

armando andrade tudela

sombras del progreso

galería elba benítez

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"There's an area of doubt where words and their meanings change in ambiguous relationship to each other, transformed by a slow rotation which prevents the return of meaning from coinciding with the return of language."
Michel Foucault, *Death and the Labyrinth*.

Central to Armando Andrade Tudela's methodology in *Sombras del progreso* (Shadows of Progress) – the Peruvian artist's exhibition of new and recent work at the elba benítez gallery, and his first gallery show in Spain -- is the role of the pedestal. In *Sombras de progreso*, however, (as in all of Andrade Tudela's work) the pedestal need not be understood solely in the literal sense as a plinth or column on which another object rests, but rather as the support structure that presents, isolates and inevitably endows a given object with a given meaning. In this sense, a video monitor is a pedestal. As is the space or site produced by a work of architecture. As is a cultural context, or a cultural construct, or an ideology. As is history. As, on occasion, is a hand. As, even, is a name.

The centerpiece of *Sombras de progreso* is the installation *UNSCH/Pikimachay* (2012), consisting of an installation of printed matter and a 16mm film loop. The film juxtaposes images of San Cristobal of Huamanga National University (UNSCH) – a Modernist campus built in the 1950's, and which later was the birthplace of brutal Maoist insurgency known as Sendero Luminoso that terrorized Peru in the 80's and 90's – with footage of the caves of Pikimachay, a pre-historic archeological site in the Peruvian Andes which is thought to have housed the region's earliest human communities. The film loop, with its rough grammar of cuts and juxtapositions, intentionally avoids a structured narrative or documentary argument -- indeed, when individuals are interviewed, the sound has been removed, shifting the focus from what is being said to how it is being said. The result is a powerful filmic deconstruction that, in dismantling cultural and historic framing structures, frees meaning from iron-clad representation; as Andrade Tudela has said (citing Foucault's analysis of Rousel), in his approach to art the *"discrepancy between language and object is, above all, emancipatory."*

Sombras del progreso also presents two short silent film loops, *Mano que sostiene* (hand that holds), from 2009/2011, and *Sin título* (*Huaco deforme*) (Untitled (Deformed Huaco)) from 2012.

Using the simplest of means – the film consists of nothing more than a single hand holding and handling a sequence of small rocks -- *Mano que sostiene* achieves a delicate polyvalence: are these rocks bits of ore, potential gems, magic-infused amulets, or acts of violence waiting to happen? And in *Sin título* (*Huaco deforme*), a pre-Columbian vase, turning slowly on its base, has been cropped by the camera's frame so severely that it is never seen in its entirety, almost as if directly quoting Foucault's description of the *"slow rotation which prevents the return of meaning from coinciding with the return of language."*

Armando Andrade Tudela (Lima, 1975) works with a wide range of media in order to explore the intersecting interfaces between popular culture, politics and fine art. While frequently using the South American cultural and historical context as his starting point, Andrade Tudela in fact focuses on complex systems of translation and transference; how are aesthetic ideas assimilated and reactivated politically, or socially, at a local level? And more broadly speaking, how are ideas themselves embedded within the fabric of geography and physical topography? Andrade Tudela studied at Pontificia Universidad Católica, Lima, Perú, The Royal College of Arts, London, and at the Jan Van Eyck Akademie. He has had exhibitions at Macba (Barcelona), Frac Bourgogne, DAAD (Berlin), the Museo de Arte de Lima, the Ikon Gallery (Birmingham), the FKV (Frankfurt) and the Kunsthalle Basel. He has taken part in the 2006 Sao Paulo Biennial and the 2006 Shanghai Biennial. He lives and works between Berlin and Saint-Étienne (France).

George Stolz