



ON SURFACE

AMELIA JIMÉNEZ
REFLECTIONS AND DIVERGENCES

NOVEMBER 7 – DECEMBER 5, 2009

OPENING FRIDAY NOVEMBER 13, 7:30 PM

Toronto-based artist Amelia Jiménez' *Reflections and Divergences* is the last in a series of four exhibitions taking place at The Print Studio in 2009. Under the title *On Surface*, the series features print-based works that explore the connection between the print/image and the meaning underlying its surface.

Jiménez' exhibition is presented in two parts, each referencing something 'other,' existing in times and places different from the images and objects on view. Inside the gallery, the artist has built a series of cylindrical structures, giving new form to prints created in the eighties. Referring to the ideas that informed her past imagery as "imprints" that have stayed with her through the years, the artist expresses her intent to re-use old work as "an act of rebellion against forgetting." Rather than recalling a specific history or memory, the new array presents fragments of ideas and thoughts that reflect on a continuous flow in many directions.

The series of digital prints on the adjacent wall contain images of body parts, insects and objects on ambiguous ground. Their dream-like aura leads along the labyrinth of memory, a web of images without time or place.

As the artist reflects on divergences in her own life, she draws connections between past and present in this body of work.

Curated by Ingrid Mayrhofer

Reflections and Divergences

In Amelia Jiménez's work, the activation of nostalgia—be it in the dispositions of the objects, or in the recreation of ambiances—is challenged by the staging of scenarios in which spectators are not only enjoined to reminisce, but to translate the image-objects into a present, a present that in this very act becomes sometimes unsettling, but always sensuous.

The title of the present installation is by no means ambiguous or misleading. *Reflections*, mostly referring to the installation made up of rolled xylographs, or woodcuts, hanging from the ceiling, might indeed speak for both the beams of light emitted



from inside these floating images as well as for the introspection into which the viewer is invited while walking underneath what Jiménez calls "a ghostly forest of light" ..

But light is not the only element in play here, not the sole agent of reflections and interpellations. Coming out from under these lights, from strolling under what might at first look like a peaceful, yet magic canopy, one discovers that the xylographs—placed in fact as screen-lamps deeming the light—hide some horrific faces. And upon this discovery it is as if the viewer's own past is activated, and ghostly images of dubious creatures are conjured up at once.

Here, light brings the past into the present, actualizing the now classic definition of memory given by Francis A. Yates: putting thoughts into a landscape, in the case of *Reflections* via a bodily experience.

However, *Reflections*, orchestrating light and simulating a landscape, does not limit itself to being an experiment mirroring Yates' *Art of Memory*. For one of the things the work does is percolate a violent political experience, one that Jiménez has been reworking since 1977. It tells of horror, but speaks of life, of light and lightness.

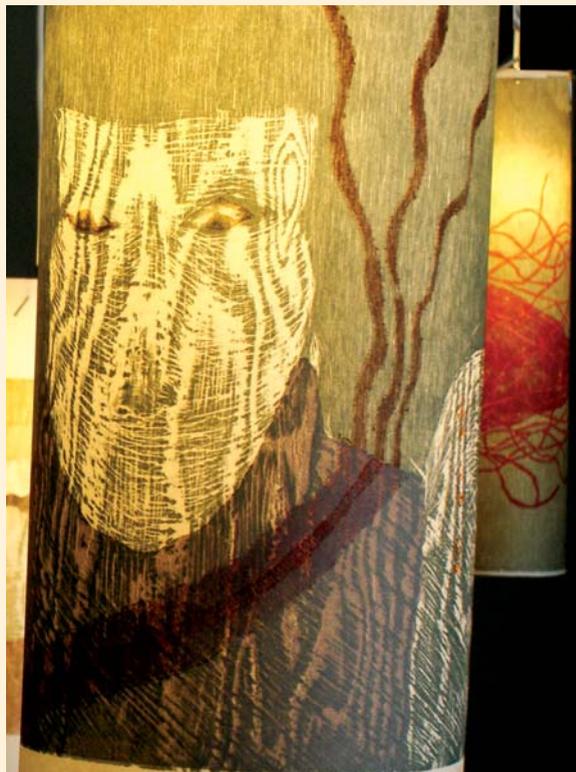
The xylographs, rolled, illuminated, and graciously hanging like paper lanterns in a garden of one's memory, were originally flat surfaces. The artist's gesture of rolling them up is already a playful one. Reminiscent of the hiker who takes a little bag, or a newspaper under her arm, the formerly still memories of the xylographs are now ready to circulate, vehicles themselves of new images freed from the old ones.

In this discovered motion, Jiménez has appropriated once more her own images and has superimposed upon the old new and cryptic signs, so now, the screens are shown with punctuations of a new language that calls for our deciphering, our participation.

The title *Divergences* might at first be taken to represent the series of photographs that not only diverges from "reflections", but which also has diversion as one its central motifs.

