

INVISIBLE HANDS

Donna Conlon & Jonathan Harker

Curated by Omar Lopez-Chahoud



Invisible Hands, 2014 - HD video 8'46" - [video still]
Donna Conlon / Jonathan Harker courtesy of DiabloRosso

September 12 - October 23, 2014

Hours: Tue-Sat 12-6pm

Opening Reception: Friday, September 12, 6-8pm

Invisible Hands is an exhibition of videos made in collaboration by Donna Conlon and Jonathan Harker. Conlon's and Harker's work is in the collections of Tate Modern and the Guggenheim Museum, where it is currently on view as part of the exhibition "Under the Same Sun".

The artists premier their latest work, ***Invisible Hands*** (2014), a video addressing social and financial power structures and the symbolic nature of money. The video shows the artists' hands engaged in a series of shifting interactions centered around a collection of panamanian "balboa" coins, named after Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, a Spanish conquistador credited with "discovering" the Pacific Ocean, and since appropriated as a national icon. Each balboa is worth a U.S. dollar, the official currency in Panama. The coins were minted once, in 2011, when forty million were put into circulation without retiring the equivalent number of dollars. They were nicknamed "martinellis" after Ricardo Martinelli, then ruling president, infamous for his corrupt, imperious style. After an initial fascination with their novelty, the populace soon deemed them a currency of lesser value.

Historical architecture in Panama City is not appreciated, and is usually replaced with shopping malls and high-rise condominiums. Development for development's sake seems to be a process that, once set into motion, cannot be stopped, like a chain reaction of dominoes toppling. One exception to this phenomenon has been the Casco Antiguo, the old quarter district located on a small peninsula in the Bay of Panama that

has been protected as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2003. Its World Heritage Site status is now in jeopardy because of the construction of a government sanctioned multi-million dollar marine viaduct around the peninsula. In its frenzy to tear down and re-build everything for a quick buck, the government even tore up the old cobblestone streets only to re-pave them with new, inferior bricks. In ***Domino Effect***, Conlon and Harker create a domino-like chain reaction through the neighborhood's streets. The dominoes themselves are the discarded antique colonial era bricks that were ironically used as landfill material in other parts of the city.

Zinc is a ubiquitous building material in the tropics. In ***Tropical Zincphony*** (2013), the artists play with a typical scenario in Panama: a mango falls from a tree onto a corrugated zinc roof, landing with a reverberating bang. The mango in the video goes on a fanciful sensorial journey, rolling haphazardly through an abstract zinc landscape. At one point during its travels, the lone mango is overrun by a stampeding herd of wild mangoes, conjuring up notions of collectivity, individuality and solitude. Color, texture, sound, and rhythm are used whimsically to explore the roles of unpredictability and spontaneity of life in the tropics.

These works highlight Conlon and Harker's playful use of the inherent properties of everyday objects to generate incisive and poetic social criticism.

This is the artists' first solo exhibition in New York. They are represented by DiabloRosso, Panama City, Panama.