

FELIPE BAEZA

La Emergencia de Hacer Memoria

May 1 - June 2, 2019

Opening Reception: Tuesday, April 30th, 6-8pm

FORTNIGHT INSTITUTE

60 East 4th St. NYC

*Se encuentra presente el divino pasado.
La energía divina únicamente puede estar y
hacerse presente en nuestro mundo
contenida en algo.*

Fortnight Institute is pleased to present *La Emergencia de Hacer Memoria*, an exhibition of new works on wood panel by Felipe Baeza. This marks Baeza's first solo exhibition in New York, as well as the release of his first artist's book, *Gente del Occidente de Mexico* published by Fortnight Institute in a limited edition.

The works in the exhibition are created through a fragmented process of reworking and reusing of materials, mostly images found in books, that integrate collage and monotype printing techniques. Through this practice, Baeza's work becomes a palimpsest of memories. As the title suggests, there is an urgency, a need and desire, for memories to be created, collected and kept within the inner and outer substance of being. The pieces become vessels for ancestral histories to be contained in. Stated in the introductory quote above is the idea that divine power and energy can only be contained by an object. At the root of Nahua philosophy, is *Teotl*, the belief that there exists a sole, dynamic, vitalizing, perpetually self-generating and self-regenerating sacred power, energy or force. The Nahua people are a native group of central Mexico that included the Aztecs of pre-conquest Mexico.

The small to medium-sized scale of the works are intended as intimate and to be looked at one person at a time. They reference the devotional scale of *Retablos* - small, colorful paintings on tin, popular in Mexico from the early 19th to 20th centuries. Often made by anonymous artists, they were meant to be displayed in private altars at home, shrines, and churches.

The figures in the works come forth, hovering over a timeless dimension with backgrounds tinged in deep dark colors as in *Las Cenizas del Deseo*, with its seductive black tincture and surface evocative of Chapopote (the Aztec word for tar). For Baeza, "the use of dark colors in these pieces derive from an interest in darkness and night that functions as an in-between space where transformation happens." In *Naufragó Mi Cuerpo Pero Nunca Fallecio* and *Tengo Un Crecimiento Que Atender*, ghostly beings with disembodied bodies, roots, and branches growing out of the body and head, valleys and rivers flowing from their noses and mouths, are navigating space, trying to set themselves free. The tactile layers and marbled ash backgrounds elicit visceral sensations through which one can almost smell the earth-like nature of these works, diffused with the thick, musky smoke of copal, a tree resin used in ceremonies and rituals in pre-Columbian Mesoamerica.

Under the medium of collage, through the putting together and tearing apart of the body, lies the reminder of the inescapable cycle of life. As in nature and in alchemy, the process of fragmentation and dissolution leads to renewal and regeneration. For Baeza, "the work exists between a real and imaginary space of life, death, and transformation that lives beyond borders and boundaries; while also offering the viewer a return to places, histories and visions of the past that might otherwise be forgotten."

The Aztec god Tezcatlipoca is the Smoking Mirror, the god of the nocturnal sky, the god of the ancestral memory, the god of time and of the embodiment of change through conflict. Together with his eternal opposite Quetzalcoatl, he created the world.

Felipe Baeza (b. 1987, Guanajuato, Mexico) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. He received a B.F.A. from The Cooper Union (2009) and an M.F. A. from Yale University (2018). His work will be included in the forthcoming exhibitions *Nobody Promised You Tomorrow: Art 50 Years After Stonewall*, Brooklyn Museum, NY (May 3, 2019-December 8, 2019), and *Queer Forms*, Nash Gallery, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN (September 10, 2019-December 7, 2019). Recent solo and group exhibitions include *Underlying Borders*, The Mexican Cultural Institute, Washington, DC (2019); *FOUR*, Yossi Milo, New York, NY (2019); *FELIPE BAEZA*, Maureen Paley, London, UK (2018); *XL Catlin Art Prize*, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA (2018); *No Longer Yours*, The Mistake Room/Anonymous Gallery, Mexico City (2018); *Demolition WoManhood*, Skibum MacArthur, Los Angeles, CA (2018); *Kink and Politics: The Ties That Bind*, David Nolan, New York, NY (2017); and *New Prints 2017/Summer*, selected by Katherine Bradford, International Print Center, New York, NY (2017). Baeza has been the recipient of NXTHVN Studio Fellowship Program, New Haven, CT (2019); The Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Grant (2018); and The Josef & Anni Albers Foundation Traveling Fellowship (2017).