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Cultured

Artist Pedro Reyes
And The Sublimation of Violence

AdDiS GOLDman
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Pedro Reyes’ Disarm Music Box
(Glock/Mozart), Disarm Music Box
(Beretta/Vivaldi), Disarm Music Box
(Karabiner/Matter), 2020,
Installation View Museum Tinguely,
(L.t.r.) Courtesy of the Artist © 2020
Museum Tinguely, Basel; Photo: Daniel
SPEHR, Related to the Artworks
For his exhibition “Pedro Reyes. Return to Sender” at Museum Tinguely in Basel, Switzerland, Mexican artist, educator, and activist Pedro Reyes brings to bear his singular approach to creating functional sculptures by repurposing the fragmented remains of weapons of war—in this case, guns. In this repurposing, instruments of death are transformed into instruments of peace and reconciliation. Working within the context of the ongoing Mexican drug war, Reyes reflects on the vast accumulation of weaponry that has coincided with drug-related violence. And, he does so from an explicitly Marxist-humanist position grounded in an awareness of how the social is bound up in the material. As a 2016 visiting lecturer at MIT’s Art, Culture and Technology program, Reyes and his partner, fashion designer and social entrepreneur Carla Fernández, co-taught the course “The Reverse Engineering of Warfare: Challenging Techno-optimism and Reimagining the Defense Sector (an Opera for the End of Times).” As such, Reyes’s work is often both pedagogical and theoretically rigorous, and draws on his personal perception of drug-related conflict as a Mexico City native.

In the past, Reyes has staged elaborate and thoughtful social interventions, variously involving aspects of theater and often in concert with educational and governmental organizations. For *Palas por Pistolas* (2008)—a program supported by the Art in Embassies program of the U.S. State Department—he gathered 1,527 weapons, 40% of which were of a high-powered military grade. As his website reports: “These weapons were taken to a military zone [where] they were crushed by a steamroller in a public act.” After being crushed, the weapons were melted and turned into 1,527 shovels. Since then, the shovels have been used to plant trees at various forums in successive acts of public reconciliation. In a related work, *Disarm*, 2012, Reyes repurposed 6,700 weapons seized by police in Ciudad Juárez in order to produce a collection of musical instruments that could be played by musicians, often his friends. He has gone on to create a thematic series using the same methods, such as *Disarm (Mechanized) I*, 2012-13, which automates the percussive act of music making through an array of eight separate instruments that form a kind of robotic band.
For this exhibition, the second of the two existing versions of *Disarm (Mechanized) II*, 2014, is in dialogue with Swiss artist Jean Tinguely’s permanent installation *Mengele-Dance of Death*, 1986, which repurposes materials from a barn destroyed by a fire near Tinguely’s home. For the entirely new body of work *Disarm (Music Boxes)*, 2020, Reyes acquired gun barrels directly from the manufacturer which were “destroyed in order to create resonating bodies.” Using rotating hand-cranks, the boxes churn out well-known works of music from the respective manufacturer’s country of origin. One music box made with repurposed “Glock pistol parts” plays a tinny Mozart tune. In another, “Beretta barrels” play Vivaldi. Though the boxes emit precious metallic tones, there is an eerie awareness of the violence bound up in these expressive machines. It is this high contrast, between beauty and brutality, that makes these works so powerful.
But the allusions to violence Reyes employs are not cheap nor aestheticized. Rather, the artist engages in acts of transsubstantiation. He isn’t dealing directly with themes of Catholic religiosity, but his process has a similar structure. The machines sublimate the raw physical terror of weapons of war and, in turn, transform instruments of death into vessels of musical transcendence. In the context of ongoing drug-related conflict in Mexico, this work is as cathartic and critical as it is charming and sublime. As Reyes himself believes, “the physical act is always accompanied by an idealistic one and appeals to the spiritual dimension of this quasi-alchemical operation towards the good.” Beyond this transcendent aspect of the work, Reyes’s practice is also grounded in a desire to promote practices of “up-cycling”: the repurposing of discarded materials for new productive uses in a wasteful age—a practice more urgent now than ever. In sum, Reyes’s work reconciles the material and the metaphysical and, in affect and effect, is as idealistic and sculptural as it is educational and purposeful.

“Pedro Reyes. Return to Sender” is on view at the Museum Tinguely in Basel, Switzerland through November 15, 2020.
From weapons to music

The Mexican artist Pedro Reyes presents his work at the Tinguely Museum, in Switzerland, in one of the first European exhibitions on the “new normal”

By: The Informer
July 1, 2020 - 01:00 a.m.
Mexican artist Pedro Reyes inaugurates the exhibition “Return to sender” in one of the first exhibitions in Europe’s “new normal”, after months of museum closings caused by the coronavirus pandemic. The Tinguely Museum, in Basel (Switzerland), is the venue where, from June 23 to November, the Kings' exhibition is presented, reflecting on the criminalization of the use of firearms based on skin color and systemic racism.

The work consists of music boxes built with firearm barrels cut to different lengths to create different musical scales. Each of the pieces reproduces compositions by musicians from the same country of origin of the weapons with which they are built. For example, the piece “Disarm Music Box Vivaldi / Beretta” incorporates rifle barrels from the Italian brand Beretta, which has been making weapons since 1526, and plays a fragment of “The Four Seasons” by Antonio Vivaldi. For its part, "Disarm Music Box / Glock Mozart" was manufactured with barrels from the Austrian brand of pistols Glock that allow to reproduce part of the Symphony No. 40 in G Minor composed by Mozart.

The artist details regarding this exhibition: “There is a racial bias when we talk about violence by firearms; it is assumed that it is always the fault of the one who pulls the trigger, however the companies that make these weapons seem to be free of fault. With this work I am interested in giving a designation of origin to these weapons that are usually manufactured in countries considered peaceful as Finland, Belgium, Austria or Italy, among others, but where for hundreds of years weapons that have been complicit in colonization have been manufactured, war and crime. It is time to point out that violence by firearms begins in the factories where they occur. “

The subversion of the uses of the object

This work began to take shape in late 2019, when the artist began to obtain the pieces of weapons and completed its construction this year. It is not the first time that Pedro Reyes works with this type of objects. Previously, he developed “Shovels for pistols” (2007 to present), which involved a voluntary donation campaign of weapons in Culiacán, Sinaloa, and which managed to gather 1,257 weapons that were melted down to create the same number of shovels with which trees were planted. This work was followed by "Disarm " (2012 to present), in which he incorporated firearms to make musical instruments that to date total nearly seven thousand pieces that have been used in orchestras and mechanized sound installations.
Reyes seeks in his new exhibition to offer the viewer an aesthetic, political and sociological experience by exploring the subversion of objects and the transformative capacity of sculpture capable of influencing the death-life relationship between weapons and their new utility as part of a musical box: “I am very interested in that alchemical transformation where there is a subversion of the uses of the object. Sculpture for me is a way of generating a psychological transformation through a physical transformation of the object.”

"Return to sender" is a commission that Pedro Reyes developed after an invitation from the Tinguely Museum to produce a mechanical work of art or kinesics display.

**The artist**

Trained as an architect, Pedro Reyes has positioned himself on the international scene as one of the most important contemporary Mexican artists. His work ranges from sculpture to multimedia and has reached prominent art venues such as the Serpentine Gallery in London, the Lisson Gallery in New York and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.
Pedro Reyes and Carla Fernández: 'death to planned obsolescence'

The Design Miami Visionary award-winners tell us about their projects at the fair
The artist Pedro Reyes and the fashion designer Carla Fernández are the winners of the 14th edition of the Design Miami Visionary Award, an annual prize established in collaboration with the Savannah College of Art and Design (Scad) to honour creatives making significant contributions to the design world. The artists—and husband and wife team—were recognised for their “always brilliantly synthesised spectrum of influences, from Brutalism to Mexican indigenous culture to progressive values”, says Craig Robins, the founder of Design Miami.

Two large-scale installations designed by Reyes and Fernández are being shown at Design Miami (until 9 December) along with works from the past decade. These works contrast hands-on design traditions with concerns around automation and our tech-obsessed zeitgeist, and also address current socio-political issues. On 5 December, Rodman Primack, the fair’s chief creative officer, moderated a talk with the artists on the importance of “coming together to make art, architecture, design and fashion that is rooted in social consciousness and justice, and that keeps craft alive and vibrant”, Reyes says. Scad is slated to open an exhibition of the artists’ works next February.

The Art Newspaper: Your work deals with cultural heritage, artisanal traditions and social justice. What can visitors expect to see in the Design Miami exhibition?

Carla Fernández: It’s a full retrospective of our works. In the booth, there are some of my contemporary designs that were made in collaboration with indigenous female artisans across Mexico who specialise in handmade textiles and utilise centuries-old techniques. The textiles are woven to be treasured and we create few of them, doing so slowly. We say: death to planned obsolescence. We understand that artisans need time to think, learn, transform and transcend. It is not only a romantic idea, but also a way to ensure that people who choose these professions will be safe from the destructive waves that automation is bringing to society.
Pedro Reyes: The exhibition also has various stone carvings I’ve done over the past five years. That tradition goes back 3,000 years in Mexico. At a time when a lot of designers are going for 3D printing or computer-controlled machining, I’m more interested in revealing the natural properties of different stones.
Travelling across Mexico, Carla and I became aware that there was no need for us to import sources of inspiration because we have so much to unearth from our past. The furniture I’m designing is based on Pre-Columbian artefacts. My metate chair has three legs, a constant feature in metates [hand-mill stones], molcajetes [mortar and pestles] and most Pre-Columbian pottery because an object with three legs always sits firmly on the ground. This tripod shape was considered a design error, so I’m interested in tackling this principle with a modern language. There’s an elegant yet bold simplicity to these types of tools that haven’t changed much in thousands of years.

