



For Immediate Release

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Embarcadero Gallery Opens “Humor US” Exhibition

Humor US features seven artists using levity to address political issues in the run up to the 2016 elections



Nathan Becka. Civility Pedal, 2015.

Humor US will be on view from September 9-October 22, 2016, with an opening reception on September 9 from 5-9pm. This exhibition considers philosopher John Morreall’s definition of humor as “amusement that takes pleasure in a cognitive shift.” Indeed, much of what we find laughable also allows us to think differently about people, ideas, and states of being. Yet, in light of the current election season, humor can also function as an aggressive act of power and cause destructive effects. The graduate students featured in Humor US utilize comicality as a medium to reflect on the world outside of academia in the new upcoming presidential tenure. Through installations, videos, and photographs embedded with wittiness, the artists display personal experiences of disenfranchisement, criticisms regarding the American Dream, and platforms for positive social and political change made possible by the simplicity of simply listening to one another.



Jin Zhu. *El Requerimiento*, 2015, video.

Jin Zhu's video piece sets the tone for the exhibition by providing viewers with a historical context and well-trodden path associated with Western politics—the disruption and marginalization of the “other” by the white male. Douglas Angulo's video piece, and his deafening stare within it, builds on Zhu's concepts and asks us to take a hard look inward to consider how we form and project identity, and construct misconceptions of identity. The work of France Viana and Hui Meng Wang question what it means to step in and out of traditional and individual identity in a photographic exploration and video piece, respectively. Viana searches for answers in the neighborhoods of Filipino Americans and confronts their political values. In a satirical commentary on the emerging Chinese middle class, Wang's video investigates the disconnection between their idealized lifestyle and actual reality that is increasingly shaped by the political and social interests of the West. Nathan Becka's objects and the installation of Kaitlin Trataris mock the blind acceptance that follows campaign endorsements and empty promises given by both powerful figures and everyday citizens simply due to the chase of the American Dream. Finally, it is Boris Scherbakov's sound installations that presents viewers with some answers while grappling with the current political elections: to truly embrace our everyday surroundings and focus on conversations that lead to greater cultural and political understanding.

This exhibition is curated by Tanya Gayer (CCA), whose proposal was selected in Embark's recent call for curatorial proposals from Bay Area graduate students.

Artists in this exhibition include: Douglas Angulo (SFAI), Nathan Becka (CCA), Boris Scherbakov (Mills), Kaitlin Trataris (SFAI), France Viana (Mills), Hui Meng Wang (SFAI), Jin Zhu (UC Berkeley).

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Opening Reception: Friday, September 9th, 5-9pm

Open Hours: Saturdays, September 10th-October 22nd, 12-5pm or by appointment during the week

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Following *Humor US*, the exhibition *#simulacra* will be on view from November 5th to December 17th, 2016. For this exhibition, artists were asked to submit works that the increasingly visual culture we live in where images are all-important, and are no longer mere representations of truth. This photography show, juried by Julie Casemore and Allie Haeusslein, is an exploration of reality vs model, signs, place, and memory.

From January 28th to March 4th, 2016 the gallery will host *Get Lost*, an exhibition inspired by philosopher Herbert Marcuse's notion of "the great refusal." *Get Lost* showcases contemporary takes on queer identity politics by challenging the representational imagery that queer art is perhaps best known for suggesting that queer activism in the digital age may take more nuanced forms of expression. This exhibition was juried by Avram Finkelstein.

Embark Gallery, a 1,500 sq. ft. non-profit art space that opened in February 2015 and located in Fort Mason Center for Arts and Culture, helps create and support an engaged community of young artists, curators and scholars during their studies and as they leave their graduate programs. We assist students to embark on their professional careers, while expanding the audience for up and coming contemporary art. The gallery represents the diversity of the talented artists studying at eight local art institutions including California College of the Arts, Mills College, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco State University, San Jose State University, Stanford University, University of California, Berkeley and University of California, Davis.

For more info go to EmbarkGallery.com

Media Contact:

Tania Houtzager

Tania@Embarkgallery.com

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