



Galería RGR presents *El ladrillo*, a Patrick Hamilton exhibition, in Mexico

- Since the end of the 1990s Hamilton's work has had the concepts of work, economy, and history in the context of Chile's past few decades as unifying theme, in particular during the period known as post-dictatorship.
- The exhibition will be open from November 7, 2020, till January 23, 2021.

Galería RGR presents *El ladrillo*, an exhibition by Patrick Hamilton (1974), who, after a profound analysis of the economic policy book of the same name that established the free market guidelines implemented in Chile during the military dictatorship, questions the politico-economic model imposed by Augusto Pinochet and reflects upon its social and cultural impact in the following years.

In the work exhibited there exist references to social and economic history, to collective memory and artistic movements such as Russian Constructivism, Neoplasticism, Latin American Conceptual Art from the 1970s and 1980s, Minimalism and *Arte Povera*.

As part of keeping the coherence of his critical discourse on politics and economics, Hamilton works with simple materials, which is why in this exhibition he employs elements proper to the construction sector, such as saws, gloves, bricks and sandpaper, in order to create –poetically– simple compositions. Simultaneously, he reformulates the understanding of certain concepts such as balance/unbalance, equality/inequality, regulation/deregulation, and individual/community. The word “brick” is taken in its different connotations: the title of the book, as expression of the housing market crisis (also known as the Subprime Crisis) detonated in 2008, as well as in its material and utilitarian dimension.

For Hamilton, “neoliberalism and the great economic crisis launched by neoliberal ideology is something present in our everyday lives in many parts of the world. In Chile, the social disturbances from last year was related to the crisis of a model based upon extreme individualism and that lack of social and economic rights promoted by neoliberalism. The topic of economics crosses our entire lives.”

The exhibition is composed by three series. The first, *The Chicago Boys Project* (2018-2019) is articulated around unedited photographs that, in the style of still life paintings, combine documents printed in red paper, workers’ gloves painted black, and objects such as a goods transport network and false gold chains, assembled like “constellations”. The files – photographs, press clippings, book covers and letters – document and narrate, in fragmentary form, what was the most important ideological conflict in the world of the past decades, in the context of the Cold War: the battle for economic thought, and from it, the way our societies are modeled.

Another series of works that also meditate on the history of painting and the conditions of work in our societies are the *Abrasive paintings* (2015-present). The formalist character of these works is granted by the history of Constructivism, Concrete Art, and Suprematism, particularly Kazimir Malevich’s *Black Square* (1915). Hamilton’s collages, built with acrylic and black or white sandpaper, are the most direct reference to certain characteristics of Malevich’s painting. The grid formed by the sandpaper, likened to the patterns of walls and pavement, additional to their monochrome aspect, speaks of an extensible “pictoric” surface, and thus suggests the idea of continuity, of infinity, as much as it manifests the will of restricting the means used as much as possible, in an economy that is both formal and conceptual.

Art created with work tools has been a constant in Hamilton’s career. *Sculptures with tools* (1998-present) is a group of pieces where manual tools (saws, spiked sticks, machetes, spatulas, etc.) are intervened and manipulated so as to reference the precarity of the world of labor and workers, in opposition to the source of wealth they represent for the business sector. In the beginning, Hamilton painted or coated tools with colored paper or geometric designs to present them as if they were sculptures, occupying and intervening specific sites or as small exercises upon pedestals. Afterwards, he changed the original materiality of the tools and began to use copper, since, apart from its relation with art history – as the work of Joseph Beuys or Donald Judd shows – is also the backbone of the Chilean economy.

El ladrillo

El ladrillo is a book of economic policy that set the guidelines of the free-market system implemented in Chile during the military dictatorship. The text was written at the beginning of the 1960s by a group of Chilean economists, alumni of the controverted Economics Nobel Prize Milton Friedman (1912-2006) at the University of Chicago, known as the “Chicago Boys”. In its pages, radical economic measures are proposed, as an antidote that would cure Chilean society from the dream of socialism through measures such as the complete opening of markets, the lowering of customs duty and taxes, the reduction of public expenditure and the promotion of goods and services privatizations on behalf of the state.

Patrick Hamilton (Belgium, 1974)

Patrick Hamilton holds a BA on Arts from the University of Chile. In 2007 he received the Guggenheim Fellowship, awarded by the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation of New York. His work has been presented at institutions such as the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain (2019); Museo de Arte, Arquitectura y Tecnología (MAAT), Lisboa, Portugal (2019); Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Wifredo Lam, Havana, Cuba (2016); Auckland Art Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand (2016); Centro Cultural São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil (2015); Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw, Poland (2014); The Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York, US (2014); Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach, US (2013); Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara, Mexico (2011); Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende, Santiago, Chile (2011); Kunstmuseum Heidenhheim, Heidenheim, Germany (2008); National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MMCA), Seoul, South Korea (2005); Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Høvikodden, Norway (2004).

His work has been present at biennials such as the 55th Venice Biennial (2013); 11th and 7th Cuenca Biennial, Ecuador (2011 and 2001); Dublin Contemporary, Dublin, Ireland (2011); 2nd Art and Architecture Biennial of Canarias, Spain (2009); 10th and 8th Havana Biennial (2009 and 2003); the Curitiba Biennial, Brazil (2011 and 2007); 1st Chile Triennial (2009); 2nd Praga Biennial (2005); 26th São Paulo Biennial (2004); 2nd Mercosur Biennial, Porto Alegre, Brazil (1999), among others. His works are also a part of private and public collections across the world such as the Colección Jumex (Mexico), the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía and the Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo (Spain), the Museo del Barrio (US), the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (Chile), the DKM Duisburg Museum (Germany), the Museum of Latin American Art (US), the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Santiago (Chile), among others.

Currently, he lives and works between Madrid, Spain and Santiago, Chile.

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