“...The art world can’t be oblivious to the world in which we live” — CARLA FERNÁNDEZ

What messages do you hope visitors take away?

Fernández: For us, it’s important to show that the political borders we know today are only 200 years old in comparison to a continent that has been inhabited for 11,000 years. Our goal is to bring some perspective to a time where xenophobia and racism are increasing. Looking ahead, we are going to have increasing migration. On the other hand, we also want to show that many of these indigenous cultures continue to exist, and that, in contrast to these original settlers, we are all immigrants.

Art fairs are effective platforms to address social issues because they welcome many spectators with different backgrounds from all over the world. We think that part of the importance of art nowadays is to bring about social change and not only the selling of it.

You’ve designed a special project for the plaza at the fair. What inspired this work?

Fernández: Our presentation addresses one of the most important issues of our time: migration. There are two different installations, one of them showing two large-scale effigies carrying different tools, representing the many trades done by immigrants in the US. The work becomes a sort of monument to honour and acknowledge the energy that immigrants bring into each profession, and to show their diversity and richness.
The second one, presented within a container, revisits the subject of migration from a political standpoint. We are living through a humanitarian crisis, where immigrants from Latin America are persecuted and families are being separated and abused on grounds of their ethnicity. This persecution has brought us indelible images of detention centres where children as young as four-years-old are being held and separated from their families. We believe that it’s our duty to present such images so that these acts of racism don’t go unnoticed. We want to open a conversation about the ongoing humanitarian crisis of migrants in the US, as it is our firm belief that the art world can’t be oblivious to the world in which we live.

You’re also designing the graphic identity of the fair, which is based on protest posters.

Reyes: For several years, we have been collecting protest posters from Mexico, Latin America and Europe. These obviously have a sense of urgency. The inspiration comes from the bold graphics of the handmade protest signs, posters and ephemera from the 1968 uprisings in Mexico, Paris, Prague and Berkeley. Fifty years ago, there was a revolution that signalled a social and cultural turning point worldwide and inspired artists to also get political.
Pedro Reyes & Carla Fernández | Design Miami/ Visionary Award 2018

El premio anual se otorga a talentos creativos de todos los campos que han hecho contribuciones significativas al campo del diseño que ofrecen un impacto tangible y duradero en el mundo que nos rodea.

Por: Redacción
Fotos: Cortesía

Design Miami/ nombró a Pedro Reyes y Carla Fernández como los galardonados del Design Miami/ Visionary Award 2018. El premio se otorga a talentos creativos, incluyendo diseñadores, curadores, arquitectos y luminarias cuyas contribuciones ofrecen un impacto tangible y duradero en el mundo que nos rodea. El premio Design Miami/ Visionary Award es reconocido por tener una continuidad, un impacto tangible y duradero. Los ganadores de los premios Design Miami/ Visionary Award incluyen a Zaha Hadid, Marc Newson, Tokujin Yoshioka, David Adjaye, Yves Béhar, SHoP Architects y a la Escuela Mwabwindo.
El artista contemporáneo Reyes y la diseñadora de moda Fernández, quienes están casados, presentarán una exposición colaborativa en Design Miami/ 2018, además de diseñar la identidad gráfica para la feria. “El trabajo de Pedro y Carla siempre ha sintetizado brillantemente un espectro de influencias, desde el Brutalismo a la cultura indígena mexicana en un cuerpo nutrido de trabajo. Estoy contento de que vamos a celebrar sus logros en Design Miami/, y espero con interés ver su exposición en la feria”, dijo Craig Robins, fundador de Design Miami/.

La pareja presentará una retrospectiva de obras que abordan algunos de los aspectos fundamentales de la historia de la humanidad, de nuestro tiempo y de los intercambios humanos íntimos que se han vuelto raros en esta era digital. La estructura general del stand es diseñado por los ganadores del premio y contará con paredes de acero curvado. Las obras clave a la vista incluirán las sillas Metate de Reyes, que están inspiradas en artefactos precolombinos de tres patas. El artista talla las sillas con herramientas sencillas que no han cambiado en casi 3,000 años. También se pueden ver ejemplos del Desarme de Reyes, instrumentos musicales fabricados con armas de fuego destruidas, así como las obras textiles de Fernández y las obras en colaboración como un mapa con los nombres de los más de 300 asentamientos originales del continente americano que existían antes de la conquista.
“Nos sentimos honrados por ser seleccionados como los ganadores del Design Miami/ Design Visionary Award”, dijo Reyes. “Esto nos ofrece la oportunidad de presentar a los asistentes a Design Miami/, piezas en las que el diseño ha adquirido dimensión social, ya sea abordando la justicia social o el establecimiento de la paz, así como la importancia de productos artesanales en un mundo donde la mayoría de los procesos están siendo automatizados y millones de personas están perdiendo sus trabajos.”

El premio es co-presentado por el socio universitario oficial de Design Miami, Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD). Después de su debut en Design Miami/, la exposición tendrá como objetivo viajar al SCAD Museum of Art que abrirá sus puertas en febrero de 2019. Además de la exposición dentro de la feria, Reyes y Fernández diseñarán una presentación especial para la plaza frente a la feria este diciembre y será la sede de una charla de diseño.

Acerca de la Identidad Gráfica

La inspiración de Reyes y Fernández para la identidad gráfica de Design Miami/ 2018 viene de los gráficos bold, de carteles, de pancartas de protesta hechas a mano y de la sublevación de mayo de 1968 en París, una revolución que marcó un punto de inflexión social y cultural en todo el mundo e inspiró una revolución artística.

“Cincuenta años después de las manifestaciones de 1968 en México, París y en todo el mundo es más importante que nunca escuchar las voces de nuestra sociedad global”, dijo Carla Fernández. “Que es la razón por la que nos inspiramos para incorporar los colores, imágenes y mensajes de este movimiento en nuestro compromiso con la acción y el cambio social”, añadió.
“Design Miami/ se siente honrado de apoyar a tan poderosos visionarios y tener el honor de que su lenguaje sea parte de nuestra identidad visual con la misión de ser un mercado para el diseño y un líder en el discurso del diseño global.” dijo, Rodman Primack, Director Creativo de Design Miami/.
designboom/ celebrates pedro reyes and carla fernández with 2018 design visionary award

Contemporary Mexican artist Pedro Reyes and fashion designer Carla Fernández have been announced as the recipients of the Design Miami/ Design Visionary Award for 2018. The Design Visionary Award is an annual celebration of luminaries from a wide range of disciplines that have significantly contributed to the field of design, with previous winners including Zaha Hadid, Tokujin Yoshioka, Konstantin Grcic, Sir David Adjaye, and Yves Behar among others. Recognized for their impact on local communities through their individual practices, Reyes and Fernández are to present a collaborative exhibition at the fair, as well as design the graphic identity of this year’s edition.
Despite their individual focus on separate design disciplines, Pedro Reyes and Carla Fernández express similar concerns through their work, often dealing with Mexican indigenous culture, social values in communities, and intimate human interaction in an age of digital exchange. 'A few years ago we began to realize that we wanted to start looking at designers and people that were doing more with their practice than just creating buildings or objects, using their practice in ways to impact the design community more broadly,' explains Rodman Primack, chief creative officer of Design Miami. 'With Pedro and Carla we are obviously so inspired by the work that they create, but also by the way they run their practices and have used them to impact their communities; in Carla's case to really keep some crafts and the conversation around native handmade things alive, and use that as a way of communicating with the world and fashion to give energy to that. With Pedro, there has always been in his practice a connection with social impact, from early projects such as the ones he did with guns. For design Miami it is a way of recognizing our community can do more with opportunities and opportunities that will not only benefit the maker, or the artist, but that can also benefit the people that they collaborate with, the communities that they interact with. It feels like this is probably our best expression of this award so far,' Primack concludes.

Mano sillón by Pedro Reyes, 2012, courtesy of Labor Gallery. The chairs appear to be in the middle of a sign language conversation.
a retrospective exhibition of both of their works will open on the occasion of design miami/ on 5 december, while a large version of it will travel to SCAD (savannah college of art and design) in february 2019. the pavilion which will hold reyes' sculptures and artworks, together with fernández's textile archive and fashion pieces, is designed by the two award winners as a curved, steel wall structure. born in mexico city in 1972, pedro reyes uses various media, such as sculpture, performance, and video, to address current sociopolitical issues. ‘being an architect and then becoming an artist I could never get away from the idea that you have to solve problems, so I continued making art but always thinking that it should have a function,’ explains reyes while discussing what will be on show at the upcoming exhibition. ‘a lot of my pieces are to be used in the sense that there is an instrument, or piece of furniture – they are all works that are only completed once you use them and they become an activity as well.’

disarm by pedro reyes. 2013. courtesy of yisson gallery, london. the instrument series uses remnants of decommissioned weapons which the mexican army had collected and destroyed.
working with Mexico's indigenous communities to produce handcrafted, avant-garde garments, Carla Fernández has established her brand as a pioneer in ethical fashion. The designer collaborates closely with the artisans on site for every project, integrating centuries-old indigenous techniques in every piece she creates. "I hope to give a voice, and a name, and a last name, to the people that make these amazing crafts," says Fernández. "I am very grateful for the award and the exhibition because it gives us the opportunity to show all these people, either the visitors of Design Miami or the SCAD students, that another way of doing things is possible, especially now that a lot of people think that technology is the only future the world has — we believe that it is one of them, but we also believe the future is handmade." "Fashion sometimes is seen as very empty and pretentious, but for me it's the most amazing thing — it's culture, it's politics, it's architecture, and I don't understand why a lot of people tend to see it as very empty, or banal. We have to be very specific to show that another way of doing fashion is possible, that we can maintain tradition of thousands of years, and be modern and super contemporary at the same time."

