

DESTRUCCIÓN
TOTAL
DEL
MUSEO
DE
ANTROPOLOGÍA
un proyecto de Eduardo Abaroa

march 5 - march 31, 2012

tuesday to thursday from 11:00 am to 6:00 pm

friday and saturday from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm

Passion for destruction is also a passion for creation
Mikhail Bakunin

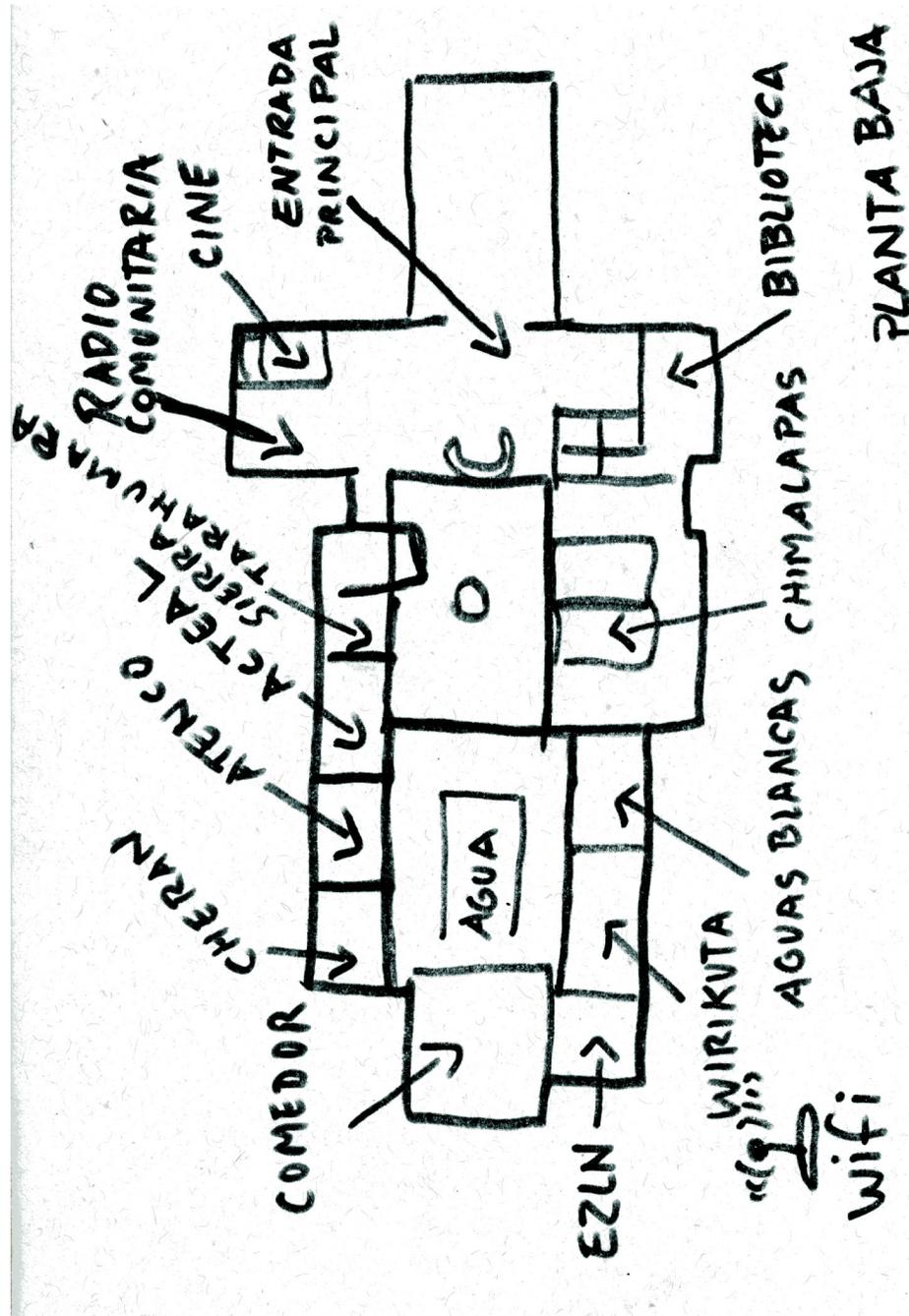
Foremost, this exhibition describes a mere physical process, that even in its quality as a possibility can generate discursive implications on museological, historical, anthropological, and artistic practice.

