

YOSHUA OKÓN

THE INDIAN PROJECT : REBUILDING HISTORY



29 MAY—28 JULY 2015
TUESDAY-SATURDAY, 11am—7pm
8, RUE SAINT-CLAUDE, PARIS 3ÈME

The Indian Project : Rebuilding History

This piece was shot in Skowhegan, a small town located in the state of Maine, USA.

The original town's name was Milburn, but in the 19th century it was changed to what it was considered to be its former Abenaki, Native American name.

New England, the region in which Skowhegan is located, was the site of some of the worse Native American genocides in the continent and the town has no remaining Native American population or cultural influence.

During the 1960's, the town's Chamber of Commerce decided to erect an 80 feet tall Native American wooden sculpture, which they refer to as "The tallest Indian in the World".

In the summer of 2014, the Chamber of Commerce was conducting a restoration of the sculpture. Taking advantage of this occasion, **Okón** invited the members of the committee in charge of the restoration to conduct a program/performance at their local TV station.

The committee members were asked to talk about the history of the statute, about the town's adoption of a Native American identity, as well as to perform a "Native American Trance Ceremony" based on their own notions of what that constitutes.

Yoshua Okón was born in Mexico City in 1970 where he currently lives and works. The artist blends mediums, including video, installation, and performance, in order to engage the viewer in a dialogue concerning the complexity of contemporary society. His work is like a series of near-sociological experiments, a humorous provocation, executed for the camera in which he blends staged situations, documentation, and improvisation in order to question habitual perceptions of reality and truth, selfhood and morality.

In 1994, he founded La Panadería, an artist-run space in Mexico City. In 2002 **Okón** received an MFA from UCLA with a Fulbright scholarship.

His solo shows include: Octopus, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, USA (2011); HH, Baró, Sao Paulo, Brazil (2011); Yoshua Okón: 2007-2010, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, USA (2010); Ventanilla Única, Museo Carrillo Gil, Mexico City, Mexico (2009); Canned Laughter, Viafarini, Milan, Italy (2009); SUBTITLED, Städtische Kunsthalle, Munich, Germany (2008); Bocanegra, The Project, New York, USA (2007); Gaza Stripper, Herzeliya Museum, Herzeliya, Israel (2006); Cockfight, Galleria Francesca Kaufmann, Milan, Italy (2003); Orillese a la Orilla, Art & Public, Geneva, Switzerland (2002).

Okón's group exhibitions include: Amateurs, CCA Wattis, San Francisco, USA (2008); Laughing in a Foreign Language, Hayward Gallery, London, UK (2008) The Age of Discrepancy, MUCA, Mexico City, Mexico (2007); Adaptive Behavior, New Museum, New York, USA (2004); Terror Chic, Spruth/Magers, Munich, Germany (2003); The Virgin Show, Wrong Gallery, New York, USA (2003); Mexico City: an exhibition about the exchange rates between bodies and values, PSI, MoMA, New York, USA (2002) and Kunstwerke, Berlin, Germany (2002).

The artist has also participated in: California-Pacific Triennial, New Port Beach, USA (2013); Mercosur Biennale, Porto Alegre, Brazil (2005); Torino Triennale, Turin Italy (2005); Istanbul Biennale, Istanbul, Turkey (2003); ICP Triennale, New York, USA (2003) and California Biennale, OCMA, USA (2008 and 2002).