American visual artist Joan Jonas wears a piece by Carla Fernández, photo by Ramiro Chaves (left)
the two designers have also made some new pieces for the exhibition including a hand-painted map of the Americas, where they have put together all the indigenous groups that have exited across the continent over time. 'we were trying to find if there is a map that shows all the original groups of the continent – there are some settlements that go back 11,000 years – but there was none, so we decided to make one, which was incredibly complicated,' explains Reyes. 'we've been checking ethnography maps, topology maps, and so on, and building this map, because in a time where there is a migration crisis, and it is an issue around the world, and there is all this suffering that happens at the crossing of borders, we wanted to bring some perspective to the fact that our current borders are only 200 years old. when the world has been inhabited for thousands of years in many different configurations, what we assume as our current borders may not be the borders in the future and they were essentially not the borders in the past.'
design miami\' has also collaborated with reyes and hernández on the visual identity of this year\'s edition, who came up with a series of graphics that capture the spirit of protests that took place in paris and other places around the world in 1968. \"we suggested a kind of protest versus organics, because now we are turning 50 years since 1968, when there were all these movements in prague, berkeley, mexico, paris, and so on, and there were all these protest posters done with only one ink and political messages,\" describes pedro reyes. the visuals will play out across the entire fair, into merchandise and into everything that is \"design miami\" (branded).

entomophage / the grasshopper by pedro reyes, 2013. a food-cart made of welded iron and mechanical parts serves grasshopper burgers to introduce the consumption of insects.
IS FASHION
IN TRUE
LUXURY
THERE
IS NO
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NOT TO BE
ORIGINAL IS TO
GO BACK TO
THE
ORIGIN

Image © designboom
PLEASE JOIN US FOR DESIGN MIAMI/2018
The Boston Globe

New ‘Manufacturing Mischief’ features Chomsky, Rand, and Tiny Trump

By Jeremy D. Goodwin | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT APRIL 24, 2018

It’s Noam Chomsky vs. Ayn Rand in a new show from multimedia artist Pedro Reyes — and just to be clear, it’s a comedy, and they’re puppets.

“Manufacturing Mischief,” based in part on the writings of Chomsky, debuts at Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Simmons Hall in Cambridge on Thursday and Friday, and all seats are already fully reserved. It’s just the latest provocative work from Reyes, a Mexican artist whose past projects include “Palas por Pistolas” (2008), in which 1,527 guns were melted down and made into shovels that were then used to plant an equal number of trees, and “Imagine” (2012) and “Disarm” (2013), both featuring musical instruments fabricated from guns. Reyes also recently had a sculpture show at Lisson Gallery in London.

For “Manufacturing Mischief,” Reyes teamed up with director Meghan Finn and writer Paul Hufker. The trio are following up their last project together, a haunted house/art installation called “Doomocracy,” staged at the Brooklyn Army Terminal shortly before the 2016 election. The puppets used in “Manufacturing Mischief” are made in Japan by puppet designer Chihiro Takahashi, based on the traditional Bunraku form. Reyes is returning to MIT after serving as the school’s inaugural Dasha Zhukova Distinguished Visiting Artist, a program launched with a $1 million gift to the school by the noted art collector and founder of Moscow’s Garage Museum of Contemporary Art. This month Harvard University Press also published “Pedro Reyes: Ad Usum/To Be Used,” a handsome career-long survey accompanied by scholarly responses to the work.
A. Chomsky is in this play to sort through ideas that people are reading that present worldviews that are a bit dangerous. Like in the case of Ayn Rand. In academia, no one takes her seriously. It's almost an embarrassment to even mention her name. But a lot of people believe in her philosophy.

I was totally surprised that very influential people like Steve Jobs and Elon Musk [who are also characters in "Manufacturing Mischief"] praise her. I feel that there's a theme of people who are visionaries in the realm of science and technology but that nevertheless lack a philosophical and moral framework to use those advancements of technology for the betterment of all of society, not only a few. Translated to the comedy format, it has a lot of potential. Because Ayn Rand is such a sociopath, it was so funny to put her in contrast with the very benevolent and generous character of Noam Chomsky. I also have a character called Tiny Trump.

Q: Tell me about him.

A. Trump is a nice entertainer, no question about it. And all of the extreme behavior that the people have learned so well, the kind of—how to say it? Obscenity? It almost plays into creating this puppet character. In puppetry, there's usually some characters who are comparatively foolish, but in the case of Trump it's someone who happens to also be dangerous, in real life.

Q: What does the show have to say about technology?

A. We're not against technology, but we're against the idea that whatever the problem is, the solution is technology. Sometimes it seems that everyone is thinking of how to make a robot like a person. For instance, if you go to the cafeteria, it has no clerk. What would happen if all the pubs and restaurants follow that trend? When you're developing that technology, are you thinking about that? No. There's no discussion about what is going to happen with all the people that lose their jobs.

Automation and artificial intelligence are subjects that we deal with in the play, technological developments that happened with only having profit in mind. That is a very dangerous worldview.

MANUFACTURING MISCHIEF

At MIT's Simmons Hall, Thursday and Friday evening. Tickets are free but fully reserved. arts.mit.edu.

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Theater

Noam Chomsky, Elon Musk and Ayn Rand Walk Into a Puppet Show

By Jennifer Schuessler  April 16, 2018
Noam Chomsky, the dead-serious linguist and critic of American capitalism and imperialism, has had his brushes with the gutter realms of pop culture, from an invitation to appear on “Saturday Night Live” (he declined, apparently having barely heard of the show) to the inevitable “Singapore” meme.

Now, Mr. Chomsky is the star of a perhaps even more unlikely production: a puppet show.

“Manufacturing Machine,” which will have its premiere run on April 16 and 17 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, puts a mini-Chomsky montage alongside Elon Musk, Ayn Rand and Karl Marx. Created by the Montreal artist Paolina Reyes, it features a sly plot involving a technology contest, a contradiction called the Print-a-Friend and a surprise appearance by Donald Trump. There’s also plenty of high-flown debate about technology, freedom and inequality.

The play, which was scripted by Paul Shulman and directed by Ilan gren, grew out of an artistic residency (Mr. Reyes had had his at M.I.T.). Mr. Chomsky’s "intransigent intellectual home, and a place so之ized, as Mr. Reyes put it, with "techno-optimism."

"M.I.T. has this very beautiful culture of hands-on creativity," he said in a telephone interview. "But there is also this idea that whatever the problem is, the solution is technology."

We spoke with Mr. Reyes about getting Mr. Chomsky’s blessing for the project, and about the other main characters in his mini-drama of big ideas, which will travel to Carnegie Mellon University as part of its Marx@200 series from May 10-13 and to the Tank in New York from June 5-24.
Noam Chomsky

After arriving at M.I.T., Mr. Hayes met with Mr. Chomsky to float the idea of a puppet play riffing on his criticisms of artificial intelligence research and the social impact of technology. As a prop/embassador, Mr. Hayes brought along a puppet of Lenin Trotsky, from his 1988 play "The Permanent Revolution."

"He said: 'Oh that's nice. But where is Rosa Luxemburg?"' Mr. Hayes recalled. "In it turns out, I also have a puppet of Rosa Luxemburg, so I put her in the show too."

Mr. Chomsky, Mr. Hayes said, approved a synopsis of the play (whose title riff s on "Manufacturing Consent," his 1988 book with Edward S. Herman). As for his puppet (Rosa, which (like the others) was made in Japan by master puppet-makers in the Bunraku tradition, "he was pleased with it," Mr. Hayes said. (Mr. Chomsky didn't respond to a request for comment.)
The show features a cameo by an undead Steve Jobs, who pops up, like a discombobulated Alexa, when a character mentions the impact of automation on "Jobs." But the real skewering is reserved for Elon Musk, the Tesla and SpaceX founder who wants to send humans to Mars.

In the play, Mr. Musk (who in real life has called the government regulation of artificial intelligence "insane") and his start-up Neuralink aims to build a brain-computer interface. This elicits Mr. Chomsky as a reluctant judge in a contest to select "The Terrifying New Gadget Which Might Kill Us All." To Mr. Bayes, Mr. Musk is the kind of visionary who ignores the more basic needs of the broad mass of humanity.

"The very idea of going to Mars may capture people's imagination but it's something that is only accessible to a small fraction," he said. "There's nothing up there anyway. Mars is kind of a boring rock."
Ayn Rand

About halfway through the play, Wolk puts a copy of “Atlas Shrugged” into the Print-a-Friend, and out pops Ayn Rand, wearing the signature dollar-sign pin she favored in real life.

Mr. Reyes read Rand’s novel “The Fountainhead” as a teenager, but unsurprisingly is not a fan, though he said he appreciates her theatrical qualities.

