

CARTÆL TRIANGLEÆ FRANCEÆ

—
ASCO and Friends:
Exiled Portraits

March 8 2014

— July 6 2014

Opening: March 7 2014.

Harry Gamboa Jr., Gronk,
Willie F. Herrón III, Patssi Valdez.
With works by Oscar Castillo,
Cyclona, Jerry Dreva, Humberto
Sandoval, John Valadez, Ricardo
Valverde, Agnès Varda.



Asco, *Pseudoturquoisiers* (fotonovela), 1981

Color photograph by Harry Gamboa, Jr.

Courtesy of the artist. © Asco; photograph © 1981 Harry Gamboa, Jr.

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Triangle France, The UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center and Le Cartel are pleased to announce *ASCO and Friends: Exiled Portraits*, the first major exhibition in France of works by the artist group ASCO, active in Los Angeles from 1972 to 1987.

Starting in 1972, the Chicano art group Asco applied conceptual strategies to challenge the inequities and violence of their lives in East Los Angeles. The four founding members – Harry Gamboa Jr., Gronk, Willie F. Herrón III, and Patssi Valdez – had participated in the social protests, anti-war marches, and student movements of the 1960s. But as an art group (whose name means “nausea”), the artists turned to such ephemeral forms as urban intervention, street performance, and mail/Xerox art. In all cases, film and photography were crucial tools in extending this work to an international audience through mainstream and alternative media, art spaces, and informal social networks. The photographic image also allowed the group to create exiled portraits for something that cannot be documented: the politics and the poetics of erasure.

This exhibition looks at presence and absence in Asco’s work during its fifteen-year history, and beyond. It also includes assorted friends and collaborators whose own work explored similar issues: Cyclona, Oscar Castillo, Jerry Dreva, John Valadez Ricardo Valverde, Agnès Varda etc. The visual dialogue among these artists reveals how portraiture enabled a crucial pivot from the rhetoric of an “outside” social protest to conceptual strategies that place the margin at the center, and that make absence present.

PORTRAITURE AS PRESENCE AND ABSENCE.

Throughout Asco’s diverse practice, the concept of portraiture functioned on two levels. The group rejected systems of erasure, most notably by the news and entertainment media. But rather than stake a claim to an “authentic” Chicano representation, it interjected constructed or staged images into the public sphere. Both presence and absence are constructs, Asco argued, and so attention must be paid to how they are made and circulated. For Asco and friends, the portrait is like a faint trace, an oft-repeated innuendo, or wall graffiti: the presence it marks now only haunts the built environment.

STREET PORTRAITS.

Since the 1970s, Asco and friends have imagined Los Angeles as a backdrop for documenting themselves as well as the other anonymous Chicano or Mexican figures who make up the city’s largest population. The city has also served as the site for Asco’s street performance and film/video shoots. Centered within the frame, these exiled figures introduce a different perspective on urban life.

PRIVATE PORTRAITS.

Interior portraits depict “intimate” scenes. But these are no less constructed than the street portraits. Often playful and humorous, they signal the way in which private space provides a staging ground for ethnic and sexual identities, absurdist interpersonal dramas, sustained artistic dialogue, and emergent public personae.

FOTONOVELA AND CELEBRITY CULTURE.

From the start, Asco appropriated cinematic strategies and the trappings of celebrity culture from which Chicanos were excluded. With an emphasis on conceptual narratives (Fotonovelas and No Movies), Asco derived a critical frisson from the affect associated with Hollywood genres as well as from the ways the industry blurred the distinction between production, publicity, and on-screen performance. If Asco created a Hollywood-style

Curators :

Céline Kopp, Chon Noriega and Pilar Tompkins Rivas.

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Asco, *Pseudoturquoisiers* (fotonovela), 1981
Color photograph by Harry Gamboa, Jr.
Courtesy of the artist. © Asco; photograph © 1981 Harry



Harry Gamboa Jr. *First Supper After a Major Riot*, 1974.
Color photograph. From left to right: Patssi Valdez,
Humberto Sandoval, Willie Herrón III et Gronk.
Reproduced with permission of Harry Gamboa Jr.
Courtesy of the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center



Harry Gamboa Jr., *Tumor Hat (Silver and Gold)*, 1974.
Color photo representing Patssi Valdez with “paper
fashion” of Gronk.
Courtesy the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center



Ricardo Valverde, *Diane (Paper Fashion Show)*, from
Day of the Dead, 1983. Black & White photograph.
Courtesy of Esperanza Valverde

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Chon A. Noriega

Chon A. Noriega is Director of the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center and Professor of Cinema and Media Studies at UCLA. Since 2004, he has been Adjunct Curator of Chicano/Latino Art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. He has published numerous books on Latino art, media, and performance, and is editor of the award-winning *A Ver: Revisioning Art History* book series and *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies* (both CSRC Press). Noriega has curated and co-curated numerous Chicano art exhibitions, including most recently *L.A. Xicano*, which comprised five exhibitions developed for the Getty Foundation's Pacific Standard Time initiative (2011-12). In partnership with the UCLA Film and Television Archive, he has recovered early Chicano works in independent films and video art. He is currently completing a book on Puerto Rican multimedia artist Raphael Montañez Ortiz (b. 1934) and a longitudinal study of online and social media strategies of art museums in the U.S.

