

US OR CHAOS

The a/political collection at the BPS22

22.09.2018 > 06.01.2019

a/political presents from their unique collection US OR CHAOS, an exhibition that exposes the unjust balance of power between citizen and state. On show at BPS22, in Charleroi, as of late September.

Based in London, the a/political collection has developed through long-term collaborations with international artists who are engaging their practice directly with today's major political and social problems. In parallel to initiating, producing and touring ambitious artistic projects, a/political continues to acquire historical works. To further production, a/political opened The Foundry, an experimental space in a disused foundry in the old French industrial town of Maubourguet close to the Pyrenees. Recent collaborations include 'Torture' with Andres Serrano, 'FORWARD' with Erik Bulatov and 'Black Flag' with Santiago Sierra.

US OR CHAOS brings together around forty works from the a/political collection. Inspired by an anti-riot policeman's retort to a member of the Spanish artist collective Democracia, the exhibition looks at control techniques and resistance strategies challenging the prevailing order.

Curated by Becky Haghpanah-Shirwan, director of the a/political collection, the exhibition US OR CHAOS includes powerful works that are at times monumental, at times minimalist, by Franko B, Democracia, Teresa Margolles, Andrei Molodkin, Andres Serrano, Santiago Sierra, Kendell Geers, Nancy Spero and Leon Golub. Petr Pavlensky has been invited to take part in the exhibition. He does not feature in the a/political collection. The documentation of his actions is not for sale and is free for everyone to use.

Quoting the philosopher Henry David Thoreau (1817 - 1862), "Let your life be a counter-friction to stop the machine", the curator Becky Haghpanah-Shirwan explains her view:

US OR CHAOS looks at citizens subjugated by the state. It exposes the repressive measures used to degrade and dehumanise agitators, who reject the rule of law through individual acts of resistance and extreme self-sacrifice. These moments of disobedience become political instruments, exposing the covert apparatus of power. Positioned side-by-side, they warn of chaos – a new radical system rising from beneath.

In 2014, as part of the series 'We Protect You From Yourselves' Democracia produced twenty-one portraits of the police photographed during anti-austerity demonstrations in Madrid. As a consequence of Spain's new legislation internationally known as the 'gag law', they were prosecuted under Article 40 of the Organic Law 15/1999 for the Protection

of Personal Data. The charges were dropped after months of court appearances. More recently, in 2017 Petr Pavlensky was arrested under ARTICLE 322-6 of the French penal code for his action of setting fire to the Banque de France against the bankers who 'have taken the place of monarchs'. Pavlensky remains in solitary confinement in Fleury-Mérogis prison with no trial date. In both cases, techniques of intimidation, prosecution and imprisonment expose the state's disproportionate use of aggression to maintain control.

The social contract between the state and its citizens is preserved by a strategy of fear. In an interview with Democracia, an anonymous riot policeman threatened, "It's either us or chaos". Refusing to comply, Petr Davydtchenko relocated to rural France to live exclusively off animals killed by human negligence on the road. Scavenging off waste - disregarded carcasses - to retain autonomy, his sustainable existence demonstrates Thoreau's desire to 'refuse allegiance to the state, to withdraw and stand aloof from it effectually.'

Largely comprising of works from a/political collaborations with acclaimed international artists and works from their historical collection, the exhibition shows that acts of disobedience have consequences, but are necessary to subvert the balance of power.

US OR CHAOS organised as part of Cent ans de Culture en Hainaut.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

BPS22

Musée d'art de la Province de Hainaut

Bd Solvay 22

B-6000 Charleroi

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W: www.bps22.be

Museum accessible from Tuesdays to Sundays, 10:00 > 18:00.

Closed on Mondays, on 24.12, 25.12, 31.12, and 01.01 and from 03.09 to 21.09.2018.

Rates: € 6 / seniors: € 4 / Students and job seekers: € 3 / under 12 years of age: free

Groups of 10 persons minimum: € 4 / guides: € 50 or € 60 (weekends) per 15-persons groups

Free entrance for schools and associations (visits and workshops) upon booking

EXHIBITION: 22.09.2018 > 06.01.2019

PRESS PREVIEW: FRIDAY 21.09.2018 - 10:00

Paired with that of the Musée de la Photographie (exhibitions by Robert Frank, Lisa De Boeck & Marilène Coolens and Manfred Jade).

Shuttle bus connection from Brussels.

OPENING : FRIDAY 21.09.2018 - 19:00

PRESS CONTACT

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