

Park View

A Spaghetti Dress for World Peace
September 2 – October 21, 2017

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Press Release

I have been spending a lot of time thinking about values, and how one's reality more often than not falls short of ideals that one claims or tries to uphold. I think this has to do a lot with the election cycle of 2016. In the spring of that year I wrote an article about the fashion brand Gypsy Sport for *Flash Art*. I was drawn to the brand for its signature ways of up-cycling materials and designs, some kind of analog to the artworks I am drawn to the most, which come from a tradition of the altered readymade. In my research I came across the fashion designer Miguel Adrover, a Spanish working-class outsider from Mallorca who came to New York City in the late 90s, becoming one of the most influential and talked-about figures in the scene. To me it felt like a lot of the essence of Gypsy Sport's ethos had originated from Miguel, who celebrated appropriation and retooling, asking questions about our relationships to consumption, waste, aspiration, beauty, etc. Both brands contained an equal mix of political and spiritual qualities that would be challenging to transmit authentically in a fashion context for most (and in an art context by analog), but both succeeded.

A lot has changed in a gap of 17 or so years. The moral stakes and valuations at play for Miguel and Gypsy Sport were and are happening in two very different market contexts—the early 2000s and its dizzying and shifting pre- and post-9/11 conditions for financing; and 2017, where an underground brand could be anointed by *Vogue* and sign a collaborative deal with Amazon.com in the same season. Doing more reading into Adrover, I started to understand how difficult it was for him personally to be a designer within his newly accelerated financial, political, and aesthetic moment. In March of 2001 Miguel exhibited a line inspired by Middle Eastern womenswear (hijabs, burkas, caftans, tunics) called “Meeteast.” He and his business partner had spent six months in Egypt researching and developing the collection, and it was met with high praise in New York City despite, and perhaps because of, its utter radicality (one retailer called it “Osama bin Laden as fashion icon”). This was to be his fall/winter 2001 line, and it was to be released in early September. 9/11 happened and it suffices to say most if not all of the orders were cancelled. The newly formed American fashion conglomerate financing him, Pegasus, folded shortly thereafter.

This narrative—of the artist trying to convey some vision or idea to the world and at the same time undergoing some invasion or pollution from some real or imagined outside—started to appear in my friendships, in my love relationships, and in myself the longer I thought about it. The complete marriage between the celebrity and political news cycles during the 2016 election cycle brought this to a fever pitch, with people exhibiting manic-depressive symptoms all around me.

The show is about how people have particular values and morals, and ideal ways of being in the world, which all apply both to their working lives and personal lives. These values are almost always perverted by the “noise” of encounter—with media, conflicted relationships, class warfare, world events, the environment—sending them towards some other unanticipated reality (I want to emphasize that not one of these aspects should be over or under-emphasized, but that they are all at play and moving through us at all times). Sometimes people try to transmit these into their work—the values, the “noise,” and the interaction of the two. The artworks in the show are all dealing with this same phenomenon in themselves, but then on a second level are asking to be understood in aesthetic terms for contemplation. Under evaluation is the possibility of transmitting such a political experience through the process of becoming an artwork in a particular market context. The title of the show, “A Spaghetti Dress for World Peace,” is borrowed from an

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article in the *New York Times* about Adrover, and I think it perfectly encapsulates the significance, and perhaps senselessness (or ultimate desire and sense), of trying to enact this process, of taking a moral or political stance through an artwork that will always be a luxury good existing in the world, and dramatizing that course of action in various ways.

Miguel has been back in Mallorca for some time. I messaged him to see if he wanted to participate in this exhibition. His assistant, Costanza, wrote me back once telling me he was enthusiastic about it, and then I never heard from them again. (1)(2)(3)(4)(5)(6)(7)(8)(9)(10)(11)(12)(13)(14)(15)(16)(17)

—Paul Soto, 2 September 2017

- (1) Hirschberg, Lynn, “A Spaghetti Dress for World Peace,” *The New York Times Magazine*, 1 December 2002
- (2) Thurman, Judith, “Combat Fatigue,” in *Cleopatra’s Nose: 39 varieties of desire*, Picador, 2007.
- (3) _____. “Miguel Adrover: Fall 2001 Ready-to-Wear,” *Vogue.com*, accessed 15 March 2016
- (4) Trebay, Guy, “A Designer’s Incredible Rise and Inevitable Fall,” *New York Times*, 7 December 2004
- (5) Schulman, Sarah, *Conflict is Not Abuse: Overstating Harm, Community Responsibility, and the Duty of Repair*, Arsenal Pulp Press, 2016.
- (6) Eribon, Didier, trans. by Michael Lucey, *Returning to Reims*, Semiotexte, 2013.
- (7) Indiana, Gary, *Three-Month Fever: The Andrew Cunanan Story*, Semiotexte, 1999.
- (8) Klossowski, Pierre, *Living Currency*, Bloomsbury Academic, 2017.
- (9) Moore, Jason W., *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital*, Verso, 2015.
- (10) Black, Claudia, “It Will Never Happen to Me!” – *Children of Alcoholics: As Youngsters – Adolescents – Adults*, Ballantine Books, 1987.
- (11) Wright, Robert, *Why Buddhism is True*, Simon & Schuster, 2017.
- (12) Goenka, S.N., *Satipatthana Sutta Discourses*, Vipassana Research Publications, 1998.
- (13) *Girls Trip*, directed by Malcolm D. Lee, written by Kenya Barris and Tracy Oliver, with performances by Regina Hall, Queen Latifah, Jada Pinkett Smith, and Tiffany Haddish, 21 July 2017.
- (14) *Beatriz at Dinner*, directed by Miguel Arteta, written by Mike White, with performances by Salma Hayek and John Lithgow, 9 June 2017.
- (15) *Clean*, directed and written by Oliver Assayas, with performances by Maggie Cheung and Nick Nolte, 1 September 2004.
- (16) *Beach Rats*, directed and written by Eliza Hittman, with performance by Harris Dickinson, 25 August 2017.
- (17) Conversation with David Muenzer 13 October 2016.