“She’s a great character for comedy because she’s a sociopath,” he said. “There are so many very crazy things she said.”
Mr. Chomsky may be the hero of the play, but it’s Karl Marx who has intellectual cleanup, with a 21st-century rap update of “The Communist Manifesto” that somehow rhymes “Eisenbahnen” with “Amazons.”

The Marx puppet has appeared (with Adam Smith) in a series of short buddy videos and in “The Permanent Revolution,” alongside Lenin, Trotsky, Primo Levi, Julian Assange and others.

“Very naïvely, I had this goal of creating a certain literacy through entertainment,” Mr. Reyes said. “After I became a parent, I found myself wondering, if kids can learn 300 names of Pokémon and ‘Star Wars’ characters, why not some history?”

Follow writer Schwartz on Twitter: @schwartzschwartz
LA CASA TECTÓNICA

La arquitectura en Carla Fernández y el arquitecto arquitecto Pedro Reyes, son los encargados de esta residencia martesada por el ingeniero y la empresa editorial

Adquirieron terreno de 4000 ha en Zacatecas

Adquirieron terreno de 4000 ha en Zacatecas. En un ambiente de campo, entre los valles, deciden construir un edificio que se adapte al entorno natural. La casa se divide en diferentes espacios: una zona residencial, una zona de trabajo y una zona de juegos para los niños. La fachada de la casa está compuesta por piedras locales, lo que le da un aspecto auténtico y a la vez moderno. La sala de estar, con su techo de madera, ofrece un ambiente cálido y acogedor. La cocina está equipada con electrodomésticos modernos y toda la casa está bien iluminada. La casa está rodeada de jardines y terrazas, ideales para disfrutar del tiempo libre. La casa es un ejemplo de arquitectura moderna que se adapta al entorno natural.
Pedro Reyes
Sculptures, mostly in volcanic stone, and mural-like installations of large drawings by the Mexican demiurge, who was trained in architecture and plainly deems no scale or theme too ambitious, are beyond impressive—they awe you. Reyes’s style runs the gamut: from primitivist through neoclassical to futuristic, from tartly realist through surrealist to chastely abstract, from monumental to intimate, with each formulation specific in its erudite references, tinged with political conviction, and consummate in form. Although big, the show suggests a mere warmup for a refashioning of pretty much the whole world, retroactively and from now on. Through April 15. (Lisson, 504 W. 24th St. 212-505-6437.)
For his first solo exhibition with Lisson New York, Mexican artist Pedro Reyes presents a group of new sculptures made from volcanic stone, marble and concrete.
Surrounding these are over 150 works on paper, installed floor-to-ceiling on the gallery walls. This is the first presentation to feature drawings by Reyes on such scale or diversity.

Ranging from the intimate to the monumental, these new works resonate with both modern and ancient sources. Reyes has been looking closely at the history of statuary. Echoes of Western masters like Germán Cueto and Luis Otaola are evident in Mexico. Frank Okebon, Reg Butler and Lynn Chadwick in the United Kingdom; Gerhard Blanke and Ernst Barlach in Germany; and Pierre Saelely and Albert Ren in France, may be found in some of the sculptures.

The materials Reyes employs in these sculptures further the careful attention to ancestry. Volcanic stone is a recurring material for the artist, and he notes both its integral role in the shaping of Mexico’s landscape and its deep connection to the life of its inhabitants, used for millennia in grátil work in masons and marblecutters, the traditional Mexican version of the morish and pestle. Other works in the show range from the luminous marble of Carrara—long beloved by artists and architects as well as abstract sculptors such as Sergio Camargo—to concrete, which offers the artist new and entirely different plastic possibilities thanks to the interplay of cement and steel armatures.

The son of a professor who taught advanced engineering drawing, Reyes received informal training from a young age in the technical process of rendering three-dimensional objects. This early understanding has been an essential part of his practice ever since. For Reyes, it is a fluid movement between the creation of drawings and sculpture, and vice versa, and the dizzying multitude of works on paper in this exhibition exemplify the complexity of the relationship. The 150 drawings covering the entirety of the gallery’s wall and wall units, extend Reyes’s concerns with sculpture and art-making to encompass many of the radical thinkers that have informed Reyes’s practice, from conceptual artist Lee Lozano, Colombian mathematician Antonino de Oliveira, Chilean video artist Juan Downey, and Italian-born Brazilian modernist architect Lina Bo Bardi, among others.
Pedro Reyes is the Artist Donald Trump Should Fear

If Donald Trump were to invent a contemporary artist to generate on Twitter (June’s (Bad for black news?), he might dream up a (his favorite) mind-someone like Pedro Reyes. Reyes might even be too-on-the nose. Unavoidably brash, proudly socialist, the Mexican conceptual artist works in an overtly political register—his self-designed home studio pays homage to the work of Mexican artist Juan O’Gorman, who was responsible for Trotsky’s burial site in Mexico. Reyes first gained notoriety abroad for artworks that effectively functioned as gun-control: Political pair Pistoles, a program in which Bureaucracy could be traded in for shovels, and then Dinosaur, for which he melted down flakers into musical instruments. Just before the April election, in Brooklyn, he showed Democracy, a haunted house of politics addressing abortion, gun violence, and wealth inequality in no uncertain terms. Oh, and he also reads. A lot.

On a recent afternoon during the Zona Maco art fair in Mexico City, where Reyes lives and works, he walked over the current political climate and his upcoming show at Lisson (Gallery in New York, opening February 28. We met in his studio, which is planned around his vast, two-story library. The way other people consume food or the internet, Reyes consumes books. He reads his books (his go-to second-hand stores—daily, estimating that he buys around 10 books a month. From 9 PM to 7 AM every day, he compulsively rearranges them.
“It's like your bandwidth. My mind is up there,” Reyes explained. He wore square, professorial Saint Laurent glasses, and sat across from the stacks upon stacks of books. “And then you wake up and see all this Trump shit,” he added.

It seems to follow that his latest exhibition would be a show largely made up of works on paper, in a departure from his conceptual work—and from any requirement to look at a screen. For the past few months, Reyes created quick, expressive drawings of the intellectual heroes found in the pages of his books: there's Sophocles and Epicurus, as well as modern icons like Lina Bo Bardi and Lee Krasner. (It's a process he has been documenting on Instagram.) These drawings (all 150!) will surround concrete, marble, and volcanic rock sculptures in “an environment,” he said. “It will feel cave-like, forest-like.”

Reyes wanted to make “art that cannot be outsourced,” he said, in a political nod behind the largely apolitical work. He hires local workers to create his sculptures because, he said, “I can’t do it in the U.S.”—noting the techcratsy that led to many of the anxieties that fueled the election. “A robot will do it.”

Days after our interview, Mexico City had its first major protest against Trump's proposed trade policies and border wall, which Reyes called “a delusional slogan.”
“He is bringing everyone together against him,” Reyes said of the response. “That corny idea of winning—it’s cheap. I don’t know any rich people as corny as Trump.”

Next up, Reyes says he will work on a new lab at MIT, where he teaches, studying how to decode and fight tyranny—with one obvious target in mind. “You have to understand the system to make it work backwards,” he said.

For him right now, a show that sidesteps politics can be more political than ever. “It’s important to think of art as a kind of sanctuary,” Reyes said. “These are the things we are fighting for.”
Halloween started early this year. I’d put the date at July 18, opening night of the 2016 Republican National Convention. Trick-or-treating has been nonstop since. The tricks have included a couple of Creature Feature debates, email scandals, xenophobic rants and personal attacks, all of which have too often been received as sordid but tantalizing treats by audience and news media alike. Action in the electoral arena makes any art pale by comparison. But this hasn’t prevented Pedro Reyes, an artist-activist from Mexico City, from creating his own bit of fright-night political high jinks in “Doomocracy,” an elaborately trenchant performance piece presented by the nonprofit Creative Time in the Brooklyn Army Terminal.

The setting, on the Sunset Park waterfront, is ideally spooky. If you imagine the concept of a military-industrial complex translated into power architecture, that’s the terminal. Built in 1919, a military supply depot through two World Wars, it’s monstrous: a 97-acre, multi-building complex with two eight-story concrete warehouses and enough space to park 20 ships and a train. Although much of it is now given over to light industry and boutique businesses (furniture designers, chocolatiers), the place still projects a mausoleumlike chill, especially at night. And, appropriately, night is when “Doomocracy” happens, on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, from 6 p.m. to midnight.
Visitors first gather in a soaring glass-roofed hall dominated by one of Mr. Reyes’s wood sculptures. A surreal fusion of the Statue of Liberty and the Apocalyptic Beast, it hints of disorientations to come.

From that starting point, small groups are admitted, one at a time, to the main event under close supervision on what feels like a cross between a guided tour and forced march. (Tickets are free but must be reserved in advance.) A group is loaded into a van and driven to a distant location on the terminal campus. As the group nears its destination, a disruption occurs.

The van is flagged down by figures who are not, as it first seems, parking attendants, but military police in SWAT gear. They yank the van doors open, flash lights in your eyes, order you out and herd you into a pitch-black building, barking commands: put your hands on the wall; behind your head; line up; move. You know this is theater, but you also discover that being yelled at and light-blinded makes your pulse jump; disarms your defenses; persuades you to do what you’re told.

The rest of the show, which is basically a 45-minute mobile drama in a dozen or more short acts, alternates staged reality with zany satire, though, as usual, Mr. Reyes tends to resist making clear distinctions between modes. For earlier projects, he gathered automatic weapons that were turned in or seized by the Mexican Army from drug cartels and melted them down to make garden shovels and musical instruments. He has also organized exhibitions that have fused performance art, sculpture and psychotherapy.