Here Jiménez, through a series of film photographs transferred onto printmaking paper, juxtaposes – and hence the divergence – scarab beetles placed on different parts of human bodies: feet, hands, chests..

The role of the scarab beetle in Egyptian mythology is well-known, a connection highlighted in Jiménez's work through the choice of colour treatment and through the placing of the beetles on specific parts of the bodies such as the chest. The connection between life and death seems evident, as much as the relation between one's own body and a foreign one.



However, the tonality of these pictures, a slight, subtle layer of green and ochre that calls to mind a sandy desert landscape, covers both the human and the insect body, opening the door to a reflection on what it is in the body that can be called "our own".

In allowing for reflection and sensation, *Divergences and Reflections* constitute two pieces in a dynamic dialogue. Light in the present. Bodies that can only be illuminated by the touch of the foreign body, the other.

Marta Marín-Dòmine



Marta Marín-Dòmine was born in Barcelona and lives in Toronto. She currently teaches in the Department of Languages and Literatures at Wilfrid Laurier University. Her research concerns the fields of testimonial art and literature and the representation of violence through the arts. She is the co-founder of LI/ER (Literature. Internment/Exclusion. Research).

Amelia Jiménez is a Toronto-based visual artist, educator and curator.

She studied Education (1969–1972) and Fine Arts at the Catholic University of Chile in Santiago, Chile (1972–1976). Specializing in printmaking in Chile, and later at Studio Camnitzer in Lucca, Italy, Jiménez integrates print media in her installations and performances.

Artist Residencies include Serbia 2009, Museum of Modern Art, Chiloe, Chile in 2005, Escuela de Artes Violeta Parra, Iquique, Chile 2005, Arte Dos Gráfico in Bogotá, Colombia in 1984, La Chasse Gallery in Toronto, 1980. As part of her 2005 residency in Chile, Jiménez started a printmaking studio in the northern city of Iquique, where she taught printmaking to students, teachers and local artists.

Public engagement is integral to Jiménez' artistic practice. In addition to conducting hands-on workshops and participatory performances, Jiménez is a community arts practitioner. She is currently working with the Red Tree Collective on the multi-disciplinary labour arts project "El Arte de Trabajo/The Art of Work" scheduled for presentation at the Workers' Art and Heritage Centre in 2010, and led two community arts projects at The Print Studio in 2008/09.

Selected Performances

- 2008 "Contracted Locations", The Production House Toronto
- 2008 "Art A Fair" The Gladstone, Toronto, Canada
- 2007 "Made in Canada" Bienal Inter-activa, Mérida, Mexico.
- 2003 "Power/Play" an interactive performance, Vrsac, Serbia.
- 2003 "Power/Play" an interactive performance, Toronto.
- 2003 "Chasing Mirages", Faculty of Arts and Letters, University of Havana, an interactive collaborative art action. Havana, Cuba
- 2000 "Messages to the Wind", Cultural Centre, Calbuco, Chile

Recent Exhibitions

- 2009- Site specific Installation, Trsic, Serbia
- 2006- Active Layers, Video Pool, Winnipeg
- 2005- Active Layers, McMaster Museum of Art, Hamilton
- 2004 – Dos + Uno, Site Specific Installation, MAC. Museum of Contemporary Art, Chiloe. Chile.
- 2003- "The Chile Exchange- Art Making as Departure and Arrival" A Space Gallery, Toronto. Algoma Art Gallery, Sault St. Marie.
- 2003- "A place not visible on the map" Konkordija Center for Contemporary Art, Vrsac, Serbia
- 2002- "Migraciones" Matucana Cien, Site Specific Installation, Contemporary Art Centre, Santiago, Chile
- 2001- "Claroscuro" Installation, York Quay Gallery 2, Harbourfront Centre, Toronto.
- 2000 - "Taking Place" A Space Gallery, Toronto

Curatorial (Partial List)

- Bringing Down Our Dead* A Space Gallery, Toronto 2009
- Alter Toronto*, Gallery 1313 Toronto, Canada
- eX Margins- Ideas of Collaboration-* Exhibition of 10 artists and their collaborators Propeller Centre for the Visual Arts, Toronto 2006
- Pocha Nostra -Guillermo Gomez-Peña* Performance and workshops at Toronto Free Gallery in partnership with LCCA 2005
- Our Roots and Beyond-* group exhibition at Gallery 61 Toronto 2005
- Loteria* – a presentation of multidisciplinary work by A. Dempster, printmaking, music, performance, Harbourfront Centre, Toronto 2004
- Ebb and Flow-* group exhibition of Latina/o artists at Gallery 1313 Toronto 2004
- Hilando Fino/ Fine Threading* Installation works of an international exchange between Chile and Canada. A Space Gallery with the collaboration of the Woodland Cultural Center, Brantford, ON, 2001

the Print Studio
Hamilton Printmakers Arts Association

Gallery hours: Wed—Fri 10 am—6 pm, Sat noon—4 pm

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