

## FROM TOKYO TO PUEBLA, AND THE ROAD TO NOWHERE.

By zzyzx, independent writer

*All characters appearing in the following work may or may not be fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is or is not purely coincidental.*

A linear trajectory of the life cycle—of birth, growth, and lastly, death—is not what interests Martín Soto Climent. Rather, his work as an artist, curator, and foremost as a human, muses about the possibility of simultaneous, rather than sequential, moments. A series of these moments converge in this exhibition, albeit from separate realms of time and space, fiction and reality. The resulting structure is one that allows for various channels of exploration and introspection rather than a singular, well-defined expression from the artist, as is expected.

Whether or not the following adds up to a physical truth, each element points to an aspect of the artist's own creative identity. He is here afforded the channels of multiplicity and of experimentation with his own voice. For Soto Climent, a conceptual truth takes precedence over the narrative truth, and the artists within this scheme bring life to Soto Climent's navigation of the vast concepts of humanity and death.

//

### ***The Mirror.***

A collaboration between two Mexican men sharing a name and a profession. The work between Martín Soto and Martín Soto Climent reveals the artist's fascination with identity, and the multitudinous possibilities of one's self. The two men found each other through a plate and a painting of a fish. Sitting in a restaurant cabana in the countryside just outside of Mexico City, a framed painting caught Soto Climent's eye as he finished his plate of grilled trout. The painting is also of a trout, and provoked the artist's questioning of life cycles as the fish made its way through his digestive system. Approaching the painting, he found that the signature read *Martín Soto*.

*"To find the same name was not only a surprise, but a mirror between life and death. It turned me into an object rather than a subject of life,"* says Soto Climent. Mixed media works by both of the artists illustrate the layering of personas, an inquisition into themes of singularity, duality, and multiplicity between them. The resulting collages act as a mirror through which both of the artists analyze their own being, and their relationship to each other as estranged allies sharing the same name and life's work.

### ***The Mask.***

Following the line of converging identities, John Brown (1989, New York) makes his second appearance in collaboration with Soto Climent. The artist molds plasticine sculptures of highly detailed

faces atop crumpled beer cans. A mask. "As 'evolved' creatures, we still consume and are consumed by copious amounts of trash. Is the garbage the object, or perhaps the subject matter itself?" Brown questions the roles of consumer and consumed in a desperate plea toward reorganizing the balance of power in society. The sculptures become portraits of a culture that is slowly consuming itself, breaking us down by our very own habits. Making use of Soto Climent's recurring material motif of a beer can, Brown implicates the artist in this proposed restructuring of cultural ideology to an extent that may reveal itself over the duration of this project.

### ***The Gesture.***

Enduring the death of his family and internment at a concentration camp in Mexico during WWII, Japanese calligraphy master Tashiro Tsuramoto (b. 1920, Kawachi) has turned to Bushido meditation as his solace. His lifelong work *Hagakure* reflects the transformative journey his life has provided, in a series of simple gestures. Inhabiting the walls of a make-shift house, the ink drawings he composes with sweeping gestures are subtly complex in their repetition. The artist's life has been dedicated to the investigation of death, his own mortality, and the meaning of the inhabitation of his own physical body.

### ***The Instant.***

The enigmatic choreographer Lola Lago (b. 1944 Tierra del Fuego, Argentina; d. 1977, Antigua, Guatemala as Lola Nichte Ha) seems to elude categorization at every opportunity. She changed careers, names, and steadily moved around the world as she coated her identity in a cloud of seductive mystery. More than a prolific dancer, performer, or choreographer, Lola Lago was an artist obsessed with the construction of a *conscious instant*. She used her body as a vehicle through which to study Mayan philosophy and mysticism under the veil of an avant-garde identity during the 1960s through her untimely death in 1977.

Notes, sketches, and photographs found in a lingering archive point to Lola Lago's impossible task of capturing a single moment of corporeal movement in her work. Soto Climent arranges portraits of the dancer in such a way that suggests sequential movement, but also captures Lago's intense focus on the singular gesture of an instant. The artist created impossible choreography that transcended time and space, building upon concepts far more expansive than merely bodies moving on stage, but fictional and unsolvable equations of mathematics beyond physical capability. Her suicide reveals the true depth of her fascination with the body and its limitations in the physical realm. Soto Climent revisits her work here in the role of a curator, attempting to give shape and presence to her revolutionary vision with this series of frozen actions.

### ***The Code.***

Musician and artist **João Carvalho** (1945–1982, São Paulo, Brazil) developed a visually coded language while imprisoned during the height of the military dictatorship in Brazil. Working with a group

of his peers, Carvalho embedded hidden messages inside of his inked fingerprints left behind on letters to the outside world. Maneuvering the carefully monitored communication circuits of the prison system, Carvalho was able to continue his work as an artist and revolutionary from the inside of one of the most feared institutions of his time.

Documentation and conjecture suggest the artist was killed by the regime in prison. His work continued to circulate within and without the prison walls, however, and is portrayed here as a meditation on the value of communication. Risking his own death for freedom of expression reveals not only a certain generational ethos, but also the human craving for socialization and community, withstanding even the most brutal of physical threats.

### ***The Survivalist.***

Felix Manz (1986, Zurich) meticulously modifies newspapers as a mode of survival. Obsessively, he erases and restructures newspaper columns, advertisements, and images, inserting instead his own impressions in pencil. An uncontrollable urge to mediate the content spread by mass publications drives Manz's practice, and his life's work lies in the piles of newspapers that populate every surface of his home. Just shy of committing suicide one afternoon, a woman notices his intricate drawings and strikes up a conversation that will purportedly save the artist's life. The work included in this exhibition is that which has been produced since the two were married in 2012.

### ***The Fossil.***

Unearthing archeological discoveries of the future, Iris Shady (b. 1986, Greymouth, New Zealand) inaugurates a new sculptural practice unsynchronized with contemporary time or space. The artist suspends logic in order to facilitate a practice that relies on the presumed extinction of the human race. With the eyes of an anthropologist, she models figurative sculptures of the human body from an ambiguous era. Are they recovered relics from the past, or the remains of a future civilization that fossilizes our own present? Her delicately constructed faces speak to a certain fragility that relates to all beings, real or conceptualized.

//

Individually, each artist functions to reveal an element of Martín Soto Climent's introspective odyssey. Together, they begin to encapsulate the ethos of a far larger project the artist is embarking upon, using conceptual material for manipulation rather than his archetypal use of vernacular objects. The artists involved in this group exhibition, be they real or imagined, constitute a structure whereby conventional modes of exhibition may be broken down, and an artist be free to explore himself under the public eye.