

Carroll / Fletcher

Looking at one thing and
thinking of something else:
Part Three: United We Stand

13 January - 4 March 2017

**Looking at one thing and thinking of something else
An Exhibition in Four Parts**

11 November 2016 - 29 April 2017

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Private view: Thursday 12 January, 6-8pm



Eva and Franco Mattes, *United We Stand* (2005)

Courtesy of the artists and Carroll / Fletcher, London

In the wake of Brexit, Donald J. Trump's election as President of the United States, and the ongoing refugee crisis, 2016 could be described as the year the outside world crashed in on contemporary art. In such uncertainty, the role of the artist seems more urgent than ever. *United We Stand*, the third part of *Looking at one thing and thinking of something else*, brings together works that aren't afraid to intervene in the political. From the poetic to the absurd, the exhibition presents a variety of creative and critical approaches to resistance and the reimagining of a shared future.

Eva and Franco Mattes' film poster *United We Stand* (2005) advertises a fictitious, Hollywood-style blockbuster in which Europe, not the USA, saves the world from impending doom. The film synopsis explains that in the year 2020 the USA has declared war on China. 'The European president calls for the intervention of a special Task Force of five highly trained individuals known only as the English (Ewan MacGregor), the Spanish (Penelope Cruz), the German, the Italian and the French agents. Their mission: to work behind the scenes to resolve the international crisis before it's too late.' Today, with increasingly uncertain Sino-US relations and the growing prospect of a new Cold War, America's status as the world's policeman sits on shaky ground. Whilst the Mattes spotlight and satirise the precarious nature of power blocs, they envision the 'European Project' as overseeing the reinstatement of global order, all the more pertinent in light of recent events.

UBERMORGEN's *[Vote-Auction]* (2000) was a website launched for the 2000 presidential election, allowing US citizens to sell their vote to the highest bidder. Intervening in the electoral contest between Al Gore and George W. Bush, the work unleashed a storm of outrage with several states issuing temporary restraining orders or injunctions for alleged illegal vote trading. Moreover, federal attorney Janet Reno, the FBI and the NSA launched dedicated investigations to ensure the integrity of the voting process, issuing injunctions that amounted to 700 kg of legal documents. Ultimately, the website precipitated over 2500 national and international news features across print, television, radio and online media, including a 27-minute episode of CNN's 'Burden of Proof' devoted exclusively to the work. The artists' incendiary mode of 'media hacking' had the wry ambition of 'bringing capitalism and democracy closer together', a premonition that one might argue is being borne out today with the election of Donald J. Trump.

Likewise, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's *Level of Confidence* (2015) also seeks to intervene in current events but to very different ends. The work acts as a poetic memorial to the 43 students from the Ayotzinapa school in Iguala, Guerrero, Mexico who were kidnapped and likely murdered in 2014. Facial recognition technology is trained to tirelessly seek the faces of the disappeared students in those of exhibition visitors. As you stand in front of the camera, the system calculates which student's facial features most resemble your own, and offers a percentage 'level of confidence' for the accuracy of the match. The technology incorporates the same biometric surveillance algorithms that military and police forces would use to look for suspicious individuals, but re-orientates them to search for victims instead. In

this endlessly thwarted search for the missing students, the work serves as a profound testament to their absence and the near-impossibility of return.

James Clar's sculptural work *The Difference Between Me & You* (2010) positions two television screens facing each other, one playing Fox News and the other Al Jazeera. With only a narrow gap between the screens, the image is obscured and the soundtracks compete for attention. The play of light diffused through a piece of acrylic held between the screens stands to illustrate the gap between different points of view, and political and cultural agendas.

Looking at one thing and thinking of something else - Part Three: United We Stand includes work by Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme, James Clar, Constant Dullaart, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Eva and Franco Mattes, Natascha Sadr Haghighian, Thomson & Craighead, and UBERMORGEN.

For a PDF of the press release, [click here](#).