Throughout history, the role which museums have been dealt has been preserving the cultural milestones of their communities. Yet this intention has always served as an alibi for tangible acts of archeological scavenging. In most cases it is a domination resource. Even today, unless one chooses to eradicate a series of events that are inconvenient for memory and the spirit of official culture, the museum institution remains an awkward place.

The project echoes two traditions, one that begins with Bakunin's illustrious proposal, whose explosive overtone precedes innumerable vanguard movements, including futurists, Dadaists, fluxus, Destructivists, punks, etc. On the other hand, the show adds itself to the long series of symbolical raids against museums which brighten the exercise of institutional critique.

If since its foundation one of the purposes of the National Anthropology Museum has been the reassessment of the cultures originated in Mexico, today we see its focus as insufficient and somehow obsolete.

Its architectonic splendor simultaneously praises and masks the desperate situation of the many ethnic groups which barely survive the struggle of geopolitical processes. The institutions magnificence clashes against the poverty and abandonment of the cultural practices the State claims to defend.



Demolition

Tatatatattayayayayayaa
Echemos abajo la estación del tren
demoler demoler demoler demoler
echemos abajo la estación del tren
demoler demoler la estación del tren

Tatatatattatayayayayaya
nos gusta volar la estación del tren
demoler demoler demoler demoler
ye ye ye ye ye ye ye
ye ye ye ye ye ye ye
Demoler demoler demoler demoler
ahhh
tatatatatyayayaya

Demolición, Los Saicos, 1965

Twenty years ago, a dear friend, named Eduardo Abaroa (Mexico, 1968), proposed a game: barefoot and wearing only t-shirts and underwear, the participants had to place one at a time, one pancake over another while saying ‘make a wheel’ as they grabbed hands, held their breath and made a circle around the growing pancake tower, until they lost their breath or the construction collapsed. Previously, in a building in downtown Mexico City, Eduardo elaborated a fragile and light structure made out of balsa wood and articulated solely by threads and suspended –floating- by helium-filled balloons. One of these flew outside the room, subtly and delicately modifying the whole piece, until it collapsed and was left unraveled on the floor. Next, he built another sculpture crossed by the tension meant by wear and tear, by the yielding of physical material: for an entire week he carried everywhere he went a bag of sliced bread on one hand, and whenever someone asked him why, he would take one of the slices, crumble it into an implosive ball and then placed it inside the bag, without saying a word.

Demolishing is the contrary to constructing, and there are many ways to demolish, curiously, no less complicated in its processes, techniques and strategies as building. The stereotypical image of a giant crane with an upright arm from which a wrecking ball is suspended, and whose balancing tears apart a house or building has become obsolete in the face of progress within the destruction industry. The demolishing industry had achieved such sophistication that they become related, as in the so-called ‘deconstruction’, which dismembers a construction piece by piece in an attempt to recover and recycle the materials its built from: brick by brick, nail by nail. The implosion has also allowed the destruction of huge buildings without any damage to the adjoining structures and has become a high mark of technology, of the development of a language exclusively designed to destroy, surpassed only by the devise of weapons and synthetic epidemics.

Other techniques, highly refined in their spanking planning, that with devastating clarity point also in direction of a symbolic destruction of the man-built constructions, of capital and of what it entails, in a deliberately destructive spirit, have become emblematic of our times, such as the precise beheading of the World Trade Center in New York, on September 11th, 2001.

Eduardo Abaroa is an artist whose work is crammed with metaphors and other figures, enriched by a vocabulary diverse and complex –in technique and concept- and whose formats transcend themselves in spirals that turn towards diverse fields, now points to destructive engineering. Abaroa has proposed to himself the demolition of Mexico City’s National Anthropology Museum, gesture which appears as a far too thorny challenge in symbolic terms, almost an excess that because of its political and economic implications, surmounts any other demolition proposal. Abaroa’s skill as sculptor, in the traditional sense, is one of his work’s main virtues, which has always occupied a central role in his discourse. Whether modeling resins or ceramics, building and assembling with wayward materials, he generates playful and eccentric images that arrive at plural and occasionally unstable plastic exercises. And yet his work has also been permeated by a performance will, not exempt of a black and velvet humor, such as in the actions I enlisted at the beginning.

