

EITHER SIDE OF THE DIVIDE

Opening: Wednesday September 4th, 2013, 6 – 9pm

On view: September 2nd – September 7th 2013

LAMB arts is pleased to present its inaugural show in London, *Either Side of the Divide*, a group show of works by Latin American artists Fernando Otero, Tete de Alencar, Rodrigo Petrella and Ivan Cardoso. Curated by **Joe Elliott**.

The world we find ourselves in today is a greatly complex arena of cross-pollinating ideas, combining vast quantities of data, all immediately available for our instant consumption. Our network is no longer tied to our immediate physical surroundings, or indeed our region of birth, it is everywhere, in Sydney, Hong Kong, New York, and Dubai. But whilst the many benefits are plain to see, are we not as a result becoming more homogenized, a global nation? And as such, is it possible or even relevant to retain our original cultural identities? Is the only approach to willingly accept and roll with the times or must we stubbornly grasp onto our histories in the hopes of preserving true cultural individuality.

Either Side of the Divide presents four artists, each illustrating an approach to globalization and the effects it has on his or her work. Whether choosing to document the wonderfully rich histories of South America directly, or tackling the complexities of overconsumption head on, a divergence in opinion is clearly apparent.

Two works by artist, actor, director, photographer and filmmaker Ivan Cardoso, stills from his film *HO*, were shot in 1979 during a performance titled *Parangolés* by artist Hélio Oiticica. Filmed in Mangueira Hill, a Rio de Janeiro shantytown, the participants dance in *Parangolés* (cape-like suits constructed with painted fabric, plastics, mats, screens, ropes and other materials), or as Oiticica defines them, 'habitable paintings'. With each of the performers drawing much influence from Mangueira's samba school, Cardoso clearly wishes to capture this organic and spiritual experience rooted in the vibrant activities of this local community. As such Cardoso affords the viewer an instant historical insight into this unique act, irrespective of its isolated occurrence.

In contrast to Cardoso's cementing of Oiticica's performance in the archives of art history (both digitally and physically), artist Fernando Otero chooses not to document the past directly but instead endeavors to extract emotional and spiritual meaning from his own hyper consumption. Consciously accumulating ephemera from the everyday swaths of disposable information, Otero then reconstructs these items in *Boxes*, a deliberate attempt to extract an emotional and long lasting connection to this fleeting collection of globalized information. Beautifully intricate and collaged, each provides a fascinatingly personal insight into the artist's personal activities, interests and archival tendencies.

Having once worked as a commercial fashion photographer, Rodrigo Petrella now devotes his practice to the documentation of the indigenous Amazonian tribesmen and the preservation of their history and culture. Petrella's work is exceptional in its seemingly effortless execution, striking compositions and highly polished finish, all of which aids our connection to these isolated communities. But as the artist himself points out, his work is first and foremost "grounded [with] respect to reveal subtleties about the social, economic and physical environment of the indigenous people." The obvious trust that Petrella's work is granted amongst these communities presents us with a unique opportunity to understand their histories.

Not surprisingly, London-based artist Tete de Alencar is the most seemingly detached from her South American roots. Raised in the hostile and dry region of Northeast Brazil, she has lived and worked in the UK for the past 20 years. Though an active believer in the benefits and necessity of globalization, Alencar chooses to avoid any direct reference to the topic in her work. Instead she relishes in the freedom found in creativity, unbound by the confines of our modern society. Each of Alencar's drawing is organic at its core, biological in its wonderfully intricate yet controlled structure. Alencar's beautifully precise and fluid lines typify the freedom she aspires towards and reminds us of a need to rid ourselves of structural constraints and expectations.

Regardless of the intentions and motivations behind their work, what holds consistent throughout this exhibition is that there remains an aesthetic sense of something innately South American. It seems that regardless of 21st century's obsessive interconnectivity, at our core, ingrained and nurtured in our formative years, is a strong culturally derived personality.

Either side of the Divide will be on view September 2nd, 2013 through September 7th, 27 Cork st., London, W1S 3NG. Hosted by LAMB arts and curated by Joe Elliott. Opening hours, 10-6pm, and by appointment.