Renee Petropoulos – Department – Graduate Studies GFA and Public Practice

Project Dates Fall 2013 to Winter 2014

In the fall of 2013 I received a Faculty Development Grant in support of a print project that I produced with Francesco Siquieros and El Nopal Press. We produced first a lithographic edition of 16 prints. Each print includes all of the plates that were made for the project and various stencils also produced for the project. Each print reflects a different sequencing of the plates, stencils and colors, remarking on the process by which they were made. The edition is entitled From Mexico to the United States.

A companion work also in an edition of 16 included the printer Brienne Arrington (Otis Alum) and her skills as an ink jet printer. This work, entitled, From the United States to Mexico, incorporates both lithography and ink jet photography.

This project in its entirety will be exhibited later this year at the Commonwealth and Council Gallery, Los Angles. Parts of the project have been exhibited at Off Ramp Gallery in Pasadena in the exhibition B.A.T. (Bon a Tirer/ Good to Go) and in The Press is My Paintbrush at Los Angles Print Space.

Francesco and I will make a presentation of this project to the Otis Community later this year to speak both about the process of ‘conversation and production’ that resulted in this print and about El Nopal Press in the context of a social project.

I believe the process that we initiated and the resulting work will touch on many issues present in the Otis curriculum. As I teach in both Public Practice and Graduate Fine Arts I believe conversations engaging in social practice and art production will be relevant. Specific issues concerning collaboration and revelations of the process of collaboration will contribute to discussions with students regarding this topic.

This project continues more than 30 years of collaborations with artists, architects and writers. This process continually punctuates and advances my practice as an artist providing insight and expansion of my thoughts and production.

Notes:
This project was the result of several years of conversation between the artist Renee Petropoulos and the printer/artist Francesco Siquieros. They had during this time discussed the process of producing a print. Francesco initiating this process with a particular desire to print or develop a project by Renee specifically relating to her on-going ‘mapping of the world”. This then developed into a specific project that reflected the site of printmaking and the collaborative aspects of the process as well as the subjective interactions that resulted from this engagement.
As El Nopal press has as its mission a chronicling of particular artists’ relationships and mission to contribute to an exchange between artists of Mexico and the United States; Petropoulos took this as her departure point.

The process entailed weekly visits over a period of nearly 3 months. Each encounter was a kind of starting point and a continuation of the session before. There was the material aspect of the work and the physical labor of making the print and there was the work of discussing the politics inherent in the work. The relationship between the two of us, and the relationship of our nationalities and attendant current events and philosophical matters formed the background to the exchange. The colors of each print reflect the colors of the flags of our respective nations, and the nations of our immediate ancestors. I am a first generation citizen of the U.S. My parents were both born in Europe; my mother in Germany and my father in Greece. Francesco was born in Mexico but raised mostly in Los Angeles.

The prints in part one are in multiples of 4 deriving from the 4 individual lithographic plates. (edition of 16 prints) The print in part two is in multiples of 4 derived from 4 lithographic plates plus one. (multiplied by 1 is 16) (edition of 16 prints)