September 11. 1973.

Organized By: Nicolás Guagnini

This exhibibition presented a series of works produced in reaction to the CIA backed coup and assassination of the Chilean president-elect Salvador Allende in 1973. A second group of works exploring the events and consequences of 9-11-2001 were juxtaposed for their resonance with this earlier moment. Some common threads are the use of collaged media, an attention to low-cost distribution such as printed matter or multiples, and a sense of urgency and outrage. Artists include: Hans Haacke, Öyvind Fahlström, Karin Schneider, Diego Fernandez, Martha Rosler, Ivan Navarro, Luis Camnitzer, Juan Downey.

"De Quincey, circa 1844, postulated that history is inexhaustible because the possibility of permutation and combination of facts registered in it equals practically an endless number of facts. He believed that interpreting history is no less an arbitrary activity than seeing figures in clouds, but the variety of those figures satisfies him."

Jorge Luis Borges

On September 11, 1973, the Casa de la Moneda was bombed in Santiago De Chile. Salvador Allende, the president elect, chose not to flee and died instead. Against the backdrop of the cold war, the coup was orchestrated by the CIA, under orders from Henry Kissinger. Chileans were tortured and killed in the name of freedom from Communism. During Pinochet's dictatorship, once the opposition was literally annihilated or exiled, the carnage continued in a different manner. People suffered or died for decisions made on Wall Street. Between 1973 and 1989, the Chicago School of Economics dictated economic policy in Chile, under near-laboratory conditions. Their program included privatizing welfare and social programs, deregulating the market, liberalizing trade, rolling back unions, and rewriting the country's constitution and laws.

On September 11, 2001, twenty-eight years later, New York was attacked by fundamentalist Islamic terrorists. In the confusion that followed, some contended that the effective strike against America was revolutionary in essence. And yet, it is clear that the horror of terrorism can hold no revolutionary content whatsoever. The ideology of the terrorists is blatantly retrograde and repressive: religious control of secular society, elimination of women's rights. In sum, a pre-1789 agenda. How frightening then that the policies of the Bush Administration have succeeded where the terrorists failed. Where the terrorists were despicable and inhuman, the neo-cons and religious Right have used legal means to erode civil liberties and human rights.

In juxtaposing these two different historical moments, this exhibition proposes no single judgment or belief. The artistic interpretation of these "cloud formations" yields a number of key figures: the Chicago Boys, American economic interests in the Third World (embodied in a Guggenheim trustee,

no less), Bush, the US Army, Osama, the disappeared, the kidnapped, oil interests, etc. These persons and events often enter the art works as clipped from the media, moved from the news to art in an urgent and outraged manner. Art markets boom, explode. New capital and new commodities, either in the form of objects or services, are injected at every angle. Every form or anti-form can be sold. The critical revolution of the 1960s and 1970s is in permanent revision, the garage sale of the 1980s ready for picking. New York is rightfully seen as the center of this situation. And yet, in bringing together the works for this exhibit, we also want to point out that New York is a center of other types of agitation, the home for making and exhibiting art of an extreme critical content and radical nature. All of the pieces in this show were made to be exhibited in New York, and mostly by New York-based artists. It's just a look at the figures of our local, clouded sky.
Nicolás Guagnini

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