

Press release

Jota Castro Gemütlichkeit

Exhibition space: Galleria Umberto Di Marino - Via Alabardieri 1, 80121, Napoli

Opening: Friday 13 December 2013 - 7.00 p.m. - 10.00 p.m.

Duration: until 22 February 2014

Opening hours: Monday - Saturday 3:00 p.m. / 8:00 p.m. – by appointment in the morning

Galleria Umberto Di Marino is pleased to present the latest solo show by Jota Castro entitled *Gemütlichkeit*, on Sunday 15th December 2013.

Europe and the failure of its ideological foundations are the central themes in the artistic vision of Jota Castro. He also worked for many years as a diplomat and has experience as a curator, allowing him to view issues from many different perspectives.

His third solo show for the gallery marks the culmination of a relentless, acutely observed analysis of Europe and offers an even closer examination of its boundaries. In his first show, the ironic and visionary spirit of the artist denounced the nostalgic and antiquated narrative of Europe as a mirage for peoples living beyond the Mediterranean area, as well as the area's unquestionable decline, caused by the driving force of emerging economies. Through the ineluctability of marble, his chilling memento mori, dating to 2011, warned about the suicidal logic of an Old Continent which is incapable of admitting its own limitations.

After two years of social collapse, political indecision and the dismantlement of the cultural system, Europe has been transformed from a sparkling democratic dream into a depressing fiscal nightmare, completely denuded of the ethical and civic values on which it was founded only half a century ago.

On other occasions, Jota Castro has already underlined the generalised stagnation and the chronic problems caused by migration, the changes in the geopolitical scene and the implosion of the neo-liberal economic model. However, in the show entitled *Gemütlichkeit*, he points an accusing finger at the complete lack of responsibility displayed by European society in favour of a false comfort zone that rejects change, unjustifiably and obstinately celebrating an inexistent wellbeing.

The processions of corpses of illegal immigrants emerging silently from the sea are a wake-up call for Europe to face the inevitable reality: this would involve an earnest dialogue with people who live beyond the fluctuating demarcation line which is constantly renegotiated by diplomatic talks. The island of Lampedusa has become the ghost of this ersatz Christmas in which the consumerist veneer of tradition wipes clean the conscience of those who ignore the tragedy, marking the final decline of a "civilization" which is not worthy of such a definition.

The iconic flag of the EU, torn and clumsily mended, is represented here by a carpet made of safety pins. *Jugaad* is a Hindi-Urdu expression that refers to a makeshift way of finding a solution to deal with an emergency provoked by a lack of resources; it becomes the distressing representation of the treacherous terrain on which the history of this continent will continue.

The enchanting and ephemeral dream of a new generation brought up to enjoy peaceful progress, based on respect for diversity, has been shattered by the weight of responsibility about local problems. In other words, the construction of identity does not just involve the promotion of a tranquilising institutional facade but the constructive working-through of one's own wounds.

Jota Castro (Lima - Perù, 1965) lives and works in Bruxelles (Belgium).

Selected solo and group shows:

- 2013 Emergency Pavilion: Rebuilding Utopia, 55th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia, Italy
Tell me whom you haunt: Marcel Duchamp and the contemporary readymade, curated by Mario Codognato, Blain Soutern, Londra, UK
- 2012 Austerity Über Alles, Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin, D
- 2011 Dublin Contemporary - Terrible Beauty—Art, Crisis, Change & The Office of Non-Compliance, Dublin, Ireland
- 2010 Trasparenze, curated by Laura Cherubini, MACRO, Rome, MADRE, Naples, Italy,
17th Biennale of Sidney, Australia.
- 2009 Low cost tour, Gonzalez y Gonzalez Gallery, Santiago, Chile
The Fear Society. Pabellón de la Urgencia, Murcia. 53rd International Art Exhibition, Biennale di Venezia, Italy
Low Cost, Galeria Oliva Arauna, Madrid Spain
- 2008 U-Turn, Quadrennial for Contemporary Art, Nicolaj CCAC, Copenhagen, Denmark.
- 2007 We are your future, 2nd Moscow Biennial of Contemporary Art, Moscow, Russia
- 2005 3rd Tirana Biennale, Albania Prague Biennale2, Prague, Czech Republic
Introduction to Jota Castro, Uplands Gallery, Melbourne, Australia
Exposition Universelle 1, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France
- 2004 4th Kwangju Biennale, Korea. BIENNALE PRIZE
- 2003 Motherfuckers never die, Galleria Minini, Brescia, Italy
Z.O.U., 50th Venice Biennial, Italy, Survival Guide for Demonstrators