

The Works and Days

Telam, Thursday May 19, 2011.

By Viviana Ponieman

An exhibition that questions the relationship between artists and the world of work, or to put it another way, what the actual insertion of artists to society or the community to which they belong is conducted in Pasaje 17 Contemporary Art.

This is an unusual gallery, founded three years ago by the social work of the Staff Association external control bodies union (Apoc), in a historic building, located in the city center which was restored respecting the original structure of the house, directed by a group of artists.

For this occasion, they invited Rodrigo Alonso as curator who suggested –motivated by the character of this space- to focus on how work defines a way of living in community, and how indifferent or devastating, the labor market of contemporary capitalism determines the existence social inclusion or exclusion, possession rights or civil nullity.

Alonso appeals to the view of the artists who display their works in the echoes of political, economic and cultural events that affected the Argentine labor physiognomy in more or less evident, more or less radical ways.

Then we see the photographs of Marcelo Coglitore that in 2001 begins these series of "Portraits of people at their workplace" as an act of resistance, an almost museum preservation of images which in those days would be condemned to disappear. The artist runs through the territory of our country recording workers and their environment in direct drive with his analog camera without gadgets.

Also responding to that tessitura we have the photos and portraits of Azul Blaseotto that since 2000 works about the transformation of Puerto Madero, and from 2004 on the Rio Santiago shipyard experience and Shipyards States which are two unique situations, the first of its resistance to remain the state and the second recovered by their workers. This entire through her camera to record changes over time, and in her drawings portraying workers.

Eduardo Molinari who conceives walking as an aesthetic practice, uses photographs of the General Archive of the Nation that show us some floats made by the CGT in 1948, prepared for a parade with applications in relief of slogans. This reflects the aesthetic of an era that still can be seen in the buildings and the logo of the "Central Obrera", and confronted with a flat of 1822, with instructions on how to accommodate in the holds of ships, blacks, to save space and fit more quantity. In addition, a current photo of the news story shows us victims of slave labor in the exploitation of the field, inside a shipping container where they are supposed to sleep and another shipping container near the port with a painted wondering: Who wins with soy?

Mercedes Figallo and Florencia De Titta without euphemisms show us the remains of craftsmanship in the city center, through framed objects and also invite us for a tour to visit the places of work of the tailor, the manufacturer of medals or flags, trades that remain in the places where they are still necessary but sometimes we lose their track. Trying may be in this way, to rebuild ties, to give visibility in the midst of a sweeping urban fabric.

Meanwhile Juan José María Tirigall invents a small machine that mixed cement beads of different colors through referring to migration and miscegenation, others in mini screens make a parallel between the work and the landscapes of the places of origin. In a strange and disaffected poetry, it offers a mechanism that works alone, automated toys of a virtual world, a little tight reference to a dehumanized world.

“The craft knowledge, the sources of re appropriated employment, the human maps of the current work force and contexts of labor exercise, past and present, are combined here to offer us a space for thinking, analysis and evaluation of a phenomenon that involves us all. Its appearance in an art space that belongs to a guild is not accidental” says Rodrigo Alonso. Then Alonso promotes a dialogue between artists, the community and the workplace, in Pasaje 17 Gallery at 1559 Bartolome Mitre.