

kurimanzutto

gob. rafael rebollar 94

col. san miguel chapultepec

11850 mexico city

la cuesta de enero y otros comportamientos protoeconómicos eduardo abaroa

18, 5 de mayo and bolívar, downtown, mexico city

january 13 - 30 2005

Eduardo Abaroa and kurimanzutto present *La cuesta de enero y otros comportamientos protoeconómicos*: the name of this exhibition comes from the Mexican expression *La cuesta de enero* (literally, January's slope) used colloquially to describe the period of financial stringency that comes after the Holidays. This project ponders different aspects and consequences of the current financial reality of Mexico. The site chosen to host *La cuesta de enero...* is also its conceptual starting point: a former commercial transactions firm in downtown Mexico City.

For this exhibition, Abaroa has created fifteen pieces that comment the irrational distribution of wealth, the struggle for market domain, the instability of commodities, and the marketing control of consumer needs satisfaction. These works address "sideways" non-specialized aspects of local economy through a conceptually ambivalent approach that allows for freedom of interpretation while still providing apparent clues.

By way of his characteristic iconography and with the intention of sparking off the viewer's reflection, the artist resorts to cubic forms, altered animals, popular culture objects, pornographic references, and miniature representations. A cube made of chrome steel rods is distorted through tiny fridge magnets with popular brands of consumer items: light bulbs, cereal, cheese, and jelly.

From a minimalist support depicting a sort of geometrical language, hang male underpants under the title *La amenaza del calzón chino* (the threat of the *wedgie*), referencing both the voracity of Asian economy and the aggression of the child's prank (known in Mexico as "Chinese underwear"). Finally, serving as a metaphor for useless intelligence and marketing survival control: Abaroa's intervened

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dolphins; one, blackish brown surrounded by empty soda bottles; another displaying erotic objects and tiny pornographic images; and others still, disguised as chicken (the quintessential link of the marketing food chain).

La cuesta de enero... is a paradoxical exhibition that confirms the persuasive force of the discourse and denounces the contemporary difficulty of weakening its power; a power that delimits object meaning and viewer perception while altering the conceptual expectations of the artist.

Source: *Proceso*, (January 23 2005)

press reviews:

“Eduardo Abaroa catches up with the holiday season as he bares-naked the relation between contemporary art and the hardships of the financial beginning of the year. *La cuesta de enero (y otros comportamientos protoeconómicos)* is an exhibition that probes into different behavioral paradigms: animal, psychosocial, and of course, financial.

For Abaroa [...] economy may be objective but the *cuesta de enero* phenomenon is provoked by a far from objective religious festivity that precedes it. “To some extent, it is something immaterial, but it influences economy. I was interested in this approach to a financial situation that is more akin to popular thought and rite celebration.”

Art pieces are made through a mix of “disciplines” such as science fiction, amateur psychology, zoology, swindle, and involuntary humor; they reveal images of sexual dolphin-therapy, or, in the case of *La amenaza del calzón chino*, the trade competition between Mexico and China.

“I wanted to work with dolphins ever since I found out they were used to find naval mines and clear the way for submarines. I imagined a possible science fiction of sorts in which animals exist not through evolution but solely to fulfill human needs”.

Ceballos, M.A. (January 6 2005), *La cuesta de enero desde la plástica*, *El Universal*.