Ambiguity of tone and purpose is one of the elements that makes “Doomocracy” dramatically effective.

Another is the rapid-fire pacing established by the performance’s director, Meghan Finn. One scene bangs into another. The SWAT team hustles you down a corridor, then disappears. Now you’re in a polling station, being registered to vote while watching ballots being shredded before your eyes. Next, you take a breather in a comfy suburban living room, only to hear a pair of gun-toting housewives warn about unwelcome “new additions” to the neighborhood. The trigger-happy duo have barely warmed to their subject when you’re moved on again, into a doctor’s waiting room, where an opioid-addicted soccer mom hits you up for a fix.

And you go on: to a corporate boardroom to vote on advantageous deals for the privileged (meaning yourself); to an elementary school classroom that teaches false history (slavery wasn’t all that bad) and supplies you with bright-red bulletproof shields; to an anti-abortion witch hunt (this is the show’s big song-and-dance number); to a factory that markets artisanal Himalayan air to an environmentally ravaged world. (“Only God breathes air this pure.”)

And in one amusing moment along the way, you emerge from an elevator into a cocktail party in a collector’s penthouse. The scene, like the art world itself, is a pure cliche: Champagne-serving waiters, an air-kissing hostess, a Christopher Wool word-painting on the wall, and an antsy, importunate artist in residence pitching his latest product. (“It’s about gentrification!”)

There’s more, quite a bit, concluding with an ostensibly nonpartisan, viewer-participation take on the current election battle as a political World Cup match with Earth as the ball in play. Then suddenly you’re on your way out of the show, passing a grumbly street prophet wearing a sandwich board and handing out “Doomocracy” fliers.

Given the performance’s speed and the pileup of sensory input, it’s impossible to take everything in. Enough to say that, while all parts of the piece are not equally strong — satire has to be right on the nose, weirdness-wise, to work, and some of this is too easy — the level of visual invention is high, and the cast of more than 30 actors (among them, a Chihuahua named Dreidel) is impressive. Paul Hufker’s script, with contributions by Nato Thompson, Creative Time’s artistic director, sounded, on a one-time hearing, sharp, up-to-date and wide-ranging in its talking points, some of which Mr. Reyes cites in the definition of “doomocracy” he has printed in the flier:

1. A form of government in which the supreme power is vested in a tyrant by a terrified general electorate.
2. The esoteric arithmetic that makes the electoral process malleable.
3. A corporate coup d’état in slow motion.
4. Permanent global war waged in the name of freedom. At present, we’re experiencing all of that, not to mention planetary destruction and international homelessness. And if the standard for judging the success of “Doomocracy” is whether it’s weighty enough for its subjects, it fails. Most political art does. In a global media age of perpetually cycling digital drama, it feels dwarfed and static. And the audience that really needs to see it won’t. Mr. Reyes knows this, and he knows you have to make the art anyway, and he makes it well, shrewdly and with upbeat panache. When you emerge from “Doomocracy” you’ve felt the visceral thrill, the thrill that good theater delivers, the sense of having been through something energizing and focusing. You may also feel a reassuring sense that, no, it’s not just you; American reality, in 2016, is every bit as out of control as you think it is. Hold onto that reassurance. You’re going to need it. The show wraps up on Nov. 6, two days short of the presidential election. And that event, no matter what the results, will not bring Fright Night to an end.
Doomocracy: the funhouse haunted by Trump and Clinton

Described as ‘Hieronymus Bosch meets Fox News’, artist Pedro Reyes’ installation will be a haunted house taking in gun nuts, genetically modified crops, climate change and other modern horrors.

The horrors of a haunted house usually end once you push open the final set of black, saloon-hinged doors and step back in the fairground. However, the Mexican artist Pedro Reyes hopes his nightmares remain with visitors long after they have left his immersive 2016 Halloween attraction, opening in New York next month.

“Monsters have always been a way to speak about our real fears,” says the 44-year-old. “Zombies are a fear of poor people; Karl Marx talked about capital being like a vampire that stalks the living; and Mary Shelley’s Dr Frankenstein is trying to create life, which is exactly what genetic engineers are trying to do today.”
All these bogeymen and more will populate Doomocracy, “a political haunted house” that Reyes is preparing to stage within the vast Brooklyn Army Terminal from 7 October until 6 November in conjunction with the New York non-profit arts organisation Creative Time.

Doomocracy’s spooky run will coincide with both Halloween and the 2016 presidential election, and is appropriately pitched somewhere between a carnival attraction, an immersive theatre production and any given hour or two within today’s news cycle. Creative Time’s artistic director, Nato Thompson, describes the venture as “Hieronymus Bosch meets Fox News. It’s holding up a funhouse mirror to society.”

Reyes and Nato hope to offer about 400–500 people a night a ghostly, dramatic interactive trip that takes in gun nuts, genetically modified crops, climate change, deadly fast-food chains and looming over Doomocracy’s entrance, a chimera effigy that’s part Statue of Liberty, part Trojan Horse, and, in Reyes’ view, entirely the embodiment of American foreign policy. “The US doesn’t have true representation,” he argues, “and yet they say they’re exporting democracy around the world.”

That may all sound a bit too much as it is scary. Nevertheless the artist – who has previously staged a live art version of a psychiatric sanatorium at different galleries around the world and overseen a programme to repurpose firearms as musical instruments – is deeply serious in his examination of fear within today’s political landscape.

“These days, politicians are trying to create fear in order to take power,” Reyes says, “so it’s quite an experiment to be dealing with the production of fear and its political uses.”

He is also highly respectful of the funhouse tropes, partly because it is so familiar to people who might not necessarily be avid gallery goers.

“Pretty much everyone can picture a horror house,” he says. “It will, if you forgive the paradox, deal with political issues in a very democratic way. Everyone can engage with the form.”

Reyes and Thompson are keen to ensure Doomocracy keeps pace with events and have been writing and rewriting the dramatic scenarios to reflect the changing nature of the electoral race.

“We’ve been workshopping the scripts today,” says Thompson. “It’s a fluid process. The ground is moving fast this election, it’s hard to keep up.”

Reyes, who visited both commercial haunted houses and guerrilla theatre groups in preparation for the show, also says Doomocracy reflects a general hopelessness within contemporary politics, both in the US and elsewhere.
“Why do people vote against their own interests?” Reyes says. “Is it that we have brainwashed people to make the wrong decisions? There’s a feeling in the US that it’s a dozen to have to choose between the [presidential] options. But it’s elsewhere too; it can be said of Mexico and many other places around the world. Brexit was almost like a democratic, right-wing coup d’etat.”

Despite this gloomy view, Doomocracy is still able to engage with some of the excesses of campaign fundraising. Its Kickstarter page looks set to reach its goal of $80,000 by its deadline of 25 September, offering suitably doomsday swag for its pledgers, including Doomocracy pensants and buttons, and “Yes We Can’t” bumper stickers.

With all this left-leaning pessimism, Reyes’ haunted house looks unlikely to attract many Trump voters. However, Creative Times’ executive director, Katie Hollander, argues that the work doesn’t favour either side. “It’s not a commentary on the candidates, more a commentary on the issues,” she says.

Indeed, Reyes hopes to make wider political issues unlike to be addressed by either party this election year. “It will deal with mental health, the excessive criminalisation of drug use, and the increasing role of the medical industry as a kind of white-collar drug dealer,” the artist says. “There’ll be stuff on the food industry too, and equity on the lack of social mobility — those universal issues, that are experienced in every part of the world.”

While all may sound nihilistic, Reyes hopes Doomocracy could be liberating too. “Usually my art is more about hope, but on this occasion it is a dark project, and offers more of a space for catharsis,” he says. “After all, Halloween is a moment to go crazy. That is the role of carnival.”

Yet, does he genuinely expect Doomocracy to actually change any visitors’ minds about the issues examined? Won’t most already agree with his position on, say, pharmaceuticals and gun-crime?

“There will be people who love it, people who hate it, people who feel empowered, and people who feel offended,” says Reyes. “Making art is one way to elaborate and engage with reality.”

And this autumn, at a time when truth seems if not stranger, then at least as spooky as fiction, one route for meaningful political engagement appears to lie through Doomocracy’s funhouse doors.
Pedro Reyes awarded Medal for the Arts

19 January 2013

Pedro Reyes is among a number of artists awarded a Medal for the Arts in 2013 by the US State Department. Reyes along with Sam Gilliam, Xu Bing, Mark Bradford, Maya Lin, Julie Mehretu, and Kehinde Wiley have been chosen for his or her substantial commitment to the State Department’s cultural diplomacy outreach through the arts and in particular recognizes their work with the “ART-in-Embassies” program which promotes American art abroad. Previous winners of the award include Cai Guo-Qiang, Wha痴i Mandla, and Corinne Rae Weers.
Pedro Reyes

In Conversation With Peter Doggett

A recent survey of Pedro Reyes's work at Lisson Gallery shows a marked progression of his ideas and techniques in recent years. Reyes has always been interested in the language of contemporary art and has been able to incorporate it into his work in a way that is both accessible and engaging. His most recent works have been characterized by a focus on the political and social implications of art. In 1991, when Reyes was a student at the National University of Mexico, he was involved in a series of protests against the government. These experiences have informed his work ever since. Reyes's latest series, entitled "The New Barbarians," explores the relationship between art and politics. The works are characterized by a mix of materials and techniques, including stone, wood, and metal. The series is a reflection on the current state of the world and the role of art in it. Reyes's work is not only a commentary on the political landscape, but also a call to action. His message is clear: art can and should be used to communicate important ideas and to provoke change. The series is an exploration of the power of art to create a dialogue about the world and to challenge the status quo. The works are not simply decorative, but are tools for thought and reflection. They are a reminder of the importance of art in society and of the responsibility of artists to use their work to make a difference. The series is a testament to the power of art to connect us, to challenge us, and to inspire us. In his own words, "Art is a way to understand the world, to see it differently, to see it as a place of possibility. It is a language that can be used to communicate important ideas and to challenge the status quo. Art is a tool for thought and reflection. It is a way to connect us, to challenge us, and to inspire us."
This show is incorporated in many exhibitions of the context of Reggona - Lucas Meurer welcomes, in a way of the complex program of the last ten years, a different perception of the world and the way people interact with it. This is how the idea of the exhibition "^" is developed, where the concept of "^" becomes the main element of the artwork. The "^" symbol represents a new approach to the interpretation of reality, where the viewer is encouraged to explore and engage with the artwork in a new way.

