

mor
charpentier

MATERIA PRIMA

|

Edgardo Aragón

Sep 9 - October 7 2017

Opening

Saturday, September 9— 6pm - 9pm



Belief in Progress is an act of faith, a faith that evaporates as it moves away from the power that promotes it. In **Materia Prima**, **Edgardo Aragón's** first solo exhibition at mor charpentier, neoliberal ideals of progress are confronted with the realities of underdevelopment and extreme need.

The exhibition opens with **El Paraíso** (The Paradise), a series of abstract paintings of iron oxide. The rust turned pigment was collected from scrapped auto parts that the artist found in junkyards located in an area known as "El Paraiso" (The Paradise) in Zimatlán, Oaxaca.

The different formats and placement of these paintings are a reference to cars and car parts such as doors or windows and the way their display is organised in junkyards. These cars, brought into the country by Mexican immigrants, are used in place of much needed but unattainable tractors and sophisticated agricultural equipment. The paintings—sometimes a clear brown square but often a multilayered and profoundly dark shape—stand in contrast with its pristine supports.

This contraposition translates the inequality of power relations in developing nations to a formal expression of canonical painting in which the products of obsolescence and neglect take over spotless surfaces.

In a contiguous space we find **Música de viento** (Wind Music), a sound installation for which the artist recovered the magnetic tapes extracted from cassettes used by farmers in Oaxaca as rudimentary scarecrows. As they beat the wind, the sounds produced by the flapping tapes drive away birds, while natural elements and wind itself distort the music that was once recorded, engraving in turn the noise of time. that we listen to inside the gallery.

Downstairs, **American Pick Up** is a video in which the abhorrent killing of James Byrd is abstractly reproduced by dragging a bale of barley chained to the back of an American truck. The piece tacitly establishes a relationship with the millions of immigrants and marginalised populations—enslaved by work and precariousness—that populate the American Southern lands.

Whether in paintings, sound installations or videos, Edgardo Aragón dismantles the local landscape of his native Oaxaca to create both poetic and unsettling works. While these may seem context-specific, the story of how the idea of Progress continues being pushed in nations with unsolved issues of injustice and extreme poverty remains painfully current.

List of works

Edgardo Aragón

El Paraíso (The Paradise), 2017

Rust on canvas
Variable dimensions

Música de viento (Wind Music), 2017

Cassette tape, hifi cassette player, speakers
Variable dimensions

American Pick Up, 2017

Video digital / color / audio
3:00 min