

minerva cuevas

paro general, 2017

apr. 1 – 2017
may 31, 2017

sonora 128

av. sonora 128,
col. condesa, mexico city

#sonoral28
#parogeneral
#minervacuevas

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tue – thu, 11 am – 6 pm
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kurimanzutto is pleased to announce **Minerva Cuevas (Mexico City, 1975)** as the fifth participant of **Sonora 128**, an exhibition space in an advertising billboard in Mexico City, which aims to instigate conversation with a broader audience.

Cuevas finds raw material for her work by analyzing the power relations that characterize the capitalist economy and its environmental consequences. One of the lines of research in her work has been the exploitation of the worker as part of the labor dynamic imposed by consumer society and hierarchical social relations, as well as the possibility of resistance. **Through graphic intervention - one of the constants in her practice - she proposes political reflections and promotes the impact of local actions in the generation of fair labor practices.**

Throughout her career Cuevas has inserted her work into urban spaces, outside of the conventions of the museum and the gallery. For example, *Mejor Vida Corp* (1998) was a project based on replicating the structure of corporations to generate a space within the rigorously monitored and regulated systems of the economy and its institutions. Often the artists' pieces become part of everyday life, as in the case of *Dodgem* (2002), where she intervened the bumper cars at an amusement park in Mexico City with stickers of the most important oil companies. The scene emulated the permanent war of these companies to control the markets and territories. **Cuevas has also created works for billboard advertising in countries such as Slovenia, Germany and Austria, which respond to the historical, political and social context of each geography.**

Commissioned specifically for Sonora 128, *Paro general* (2017) seeks to go beyond the advertising dimension of the billboard as a public device; the work subverts the commercial purpose of the billboard to communicate an unsettling message. The advertising board is transformed into a symbol of labor struggle: a red-and-black banner, related to the labor movement and the strike. On this sign of rebellion, Cuevas places the phrase of the writer and political theorist Murray Bookchin: "If we don't do the impossible we will be faced with the unthinkable." Taken from Bookchin's book *The Ecology of Freedom* (1982), this quote suggests a precise reference and at the same time an infinite number of readings, which circulate political action, the urgent complaints voiced by the social and ecological crisis, and even the most personal spheres.

Cuevas appropriates the language of the establishment to destabilize traditional mechanisms and present a message of resistance open in its interpretation. The title refers specifically to the context of Mexico, where a national strike would represent a political action of enormous visibility and impact. *Paro General* seeks to communicate the urgency of change with a phrase that resonates in a sea of marketing designed to curb a transformation of the dominant social and economic structures. This piece acts as a tool to question the status of the individual under the capitalist regime, characterized by constant abuse and the implicit possibility of rebelling in daily life.

about the artist

Minerva Cuevas (Mexico City, 1975) studied a BA in Visual Arts at Escuela Nacional de Artes Plásticas UNAM. In 2004 she attended the Artist Residency Edith-Ruß-Haus für Medienkunst Stipend, in Oldenburg, Germany after having made in 2003 the Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst DAAD, Artist Residency in Berlin, Germany and in 1998 The Banff Centre for the Arts, Artist Residency in Alberta, Canada.

Her most important solo exhibitions include: *Feast and famine*, kurimanzutto, Mexico City, Mexico (2015); *Minerva Cuevas*, Museo de la Ciudad de México, Mexico City (2012); *Landings*, Cornerhouse, Gallery 1, Manchester, United Kingdom (2011); *SCOOP*, Whitechapel Gallery, London, United Kingdom (2010); *Minerva Cuevas*, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Nederland (2008); *Phenomena*, Kunsthalle Basel, Basel, Switzerland (2007); *On Society*, MC Kunst, Los Angeles, United States (2007); *Egalité 2007*, Le Grand Café-Centre d'art contemporain, Saint Nazaire France (2007); *Schwarzfahrer Are My Heroes*, DAAD, Berlin Germany (2004); *Mejor Vida Corp*, Museo Tamayo, Mexico City Mexico (2000). Moreover, her work has been included in group exhibitions at institutions such as the Museum Ludwig, Koln, Germany (2016); South London Gallery, London, United Kingdom (2016); MOCA Detroit, Detroit, United States (2015); Museo Jumex, Mexico City Mexico (2013); Kunsthau Bregenz, Bregenz, Austria (2013); Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris (mam/arc), Paris, France (2012); muac Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City, Mexico (2011); KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany

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(2010); Centre Pompidou, Paris, France (2010) San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, United States (2008) among others.

She has participated in various biennials, such as the Liverpool Biennial, Liverpool, United Kingdom (2010); the 6th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art, Berlin Germany (2010); the 9th Biennale de Lyon, Lyon France (2007); The Bienal do Mercosur, Porto Alegre, Brazil (2007); the 27th Bienal De São Paulo Brasil, Sao Paulo, Brazil (2006); the Tirana Biennale, Kompleksi-Goldi, Tirana, Albania (2005), and The 8th International Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul, Turkey (2003).

Minerva Cuevas currently lives and works in Mexico City.

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Minerva Cuevas, installation view of *Paro general*, 2017, Sonora 128.
Courtesy of the artist and kurimanzutto, Mexico City, 2017.
Photo: Abigail Enzaldo