In this context, the exhibition presents a unique perspective on the concept of the "^" symbol, exploring the different meanings and interpretations that it can have. The artworks are designed to provoke thought and encourage the viewer to think about the role of symbols in our daily lives.

The exhibition also explores the idea of the "^" symbol as a representation of the human condition, exploring the ways in which we are connected to each other and the world around us. The artworks are designed to challenge the viewer's preconceptions and encourage them to think about the nature of reality and the role of symbols in shaping our understanding of the world.

Overall, the exhibition is a thought-provoking exploration of the concept of the "^" symbol, encouraging the viewer to think critically about the role of symbols in our lives and the nature of reality.
Lisson Gallery

SFAQ, 2014

The Museum of Contemporary Art Darling Harbour is an exciting place to be. The gallery is housed within the MCA building, which was designed by Japanese architect Tadao Ando. The building itself is a work of art, with its sleek lines and minimalist design. The gallery itself is equally impressive, with its high ceilings and large windows that allow natural light to flood into the space.

The exhibition presents the works of SFAQ, a leading contemporary art gallery in Sydney. The gallery has a strong commitment to supporting emerging artists and is known for its innovative and thought-provoking exhibitions. The current exhibition features a range of works by emerging artists, including paintings, sculptures, and installations. The works are displayed in a way that encourages visitors to engage with the art on a deeper level.

The gallery also hosts a range of educational programs, including workshops and discussions with artists. These programs are an excellent opportunity for visitors to learn more about contemporary art and engage with the artists themselves.

In conclusion, the Museum of Contemporary Art Darling Harbour is a must-visit destination for art lovers. Whether you are a seasoned collector or a first-time visitor, you are sure to find something that inspires you. The gallery is open daily from 10am to 5pm, and entry is free. So why not plan a visit today and enjoy the art?
Currently on view at ICA Miami for Art Basel, Pedro Reyes' on-going performance project and utopian installation, the 'Sanatorium', enlists role-playing therapists and receptionists in treating victims of depression, loneliness, neurosis, family violence, suicide, and other social pathologies that encumber contemporary social life. Therapeutic success depends on a visitor's ability to suspend disbelief, encouraging individual agency in the creation of change. "It's similar to quackery," Reyes tells us, "but with a fundamental difference: in quackery the patient is led to believe a lie, while in the 'Sanatorium' you are told upfront that this is not real, and it is up to you to believe."

The 'Sanatorium' simulates a temporary mental health clinic, offering visitors an environment in which they can experience three of the sixteen available therapies that draw as much from theatre warm-up exercises, corporate coaching, and anger management exercises as they do from shamanism, sorcery, iconography, and even practical jokes. The Sanatorium is dedicated to the advancement of sociatry, an obsolete term for the science and art of healing society. "I realise that it may be too much to ask for a work of art to have such an impact," Reyes says. "But I see art as a warm-up phase that prepares us for change. What is most important to achieve is a
mental state where we have the confidence to produce changes." We asked Reyes more about the change he'd like to see in the world, and received an education in return.

**How did you come to create the Sanatorium?**

The Sanatorium was conceived as a delivery system of placebos, therapies that put self-suggestion mechanisms into action. In practice, when you enter the Sanatorium you sign a paper acknowledging that this is not a real hospital, and these are not real therapists. Paradoxically, the mind loves cognitive dissonance — that is to say, being aware that you are telling yourself a lie won't necessarily prevent you from believing in it. The hypnotic adoption of an idea can be an effective way to initiate behavioural change.

**Are the therapists played by actors?**

In the Sanatorium, we play roles, using props such as lab coats to free us from the one-dimensional labels society assigns to us. While doctors use white coats, these are also used in schools when you go to the lab or in other work environments. So the white coats actually have more than one connotation, and there is room to play here. [Philosopher] Friedrich Schiller says that someone is only fully a person when she plays, and she has to play to fully become a person.

**The visitor must suspend their disbelief when visiting. Because of this, do visitors almost become actors, playing the part of themselves?**

Every therapy is like a small ritual that helps you reconcile your desires and change your mindset. The problem is that you often access rituals in a religious or esoteric context, so you have to subscribe to those systems of beliefs. So what the Sanatorium attempts is to reproduce the same psychodynamics by conducting rituals without any ethnic specificity, without their aura of authenticity. It is not only about creating an alternative space from the health system; it's also an attempt to create alternative spaces to those provided by magic, religion, etc. because these places are also industries in which a few gurus concentrate huge followings.

**Why do you describe the Sanatorium as a utopia?**

In the early 90s, [curator and art historian] Harald Szeemann came to Mexico. I attended a week-long seminar where he presented some of his ground-breaking exhibitions in detail, but what left the biggest impression on me was his exhibition about Monte Verità, which was established in 1900 in Ascona, Switzerland, as a cooperative colony based on the principles of primitive socialism. It later became the Monte Verità Sanatorium. The members detested private property and practiced a strict standard of conduct based on vegetarianism and nudism. They rejected marriage, dress, party politics, and dogmas. One remarkable aspect of Monte Verità is how many artists spent time there, such as Isadora Duncan, Paul Klee, Hugo Ball, Mary Wigman, as well as
intellectuals such as Carl Jung and Rudolph Steiner, among many others. So it was not only noteworthy for its utopian ideals but for the imagination it took to come up with it and what it inspired in these people.

**What is your opinion on conventional modern therapy, for societal pathologies like stress, loneliness, hyper-stimulation?**

These days therapy is a luxury for a lot of people, and every day there are more people in the world who need it but can't afford it. There is also a stigma attached to it that makes many people think that those who go to therapy must be crazy. Yet today, especially in cities, there is a vast population who could benefit from it. That's why I'm so interested in alternative structures in which human connection is paramount. You won't find it in prescription drugs or hospitals, but it's crucial to generate healthier communal life.

**Do you believe that people have a greater agency than they realise in the creation of societal change?**

[ Educator and philosopher ] Paulo Freire articulated this in his Pedagogy of the Oppressed, and his ideas had enormous penetration in Latin America from the 60s into the 70s and 80s. In his own words, the school system "teaches the need to be taught," when true learning has to be driven by the curiosity and desire of every person. Today we cannot expect to reach good results out of pure spontaneity nor pure planning. The Sanatorium is not conceived as a substitute for existing therapies and social services, but as a space for encounter, since so many of our everyday pathologies result from this lack of connection.

pedroreyes.net
icamiami.org

Images courtesy the artist.
A colloquium, amounting to a discussion at a conference, is being held at Lisson Gallery in Milan, between five distinguished speakers from the early modern period of radical thought and revolutionary politics. Their portrait forms, collectively part of a new Brutus series, of Karl Marx, Lenin Trotsky, Vladimir Lenin, Nikola Tesla, and David Thorne Sargent are arranged within the space as if they’re in conversation at a table or meeting, as if in line with a Spanish. While this group of never met together in one room (although Trotsky’s final years in Madrid provide a starting point), they are linked by their shared Commissar ideology, derived from Marxism and used around the fascinating international networks of this period artists, philosophers and intellectuals in the first half of the twentieth century. Peter Keen specializes in creating such historical situations and possibilities for parallel histories, through theoretical, experimental or, in this case, sculptural means.

Outside, in the courtyard, is a multi-partite, marble installation entitled Colloquium (Frontiers), a work that consists of interlocking forms in dialogue with one another, although their shapes – each a block carbon are shaped in a variety of ways – suggest that any communication between them exists without a boundary. Keen has long organized all-heavily, multiple symposiums – notably for the touring climate blanket Symposium (2011-12), which involved participants in exchange-engaged therapies-based in-situation ranging from psychotherapists and hypnosis to abattoirs and anger management, as well as for The People’s United Nations (2012), which saw an alternative gathering of delegates from insurgent New Yorkers from every member of the Observer state represented in the real 1/1/8.

