

REGEN PROJECTS

Stromberg, Matt. "Primordial Saber Tararear Proverbiales Sílabas Tonificantes Para Sublevar Tecnocracias Pero Seguir Tenazmente Produciendo Sociedades Tántricas – Pedro Salazar Torres (Partido Socialista Trabajador) at Regen Projects." *Carla* (Winter 2017) p. 46 [ill.]

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***Primordial Saber Tararear
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September 9–October 28, 2017

In 1939, Mexican artist Miguel Covarrubias painted six cartographic murals for the Golden Gate International Exposition, illustrating the cultural, historical, and natural wonders of the Pacific region. Stretching from India in the West to Brazil in the East—and completely omitting Europe, as well as Africa and the Middle East—these maps suggested a paradigm shift away from a Eurocentric viewpoint to one focused on Asia and the Americas. Facsimiles of these maps cover the walls at Regen Projects, serving as the literal and conceptual backdrop for a group show curated by Mexican artists Abraham Cruzvillegas and Gabriel Kuri.

The curators have selected 19 artists with ties to the areas depicted—who were either born there, or live there now—presenting a fractured portrait of regional identity that also alludes to our contemporary condition of stateless globalism. The show eschews a straightforward, unified theme, instead trafficking in a range of interconnected topics: the legacy of colonialism, historical memory, and cultural hybridity. One of the most entrancing works is *Untitled (Bubble Machine) #1 and #2* (2017) by Ariel Schlesinger. The sculpture contains two tanks that slowly fill soap bubbles with flammable gas, before these drop onto electrified wires and intermittently burst into flames, succinctly capturing a sense of

theatrical and absurd violence. Less spectacular but also mesmerizing is a tin can on the floor, from which the sound of dripping water emanates. Titled *Cuban Samba (Memory)* (2016), the piece by Shimabuku traces a borderless route of personal recollection from Japan to Brazil via Cuba.

Another focal point is Michael Stevenson's *The Fountain of Prosperity* (2006), which is based on the Phillips Machine, a contraption meant to illustrate how national economies function through an assembly of water-filled tubes and tanks. Stevenson's sculpture is modeled after a version purchased by the Bank of Guatemala however; in its rusted and dilapidated state it stands as a reminder of the failed promise of utopian modernism throughout much of Latin America.

The exhibition's poetic yet ungainly title very loosely translates to a call for "revolt against technocracies" in order to "produce tantric societies," however the first letter of each word also forms the acronym PST over and over, a subliminal suggestion to shift our focus, as well as a reference to the massive Getty-sponsored initiative, Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA (PST: LA/LA). Stretching PST: LA/LA's already ambitious focus on Latin America across the Pacific—and emerging with a coherent narrative—is an almost Sisyphean task, and the show offers no neat conclusions. Echoing the curators' choice to cut up and reassemble Covarrubias' didactic maps, their juxtapositions serve to decenter and complicate essentialist notions about art of the region.



Matt Stromberg

46