Grapetree Bay Hotel fell prey to such circumstances, and the millions of dollars the interloping investors who hoped to profit from the locale’s natural beauty. The class American clientele, would bring success. By this point, tourism had replaced with the gracious amenities and Danish modern furniture familiar to their upper-of St. Croix, which has been the victim of difficult circumstances since its inception. One such narrative concerns The Grapetree Bay Hotel, near the southeastern coast not been solidified, canonized, classified, and codified by the fixity of history. reconstructing obscure incidents, but in the operations of recollection and myth-based work traffics in arcane facts and quixotic episodes. His interest is not solely in approaches historical episodes with a deeply subjective sense of the documentary. Each of his acts functions as an appropriation of sorts, reframing and refocusing their original gestures, obsessively researching and representing documentation of particularly conceptual artists—through various means, repeating or reperforming a different way of conceiving art.” García Torres communes with earlier artists—concluding with the famous steel band musician Pedrito Altieri in a blatant promotional effort. García Torres has typically conveyed his research through the juxtaposition of image and text in slide-show format, as in What Doesn’t Kill You Makes You Stronger, an attempt to revive the Museum of Modern Art Syros (nowa), initiated by the artist Martin Kippenberger in an abandoned building on the Greek island in 1993. Kippenberger had been attracted to the space as a kind of contemporary ruin and met artists to exhibit there. In the slide show, García Torres explains social and cultural aspects of the island, illuminating the curious circumstance of creating a museum in such a context. Before articulating Kippenberger’s actions and intentions. The space evoked largely as a concept, as a space of artists and ideas apart from the objects they might create, once actual visitorship and subsequent documentation were scarce. García Torres re-created a decade later, through the design and deployment of an exhibition poster for the museum, which by this time had already been repurposed as a waste treatment plant. Faithful to the re-creation, García Torres did install an exhibition as well, but its visitorship consisted only of the artist and the staff’s workers. García Torres’s gesture was as much a statement of his intent to reimagine the museum as a space of absence as it was a call to the island’s inhabitants to consider the facility’s layered inbuildings, theushima sculpture garden, and the site’s history. Faithful to the exhibition, García Torres did install an exhibition as well, but its visitorship consisted only of the artist and the staff’s workers. García Torres’s gesture was as much a statement of his intent to reimagine the museum as a space of absence as it was a call to the island’s inhabitants to consider the facility’s layered inbuildings, theushima sculpture garden, and the site’s history.
The question of which does not exist, whether it never did or no longer does so, is a notion at the heart of conceptual art. And it remains a question of great interest to García Torres. In other words, he has animated this character of Garcia Smithe, the fictional "auteur" credited with filmed works from which the original creator's name has been removed, commenting on the absence and the signature of failure in the creative and the art. He has sent self-interviewing letters to D.A.T., a famous Mexican painter, about failed negotiations to build a branch of the Guggenheim near the Barrio de Olón, a campaign of individual beauty that was All's frequent subject. The work considers tourism and the landscape, not just through the lens of concrete reality, but through the implications of what once threatened to exist, but never came to be in its state of ruin, half-dead. It can be said that Buren's murals exist as a space, present, which existed as a physical exhibition space in its absence, was reanimated by García Torres through the promotion of its existence, absent the actual space. In his retelling of both episodes, García Torres consciously absents the artist, shifting the protagonists to the periphery of his own narrative, opening up space for the construction of an alternative narrative that would not be told by any art history that operated largely to contextualize through biography.

And so García Torres sees the construction of history and the functions of both remembering and forgetting that attend to the writing of histories, for the political acts that they are. Categorically, histories claim a kind of fixedness, presuming to be the empirical truth of a situation. But each historical account is a suspense, through omission or inclusion, of events within the context of their time. And that kind of subjectivity becomes more complex when one considers how the writing of histories allows us to apply circumstances retrospectively, so that the meaning of an historical event changes in relation to what follows. So García Torres is not interested in creating fictions, his reason for his evasiveness, his documental real is the narrative factual. But his work is deeply invested in how his construction of history functions as a subjective and speculative means of understanding the present.

Elizabeth Thomas

PHILIP WATTIS CURATOR

Mario García Torres was born in 1975 in Monclova, Mexico, and is now based in Los Angeles, California. He received his B.F.A. from the Universidad de Monterrey, San Pedro Garza García, Mexico, and his M.F.A. from California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, California.

García Torres's project opens the accepted art historical reading of the facts of the murals' existence to larger narratives of failure, doubt, and entropy. His subjective documentary approach, moreover, presents this work not as an isolated instance in García Torres's career, but as inextricably tied to questions about European influence in the Americas, and how the context of landscape and tourism informs these proto-constructive works.

And within his oeuvre, art historians understand that kind of subjectivity becomes more complex when one considers how the writing of histories allows us to apply circumstances retrospectively, so that the meaning of an historical event changes in relation to what follows. So García Torres is not interested in creating fictions, his reason for his evasiveness, his documental real is the narrative factual. But his work is deeply invested in how his construction of history functions as a subjective and speculative means of understanding the present.

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