

press release

DANIEL GUZMÁN

Don't Ask Me How the Time Goes By

September 4th - October 3rd 2009

Private View Thursday 3 September 2009, 6 – 8pm

Cult Mexican artist Daniel Guzmán appears for his first London solo exhibition 'Don't Ask Me How the Time Goes By' at **Stephen Friedman Gallery**. Born in 1964 in Mexico City, Guzmán takes inspiration from a diverse range of elements congruous to Mexican popular culture, often borrowing visual imagery from Mexican tabloids, pulp fiction, rock music and cinema.

Presented in the back Gallery space, his most recent body of work on paper - El Grafico - pairs exact renderings of recent front covers from the tabloid 'El Grafico' with symbolic Aztec motifs. El Grafico belongs to the 'Nota Roja' (Bloody News) section of the Mexican mass media, which supplies the population with sensationalist coverage of murder, gang war-fare, road and air accidents and gossip, in raw, unedited detail. Painted in black Indian ink on white carbon paper, the artist brings the stories of a civil war played out in street crime and drug cartels into unearthly contact with Aztec symbolism, foretelling stories of human sacrifice and death.

Part cartoon, part comic, these works have an undeniable appeal. Yet their flat almost primitive rendering of the media lies in collision with the superstitious rituals of ancient cultures and suggests a far more sophisticated enquiry. Sensitive to all facets of daily life and responsive to the wealth of indigenous and 'imported' artefacts that the history of his country provides, Guzmán's project can be understood as an ontological study of social anthropology, bringing past and present into direct contact with one another.

The brightly coloured bunting fashioned from plastic shopping bags which connect the two Gallery spaces, present the celebratory traditions native to the regional locale of Oaxaca. Hung over Guzmán's sculptural 'collages' which are fashioned from found objects, appropriated two-dimensional images, and rustic materials like cane and rattan, the dichotic pairing of the historical versus the contemporary is brought into particular refute.

'Don't Ask Me How The Time Goes By' takes its name from a small book of poetry published by the important 20th century Mexican author José Emilio Pacheco. His observatory style drew both on the individual and collective memory to re-evaluate the past – a position mirrored by Daniel Guzmán's own appropriations from mass culture and indigenous folklore. Traces of pre-hispanic culture – an ever-present underlying tenant of contemporary Mexican life – encounter the realm of Modernity face on in this exciting and challenging new body of work.

Daniel Guzmán (b. 1964, Mexico) lives and works in Mexico City. Recent solo shows include: *El Sol de Mexico*, Harris Lieberman, New York (2009); *Double Album: Daniel Guzmán and Steven Shearer*, Curated by Richard Flood, New Museum, New York (2008). Recent group shows include *My Generation*, (group project by Daniel Guzmán), Kurimanzutto, Mexico (2009); *Life on Mars: 55th Carnegie International*, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh (2008); *5th Berlin Biennial*, Berlin (2008); *Sympathy for the Devil: Art and Rock and Roll Since 1976*, Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal (2007-2009); *Turin Triennial*, Turin, (2005); *The Everyday Altered*, Curated by Gabriel Orzoco, Venice Biennale (2003).

Forthcoming exhibition: **Yinka Shonibare, MBE**, 16 October – 14 November 2009

Gallery hours are: Tuesday to Friday, 10am-6pm and Saturday, 11am-5pm

For further details please contact Bethany Pappalardo on +44 (0)20 7494 1434