

Art Review:

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'Where does (s)he stand? What does (s)he want? - I always ask if an artist is answering this question' Thomas Hirschhorn

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Seth Price
Anyone can get hold of his art, but does anyone really get it?

Tatiana Trouvé
Getting ready to take you to another dimension

Photo España
Behind the scenes with Florian Maier-Aichen and Pedro Barateiro



Thomas Hirschhorn why? Why? WHY!



Uta Barth's Ideal Home?
"Lately, I'm living inside my work"

COCO FUSCO: BURIED PIG WITH MOROS

THE PROJECT, NEW YORK
3 APRIL - 2 MAY

For a few years now Coco Fusco has been training her activist eye on the less than savoury doings of the US military, first in *Bare Life Study #1* (2005), in which women dressed in the orange jumpsuits now so familiar from military prisons such as Guantánamo Bay, were made to scrub the ground with toothbrushes; then in *Operation Atropos* (2006), a video in which we find Fusco and six other women 'taking' an interrogation workshop taught by former military interrogators; and then again in *A Room of One's Own: Women and Power in the New America* (2006), a performance that details the special role women have begun to play in the handling and interrogation of Muslim detainees (which Fusco identifies ironically with a new form of feminism).

In *Buried Pig with Moros*, Fusco's fascination with torture and detainment takes a decidedly historical turn. Focusing on the early decades of the twentieth century, the artist presents documents and artefacts related to the US occupation of the Philippines, during which the military had to contend with rebellious Moros and *juramentados*, fierce Islamic holy warriors pledged to kill the Christian infidels. Enter General 'Black Jack' Pershing, credited with solving the *juramentados* problem by playing upon the Islamic prohibitions regarding pigs. The story goes that Pershing captured 50 insurrectionists and proceeded to execute 49 of them using bullets dipped in pig's blood and then buried the bodies in pig entrails, a contamination that would supposedly deny the recently departed entry

into heaven. The 50th prisoner was set free, and it was 40 years before any other Moro thought to take up arms.

The execution story is, of course, a myth. In fact, the record of Pershing's suppression of the Moro resistance is a lesson in restraint (Pershing even contended with accusations of pacifism). Yet the myth, Fusco shows us, proves more enduring than fact. Along with papers and printouts that show its surprising resilience, Fusco has installed an edited version of *The Real Glory* (1939), in which Gary Cooper's military doctor figures out how to use the Moros's religious proscriptions against the natives. Hollywood returned to the theme in 1964 with *Moro Witch Doctor*, which again shows scenes of Moros brought into torturous contact with pigs.

But the central work here is *Lecture by Dr Larry Forness* (2008), an audio recording dramatising (and perhaps satirising) a lecture – purportedly delivered at the American Military University by a former Marine and military consultant – on the most expedient methods of torture. At the top of Forness's list is a dose of Scopolamine injected directly into the spine, which induces severe pain and seizures, but here too is the use of pig's blood as a particularly effective threat against Muslim subjects. What is really on display in *Lecture*, however, is the innate unpleasantness so evident in Forness's delivery, and the conviction that the information he is peddling is useful. Be that as it may, what the US needs is more men like Pershing, and fewer like Forness. *Jonathan T.D. Neil*

Buried Pig with Moros, 2008 (installation view), mixed media, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and the Project, New York

