

**GALERIE**

**HUBERT**

**WINTER**

**ALFREDO JAAR: 1973**

curated by John Bird

opening reception: September 12, 2019, 6-9pm

September 13 – October 31, 2019

*ALFREDO JAAR: Towards a Culture of Resistance*

Studying architecture and film-making in Santiago during the Pinochet military junta, Alfredo Jaar experienced the harsh realities of making art in the shadow of repression, censorship and injustice. From the start, his aesthetic decisions were informed by a politics of resistance and the necessity to 'speak truth to power' through a visual language that engaged and alerted viewers to the contradictions underlying the production of common-sense under totalitarianism. Working across mediums and materials – photography, film/video, installation and performance, Jaar took from architecture the significance of place and location and from film the mise-en-scene, fermented in the historical moment of Latin American conceptual art with its socio-political orientation.

Always aware of the tendency of the image to float free from the 'real', Jaar employs text and context to make work that selects from the visual informational overload – whether the banalities of everyday life or the spectacle of atrocity – an image or word that arrests our attention and identifies the individual amongst the multitude, introducing a different regime of visibility.

Jaar's aesthetic of resistance found its full realisation when he left Chile for The United States and the inward-looking concerns of the New York artworld, operating as an artist-in-exile. This state of necessary 'outsiderness' has propelled him to travel globally as a critical observer and respondent to unequal relations between dominant and subaltern social systems, and to trace the flows of information, material and people within and across continents and oceans. These global patterns of movement are signifiers of enforced displacement, bandit economics, market forces and political ideologies, all the factors that combine to rob individuals of their rights and freedoms, identities, equalities and justice sacrificed to the pursuit of profit and power. Alfredo Jaar has made work in response to events in Rwanda, Hong Kong, Angola, Canada, Brazil, Germany, Venezuela, London, Japan, Sweden...the list goes on, a geography of exploitation and victimage. However, this is not only a testimony to a dystopian world, rather Jaar creates counter-narratives to the deceits of history and proposes that there is a role for a critical art practice in the production of meaning; another way of telling, of making the invisible, visible.

For this exhibition we decided to focus on works made between 1974 and 1987, mostly conceived and executed in Chile or the early years in New York, the blueprints, as it were, for a future practice. At a moment when the threat of fascism is again intruding onto the political landscape across Europe and the Americas, and the oppressed and dispossessed constitute a migratory movement washed up on the shores of unfamiliar and unwelcoming territories, to look again at works made in a previous period of political and cultural uncertainty seems both timely and appropriate.

Jon Bird (June 2019)

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