



Instituto
de arte
contemporáneo

Avelino Sala en Virgil de Voldere Gallery de New York: Hostil

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Dates: June 18-July 31, 2009

Opening: June 18, 2009, 6 - 8 pm

Location: 526 West 26th Street - 4th Floor - Room 416 - New York, NY

Gallery Hours (June only): Tuesday to Saturday 11 am - 6 pm and Saturday 12 - 6 pm and by appointment

Important: the gallery will open Tuesday to Friday in July and will be closed in August

Virgil de Voldère Gallery is proud to present the first solo exhibition in New York of work by the Spanish artist Avelino Sala. For a special project at the gallery, Sala has selected a new video and related photographs, as well as several sculptural and site-specific works. The exhibition continues Sala's interest in slippages of language-such as how a simple change in letters can produce significant differences in meaning-and his explorations of political and social territories of place.

Despite a recent assertion in "The City in the Age of Touristic Reproduction" by the theorist Boris Groys-that "we now all live in a world city where living and traveling have become synonymous, where there is no longer any perceptible difference between the city's residents and its visitors-strangers of all stripes face increasing difficulty in foreign environments. An influx of immigrants from the third world to Western and especially European countries, for example, still creates tensions between both populations. These encounters, exacerbated not just by verbal confusion but also through hesitant, skeptical, and sometimes-bigoted attitudes, give rise to thorny, complicated issues surrounding assimilation, welfare, and human rights that collide with core principles of democratic freedom.

The centerpiece of Sala's exhibition, the video *Hostil*, is based on the false similarity of the words hospitality and hostility, and their associated derivations in several languages. While depicting the exterior of a hostel and its blinking neon sign, the artist changes a vowel to create the homophones *hostal* (the Spanish noun for hostel) and *hostil* (an adjective for adversity), thus transforming the

comfort and welcoming spirit of the hostel-a refuge for weary, economical travelers-to a place of unfriendliness, intimidation, and even outright aggressiveness. Moreover, Sala underscores the difficulty of recognizing all cognates and their "false friends"-words that look similar but have radically different meanings. It is these words, and their potential misinterpretation, that can steer a traveler or immigrant toward or away from danger. The implications can be grave: hospitals become asylums, hotels become cages, and a host takes hostages.

Born in 1972, Sala earned a BA at Brighton University and has had two solo exhibitions at Espacio Liquido in Gijón, Spain, and at galleries in Madrid, Barcelona, and Granada, in Portugal, and in Berlin. His work has been included in group shows across Europe and was also featured in Without Sun, a group exhibition at Virgil de Voldère Gallery held in the summer of 2008. In 2002 Sala also founded and writes for Sublime, a magazine on contemporary art and culture, and has written catalogue texts on numerous artists. In 2004, he cofounded an independent art space, Subliminal Art Projects, in Gijón.

Please contact the gallery for further information: + 1 212 343 9694