In this case, his will to destroy the well-known museum points not only in the direction of a physical crumbling of the building that very likely houses one of the most important collections of Pre-Columbian Mesoamerican art, but also as a symbolic tear of that which represents the foundations of the so-called national identity: precisely a building that stems from the post-revolutionary cultural institution, which imposed itself on the country’s diversity in a way that could be labeled –as Pablo González Casanova, Dean of the National University, called it –‘internal colonialism.’

The building that holds the most representative objects dating from the Mesoamerican cultures is the political and touristic mammoth with which the supposedly Mexican State has consolidated the national identity. It is also the modern formal concretion of the museum as mausoleum. An accumulation which I would rather call piling-up of the beautiful vestiges of our glorious historical past, pieces of clay, wood, stone, textile, palm leaf, and crystal that compose this inheritance compete in their evident concretion with the marginalization, racism and misery that the so-called indigenous Mexican population have and continue to suffer. In this sense, the demolition of the museum becomes indispensable in the same measure with which Joseph Beuys once demanded lifting the Berlin Wall a few inches during the Cold War’s most cutting moments.

In fact, destroying not only the museum but the entire country would be almost congruent. Tearing apart its institutions and on top of its ruins founding a new station for the citizen, a new conception of culture, of structures, of its products and of its manufacturers. In that giant hole left after Eduardo Abaroa's proposed demolition, within that pure negativity, possibility would have to flourish.

On the other hand, Abaroa simultaneously proposes a blow to the flowery institution of modern Mexican architecture. The author of the building is no local builder, since he emblematically personifies the intellectual who serves as employee of the cultural institution, of the cultural administration, the scheming buroucrat, the giver of form to buildings that put together could well represent Priato's architecture and his seventy-plus years of controlled democracy. Only to mention a bouquet of his authorship's examples: the basilica of Guadalupe, the museum of modern art, the Tlatelolco tower, the Azteca stadium, the congress palace of San Lázaro, the Mexicana Aviation Company tower, the Amparo museum in Puebla, as well as presiding the organizing committee of the 1968 Olympic Games and designing the Televisa logo. And, although the National Anthropology Museum is perhaps the sinister architect's less displeasing work, and though it perfectly fulfills its functionalist duty as creator of ideology, one still fills like bringing it down, in this way at least.

Abraham Cruzvillegas, 2012

We make available on the Mesa de Acceso, a selection made by the artist who exhibits in the gallery space. This compilation can be varied and range from literature books, monographs, essays, technical books... that the artist shares with the public to vent some of his readings, preferences and concerns.

1. DeLanda, Manuel. *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History*, Swerve Editions. United States, 2000
2. Debray, Régis. *Transmitir*. Ediciones Manantial. Argentina, 1997
3. James, Peter ; Thorpe, Nick. *Ancient Inventions*. Ballantine Books, New York, 1997
4. Fanon, Frantz. *Los condenados de la tierra*. Edit. Fondo de Cultura Económica. Mexico, 2000
5. López Austin, Alfredo; López Luján, Leonardo. *El pasado indígena*. Edit. Fondo de Cultura Económica. Mexico, 1996
6. Báez, Alfredo. *El saqueo cultural de América Latina*. Edit. Debate. Mexico, 2007
7. De Landa, Fray Diego. *Relación de las cosas indígenas*. Monclem Ediciones. Mexico, 2000
8. Bakunin, Mikhail. *Dios y el Estado*. Edit. AGEBE. Mexico, 2008.
9. De las Casas, Bartolomé. *Brevisima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*. Ediciones Catedra. Mexico, 1984

This selection made by Eduardo Abaroa presents books directed to the processes of reproduction, transmission and destruction of cultural and technological features along time.