

**FEDERICO DÍAZ: YOU WELDED THE ORNAMENT OF THE TIMES**

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Curated by Petr Rehor &amp; Esko Nummelin

On view, at the Pori Art Museum is Federico Díaz's project for CAFA Art Museum\* (Beijing), which was created over a longer period of time. Díaz has travelled to China regularly for several years and is a very perceptive observer of the small nuances in his current surroundings. According to Federico Díaz, each space is co-created by the distinctive nature of the individual's movement, tiny distinctions in everyday activities. We all move through our urban environments, consume food, interact with the people in our surroundings, make phone calls, go shopping, point out things that interest us – but each of us does this in a completely unique character that arises from the characteristics of our space.

Through his projects, Díaz creates a gradually expanding database of these tiny distinctions, which in the long run may prove crucial to understanding individual identity in an otherwise increasingly globalized world. Federico Díaz decided to use the three-wheeler, almost as if he had understood in advance that its importance in the coming months would be diametrically different. In September 2014, a ban was issued in Beijing on transportation by non-motorized rickshaws, a traditional means of transport. The ban on operating non-motorized rickshaws automatically tuned them into a relic from a certain era, an artifact symbolizing a certain time, space and attitudes associated with it. The form of movement and speed automatically changes beliefs, the urban layout, determines the size and system for planning streets, main roads, highways, and the human being in their surroundings. The three-wheeler assimilated by Europe as a symbolic reference to a distant tradition, now becomes a reference to an extinct tradition. An entire layer of the city's existence is falling apart. In the long run, transportation will speed up, large industrial production will be strengthened, and pollution from manufacturing in the very center of the city will decline.

Just as the cycle rickshaw once replaced original rickshaw, a mode of transportation that radically emphasized social stratification and used the direct power of a human being almost as a draft animal, now the motor replaces human energy. To what extent is this transformation one that is socially defining? Who drives the rickshaw and who is driven? Moreover, to what extent is the rickshaw a means for transporting people, as we are used to viewing it in Europe, and to what extent is it instead a utilitarian wagon for objects, raw materials, for making a living? Federico Díaz tackles all of these complex issues as an analyst and an interpreter. He embraces the rickshaw and its mechanisms with their entire semantic burden, and subjects the tiny nuances of movement that accompany rickshaw work to detailed examination.

A mechanic whose main income had until recently been from small-scale welding jobs, replicates the processes that had been regular for him and shows the bond through time, from the past to the near future. For Díaz, however, a technical description of the process and mathematical notation are irrelevant. The recording is created through his own artistic devices. This project resorts to another traditional legacy that is otherwise normally used in his work – ink and wash painting. The painting is not created by his own hand, but from an automated printing plotter adapted for painting on a wall. The sensors detect the mechanic's movements from various sides, just like the gradual transformation of a rickshaw as the mechanic works with it, and based on Díaz's prepared algorithm, the plotter redraws the course of the process on the mural painting.

(This text is based on a discussion between Federico Díaz and Jan Kratochvíl (October 2014, New York).  
In collaboration with: Galerie Zdeněk Sklenář

**Federico Díaz** (1971), a visual artist of Czech-Argentinean descent, lives and works in Prague. Since the 1990s he has used new media to reveal immaterial aspects of everyday reality of our natural environment which are elusive through primary human senses. Díaz's work is typified by the language of algorithmically-generated art and systems art. He uses media and technologies as a socio-political catalyst of social changes. Díaz has exhibited at the Mori Art Museum Tokyo, Institute of Contemporary Arts London, Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, Ars Electronica Linz, Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, MoMA PS1, Miami Art Basel, the Florence Biennale and at the 53rd Venice Biennale. Díaz is currently the Head of the Supermedia Studio at Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague.

\*CAFA Museum ( Beijing) 30 November 2014 – 5 January 2015

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