



Thomas Hirschhorn. *Equality Float*, 2008. Integrated text by Marcus Steinweg, plastic, paper, photocopies, print material, books, cardboard, paint, power line cables, wood, fabric, plastic flowers, plastic chairs, adhesive tape, painted mannequins, capsules, marker, foam, Plexiglas, platform scales, Polystyrene, mirrors, cubes, wooden sculptures, metal furniture, and spray paint. Courtesy of the artist.



Fernando Sánchez Castillo. *La calle es mía (The Street is Mine)*, 2004. Light object, metallic structure, 1,198 10-w lamps. Courtesy of the artist and Galería Juana de Aizpuru, Madrid. Photograph: MARCO/Enrique Touriño.

images in his video *T.W. (rock)* (1972), where a group of people lynches an individual while we hear, through headphones, the drowsy voice of René Magritte speechifying about art. The sensation of emptiness, the vertigo of the images and the indifference of the world all question the role of art in the face of violence.

Another highly staged work is *Equality Float* (2008,) by *Thomas Hirschhorn* (Bern, Switzerland, 1957). Commissioned by MARCO Vigo, this spectacular piece is a veritable kitsch carnival that mixes plastic flowers and chairs with mannequins, disco balls, a giant pair of hands on each side holding a medication capsule, and advertising billboards precariously built in papier maché. Known for the structure of his fragile works and for his philosophical referents, Hirschhorn creates a float/monument to the contemporary world, its debate centered around the in-equality and duality of language and action, symbolized by the number of giant bicolor (yellow and blue) capsules inscribed with the word "equa-lity." Building on his experience as a graphic designer, Hirschhorn's "scaffolds" become a platform for political, social, and cultural commentary.

Equally impactful is the ready-made presented by *Jorge Perianes* (Ourense, Spain, 1974) a mountain with living flora that is characteristic of the Galician landscape, resting at the base of which we find a cleanly cut fragment. The literalness of the citation forces us to rethink our relationship with the landscape and to wonder how much does economic and cultural colonization influence our perception of it.

But not everything is as grandiloquent or visually overwhelming as the installations just reviewed. In the simple yet no less impactful work of *Teresa Margolles* (Mexico, 1963) a line of 24 discretely placed speakers on a white wall force us to bring our ears close in order to hear everyday city sounds. Margolles has recorded the echo left in locations where the corpses of murdered women were found, with the victim's name and case number she places on the wall. The presence of death in anonymous sites, sites that are unknown yet familiar to us, point to the vestiges of violence there were it was committed.

The various typographies projected as flash animations and with a Jazz soundtrack by the duo known as Young-Hae Chong Heavy

Industries (Young-Hae Chang and Marc Voge) also speak of violence. *The End* is the halting last dialog of a couple that ends in physical aggression, suggested only by the sequence of words and the emphasis of the typography. A true exercise in economy of means (their projects are design for the Internet) with extraordinary visual effectiveness.

7 + 1 Project Rooms offers something more than a listing of well-known international names. It is an exercise in the selection of works of art that fit MARCO's particular space, which, without establishing an argumentative line, becomes thus a kind of Babel of this interconnected world, where nothing can be alien to us.

NOTES

1. From MARCO's press release describing the project's curatorial parameters.
2. Mosquera, Gerardo. Curatorial text for the catalog (work in progress.)
3. From the exhibition information displays that accompanied and explained Tania bruguera's works.

Dermis Pérez

The 9th Sharjah Biennial

Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

Sharjah, the cultural capital of the United Arab Emirates, it is located on the Persian Gulf and has a population of some 800,000 people making it, the UAE's third largest city after Dubai and Abu Dhabi. An initiative of its Sultan, HH Dr. Sheik Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qaimi, Ruler of Sharjah, the Sharjah Biennial has been organized since 1993. The event was founded with the intent of fostering

relationships between Arab-world institutions and artists, as well as with the international art scene. This year the Biennial held its 9th edition between March 19th and May 16th, inaugurating for the first, in parallel with Art Dubai and the alternative fair Al Bastakiya, in order to strengthen art in the Gulf region and take advantage of the audience of collectors, critics, curators, and artists. Directed

