

GALERIE NATHALIE OBADIA

PARIS - BRUXELLES

RICARDO BREY

All that is could be otherwise

January 7th – February 25th, 2017

18, rue du Bourg-Tibourg - 75004 - Paris



Ricardo Brey
Exilio temporal, 2016
Photography printed on canvas, oil, chain, metallic bells, wood and metal pasted on cardboard back-mounted
on canvas board
60 x 80 x 3 cm
Courtesy de l'artiste et Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles

The Galerie Nathalie Obadia is delighted to present Ricardo Brey's exhibition entitled *All that is could be otherwise*, after *Kicking the can down the road* held at the Brussels gallery in 2014.

Ricardo Brey, born in Havana (Cuba) in 1955, lives in Ghent, Belgium, since 1991. He is one of the most prominent Cuban artists on the international art scene. In the 1980's, he was an active member of *Volumen I*. This collective of young artists emerged on the occasion of an exhibition held in Havana in 1981 and marked the avant-garde in Cuba after the Revolution of 1959. In their works, members of the collective took distance with the official Cuban socialist-realism by proposing a more conceptual artistic approach and new art forms. During the third *Havana Biennial* in 1989, Jan Hoet discovered the work from Ricardo Brey and invited him to the *Documenta IX* of Kassel in 1992. With this exhibition, Brey's work became more internationally reconized.

In 1985, Ricardo Brey travelled to the United States. During his four-month stay, Brey produced artworks presented at the *Amelie Wallace Gallery* (State University of New York) and exchanged experiences with fellow artists from New York. He also lived among the Native Americans in South Dakota. The experience of sharing the extremelly difficult daily life of the Native American community, pushed Ricardo Brey to an introspection towards his own background. This process, that is translated in the introduction of his AfroCuban roots on his works at the end of the 1980's and begining of the 1990's, learned that there is a connection amount all things in the world, a holistic view that still guide his work.

Influenced by his Nigerian and Spanish origins, and his travels to every corners of the planet, Ricardo Brey's work goes through a wide range of references. The artist reflects a relationship between men and nature, an interaction between different cultures and religions, and issues of cultural identity on our contemporary society. In a world that confronts poetry, science and myth, his work echoes the theory of structuralism from by Claude Levi-Strauss (1908 - 2009), the work of the Russian film director Andreï Tarkovski (1932 - 1986) or even the *Hagakure*, a collection of thoughts and practical commentaries of samurai Jōchō Yamamoto (Japan, 17th century).

The *All that is could be otherwise* exhibition will highlight several Ricardo Brey's more recurrent themes in his oeuvre. In his more recent works, the artist often questions the figure of the tree, blanketed with fragments, surrounded by pieces of objects or partially

covered. He draws his inspiration directly from the place of plants in Cuba, which underwent massive deforestation. His recent photos based works, often printed on canvas, combines the intensity of the image with its negation through the intensity of objects, like the installations *Sea Level* (2016) or *Árbol cortado y escombros* (2013-2014). *Birdland* (2001), is a pivotal piece considering that on it Brey accomplished different meanings and thoughts in one work, such as the combination of references to the music and the natural world. This installation also implicates the free spirit of association taking from the jazz that are translated into all Ricardo Brey's work «(...)crossroad of thoughts that comes and back in different shapes during years». «*Birdland is the name of a mythical place for all jazz musicians. In the middle of a nest made of coats and urban waste, surrounded by ostrich eggs, lies a saxophone standing like a swan*», explains Ricardo Brey. The bird, or its eggs, is also very often used as a poetical metaphor of freedom and an opening to something else (especially in *The Tourist*, 2016).

His works on paper show a true reflection around the artist's "sculpture-photographs" and installations. For him, paper is a support that defines a limited format space. Yet material covers its surface and gives it substance, turning images, ideas and thoughts into physical reality. In his work entitled *Inferno* (2016), he references the text *Dos lecciones infernales* (17th century) by Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), from which he extracts words or excerpts in order to give shape to ideas, sounds and thoughts that inspire him. Paper becomes a territory that allows the artist's hand to leave its mark on the world. The work on paper is an object in itself. It means freedom of time, place and space.

For the *All that is could be otherwise* exhibition, Ricardo Brey worked around the Korean word "*Hallyu*", which associates quick cultural dissemination to the motion of a wave. In general, Brey's works are as intriguing and disturbing, as they are enigmatic. The artist produces global images that make us question ourselves as well as our relationship to the tumultuous world around. His work reflects his interrogations around major topics like language, image, daydreams, culture, knowledge, time and the relationship between chaos, reason and irrationality. Through an ongoing flow of thoughts and signs, Ricardo Brey constructs and deconstructs a spiritual and truly poetical work.

