

RAIMOND CHAVES AND GILDA MANTILLA

PROJECTSD - BARCELONA



“The atmosphere in Lima is opaque, cloudy and stale, due mostly to the city’s location.” pointed out Hipólito Unanue, physician and president of Peru in 1825 in “Observations on the climate of Lima and its influence on the organized being, especially man.” This quote encapsulates best the inspiration for Raimond Chaves’ (Bogota, 1963) and Gilda Mantilla’s (Los Angeles, 1967) second show at ProjecteSD, since it approaches the capital of Peru from its difficult weather conditions.

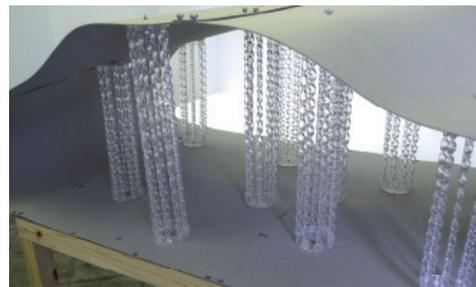
But the visitor needs to read between the lines that “Observaciones sobre la ciudad de polvo” [Observation on the city of dust] is

more than a trivial reflection of global warming and recycling necessities. The bad climate conditions of Lima are used as a metaphor to describe the fatality of a socio-political system that seems immutable, unchanging and designed to oppress the people living in the stifling city. The artwork entitled *Atrapaniebla* [The fog catcher] (2009) perfectly illustrates this pessimist vision. The piece is made of two wooden sticks that hold black recycled cardboard pieces and reminds of protest placards used during social demonstrations, except there are no writings on it. “It’s as if these placards were blind and ironically couldn’t express the anger of the people,” says Silvia Dauder, director of the seven-year-old gallery. The line between the scientific-poetic interpretation and the socio-political statement is thin and consequently makes the show intelligent, and perhaps hard to understand. Indeed, the structure and components of the artworks themselves directly support the metaphor and often make the visitor suffocate. For this show, the artists have abandoned their most recent tools of expression — drawing — to explore a broader range of possibilities,

always abstract, resulting in opaque artworks, crossing between sculptures and installations.

The second half of the exhibition was shown at Revólver in Lima, but one wonders whether the artists have used the same scientific techniques to measure its impact on the public.

Nicolas Smirnoff



Above: RAIMOND CHAVES & GILDA MANTILLA, *Nube*, 2009. Assembly of gray recycled cardboard pieces, objects in plexiglass and table (Table dimensions: 105 x 150 x 70 cm). Left: *Observaciones sobre la ciudad de polvo*, 2010. Installation view at ProjecteSD, Barcelona. Courtesy ProjecteSD, Barcelona.