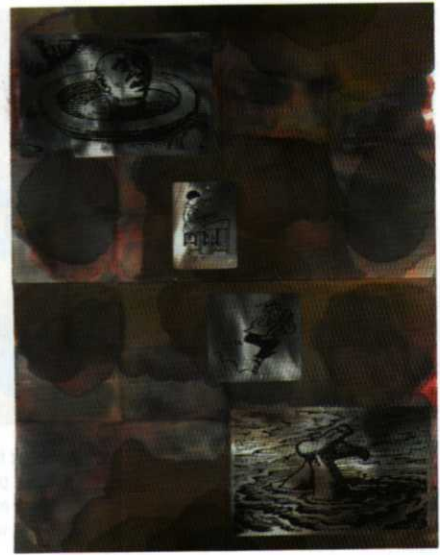
by Hoor Al Qasimi and with Jack Persekian as its artistic director, the event's team also included curators Isabel Carlos and Tarek Abou El Fetouh. The Biennial brought together 60 artists, 34 of them women and 24 selected from its production program, through which the chosen artists receive official support for the production of their work, emphasizing the importance of the process. The



Liliana Porter. *Forced Labor: Red Sand*, 08, 2008. Installation. Wooden shelf, red sand, figurine. Photo: Courtesy of the artist.



Karin Sander. *Ball Valve*, 2009. One highly reflective polished chrome ball, track in wood and Plexiglas. Diameter: 11 3/4 in. (30 cm).



Eugenio Dittborn. *Heráldica (Heraldry)*, Airmail Painting No. 156, 2003-04. Tincture, photosilkscreen, polygal, and stitching on 2 sections of duck fabric. 110 x 82 1/2 in. (280 x 210 cm). Photo: Bill Orcutt.

main exhibition was complemented with a film and performance program, *Past of the Coming Days*, conceived by Tarek Abu El Fetouh, and a series of workshops and conferences that, under the title of *March Meetings*, brings together cultural institutions working in the Arab world.

Several artists from Latin American countries participated for the first time in this 9th edition of the Sharjah Biennial. In part thanks to Portuguese independent curator Isabel Carlos, who in 2004 was artistic director of the Sydney Biennial and in 2005 was in charge of Portugal's delegation to the 52nd Venice Biennale. Under the title of *Provisions for the Future*, the curator posited a topic to integrate artists and issues from different places, inspired in Sharjah itself, a city that, as she puts it in the catalog, "... is a cultural and geographic meeting point where the notion of "future" is permanently evoked."

Maidor López. *Fountain*, 2009. Glazed tiles and water. 35 x 118 x 19 1/2 in. (89 x 300 x 50 cm).

The Biennial integrated artists from many areas, mainly artists from the region, whose works deal with issues like memory, journeys, immigration, integration, and exile. Several of the works on exhibit were created on site and inspired by the city. The main exhibition was held at the Sharjah Museum of Art and was accompanied by a catalog where each artist responded to seven basic questions, which allowed readers to explore the specific work the artists were presenting at the Biennial as well as the challenges they faced to create it.

One of the most interesting works, well interconnected with the context of the city and its environment, was the fountain -created by Maidor López, from Spain- located in the square that lies across from the Sharjah Museum of Art, offering the only public drinking fountain in the city. López, who has distinguished herself by intervening

spaces, created during a residence in 2007 the work *Football Field*, where she painted the lines of a soccer field on this square; now locals have placed goalposts and use it to play on a daily basis, giving the space a new function. Another interactive work was the one developed by Gita Meh, an Iranian artist based in Dubai. *Soffreh* (tablecloth in Persian) depended entirely on its viewers for its culmination as a work of art. The artist laid down a white tablecloth made of sugar to serve as a canvas on which she placed mats, utensils, and a large banquet. Around it, visitors could sit and leave their mark as they enjoyed a variety of dishes prepared by Meh herself, such as lentils with raisins and saffron rice, expressing the artist's desire to arrive at new meanings on the basis of interrelatedness, understanding, and the integration of different cultures.

Jose Luis Martinat. *City*, 2007. 7 minutes, video loop. DVD. The Commissioned Drawings Series (2006-2008). Drawings on paper. Series of 35 drawings. Photo: Courtesy of the artist.

