

BORTOLAMI

Nicolás Guagnini

Asociación Psicoanalítica Argentina

6 September – 5 October 2019

Opening Friday, 6 September from 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Bortolami is pleased to present *Asociación Psicoanalítica Argentina*, Nicolás Guagnini's third solo exhibition with the gallery. Combining tropes from ancient funerary architecture and psychoanalysis, Guagnini will show a group of new ceramic sculptures of heads and sphinxes, processionaly arranged and placed on glass pedestals.

What follows is a set of notes by the artist, accompanying this body of work:

Father Knots / Downfallen

The Father is one and all—is omniscient, abstract, like the law. Yet it manifests itself in perpetual difference or variation of a type... "cases." Forms of authority.

Boards, committees, academies.

Two human-beast-male-female beings (who are in fact one and two and four in their double duality) laugh uncontrollably at the downfallen. The downfallen's marbled flesh is still solid but increasingly becoming like liver meat. They live on top of each other, their pain is one as is their space.

All paranoia begins in the ear. And the downfallen Fathers monitor everything—they bear the pain of the police state, the tech conglomerate, the mega corp(se); the hallucination of the constant surveillance that produces nothing but its own reality. They are a metaphor for the contemporary self, algorithmically decapitated by a system in a precarious equilibrium of perpetual social media feedback. The Fathers are becoming-father. They only have an ear because they already know what they will hear. Heads grown out from the need to confirm the ear, to validate the paranoid listening with features.

Père-affect as Père-Trump. For the all-controlling father, ear frequencies matter more than content. Rhythm of outrage, rage as paranoid political capital. Like techno music: no melody, debasement of musical form.

Burghers of Calais, first anti-monument. Glorification of heroic "losers." No pedestal, to each figure their mini-ground. Painful gestures as immortality.

Mother enigmas

Human animal, female male.

Mother is unknowable. Yes, her breasts will always feed...but her unconditional love has no possible answer. Riddle of maternal love.

How to torque the Sphinx, the most stationary and tectonic of enigmas?

Egyptian art shows movement as potential rather than action. A reconstruction of the body alone, waiting for an animation (Greek and Roman is body and soul instead). No torsion. Either frontal or lateral, or even both in proto-cubist fashion.

Panofsky: funerary sculpture first "prospective," providing a new body for the soul on the other side; then "retrospective," celebrating the glorious stances of the body of the deceased...these oscillating positions often times overrule polytheism v. monotheism. (Tomb Sculpture is thus chronological and cyclical—an answer to Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas*?)

Where is the Sphinx being? When? It has always been and it will forever be. It's both prospective and retrospective. More than human.

If polytheism is like the id, with gods and festivals for every base instinct, monotheism is the superego—a moral voice that we must hear at all times. It sees us through our ears.

The gods before monotheism are human/animal...and they return as nightmares in the evil gargoyles of the Middle Ages, in the allegories rotten into hallucinations by Bosch and Brueghel. Monotheism condemns the human/animal to the grotesque. Satan is

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often a human/animal—and concurrent symbolic systems of heterogeneity become "occult": alchemy, Kabbalah...another return of the human/animal as nightmare: Kafka.

(*Moses and Monotheism* as the cornerstone text for the reality principle?—Yes, but the desk is always full of Egyptian figurines and cocaine. Those two escapes, one into the past and another into the present are always already *real*.)

Mom was a psychoanalyst in Buenos Aires. It has to be stated.

A psychoanalyst is necessarily sphinx-like. All therapists build shrines. My mother, too.

Processions are shrines in motion. From the tomb to the white cube, from the unconscious to the market.

Procession

Processions are a form of self-ethnography. A group representing themselves to themselves.

The unconscious and the methods to unearth it are processional. In that sense, psychoanalysis is ethnographic.

Warburg, notes for panel 79 of the *Mnemosyne Atlas*: "This atmosphere of satisfied worldliness most glaringly contrasts with the papal procession which is not centered on the monster but on the monstrosity." Like all ideological collective arrangements, processions normalize one or another monstrosity.

Processions can reconcile a cyclical notion of time with empirical linearity. Scale and repetition of motifs are explosively metonymical. As a syntax, not unlike a sentence with subordinate propositions.

Labyrinth

The ear is a labyrinth with another labyrinth inside. No labyrinth, no balance.

First labyrinth naturally in Egypt. Funerary structure. Paranoid structure par excellence.

In the labyrinth's interior, the carcasses left by the Minotaur's appetite.

In medieval churches and abbeys, the labyrinths are theological metaphors: ways to reach the Father. The swastika: labyrinth reduced to sign.

Medieval cities are concentric labyrinths. (Situationist Derive: nostalgia for the medieval city to counter Haussmannization?)

Asociación Psicoanalítica Argentina

Founding Father: Enrique Pichon-Rivière. From Switzerland to the Argentinian province of Corrientes, on the border of Paraguay and Brazil. First learns Guarani, then Spanish. Proto-psychoanalysis with Guarani indigenous people committed to semi-colonial hospital, by a forgotten river. All ends up in his invention of the "operative group". Prefigures Bateson. Of course, Mom's professor.

Founding Mother: Mimi Langer. Vienna, exiled to Buenos Aires via International Medical Brigade in the Spanish Civil War lost to Franco's fascism, then exiled to Mexico via Argentine's own fascist dictatorship. Studied in Freud's Institute. Cancer, like Mom. Of course, Mom's professor.

Nicolás Guagnini (b. in 1966 in Buenos Aires, Argentina) has lived and worked in New York since 1998. Recent solo exhibitions include *Twilight of the Idols*, Tarble Art Center, Charleston, IL; *The Walrus*, 3A Gallery, New York; *Union Gaucha Productions*, Artists Space, New York. Recent group exhibitions include *Publishing as Artistic Toolbox: 1989-2017*, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria; *Sinister Feminism: A.I.R. Gallery's 12th Biennial Exhibition*, curated by Piper Marshall, New York; *Bread and Roses*, Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw; *Dancing Museum*, Museum of Modern Art, Sao Paulo; *Descartes' Daughter*, Swiss Institute, New York; *A Drawing Show Curated by Dan Graham*, Micheline Swajcer, Antwerp; and *Notations: The Cage Effect Today*, Hunter College Art Gallery, New York. He was a founder of Orchard Gallery (2005-2008), the film collective *Union Gaucha Productions*, and his writings have been published in *October*, *Texte zur Kunst*, and the recent catalogue for *Bruce Nauman: Disappearing Acts*. He also designed DICKFACE, a typography available at dickface.me