

PRESS RELEASE

ERICK BELTRÁN – SIMON FUJIWARA – JORDI MITJÀ
Provenances

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Exhibition space: Umberto Di Marino Arte Contemporanea, Via Alabardieri 1, 80121, Naples, Italy

Opening: Thursday 14th May 2009, 8–10pm

Duration: 14 May–14 September 2009, **August:** closed

Opening times: Monday to Saturday 3–8 pm or by appointment in the mornings

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20.30h: Lecture-performance *Museum of Incest. A Guided Tour* by Simon Fujiwara (20')

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Provenances comprises three specially-commissioned solo presentations. It purposely coincides with the 2009 *Maggio dei Monumenti* (May of Monuments), a month-long festival during which many historical palaces and private sites throughout Naples are made accessible to the public. Provenance is the word which describes the source and origin of evidence which proves the ownership and authenticity of artworks, antiquities or fossils, for example. Likewise each of the artists' projects reflects on the heritage industry and the museumification of history, as well as the synthesis, transmission and fidelity of cultural worth. The artists share an aesthetic and pragmatic concern with the principle of the personal archive or the pre-museum *wunderkammer* – the categorization and veracity of objects, images and words is always provisional. As Didier Maleuvre discusses in his book *Museum Memories* (1999) the past remains, naturally enough, in the past: the gathering of art and artefacts as a ritual encounter must, and can only, manufacture an image of history.

Erick Beltrán presents four works each focussed around a relic-like artifact made of a particular natural substance and accompanied by Classical quotations. Following the related *Serie Calculum* (Calculus Series) (2008) – "an essay about the concentration, the density and the creation of value", as he has described – the artist assembles a dense proliferation of references, narratives, contexts and interconnections surrounding four mythical women. Ildeth the wife of Lot, Aeneas's wife Creusa, the oak nymph Eurydice, and the prophetess known as the Sibyl of Cumae whose eponymous caves are nearby Naples – each possessing the ability or inability to look forwards or backwards in time. The works' semantic excesses involve, among other things, salt from Robert Smithson's Land Art work *Spiral Jetty*, Mount Vesuvius, Orpheus's Gold Tablets, the rivers of Hades, and the four Greek classical elements – fire, water, air and earth. As Lars Bang Larsen recently described in *Artforum* (April 2009), "Beltrán's condensed narratives make for a Benjaminian social history that shows how words and things are connected in images that are at the same time playful and political – that is, subject to historical incompleteness".

Encompassing formats including performance-lectures, published fiction and collections of articles and artefacts, the projects of **Simon Fujiwara** take shape as a carefully constructed borderline of ethology, eroticism, architecture and ancestry. *The Museum of Incest*, 2009 is a multipart project which unearths an implicit myth of human origins and an explicit sexual archeology. Fujiwara has taken the fossil-rich Olduvai Gorge in northern Tanzania (a site often referred to as 'The Cradle of Mankind') as the venue for a proposed museum dedicated to a most unpromising of subjects: incestuous practices. His installation is a setting for *The Museum of Incest. A Guided Tour* a lecture by the artist performed during the exhibition's opening evening. The space doubles as an impromptu classroom, information centre or dysfunctional archive and includes a new edition of the museum's guidebook (published by Archive Books), an orientation video, site photographs, several maps, newspaper clippings, and a model of the facility's three-sphered form. Fujiwara's mischievous museum is a wilfully spurious visitor attraction where human sexuality and identity are rendered gloriously ambiguous.

In *Floating Lines* (2009) **Jordi Mitjà** reflects on practices of information retrieval, falsification and accumulation. In his seemingly-sparse installation, clusters of photocollages are hidden from immediate view by a string curtain which protects them from light while necessitating the visitor's gesture in order to reveal them. The found imagery of these obscured photocollages were in part encountered through Google Image Search results in response to particular keywords, as well as by scavenging vintage magazines, *photo-romans* or comics. Parsing both digital and analogue sources, the artist combines this material through an editorial indexing as if according to 'Mitjà algorithms'. Thematic strands such as the (mis)appropriation of fine art, technological obsolescence, incidental reportage, hoarding, contemporary mythology or mimicry are allowed to emerge. The resulting works comprise, as the artist describes, a "purposely eclectic cabinet of curiosities that holds jewels and monsters of all kinds": *trompe l'oeil* furniture restoration, Marcel Duchamp's *L.H.O.O.Q.* (1919), Polaroid advertisements, the Nazca geoglyphs, pornography, and so on. Mitjà also presents a pile of takeaway posters which adapt Sol Le Witt's 'Sentences on Conceptual Art' (1969) to form an sort of edict of 'vampiric' artistic strategies. ([Latitudes](#))

Erick Beltrán (1974 Mexico City, Mexico. Lives in Barcelona, Spain) recent solo shows include: Galería Joan Prats, Barcelona (2008–9); Malmö Konsthall, Sweden (2008) and Centro Cultural Matucana 100, Santiago de Chile, Chile (2008). Also in 2008 he participated in group shows including the 28 Bienal de São Paulo, Brasil, and the 7th SITE Santa, New Mexico, United States, and 'Société Anonyme', Kadist Art Foundation, Paris, France.

Simon Fujiwara (1982, London, UK. Lives in Berlin and London) has recently been artist in residence at the MAK Center for Art & Architecture, Schindler House, Los Angeles (2008–9) and participated in the exhibition 'Office of Real Time Activity', curated by the students in the MA Curating Contemporary Art, Royal College of Art, London (2009). Forthcoming 2009 projects include: 'The Collectors', Danish and Nordic Pavilions, 53rd Biennale di Venezia, and 'The Museum of Incest', Frieze Art Fair (Frame solo presentations), London, with Galerie Neue Alte Brücke, Frankfurt.

Jordi Mitjà (1970 Figueres, Spain. Lives in Lladó, Girona, Spain) recently exhibited 'From excess' at Bòlit, Girona (2008–9) and 'Concèntric. poble petit, infern gegant' at Espai Zero1, Olot (2006–7). Amongst his recent groups shows are: 'Hacia/Desde México DF', Instituto Cervantes, Stockholm and Paris (2008–9); 'Processos oberts', Sala Muncunill, Terrassa (2007) and 'Información contra información', CGAC, Santiago de Compostela (2007). Mitjà is a director of Editorial Crani (www.crani.org), a publishing house specialising in artists' books.

Latitudes is a Barcelona-based curatorial office founded in April 2005 by Max Andrews and Mariana Cánepa Luna.

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