

SGORBATI PROJECTS

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LIVIA CORONA BENJAMIN *Manhattan Transfer*

9 April - 9 May 2015
Opening Reception 9 April 6-8pm

Sgorbati Projects is pleased to present an exhibition of sculpture and photography by Livia Corona Benjamin. This will be Corona Benjamin's first solo show in New York. The exhibition's title, *Manhattan Transfer*, suggests the expectation of promise embedded in specific geographic locations. For Corona Benjamin, who was born in Mexico and currently lives in New York, this theme runs parallel to artistic practice—Manhattan being the assumed epicenter of artistic achievement. The exhibition includes two ongoing bodies of work: *English as a Second Language* (2015-) is a series of sculptures that pair English language idioms with trade-goods of colonization and current cultural commodities. *Infinite Rewrite* (2014-) is a series of unique photographs created from a single negative, and modified through experimentation in an analog color darkroom. Important to Corona Benjamin is the state of *arriving* and the repetition of task often associated with this process—the *mechanical aspects of getting there*. Visually disparate, the works in both series echo the stream-of-consciousness narrative and interwoven stories present in the 1925 John Dos Passos novel from which the exhibition's title is taken.

The sculptures of *English as a Second Language* (2015-) parody mastery of the English language as a crucial necessity for the non-English speaker to become more globally relevant. Phrases such as "Beer Before Liquor" or "Red and Yellow Kills a Fellow"—which purport to improve life experience, or improve chances of survival in the wild, if only recalled correctly—find themselves entwined with leather, fur, silver and basketball. Corona Benjamin additionally appropriates phrases from tourist souvenir T-shirts. *Another Shitty Day in Paradise* (2015) is spelled out with silver curio-shop keychain letters, evoking the manufactured *ennui* of popular vacation destinations as well as that of the foreigner transplanted to the United States—or more accurately, the Mexican artist at work in her Manhattan studio.

The seventeen photographs exhibited as part of *Infinite Rewrite* (2014-) use and reuse a single image taken by the artist as part of her extensive documentation of repurposed grain silos, the architectural remnants of a flawed and abandoned agricultural program instituted by the Mexican government. The conical building, devoid of its original purpose and function, becomes a *Tabula Rasa* for the artist's light studies as an indefinite exercise. Through an analog process, the image is fractured into marks of color not present in the original black-and-white negative. Resembling tightly formed brushstrokes, these marks overlap and recombine to form shifting optical patterns. The obscured but emergent image is thus stripped of any discernible sociological or documentarian intent. Acknowledged is the immigrant's evolving heritage and inevitable shedding of political baggage from the Old Country" in the process of assimilation and becoming Naturalized. One work in the series, *Dream Acts* (2015), whose colors are derived from the LGBT pride flag, reintroduces a political narrative disjointed from pictorial subject matter. Referenced is the fight for marriage equality, celebrating, after a lengthy holding pattern, one fulfillment of American promise.

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The work of Livia Corona Benjamin (b. Mexico 1975), explores the social and political implications of geography and architecture. Her photographs and texts comment on how these affect and modify human relations. She received a BFA from The Art Center in Pasadena, California, is a 2009 Guggenheim Fellow and a current recipient of an SNCA Endowment for the Arts, granted by Mexico's Commission of Arts and Culture, as well as a 2013 Prix Pictet Nominee.

Her works have been exhibited worldwide including Pinakothek der Moderne, München; New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; Bronx Museum of The Arts, New York; Museo Rufino Tamayo, Mexico City; Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City; Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, Valencia, Spain; Palais des Beaux-Arts, Bruxelles, Belgium; Ballroom Marfa, Texas; Fundación Joan Miró, Palma de Mallorca, Spain; Københavns Museum, Denmark; and in an upcoming 2017 exhibition at Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California, titled, *Home - So Different, So Appealing*, curated by Pilar Tompkins Rivas, Chon A. Noriega, and Mari Carmen Ramírez. Her photographs are in the collections of the Portland Museum of Art, Mount Holyoke College Art Museum and William Benton Museum of Art, the Berezdivin Collection and other private collections. She is the author of two monographs, *Enanitos Toreros*, 2008; and *Of People and Houses*, 2009, and is preparing a third book on her acclaimed *Two Million Homes for Mexico* series. Corona Benjamin grew up in Ensenada, Baja California. She lives between New York and Mexico City.

Sgorbati Projects was founded in 2013 by Seth Sgorbati. Working with artists, curators and others, Sgorbati Projects presents works of varied practice, and is actively involved in the sale of contemporary artworks on both the primary and secondary markets. Sgorbati Projects shares its exhibition space with Salomon Contemporary, alternating exhibitions.

Sgorbati Projects is located at 525-531 West 26th Street on the fourth floor.

For further information, please contact the gallery, or visit the gallery website, www.sgorbatiprojects.com.

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