

# FRACTURAL ENCOUNTERS

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As part of the ongoing work coming out of UC San Diego's Discursive and Curatorial Productions (DCP) initiative, artists Cayetano Ferrer and Adela Goldbard are exhibited together in a larger curatorial project by Melinda Guillen. The show combines Goldbard's most recent project, *Architectural Prototype for an Upcoming Disaster* (2015) with a first time, re-presentation of Ferrer's multi-modal installation, *Casino Model 3*, from 2010. The grouping brings two faces to the momentary festival of civic warfare: one on the architectural level, and the other, a brief glimpse of the skeletal desires operating beneath such social milieus.

Goldbard's video works, exhibited alongside her *Architectural Prototype...* make use of filmic tableaux in the exploration of form and narrative. In *Lobo*, (2013) viewers see an iconic vehicle rendered in painted cardboard, as it wheels across a field framing the small lights of a distant urban hillside. Somewhere outside Mexico City, the artificial lighting of the sequence culminates in a cloud of real light and smoke, as the effigy Ford Lobo truck disappears in a volumetric instant. Similarly, in *ATM* (2014) we see a recreated cajero and await nervously the deadpan delivery of its detonation. Given the unconventional, linear layout of the gallery, these works cycle endlessly against one another, the mapped video-facade of Ferrer's *Casino Model 3* standing out monumentally.

It's hard to resist the algorithmic treatment of the video, especially when placed in such proximity to the analog motion of fuses, brick, and carton. The subtle line between footage and manipulated image in Ferrer's macro-historical study jitters as it illuminates the gallery space along with its other contents. While Guillen's pairing of the deconstructive reconstructions does well to bring them together, the exhibition still gives ample space to the subtlety of their studies. For Ferrer, lived city-space meets its sensational end, recursively displayed in LED; Vegas' architecture is lyrically assembled in his installation as the viewer moves from exterior to interior, spectator to subject. Guillen smartly joins Goldbard's brick model of a housing unit, transplanted from across the nearby border. *Architectural Prototype for an Upcoming Disaster* poses the more difficult work to apprehend as it implies both fixity and discontinuation, all while remaining resolute and soft in its presence. Lighted from within, the brick and mortar model is both as real as it is virtual, and invites us inward to its impossible time. It remains unclear from the exhibition why the work will be demolished, but we can possibly infer the terminal nature given the artist's homeland in Mexico City. Across Tijuana, however, thousands of public housing units stand empty, due to poor materials, default, and further deteriorating labor conditions in many of its factories. Across the exhibition as a whole we see the logic of presumed collapse, as tragic as it is temporary

Here we may turn to the metaphysical logic of absence as promoted in professor of art history Mariana Botey's newly published critical work, *Zones of Disturbance: Specters of Indigenous Mexico in Modernity* (2015). While the text as a whole deals more closely with representations of indigenous people throughout disparate moments in modern art history, we may look to it broadly as an important turn in

phenomenological studies of alterity. Of course, this is through a “counter-phenomenology,” one that focuses on the gap inherent in the metaphysics of presence. As I have tried to establish elsewhere, locating alterity implies a fractural condition of the encounter. We can see it here in Ferrer’s split study of the casino monument in persistent implosion as we pass from the exterior to interior conditions of the installation, neither of which fully meets the other. Across Goldbard’s video works, as well, the density of the materials is subjected to an eventual erasure. These motions may follow in Botey’s proposal for a suspension in the truth-image-model of the indigenous or subaltern. This rupture in the potential for representation establishes a critical position, subsequently, as we advance along the separation of class conflict. The brutality waged against Mexico’s indigenous populations has only escalated under Mexican President Nieto’s recent “Reforma Hacendaria,” which further dislocates indigenous territories from their ancestral inhabitants through various land use mechanisms. It is not accidentally that Ayotzinapa and the current farm workers’ strike in Baja California have become intertwined with the on-going Zapatista movement chronicled in *Zones of Disturbance*. As the works in *No Longer Extant* couple varying locations of the urban and its material formation, we can witness the enduring moment of its dislocation. In this instant, all culture is void of organic root as time becomes suspended. It is then that the bare machinic condition of conflict remains visible.