website's source code to compliment the individually authored works on display.

The clear use, evidenced by the exhibition title, is a pickle shop. On offer are a variety of pickled goods priced to compete with locally-sourced, artisan-quality food retailers catering to neo-bourgeois tastes. This is not to avoid the wealth of potential meaning these goods hold when deprived of use and offered instead as objects of aesthetic reflection (the notion of preservation through a process of fermentation is certainly fecund with analogies that can criss cross art and ecology like a child curator learning to tie its shoes). Much like the brine poured into each of these jars, such connotative whimsy only deepens the flavor of what is on sale. However it is the co-mingling of the aesthetic object with a pickle's subsistent character (a subsistence that when pushed to an extreme becomes a survivance), its nutritious crunch, its glut of enzymes, its quaint organicity and so on that marks a hermeneutic horizon for this collaborative project, a deliberate conflation of the artistic and the artisanal within the stanchions of the contemporary. Until artistic worth fails to subsist the lives of those willful souls produced by the present constellation of the global, the necessity of these pickles' existence will remain a pleasant aesthetic problem. But if and when the policeable organization of creative wealth⁽ⁱ⁾ crumbles alongside the tenuous world on which it is brokered, these pickles will rise like cryogenic beings from their jars as a reminder to one's stomach the all too real object of its desire—hunger and the life that springs from its pangs.

The second, latent use is Party fundraising, an attempt to extract resources from the interest generated by the global siting of these careers to the tune of the contemporary (like chips beside a roulette wheel) toward resilient social organizing that is simply not possible within the operative discourses that bring art to the market while sending artists home to, say, the collected works of Thomas Bernhard.

Thank you,

Jenny Borland, Ivan Etulain and artisan et boulangers, Tripulación Gaga, Alex Heir, Connor Owens, Ned Vena, Stephanie Wakefield.

(i) On the DIY punk culture aspects of the show. It's been a long-given assumption that, as separated fragmented beings reduced to harsh economic roles in a private sphere enriched with liberal freedoms, we experience in a secondhand, corrupted way any of the inherited forms of socio-existential rebellion from the last part of the Occident's 20th century, including among others, DIY hardcore punk, vegan home economics and nutrition, skateboarding, bohemian low rent drug use and non-productive attitudes. That all these and so much more are merely positions of self-valuation in a hyper-competitive social field where everything is put to work, reducing former currents of resistance to today's terms of lifestyle choice, and thus supposedly testifying to capitalism's iron grip over what is and what is not political, all the while extending its nay onto the reality of all life itself.

All this transpires under a leftist cultural mindset deeply steeped in classical politics, a mindset that needs to be liquidated along with its politics precisely because it adheres to the rules of an unattainable specialist governance worthy of your father, or your professor. When someone else, not your father, nor your art professor, says that "henceforth, what is economical is political and vice versa," they are hinting at the buried eggs in the neoliberal existential matrix, at a kind of survivance propounded by Aby Warburg (Nachleben) to explain the occurrence of dead motifs re-emerging and in fact coming to define the coming eras with the intact preservation of their latent accumulating and organizing forces.

To continue raping the dead horse of Warburg studies (only relevant to a French art historical audience, as he is not studied in English and who knows what the fuck post-Nazi modern Germans study these days, Chantal Mouffe? Joseph Vogl?), the brutal nihilist puckish venomous aesthetic of "War Pickles" pokes its anachronistic head up out from the butt of the corpse, like the hidden horsemeat % in a hamburger. Rather than appealing to a low threshold Vice magazine polarity of coolness, retro-engineering the Guyton/Walker boom years artifact to arrive at some morbid subcultural referent like Assück: we can begin to understand it through the workings of Warburg's survivance in his conception of "pathos-in-formula" (Pathosformel), where thought-out aesthetic deliberations of the image can modulate these intensities in an instructive and even progenitive way (as opposed to the usual reactionary critical stance that speaks of art squashing and neutralizing intensities, turning them into frozen hedge fund product for Frieze art fair speculation, all across networks, natch). Take for example, the exhibition's largest collaborative work, the long ceramic tile pickle preparation counter-bar-piece-cum-video sculpture of "Principio del Fin" which expresses the weaponizing of the private individual atomic dweller of a city like New York, with its Brooklyn. Through a long march of jump-cut pickles on screen and a howled polemic that trudges label by label, jar by jar, toward an affirmative re-education of this pickled transbohemian into an intestinating sensitivity worthy to face the beyond identity, beyond difference of a messianic neoliberalism spectral to the organic skirmish that is digestion.

Yesterday, just another Bedford avenue skinny hipster bitch wearing Maker's Mark on his breath, dimly aware of a Neverending war on Terror that produces boring "best pictures" at each years Oscars. Today—because of the real impact of catastrophic climate change and the increased tolerance to rampage on the streets thanks to the Arab Revolts and their Occidental repercussions (and after a successful gender reassignment) — she is a kind of more sober prepper-survivalist nerd, eager to eat food out of cans, down to make love barefoot and bruised after a cold bath by candlelight, tomorrow rappelling down the side of the building to try and rescue a baby from a submerged SUV, the next day trying to figure out how to rectify the carb shortage in this months food supply for her neighborhood block (time to plan a raid on Chelsea!), while scheduling time in her iCal to pitch-in on the unified public blockade of the city's airports over the Thanksgiving holiday.