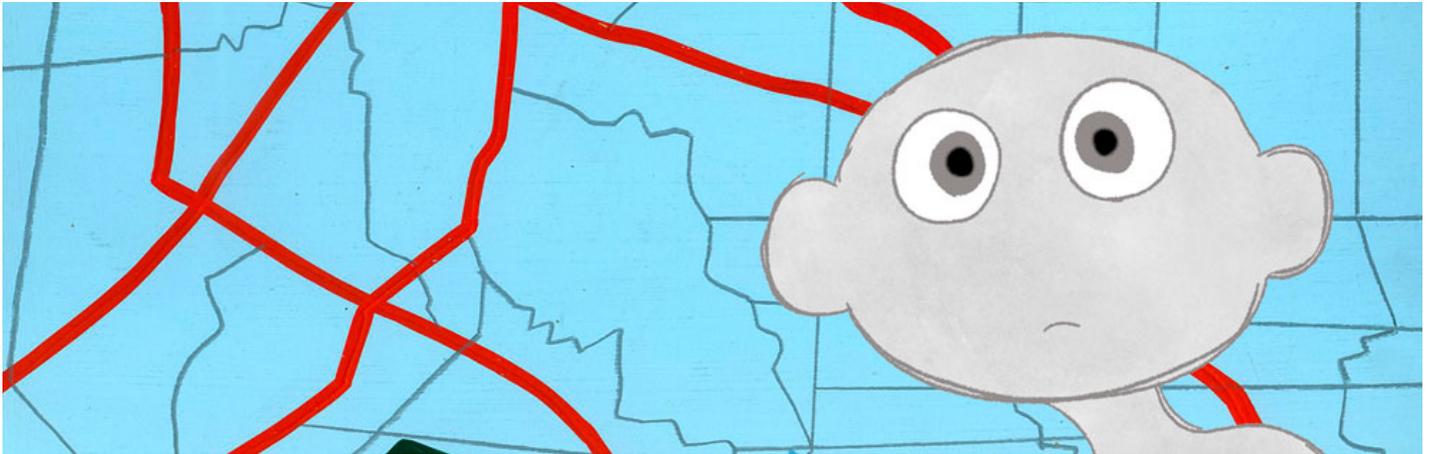


February – April 2014
Opening: Friday February 21st 2014



What is left over if I subtract the fact that my arm goes up from the fact that I raise my arm?

Ludwig Wittgenstein

In philosophical discussion the difference -- i.e. Wittgenstein's 'what is left over' -- between mere movement and deliberate action is generally held to be intention. But identical gestures can possess different meanings in different situations. Is that arm raised in greeting? Or in threat? Or is it perhaps a call for assistance? But while intention may determine meaning, context also plays a role in establishing valence. And in a parallel fashion, the significance of the artistic gesture can also change and be changed according to a combination of intention and context: where the work of art is seen, why it is being seen, what it is seen with, etc. These intricacies of art production, distribution, reception and documentation are central to the work of Mario García Torres (Mexico, 1975), and subtly inform his current exhibition of animated films at the Elba Benítez Gallery.

The centerpiece of the exhibition is *Xoco, the Kid Who Loved Being Bored (cont.)*, a 16mm animated film projected onto the wall of the gallery, accompanied by painted backgrounds of the type used by professional animators and that are likewise exhibited on the gallery walls. *Xoco* has been a recurring character in García Torres's recent films and artist books. *Xoco*'s outstanding trait is that he does next to nothing; in *Xoco*'s world, nothingness possesses a Zen-like open-endedness, and boredom is embraced as emancipatory. But here, in the animated film *Xoco, the Kid Who Loved Being Bored (cont.)*, the projection frame becomes the true exhibition site; and when juxtaposed in the mind of the viewer with the various painted backgrounds distributed throughout the gallery, *Xoco*'s navigation of and negotiation with the site takes on a wealth of possible interpretations. As a result, *Xoco* serves as an emblem of the exhibition process itself, and of its crucial function within the construction of artistic meaning. *Xoco* himself may do next to nothing; but that is not to say that next to nothing happens.

The exhibition also includes a second animated film entitled *The Remains of a Never-seen-by-the-artist animation*. Composed of *found-footage* that García Torres gathered from the cutting-room leftovers in an animation studio, *The Remains* visually recalls experimentally abstract films of the 60's and 70's. But at the same time, by breathing new life into what has been left over and discarded, *The Remains* displays García Torres's signature method of making use, literally and metaphorically, of art history, and in the process of looping the stasis of history into the ongoing present.

The research-driven work of Mario García Torres includes photographic presentations, conceptual installations and language-based pieces, and frequently revisits the overlooked interstices in the art of recent generations. García Torres has been included in the 52nd Venice Biennial (2007), the 8th Bienal de Arte de Panamá (2008), the Yokohama Triennale (2008), the 29th São Paulo Biennial (2010), the Gwangju Biennial (2010), Documenta 13 (2012) and the 9th Bienal do Mercosul (2013). He has exhibited in museums and institutions such as the Barbican Art Gallery, Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Tate Modern, Stedelijk Museum, Zurich Kunsthalle, Jeu de Paume, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía and the Museo Vostell Malpartida in 2013. This is his second exhibition at the Elba Benítez Gallery.

George Stolz