

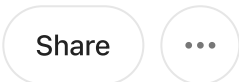
Art Writing – 'Fossils' by Pil & Galia Kollektiv: Immersive Zombie Striptease in Tecate & Los Angeles.

Repeater British Avantgarde Exhibit In California, Autumn 2023. Pastor Projects, Tecate & Tryst Art Fair, Lon Angeles.



DR PATRICK SCOTT-NAPIER

JAN 08, 2024



Pastor Projects-director & @skunkesthetix editor, Dr Patrick Scott-Napier, immersed on Pastor Projects' Tecate contemporary art lawn

If love is attention and you're panicking because you aren't getting any, then be comforted by the fact

that at least Capitalism will afford you some occasional attention – You Will Never Walk Alone as LFC supporters often remind us – even in death. Why? Because Capitalism is value extraction and, to find extractable value, capital will test, probe and regard everything and everybody – real or unreal, dead or alive – as potential sites for value extraction.

This truth is the impulse for Pil & Galia Kollektiv’s superb immersive art installation, *Fossils*, which we have had the pleasure of hosting twice in the Autumn of 2023. The first edition inaugurated our Tecate-space in August while the 2nd edition was an optimised mobile version made especially for a site-specific exhibition at the Tryst Art Fair in Los Angeles in October. A booklet with conversations surrounding Pil & Galia Kollektiv’s project, including the Mexican curator Papus Von Saenger, is due for publication in the Spring of 2024.

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The London-based “mono-duo” is surely at the forefront of absurdist-artistic exploration of the human condition in theory and practice. The morbid dash of understated humour goes hand in glove with our Mexican moods here on the border. Against the alienating grain of our *Big Tech* teenage overlords to the north of us, the artists made the 6000-mile return journey from London to be present for the launch of the work.

[**Basic Q&A About Pastor Projects**](#)



The 'Fossils'-installation

In one corner, a life-sized skeleton dummy lies prostrate on the lawn in an inviting comfortable position. At the centre of the installation, two *Alcapulco* beach chairs are arranged for the headset-enabled immersive experience. Opposite the pile of bones, an oil-spill is effected via black plastic to cover another oil spill — our bright green plastic lawn floor.

Thus, the artists touch on the show's title motif: fossils. The long-dead lifeforms that are continually extracted for value to form combustibles for the continued, at times stuttering, progress of civilization.

The dead are brought to life in the central immersive, headset-enabled, performance-universe (Youtube 2D-version is [here](#)). The 22-minutes long film (available in Spanish and English versions) features 3 set-ups: One is a Brechtian theatrical performance by a group of exhausted “worker” corpses. The performers are dressed in skeleton costumes similar to the one installed in the Calle Sexta-space. The second scenario moves us bank-side to a grey London-day along the Thames where performers are practically drowning in the fossil-extracted black plastic. While the third scenario features singing trees in a corridor in what appears to be a large archive.

The latter is replicated in the installation in the form of two framed monochrome photographs that document fake trees in a WWI battlefield, which we are informed were made to serve as concealment for observation posts.



The 'Fossils'-film

In a black-box theatre space, the apparent leader of the corpse “chain gang” (performed brilliantly by Irish artist Frank Wasser) expends considerable effort in his opening monologue to persuade his colleagues to get up from their reclining positions to get on with work. We wonder what sort of incentive this company zombie stooge can use to tempt the dead to go on working when the worst has already happened.



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Nonetheless, the foreman pulls off the feat and makes his colleagues sing and dance with him about their predicament at the bottom rung of the punishing Capitalist exploitation racket. It is funny. It is morbid. It is suffocating. It is sad. It is true. No accent but the Irish can communicate our dejected and melancholic historical position than the Irish. Hence, the choice of an Irishman as the lead is most appropriate here.

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The surreal kaleidoscope carries forth with partly immobilised human figures on the bank of the Thames. Writhing like worms wrapped in plastic, the many-headed acts like a reflective chorus to the plight of humanity. While two trees in a scene with shades of a Samuel Beckett's dystopia completes the abject picture with a conversation and song about the peculiar propensity we humans have to project meaning onto our surroundings.



The meaning machine is of course that which brings distinction and difference viz. *classes* into the world and is as such the prime mover in Capitalism.

As with Dante's hell, no hope enters here. What is left to do is for the audience to reflect and drown their sorrows with the poison-of-choice while having a laugh in true Mexican (Irish) fashion.

Yet, possibly, there might just be a glimmer of hope in the knowledge that we at least shall never walk alone – neither in the human or subhuman world. While there is the added hope in the context of the present suicide discussion: *Who would want to kill themselves when they know they are just going further down the ladder to be exploited as a living dead?*

PS-N, Tecate 7/1/2024



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**PASTOR
PROJECTS**

Pil and Galia Kollektiv

Pil and Galia Kollektiv are London-based artists, writers and curators working in collaboration. Their work addresses the legacy of modernism and the relationship between art and politics. Through their performance, film and sculptural installations, they have been interrogating the organisation of labour and the manifestations of ideology in late capitalism. They have had solo shows at Centre Clark, Montreal, Te Tuhi Center for the Arts, New Zealand and The Showroom Gallery, London, and presented live work at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Berlin Biennial and Kunsthall Oslo. They work as lecturers in Fine Art at University of the Arts London, the University of Reading and the Royal College of Art.

Basic Q&A About Pastor Projects:

Pastor Projects gallery website at pastor.mx

Who are you? Answer: Bio here: <https://pastor.mx/patrick-scott-napier/>

Why Tecate? Answer: You are free to do whatever you want and we are only 3 and a 1/2 hours drive from LA.

Where Are You located? Answer: In a three-room bungalow with an open-plan kitchen in the friendly neighbourhood Benito Juárez. There's a large porch with facilities brilliant for outdoors work.

Is Tecate secure?: Answer: Yes.

Is the border crossing "friendly"? Answer: Yes.

Do you have a gallery space?: Answer: Yes

Do you have access to additional spaces?: Answer: We can rent an additional house at the back of the bungalow (shared driveway), should some of you wish to join the camp during 2024. We also have a standing offer from Yohanna Jaramillo, who is the director of IMACTE, La Casa de Cultura, to make use of their museum facilities.

What artists have you shown? Answer: We have a decent roster of past exhibiting artists — check it out here: <https://pastor.mx/artists-shown-by-pastor-projects/>

Is the gallery established in the region? Answer: We have existed in various incarnations for 10 years. We have shown nationally in Mexico as well as internationally. The gallery's history is outlined here: <https://pastor.mx/447-2/> The last two years in the bungalow in Benito Juárez.

Comments



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