

M A R I A N   G O O D M A N   G A L L E R Y

**For Immediate Release.**

***Sunset Décor***

**Curated by Magalí Arriola**

**June 28 – August 25 2017**

***Opening reception, Wednesday, June 28th, 6-8 pm***

***Sunset Décor***

*En ton absence, vois-tu, les choses devenaient encore plus claires qu'elles ne  
l'étaient sous le feu de ton regard gai.*

Alain Jouffroy

In January of 1976, not long before his death, Marcel Broodthaers prepared two photographs of his recent show *Décor: A Conquest by Marcel Broodthaers* (ICA, London, 1975) to send his friend Alain Jouffroy. The photographs showed two views of one of the artist's last *Décors*— the stage-like installation pieces he had begun creating in 1974. One photograph depicted a 19<sup>th</sup> century-themed room featuring a gigantic stuffed python, two liquor barrels, and a 19<sup>th</sup> century pistol; the other room, devoted to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, included a row of M-16 machine guns and a lawn table and chairs positioned underneath an umbrella. Most of the objects were props that had come from Bapty & Co Ltd, Stage and Film Warlike Stores, a specialist purveyor of deactivated guns for war films, and the furniture from Heals Tottenham Court Road.

The result was one of the most overtly politicized pieces of his career—and one of the most fertile. The exhibition *Sunset Décor* recalls this late work of Marcel Broodthaers and its wide range of cultural and political references to the social context of its time, including the declining genre of Western movies of the late 1960's and the uncertain ending of the Vietnam War. Given that for Broodthaers the *Décors* weren't originally ends in themselves but rather temporary stage-sets, this exhibition also allows us to see his practice as a backdrop for other artistic inquiries and political narratives that were to be reframed and played out.

Just as the different plots and storylines that emerge from *Décor: A Conquest by Marcel Broodthaers* and the ensuing film, *La Bataille de Waterloo* (1975)—made present through artistic tributes by Leonor Antunes and Cerith Wyn Evans, and other objects and ephemera— set up a symmetry between the colonial drive of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the imperial politics that prevailed well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the works in this exhibition draw a sustained connection between the interior and exterior, the near and the far, and the domestication of war and the politics of representation and their spectacularization—for example, in works such as those by Gertrude Käsebier, SUPERFLEX and Fiona Banner.

*Sunset Décor* provides a framework in which artworks, documents and objects articulate disparate topics - from the inscription of politics into the Arcadian landscapes, captured by 19<sup>th</sup>

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century North American photographers Eadweard Muybridge, Carleton E. Watkins and Timothy H. O'Sullivan, and contemporary artist Trevor Paglen to the development of a railroad system built upon the expropriation of the land in the Western territories and the subsequent fate of these routes of commerce, as in works by Lothar Baumgarten and Danh Vo; from the exploitation of natural resources up to the point of extinction, as seen in Jean Marie Perdrix, Hiroshi Sugimoto and David Wojnarowicz's works, to the principles of self-empowerment giving way to redemptive violence for the sake of civilization, in the works of Marco Esparza and Joachim Koester.

At a time when populations, cultures and the environment are fighting to resist conservative thinking and political assault, *Sunset Décor* puts into perspective the instrumentalization, now as then, of nature, the individual and the land for the production of a symbolic order in the name of freedom, civilization and democracy.

**Artists in the exhibition:** Leonor Antunes, Fiona Banner, Lothar Baumgarten, Marcel Broodthaers, Marco Esparza, Cerith Wyn Evans, Gertrude Käsebier, Joachim Koester, Eadweard Muybridge, Timothy H. O'Sullivan, Trevor Paglen, Jean-Marie Perdrix, Hiroshi Sugimoto, SUPERFLEX, Danh Vo, Carleton E. Watkins and David Wojnarowicz.

**Magali Arriola** is an art critic and independent curator currently living in Mexico City. She was curator at Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporáneo between 2011 and 2014, where she curated exhibitions of artists such as James Lee Byars (co-produced with MoMA-PS1), Guy de Cointet and Danh Vo, as well as collective shows displaying works from the Jumex Collection. She was Chief Curator of Museo Tamayo between 2009 and 2011, Museo Carrillo Gil in México City from 1998 to 2001 and visiting curator at the Wattis Institute for Contemporary Art in San Francisco in 2006. In 2008, she curated the 8th Panama Biennial. Arriola has extensively written for books, and catalogues and has contributed to publications such as Frieze, Artforum, Mousse, Manifesta Journal, The Exhibitionist, among others.

Please join us at the opening reception on Wednesday, June 28th from 6-8 pm.

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