

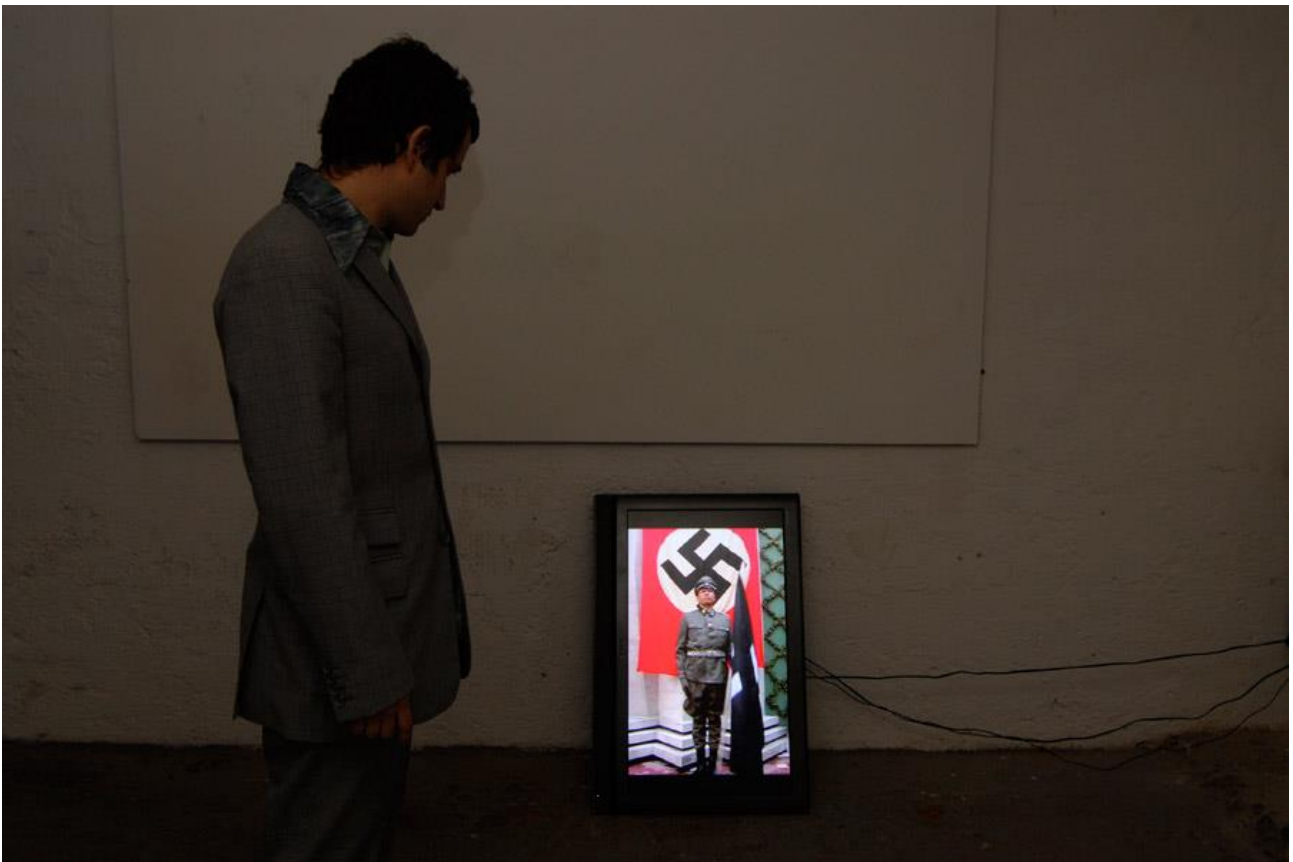
## YOSHUA OKON WORKS

Yoshua Okon e' nato a Mexico City nel 1970, vive e lavora tra Mexico City e Los Angeles.

Messicano di origine e statunitense di adozione, Yoshua Okon osserva con feroce ironia la cultura dei due paesi e la loro difficile convivenza. Utilizzando il video, la performance, l'installazione, Okon realizza di volta in volta ritratti impietosi del mondo in cui vive, riflettendo sugli stereotipi, i vizi, i miti che compongono il complesso mosaico della società centro-nordamericana contemporanea. Nei lavori di Yoshua Okon il limite tra verità e finzione tende ad annullarsi, lo spettatore e' calato in situazioni estreme, disarmanti, dove lo straniamento svela il carattere paradossale, talvolta involontariamente comico di certi aspetti della realtà. L'utilizzo da parte di Okon di persone comuni, piuttosto che di attori, implica un lavoro preliminare di osservazione - e di persuasione alla performance - e si confronta con la discreta ma non celata presenza di una regia, provocando talvolta reazioni inattese negli improvvisati protagonisti dei suoi lavori. Da [undo.net](http://undo.net).

*Bocanegra* is a room-filling video installation divided into four sections. The title refers to a group of Nazi aficionados who named their organization after the Mexico City street where they hold weekly meetings. The group is an odd amalgam of true fascists, World War II history buffs, fetishists, and weekend hobbyists who would surely have fallen foul of 'real' Nazi racial diktat. Okón gained their trust and they agreed to collaborate in a series of orchestrated situations, which were recorded on video.

2005-07



*Coyoteria* is a performance and one-channel video installation re-configuration of Joseph Beuys' 1974 piece *I Like America and America Likes Me*. As Beuys used the coyote to symbolize pre-Colonial spirituality on the American Continent, the term "coyote" was originally used by the Aztecs to refer to colonial, wealth-hungry Europeans later evolved to refer to a man who is hired to "get things done" at a price (i.e. facilitate official paperwork and bureaucratic procedures as well as to take immigrants across the US-Mexico border). Where Beuys lived with a coyote for a week in the Rene Block Gallery in New York, Okón cast a human "coyote" to play the canine role. Okón stood in for Beuys, and replaced the felt, the shamanic staff and the Wall Street Journal with a synthetic comforter, a police baton and TV Guides.

2003



*Art Wrestling* is a site-specific arm wrestling contest in which anyone at the Art Basel Miami Beach art fair can compete for art works from the Art Positions galleries. With the slogan “transform your muscle power into acquisition power,” an MC referees contestants in the male and female categories and describes the prize pieces giving his own idiosyncratic interpretations. This art fair Sideshow reveals the points where the fair-as-carnival/spectacle and the fair-as-art converge and diverge and, in good carnival spirit, enables people who would not typically or necessarily have the purchasing power to own a piece of art. The contest is accompanied by a poster campaign spreading the performativity of the piece beyond the stage and inviting participants from all over Miami Beach.  
2008



*Cockfight* is a two-channel video installation where two life-sized projections of young girls face each other. They are screaming, insulting, gesturing, and cat-calling one another. They improvise imitations of the way men yell out insults and dirty jokes amongst themselves, or directed towards women. The girls imaginatively appropriate male aggression to turn it into an over-the-top game and dance.

1998



*For Crabby*, I collaborated with Tomasa, one of the two women in the video -- both native to a village near a resort town on the Western coast of Oaxaca, Mexico. Together, we came up with a narrative mockumentary: a crab hunt saga, which questions the objectivity of the National Geographic-type ethnographic and nature documentaries. The final video is displayed in a tree-trunk, customized with car-audio/video components, including an LCD screen, speakers and DVD player.

2004

