

BORTOLAMI

Human Applause

Curated by Nicolás Guagnini

5 April 2018 – 5 May 2018

Opening Reception Thursday 5 April, 6:00-8:00pm

**Eugenio Espinoza, Nicolás Guagnini,
Sylvia Plimack Mangold, Claudio Parmiggiani, Superstudio, Claude Viallat, Dena Yago**

Isn't my heart holy, more full of life's beauty,
since I fell in love? Why did you like me more
when I was prouder and wilder, more full
of words, yet emptier?

Well, the crowd likes whatever sells in the
marketplace; and no one but a slave
appreciates violent men. Only those who
are themselves godlike believe in the gods.

-*Human Applause*, Friedrich Hölderlin, 1800

Eugenio Espinoza (b. 1950, Venezuela) was an elusive and significant figure within the Latin American avant-garde of the 1970s. Reacting to the specific relationship set forth between artwork and spectator by Kinetic art in Venezuela, Espinoza toyed with the grid in his installations and performances. His *Localizaciones* and *Participaciones* photographs from 1973 document a swath of gridded fabric as both performance prop and ground cover, transforming the grid into both participant and locale. Espinoza recorded *La Cosa (Médanos)* in collaboration with Venezuelan artist Claudio Perna in 1972, in the sand dunes of the Médanos de Coro National Park in Venezuela.

Nicolàs Guagnini (b. 1966, Argentina) conceived his *Bibelots* as a complementary counterpoint to his sculptural work in clay. Simultaneously a commentary on labor, craft, and authorship, these *tromp l'oeil* ceramic paintings are cast from molds and decorated in an array of compositional tropes, such as symmetry, rule of thirds, and gradation. The works are situated at the intersection between painting and Conceptual art, demarcated by Kawara, Buren, and Broodthaers' radical practices in date paintings, zero-degree painting, and plastic signage, respectively. With this foundation of the 1960s in mind, combined with the materiality of the glazing and chance circumstances of kiln firing, Guagnini's *Bibelots* are simultaneously critical departure and response.

Sylvia Plimack Mangold (b. 1938, USA) is an American painter. In the late 1960s and early '70s her principal subjects were floors and rulers; aluminum EXACT and Westcott wood rulers atop linoleum, parquet, and hardwood surfaces. Both referencing and countering the Minimalists of the day, Plimack Mangold's paintings present the mass-produced, industrial materials in specific, even domestic spaces. As in Jasper John's work, the object "ruler" is both itself, serving as an actual measure of the pictorial plane, and an artwork or a component of it.

Claudio Parmiggiani (b. 1943, Italy) is best known for his *Delocazione* series. Translating literally to "delocation", the artist creates these works by igniting a controlled combustion at close proximity to a panel mounted with objects. Parmiggiani coaxes the flames for several hours, and the fire covers everything in its reach with diffused smoke and soot. When the blaze is extinguished, he removes the objects, thus leaving a shadow behind. Georges Didi-Huberman defined these remaining imprints as the "dialectical image." "something that speaks of both the *contact* (foot

BORTOLAMI

sinking into the sand) and the *loss* (the absence of the foot in its footprint).” Each of Parmiggiani’s *Delocazione* works are indices of objects no longer present, and objects in and of themselves.

Superstudio was an Italian architecture group, founded by Adolfo Natalini and Cristiano Toraldo di Francia in 1966. The collective launched a radical architecture movement alongside Archizoom and Archigram. In 1967, Natalini established three categories of future research: “architecture of the monument”; the “architecture of the image”; and “technomorphic architecture”. Soon, Superstudio would be known for its conceptual architecture works, most notably the 1969 *Continuous Monument: An Architectural Model for Total Urbanization*. Their anti-architectural proposals used grid systems as a way to mediate space. Emphasizing human activity and ritual life in a gridded system, Superstudio never actually designed or constructed a building.

Claude Viallat (b. 1936, France) was a founding member of Supports / Surfaces, a group he helped establish in the late 1960s in France that investigated the role of painting as an object—both art and social. By highlighting, examining, or even dismantling the physical supports and surfaces of the work, the group aimed to emphasize the result as a product of individual labor; to undermine painting’s status as commodity without relegating the final outcome to anti-painting or conceptual art. Viallat developed a signature motif—a neutral form likened to a fingerprint or bone—that he repeats on unstretched and unprimed fabrics like canvas, bedsheets, tarp, tents, and umbrellas. Obliquely critical of lyrical abstraction and all-over geometric patterning, Viallat sees the repetitive nature of his forms as a parable to everyday life—some routine gesture that yields a different result.

Dena Yago’s (b. 1988, USA) sculpture, *Human Applause*, invoke the Hölderlin poem of the same title and lends the exhibition its name. The poem is a remarkable and unique departure from the author’s typically neoclassical stanzas as it addresses a poet/artist subjectivity and market valuation explicitly. The horse tack, fur and chain stringers hanging from Yago’s work darkly allude to markets past and present insinuated in Hölderlin’s words. Yago intertwines text along with her visual practice, often highlighting relationships between care, control and dominance while expanding the field of what can be “read” across text, materials and objects.