LUIS MOLINA-PANTIN

Modus Operandi

Opening Reception: Thursday June 20, 6-9 pm

Exhibition runs through July 27, 2013

Gallery Hours: Tuesday to Saturday 11-6 pm

Henrique Faria Fine Art is pleased to present *Modus Operandi*, Luis Molina-Pantin’s second exhibition with Henrique Faria and his fourth exhibition in New York City. Opening June 20, the show will feature a selection of photographs and installations spanning the artist’s twenty-year career. Molina-Pantin’s itinerancy throughout the United States, Canada, Germany and Venezuela has both influenced and developed his sharp eye and his commitment to exposing the failures of social, economic and cultural institutions. By appropriating specific and found objects and inserting them into his artistic milieu, Molina-Pantin paradoxically collects that which he critiques. In so doing, he mines beneath the surface of commercial items and reveals sinister, but insightful glimpses into the societies to which they belong.

Luis Molina-Pantin describes his artistic methodology–the search for banal objects that have become artifacts of different cultural and historical landscapes–as “urban archeology”. The series *28 Piggy Banks from Venezuelan Intervened or Bankrupted Banks* (2011), spans an entire wall, highlighting the bright colors and fun shapes of these engaging, personal piggy banks. The biting contradiction becomes apparent as the viewer realizes that these piggy banks are empty and further reconciles their presence with the reality of Venezuela’s inflation rate being the highest in Latin America.. Moreover, Molina-Pantin installs other ‘portraits’ of obsolete cultural artifacts, including *Untitled (15 Brick Mobile Phones)* (2011). He scoured the Internet–just as an Egyptologist would comb through materials at a dig site–looking for now ‘ancient’ cell phones. Lining the pedestal like old tombstones, these brick phones indicate the extent to which technology impacts objects, and, ultimately, our use of them.

In the same way that the artist works as an urban archeologist, he also strives to uncover truths hidden behind beautifully polished social and cultural veneers. In the *Chelsea Galleries* series (2001-2006), Molina-Pantin continues in the tradition of Venezuelan Op-Art artists by emphasizing the strict linear arrangement and repetition of the bookshelves and filing cabinets. Using a hidden camera, Molina-Pantin captures the traditionally unseen infrastructure of the gallery: its office and managerial employees. The vitality, energy and mystery found in the art on display elsewhere in the gallery are subverted through the artist’s focus on the mundane and administrative-the inner landscape of a gallery. The exposure of artifice is also found in the series *Inmobilia* (1997), where the pristine and generic environments par excellence of a Venezuelan telenovela cannot escape the encroaching set lighting and warehouse location that threaten to reveal the contrivance and generalization of Venezuelan domestic interiors to the general public.

It is in the constantly shifting balance between appearance and deeper meaning, between exaggeration and hyper-reality that we find the work of Luis Molina-Pantin. As Gabriela Rangel concludes, “Molina-Pantin’s images tackle the dark side of Latin America that coexists within touristy heavens through metonymic dérives.”

**Luis Molina-Pantin**, Venezuelan born in Geneva in 1969, lives and works in Caracas. He received his BFA at Concordia University in Montréal in 1994 and his MFA in New Genres at the San Francisco Art Institute in 1997.

Selected Solo Exhibitions include Valores Humanos, Faría-Fábregas Galería, Caracas (2012); Nuevas Adquisiciones, Periférico Caracas | Arte Contemporáneo, Caracas (2009), Estudio informal de la arquitectura híbrida Vol. 1, La narco-arquitectura y sus contribuciones a la comunidad, Cali-Bogotá, Colombia, Valenzuela Klenner Galería, Bogotá (2011); in Federico Luger, Milano and Galería Marta Cervera, Madrid (2008) and in Sala Mendoza, Caracas (2007) and Confort 1996-2000, Museo Alejandro Otero, Caracas (2000).

His work has also been featured in numerous group exhibitions, such as: A Different Kind of Order: The ICP Triennial, International Center of Photography, NY (2013); Del Buen Salvaje al Conceptual Revolucionario, Travesía Cuatro, Madrid (2013); Tres Perspectivas: Contemporary Art from Latin America, Carnegie Hall, NY(2012); The Politics Of Place: Latin American Photography, Past and Present, Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, AZ (2012); 6ta. VentoSul, Bienal de Curitiba, Brazil (2011); Islands+Ghettos, NGBK and Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien, Berlin (2009); 7th Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju (2008); Urgente! 41 Salón Nacional de Artistas, Museo de Arte Moderno La Tertulia, Cali (2008); Mapas Abiertos, Fotografía Latinoamericana 1991-2002, Palais de Beaux Arts, Brussels, Belgium (2008); Positions in Context: 2007 CIFO Grants program exhibition, CIFO, Miami (2007); Jump Cuts: Arte Venezolano Contemporáneo, Colección Mercantil, Americas Society, NY(2005) XXV Bienal Internacional de Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil (2002); Buried Mirrors, Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College, NY(2001), and the VII Bienal Internacional de La Habana, Havana, Cuba (2000).

His work has been acquired by the following institutions: The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, Seville; Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection, New York and Caracas; The Museum of Latin American Art, (MOLAA) Long Beach; Diane and Bruce Halle Collection, Scottsdale, AZ; Galería de Arte Nacional and Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas.

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