For his second solo exhibition with Lisson Gallery, Bryers’s ongoing concerns with racial or moral cohesion have been distilled into the static forms of sculpture, no offered in Tokyo in the acts of exchange and discussion. The five historical figures, each carved from volcanic stone, recall the angular forms of famous artists such as: Amedeo Modigliani, Constantine Brancusi or Umberto Boccioni, while the marble Colloquium is in keeping with the interlocking sculpture and assembled bodies (Sargent), allowing that Bryers-employed to question his characters and ideas within the heavy metals of Western Historicism. Keen is also interested in how these ideas might still permeate contemporary thinking, as not only in each souvenir but in individual – including, for instance, The Head of Karl Marx (2014) – that relate to another series of quasi-galactic puppetry forms produced since 2008 under the banner of Being Marx, which are being gathered together for The Permanent Revolution – An Ideological Snowball Comedy, concurrently on show at the Museum Aussch in Berlin.

at Lisson Gallery, Milan

until 18 July 2014.
When you live in Mexico,” says Pedro Reyes, “the worst thing is that you get used to these things, these daily killings, and you just hope it’s not gonna be you. But for me there’s a sense of urgency. I cannot afford to be cynical about this issue.”

In 2002, the Mexican artist was offered a cache of over 6000 guns that had been decontrollewed by the authorities. In a spectacular public event, the weapons were run over by a tank and a bulldozer, seen into pieces and attacked by bikers. Previously he had organized his own gun amnesty and collected a smaller cache of 1521 weapons, which he melted down and turned into 1521 shiny to plant 1521 trees (Polies Por Plantas, 2008). This time he handed the scrap metal over to a group of six musicians who converted the material into an orchestra of 90 instruments over a period of two weeks, which he collectively titled imagine. There’s a rugged brutality and an almost coldness to the creations, which are familiar yet unfamiliär. They hold a faint echo of their former selves, but a transformation has taken place.

Reyes is interested in developing a cultural rejection of the weapons industry by importing agents of death into agents of life,” says Reyes, explaining his wider artistic vision. “It’s almost like a change in polarity.”

As small groups of the Imagine instruments have been exhibited around the world — in Mexico, South Korea, Turkey, and now at London’s Lisson Gallery — Reyes has arranged for local musicians to perform with them. “In Mexico there was a special feel because people were very aware that these weapons had killed people,” he recalls. “Having them made into instruments is like a sense of victory over the beast. So it felt a little bit like an exorcism, but also a sort of request, a reconciliation.”

The Mexican government recorded 27,598 homicides in 2013, and the country is awash with an estimated 25 million civilian guns. But Reyes says his motivation stems from both the particular circumstances in Mexico, and the problem of small arms globally. “Being neighbour to the US we are very vulnerable to the weapons trade,” he says. “So is the place where all the weapons that are fabricated all around the world enter Latin America. We have a war against drugs but we don’t have governments waging war against the weapons trade. Governments are actually part of the business.”

With that in mind, I wondered whether he had any reservations about accepting weapons from the Mexican Secretary of Defence. Is he helping them look like the good guys? “The truth is that the government is made of hundreds of different agencies that often don’t talk to each other,” he replies. “I believe that if you are interested in producing change, you have to become the problem. You have to do some work in the interior of the organisation or the system. There’s always going to be people that want to do things. I believe it is the citizens’ or the artists’ responsibility to find these people.”

For the Lisson Gallery exhibition, Reyes gave some of the remaining destroyed weapons to Mexican music and technology artists COCOlab to produce a set of automatic instruments that come alive as a computer sends them fragments of scores on a
candah bates (dean, 2012). the new instruments include an e-bass cell and a collection of velvet-together-geared, and the kloostervink, which turns the shape of the handles of knifed suitcases into a circle of tuned percussion/rhythm units.

Reyes also wanted to make a record to complement the London show. London gallery director joanne thomason approached guitarist and theater artist lee johnson, who put together a six-piece group including his former spring heat jam collaborator ashley watts, one-time the invisible drummer charles hagerty, and brooklyn-based multi-instrumentalist stephen buff. over the course of a day in the studio, the band had done a mix of heavy structured, experimental rock grooves and exploratory improvisations that work with the instrument’s unique string properties.

both instrument makers and musicians have had to struggle to overcome the inherent non-linearity of the metal materials. “the fluxes are very hard to play because they don’t have proper intonation,” says johnson. “just a few seconds after the piece is complete, the fluxes just go on because they’re thin things made of metal. the easiest one to play is actually the top steel.”

reyes agrees: “these are instruments that are very primitive in a way. very cumbersome, not as lightweight and with no such qualities. they have an almost cannonball-like quality that i feel has had an effect on the music. the music is so much about the energy that had a radical potential, but also a certain intensity.”

the collective spirit of reyes’ work is easily recalled john canonna’s “imaginary,” a song about a bit of time with new zealand’s as it. health, the year of uncertain influence can perhaps be measured by the fact that in 1972 the moon administration attempted to deport him from the u.s. fearing that a former beatle’s anti-war activism would impact negatively on the president’s prospects for re-election. “today we live in an era where popular music’s cultural potential has effectively been realized,” says reyes’s project once more has the potential to force a wider change and tap into a more substantial social conscience.

of today’s circumstances, reyes has written: “this is a large flux of heavy and suffering in which all cultural rejection is expressed. guess continuing to be depicted as something easy, both in popular and independent venues. may be someone who isn’t aware to the screen, but there is always one who would reject the role of a trigger-happy hero.”

nevertheless, reyes is subject. he sees music progress as a constant process – victory was brought to an end, even here the voice. beaver or other disappearance is inevitable. “i think that when you have a concrete belief, people join and help,” he says. “it’s a collective process that i can’t do on my own. it’s not an idea that i think i possess. it’s an idea that i would like to be-activated in every other place. in the city of copenhagen, the only week of the year when the world’s-not-recorded was when there was a music festival. people went with their families to the street and there was an unexpected, surprising music, an amazing factor in the year. not everyone has a relationship with literature or visual arts. pretty much everything has a relationship with music.”

there are hundreds of people who participate in london america with a focus on music education as an active social change. he declares. “i want to do a similar project with Wales, where you can get involved with wedding and rock music. this is a demography in which no one is paying enough attention and which is most vulnerable to dropping out of school and joining a gang.”

“I feel his vision is impossible,” says johnson. “we feel like he’s picking a realistic perspective from it in an American. cd fours is at london’s lewis gallery until 4 may. the dinner at which is from 10.00am to 4.00pm. the dinner is at the gallery in a limited edition.”
Pedro Reyes Brings Serenity to Brooklyn

by Juan A. Agon

Art in America
2nd June 2011

Lisson Gallery

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What is Sanatorium?

A transient clinic which provides short, unexpected therapies. Psychological help made accessible to all ages, social backgrounds, and time schedules.

Sanatorium is inspired by the City Dweller’s remarkable fascination with a variety of therapies that help them cope with hectic schedules, demanding lifestyle choices, and often complicated relationships that the city stimulates. As a result, cities count a disproportionate number of psychotherapists, self-improvement instructors, life coaches, and counselors. In the temporary clinic, Sanatorium, we alter the city’s existing therapy landscape with short, unexpected, experimental treatments where visitors experience up to three sessions from over a dozen options through meetings with a series of “therapists.”

Balancing reality and parody, Sanatorium draws from Gestalt psychodrama, theater warm-up exercises, fluxus events, conflict-resolution techniques, trust-building games, corporate coaching, psychodrama, and hypnosis. While some of the sessions should be experienced alone, others are specifically catered to couples and larger groups or intended for families.
Pedro Reyes

Pedro Reyes

The sculpture illustrated above is from his 1997 exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles. It is titled "Reyes' 97" and consists of 97 wooden figures. The figures are arranged in a circle, each figure holding a small wooden sculpture. The sculpture is called "Reyes' 97" because it was created to commemorate the 97th anniversary of the Mexican Revolution.

How did you decide to make wooden sculptures as opposed to other materials?

I chose wood because it is a material that is easily accessible and has a rich history in Mexican art. The wood used in the sculptures is from local trees, which helps to reduce the carbon footprint of the artwork. The wood is also very sturdy and can withstand the elements, making it a suitable material for outdoor installations.

What is the inspiration behind your work?

My inspiration comes from the history of Mexico and its rich cultural heritage. I am interested in exploring the relationship between art and society and how art can be used to address social issues. The sculptures are often based on historical events and figures, such as the Mexican Revolution, and are designed to provoke thought and discussion about the role of art in society.

How do you see your work in relation to other contemporary art movements?

I see my work as part of a broader movement of contemporary artists who are using art as a tool for social change. My work is often political and social in nature, and I am interested in using art to raise awareness about important issues and to challenge the status quo. I believe that art can be a powerful tool for social change and that it has the ability to bring about positive change in the world.
The works in Divise are made of guns; how did you approach this?
The change in making art about guns is that guns are rarely used by the artists, so the work can end up degrading, rather than elevating it. More and more we see used materials for “make” guns, and when I think of these meanings, it is not always clear what the artist is responding to. It may be the situation that we see in the world; it is only when they work as good pieces, but for my own agenda I never like the message to be clear so that my works have meaning for general audiences. I am interested in how the Japanese paper weaves Berth Bertelli mentioned. He believed that when creating a Berth in both technical connection and a sense of weight where an object or image is in a size, light or when something is added or removed in a meaningful way. In this that we should not have to be afraid of technical connection. I think Bertelli worked with an idea that was very close to our call “superficial.” He worked on an idea that was very close to our call “superficial.” We worked on an idea that was very close to our call “superficial.”