Ricardo Brey is born in Havana (Cuba) in 1955. He lives and works in Ghent since 1991.

The artist graduated from the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes San Alejandro de la Havana in 1974.

Recently, he enjoyed major solo shows like *Au fond du ciel* au M.H.K.A in Antwerp (Belgium, 2015), *BREY* at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes at Havana (Cuba, 2014), *The Burden and Blessing of Mortality* at the New International Cultural Center of Antwerp (Belgium, 2009), *Universe* at S.M.A.K. in Ghent (Belgium, 2006), *Ricardo Brey, Hanging around* at the GEM of the Hague (Netherlands, 2004), *Sources* at the Centre d'Art Contemporain of Crestet (France, 2000).

He also took part in many notable group shows such as *All the world's futures* at the 56th Venice Biennale at the Arsenal and PERFORMANCES (Italy, 2015), *How to Gather? Acting in a Center in a City in the Heart of the Island of Eurasia* at the Moscow Biennale (Russia, 2015), *Ritornando a Gand, a group exhibition organised by Albert Baronian* in Ghent (Belgium, 2014), *The Permission To Be Global: Latin American Art from the Ella Fontanals-Cisneros Collection* at the CIFO Art Space of Miami (USA, 2013), *Nouvelles Vagues, Artesur, Collective Fictions* at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris (France, 2013), *Sint-Jan, curaté par Jan Hoet & Hans Martens* at the Sint-Baafskathedraal of Ghent (Belgium, 2012), *Frames & Documents: Conceptual Practices, Selections from the Ella Fontanals-Cisneros Collection* in Miami (USA, 2011), *ABC Art Belge Contemporain* at the Fresnoy Studio National des Art Contemporains in Tourcoing (France, 2010), *Something Else!!! A selection of works from the S.M.A.K* at the Museo d'Arte della Provincia di Nuoro (Italy, 2009), *Kunst uit huis IV: Otto L. Schaap Content Art Consumers* at the Stedelijk Museum Schiedam (Netherlands, 2008), *Commitment* at the CC Strombeek in Brussels (Belgium, 2007), *Kick! A project by S.M.A.K. & A.Z. Maria Middelaers* in Ghent (Belgium, 2007), *Room with a view, The Bouwfonds Art Collection* at the Gemeentemuseum of the Hague (Netherlands, 2006), *Trattenendosi* at the Venice Biennale (Italy, 1999), *Ainsi de suite 3* at the Centre Régional d'Art Contemporain in Sete (France, 1999), *Tussenin / in between* at the Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens in Deurle (Belgium, 1998), *I TransAfrican art invitational exhibition* at the Orlando Museum of Art (USA, 1998); he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for installation Art and Sculpture.

Ricardo Brey's works are also represented in numerous private and public collections among which are the Sindika Dokolo Foundation (Angola), the MOA/FL Museum of Art/Fort Lauderdale (USA), the FNAC (France), the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes of Havana (Cuba), the S.M.A.K of Ghent (Belgium), the Lenbachhaus Museum in Munich (Germany), the Suermondt-Ludwig-Museum of Aix-La-Chapelle (Germany), the De la Cruz Collection in Miami (USA), the Ella Fontanals Cisneros Collection, Miami (USA), the Bouwfonds Collection (Netherlands), the Pieter and Marieke Sanders Collection (Netherlands).

Galerie Nathalie Obadia

Paris

Bourg-Tibourg

Ricardo Brey

All that is could be otherwise

January 7th- February 25th, 2017

Shahpour Pouyan

March 9th- May 6th, 2017

Jean Dubuffet et Fabrice Hyber

May 20th- July 2017

Galerie Nathalie Obadia

Paris

Cloître Saint-Merri

Sophie Kuijken

January 7th – March 11th, 2017

Exposition collective

March 18th- May 13th, 2017

Jean Dubuffet et Fabrice Hyber

May 20th - July 2017

Galerie Nathalie Obadia

Bruxelles

Seydou Keïta

November 17th, 2016 – January 21th, 2017

Brook Andrew

February 2nd –April 1st, 2017

Brenna Youngblood

April, 18th – May 20th, 2017

For any additional information, please contact : Pauline Chiche
pauline@nathalieobadia.com / + 33 (0) 1 42 74 47 41