Céline Kopp

Céline Kopp is a French curator and writer, director of Marseille's artist run space Triangle France since September 2012. In this context she recently curated the first solo exhibition of Canadian artist Liz Magor in Europe, and produced new works by Jean-Marie Appriou, Andrea Buettner and Laure Prouvost. She is currently working on the launch of the online magazine COMMA. She has previously been curator for ART2102 in Los Angeles, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (MCA), organized curatorial projects and residencies at Memphis College of Arts, Krabbesholm Hojskole, Skive, Denmark. She curated numerous independent projects in galleries in France and abroad and has contributed to many books (Phaidon, Hatje Cantz, etc.) and magazines (Uovo, Artpress, Domus magazine, Zero Deux).

Pilar Tompkins Rivas

Pilar Tompkins Rivas is Coordinator of Curatorial Initiatives at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). Since 2002, she has curated and organized dozens of exhibitions, working with established, mid-career, and emerging artists from North America, Central America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Previously she was Curator and Director of Residency Programs at 18th Street Arts Center, and has held positions as Arts Project Coordinator at the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, Curator of the Claremont Museum of Art, and Director of the Latin American branch of the Artist Pension Trust. As part of the Getty Research Institute's Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945-1980, Tompkins Rivas curated *Civic Virtue: The Impact of the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery and the Watts Towers Arts Center* for the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs. She concurrently co-curated the suite of exhibitions, *L.A. Xicano*, at LACMA, UCLA's Fowler Museum, and the Atrium National Center.

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/ About Triangle France

Triangle France is a non-profit contemporary arts organization, based in “La Friche la Belle de Mai”, a former tobacco factory located in the city center of Marseille. Triangle France aims to promote the emerging international art scene through a challenging and experimental program of artist’s residencies, exhibitions, events, new commissions, and publications. Triangle France supports the production and presentation of new forms of artistic activity and aims to create dynamic relationships between art, artists, and audiences both locally and internationally. Since its founding in 1995, Triangle France has established itself as one of France’s most innovative organizations supporting artists at a formative point in their career. Triangle France supports emerging artists as well as artists that are under-represented in France by collaborating with them in the development, production and presentation of important new projects that enable them to take new steps in their careers.

Triangle France organises residencies for French artists abroad with partner organisations and also hosts residents throughout the year. Among previous residents at Triangle are : Simon Starling (1997), Virginie Barré (1998), Jim Lambie (1998), Pierre Malphettes (1998), Bruno Peinado (1998), Damien Mazière (2002), Lili Reynaud Dewar (2006), Clément Rodzielski (2007), Kara Uzelman (2009), Lynette Yiadom-Boakye (2009), Emmanuelle Lainé (2009), Tim Braden (2009), Dominique Hurt (2011), Jean Alain Corre (2013), etc.

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About Le Cartel

Triangle France is one of the six members of Le Cartel, a federation of visual arts non-profit based in La Friche la Belle de Mai (with ART-O-RAMA, Asterides, Documents d’artistes, Le Dernier Cri and Sextant & Plus). This exhibition is part of the 2014 exhibition program conceived collaborately by le Cartel for la Friche la Belle de Mai in Marseille.

About The UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center

The UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center (CSRC, established in 1969) has played a pivotal role in the development of scholarly research on the Chicano-Latino population in the United States over five decades. Its projects include cutting-edge research focused on the arts, education, media, economic security, and public health. The award-winning CSRC Press publishes books, policy briefs, a DVD series, and *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies*, the flagship journal for the field. The CSRC Library holds the largest archival and digital collections in the U.S. on the Chicana/o experience, drawing numerous scholars and curators from around the world. In addition to holding library exhibitions and public programs year-round, the CSRC regularly organizes research-based art exhibitions at major institutions, including *Phantom Sightings: Art after the Chicano Movement* (Los Angeles County Museum of Art), *Art Along the Hyphen: The Mexican-American Generation* (Autry National Center), and *Mapping Another L.A.: The Chicano Art Movement* (Fowler Museum at UCLA).

For more information: www.chicano.ucla.edu

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ASCO AND FRIENDS: EXILED PORTRAITS

Curators:

Céline Kopp, Chon Noriega and Pilar Tompkins Rivas.

Production:

Triangle France.

Co-production :

Le Cartel, a federation of six visual art organizations :

Astérides, le Dernier Cri, Documents d'artistes, Group/ART-O-RAMA, Sextant et plus, and Triangle France, The UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center (CSRC).

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How to find us

Friche La Belle de Mai

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Hours

Open from Tuesday to Sunday 1pm to 7pm

Late night opening on last Friday of each month until 10pm

Tickets

6 € full price · 3 € reduced price

Reservations and Guided tours

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