How did you decide to make musical instruments out of confiscated weapons?
In 2020, I was invited by the Historical Gardens of Kibune to make a public art project. I proposed Palm for Palm’s Island, made from guns for which we collected 1157 weapons at a voluntary campaign. The arms were published and then the collected material was constructed into 1157 swords, one sword for every gun. Those swords were then distributed to schools, museums, and other institutions that are helping to phase out guns. So far we have made this in over 20 cities worldwide and are still working. In January this year, I received a call from the federal government after they had heard about Palm for Palm. They told me that a huge number of weapons seized from criminals would be destroyed, and asked me if I was interested in keeping the metals to make more swords. I was happy to accept, but this time I wanted to do something different and decided to make the confiscated weapons into instruments.

These instruments are played too? Is it always innovative for you?
I have always been very interested in how art works and activate group dynamics; so this project is a collaboration understanding with strong structures and collaborations participants that it is also intended to have a wider social impact, focusing the discussion about gun control and how we can use culture to create a safer community.
"The danger in making art about guns is that you can easily be seduced by the object, so the result can end up glorifying rather than criticizing it. Some art uses cardboard or recycled materials to "make" guns and I think that, in those instances, it is not always clear what the artist is expressing."

Do you believe that art in general plays a crucial role in challenging the wider discourse of society?

The most important resource people have is their creativity. The solution to most problems is not found in money or in technology, but rather lies about how we want to create community responses that lead to cultural change.

How would you describe your performance project Sonatas?

The Sonatas is a unique clinic that provides therapeutic environments, mental health and psychology. In order to experience this project, you have to sign up as a patient and participate in sessions that may be individual or combined into groups. There are a variety of techniques used, such as social psychology, behaviorism, self-help sessions, and other creative techniques. During the course, we practice counseling, yoga, hypnosis, and art therapy. I observed the Sonatas as a group of clinicians, therapists that engage self-suggestive methodologies. We all the patients up front that the Sonatas are not set to be up to them to tell what they want since a piece of paper describing that this is not a real hospital and there are no real doctors. Fundamentally, the main issue is cognitive distortions and being aware that you are telling yourself what you want to believe. Next, you have to convince you have been feeling in it. The hypnotic induction of a sentence can be an effective way to create behavioral change. The therapists have the facile goal of removing mild affections that do not have psychological long-lasting effects on the most mental or your own personal situation. Overall, the Sonatas is a happy place that offers plenty of insights, allowing others to make meaningful discourse about their lives while helping others.

What inspires you?

Second-hand bookshelves—that's where I get all my ideas. I am a compulsive book buyer on every subject, the ideas pile up and merge into each other, so I have a whole universe of projects for years to come.
Weapon for change

Mexican artist Pedro Reyes has turned firearms into musical instruments for his show, Disarm, opening at the Lisson Gallery tonight. He hopes making a noise about the violence in his homeland will help put a stop to it. He tells Ben Luke:

"The idea came from our museum in Mexico City that since there are thousands of guns in the country do people really need to have them? The idea is not to ban them but to change how they are perceived. So we created a gun that plays a Mexican folk melody, which the police think sounds pretty nice. In Bali, the guns are used in ceremonies, and in Colombia they are used in festivals. The idea is that people can make music with the weapons."

Disarm is based on a formula - you swap the bullets for musical notes. We've created instruments like the xylophone, the cellos, and the hand drums that produce a sound. The guns are disassembled, the barrels are used for tubes that connect the notes, and then we put them together. The result is a harmonious and peaceful sound that people can understand."

The project is part of a larger installation that addresses the issue of violence in Mexico. The Mexican artist has been working on this for a number of years, and he hopes the exhibition will help raise awareness about the issue. He says: "The problem is not just in Mexico, it's everywhere. But we can start by making music with the weapons."

The exhibition is on display at the Lisson Gallery from March 26 to May 26. The gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday from 10am to 6pm. The show is free to enter.
lance Pedro hopes of the mission to persuade fellow Mexicans to lay down their arms.

The hope is that these ideas are replicable, that is, that they are not unique to the Mexican context. But while violence is already having a tangible local impact, it is also causing alarm that it is "a cultural habit" with intractable implications. It's virtually impossible to buy a weapon in Mexico - it's dangerous to carry them.

He talks of the "invisible violence" which underlies the urban decay he is trying to combat. Governmental arms trading, financial investment in illegal weapons industry. For the situation to change radically, he says, it requires an emotional change, which means changing the way we think about ourselves and our environment.

In the Union exhibition, a video shows the game that was played before they were given to Bajio being crushed under the wheels of a tank. A screen which prompted a series of original musical instruments. "The tanks left no impression on me, because with a laugh, I thought, "I can put them in a row again," I could get a tank and make a whole car."

So Baron Pedro's mission is to help the government understand that the tanks are a problem, and that peace is impossible without controlling the weapons. When he talks about these things in the tank, it's not just the gun - it's the problem of violence that underlies the situation. And it's not just the guns - it's the system of values that supports them.

If you're interested in this kind of thinking, I recommend you read the book by Baron Pedro. It's called "The Tank and the City."
Pedro Reyes dissects the war on drugs

Pedro Reyes is laughing, now, sitting and high-living with the more than 50 high school students gathering for a rehearsal at the Island of the Museum of Fine Arts earlier this week. It may feel like an earth-shaking exercise at minute camp, but “Photomontage,” the partially improvised show he’s preparing with the kids, was inspired by the death of 10,000 children in his native Mexico.
He has lost friends and relatives to violence he says was directly connected to the war on drugs. That campaign, which during the Nixon administration and through the decades by the US government’s efforts to fight the national and international drug trade, has, he says, flooded his country with illegal guns. “Pharmacosphere,” being presented Friday night in the MFA’s Shapiro Family Courtyard, will feature storylines from area schools as well as uninvited participants from the audience. 

Bryan talks about “open theater.”

The purpose is to create a scene or play with multiple endings.

“The idea is to use this idea from theater that is often used as a warm up exercise to see the stage as a way to thrust a situation that is quite complex,” Bryan said in an interview at the MFA. “How do we deal with drugs? The consumption, the addiction, the trade, the criminalization of drugs. And the reason to put this on the stage is basically to look at the subject not with a moral perspective but rather anthropological perspective. Trying to look at it objectively without putting a direct judgment on it.”

Bryan, 42, calls himself a sculptor, but in reality, his theatrical creations – blending improvisation and a base script – have earned him notice in recent years. In “Saturnrama,” which premiered at the Cooper Hewitt Museum in New York in 2003, Bryan created a kind of meta-theater with therapists ready to help actors deal with a variety of emotional issues. His “Baby Show” puppet show has been presented at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. And “Pharmacosphere” will be staged at the Denver Museum of Art in New York in the fall.

Last week, Harvard University’s Cultural Agents Initiative, sponsored another of Bryan’s projects, “Pain got Patience.”
launched in 1987, was devised made from.

glass to plant roses. So far, more that 2,000
trees have been planted, the latest in Friday
with Reyna at Arnold Arboretum.

Lucas, the MFF’s assistant curator of contemporary art, who organized ‘Phenomena,’ has been familiar with his work for years. Lucas spent seven Spanish, was a Fulbright Scholar in Chile, and traveled extensively through South America. And she was thrilled to find out that Carla Fernando, Reyna’s wife, would be in New York for three weeks this summer as the artist in residence at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. That led Lucas to approach Reyna.

In an interview, Lucas talked of Reyna’s work in relation to the Brazilian Augusto Heredia’s ‘ öğrenciler assinante,’ a maquinaria created in the system to inspire moral and political change. The quote of Heredia’s training in architecture and sculpture and his own interest in taking them to performances.

But in the end, she says it’s the artist’s personality that she respects will define the experience, whether it’s the workshops he’s running this week or the performance itself Friday night. The tough script, which includes such characters as ‘Smart Money’ in less hi-pri, dearer stuff, but hey, in topic, and the Mexican president, is peppered with statistics that far more people die from prescription drugs than illegal ones, that the United States spends billions of dollars on the drug war.

Reyna hopes to raise questions about what we, as a society, take both at the waging of dictators and our own war.

In an interview before the rehearsal, Reyna, who has a bald head sprinkled with gray, black glasses, and wears his hands as he talks, smiles easily, even when he’s talking about serious issues.

“The thing is, for instance, I’m not advocating for drug use but if we were to spend those resources on education or job creation, you could see better results,” Reyna said.

He also emphasizes what he considers the problem with legal drugs. He talks about the addictive opium prescribed by doctors, the pills that are often used where he
behavioral therapy could work. He considers alcohol a drug that should be examined more closely.

The idea is not, he says, to lose those drugs, because the behavior prohibition doesn’t work. He would like to discuss legalizing what’s now against the law, to regulate, and to take the market away from criminals.

When Bevan gathered the teens at the School at the Museum of Fine Arts for a first rehearsal, it was a loosely structured session, with the students not given a script until partway through.

“What we are trying to do is look at it as if we were scientists and we were coming from another planet,” Bevan said by means of an introduction. “And thinking, what is going on with the Roman Empire? What is this fascination they have with all kinds of violeance?”

The questions hung in the air as the teenagers waited. Then, Bevan told them to hang up their worries. Before long, they were laughing and having a good time, says Bevan.

Looking ahead to the Friday performances, Bevan said, “I think it’s going to be a blast actually, because Bevan’s such a fun guy. And these are issues I don’t think teenagers get a chance to work through in their everyday lives.”

What will happen during the performances? Bevan doesn’t know.

“I’m interested in participation and how art can help you find solutions,” he said. “The idea is that if you are uncomfortable and you feel something is wrong, you are invited to say so. If you don’t like how it is, how would you do it right?”

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