NOMAD WORLD

Stamp Gallery, University of Maryland, College Park

January 26-March 12, 2015

Reception: February 5, from 4-8pm

<http://beatrizcortez.com/nomad-world/>

***Nomad World*** evokes the space of an arcade, where childhood play encounters global capitalism and technology. The sculptures and installations in the show invite us to move back and forth from our childhood to the present, as they reveal a dislocated and fragmentary memory that mirrors the artist’s existence shared between San Salvador and Los Angeles. An embodied simultaneity is revealed and it is further complicated, particularly as the exhibition overflows the space of the gallery, and enters a virtual, transnational dimension.

The exhibition includes five sculptures/installations:

**The Pinball Machine (The Beast):**

<http://beatrizcortez.com/the-beast/>

Brought back to life through the interaction of original mechanical constructions and more contemporary versions of technology, such as arduinos, this pinball machine is a metaphor of the simultaneity of a life lived in two or more realities and two or more versions of modernity.

The piece also presents the superimposition of two narratives. The colonial content of the original narrative of the playfield, which was once titled “The Black Pyramid,” and the new narrative on the experience of immigration that has been directly drawn on the playfield by the artist.

On a monitor, a different perspective of the playfield allows the viewer to imagine a dislocated version of the events that unfold in the space.

**The Fortune Teller Machine:**

<http://beatrizcortez.com/the-fortune-teller-machine-2/>

This interactive sculpture prints fortune messages in English and in Spanish. The future that this machine predicts relates to the experience of immigration. The sculpture is based on the idea that words have power and that one can will the future into being. It is also based on the proposals by Italian philosopher Rosi Braidotti, who speaks of the possibilities contained in the future perfect tense. These possibilities allow us to imagine a different future, one where our imaginary is linked to a collective subjectivity. As a result, she speaks of a collective and nomadic subject (in the figurative, Deleuzian sense, a subject that deconstructs its privileges, that abandoned already territorialized spaces, that moves through smooth spaces, and that is always in the process of becoming). This plural and nomadic subject can dream collectively both about moving towards marginalized subjectivities, and about changing the world together. Braidotti explains that we will never be able to be completely nomadic, but if we really want to, we will have tried.

In order to create the list of collective imagined futures, the artist formed a group of friends, contacts, and collaborators who are immigrants themselves or who have had the experience of crossing borders in different directions. They were asked to help her dream together the things that collectively they will have done together in order to have a different future, taking into consideration that these collective desires implicate us all, and that one has to be careful what one wishes for…

The list of collective desires generated by this effort was later programmed in *The Fortune Teller* so that when one presses the button, a small paper slip is printed by the machine, and one of the collective desires appears in the paper in a format that reads:

When the future comes:

Cuando llegue el futuro:

*We will have found the disappeared*

*Habremos encontrado a los desaparecidos*

**Beatriz Cortez**

The Fortune Teller

La máquina de la fortuna

[http://www.beatrizcortez.com](http://www.beatrizcortez.com/)

There are several messages programmed into the machine and the spectator receives one in aleatory fashion. The machine is made with a mechanical Australian parakeet that chirps and moves when someone approaches its movement detector. This bird evokes the birds that predict the future in town’s fairs. It is made also with a button switch, a thermal printer, a wooden box, and *arduino* technology.

**The Jukebox:**

<http://beatrizcortez.com/the-jukebox/>

This sound installation evokes the sounds of different landscapes in San Salvador and Los Angeles. Simply labeled with words like “Rain,” “Shop,” “Circus,” “Wind,” “Gallery,” “Popsicles,” “Parrots,” “Studio,” “Fire,” “Bread,” “Coffee shop,” or “Burial,” the piece invites the viewer to evoke those spaces.

**The Time Machine:**

<http://beatrizcortez.com/the-time-machine-2/>

A lightbox with rudimentary technology makes the landscapes of two different cities, San Salvador and Los Angeles, with the same light, evoking the artist’s experience of a shared life in those two urban spaces.

**The Photo Booth:**

<http://beatrizcortez.com/the-photo-booth/>

This installation allows the viewer to take a *selfie*strip in front of the bus terminal in some place in Central America. This in-between space evokes movement, travel, displacement, migration. In this way, the exhibition overflows the space of the gallery, and enters a virtual, transnational dimension.

**Beatriz Cortez** is a writer and an artist. She was born in El Salvador and has lived in the United States since 1989. Her work explores simultaneity, the existence in different temporalities and different versions of modernity, particularly in relation to memory and loss in the aftermath of war and the experience of immigration. She has exhibited her work in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Washington, D.C., El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Guatemala. She is a candidate for the Masters of Fine Arts at the California Institute of the Arts. She holds a doctorate in Latin American literature from Arizona State University, and a Masters in Visual Art from California State University, Northridge. She teaches in the Central American Studies Program at California State University, Northridge.

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