

Park View/Paul Soto

Victoria Colmegna

Broken Ego

November 4 – December 22, 2017

Park View is pleased to announce *Broken Ego*, a solo exhibition by the Buenos Aires-based artist Victoria Colmegna, her first with the gallery. A reception will be held on Saturday, November 4 from 6 to 8pm, and the exhibition will run at 836 S. Park View Street through Friday, December 22. A commissioned essay by the Argentinian critic Claudio M. Iglesias will be published in an illustrated pamphlet and released at an event hosted by the gallery the first week of December.

Colmegna's works address relationships at the individual level: people, who love, bond, conflict, resolve, betray, and abuse one another. Past works by the artist have subjected fraternity rites, the codes of private clubs, and etiquette and manners in artworld social environments to aesthetic treatments. In all of these situations, Colmegna's compositions evoke tensions that are both inherent and spontaneously manifest in these exchanges, where one's identity is formed, and one's purpose and position within a group is sought. In the exhibition at the gallery these themes take shape in an environment comprised of institutional imagery derived from the education system and the Catholic Church. Four aluminum and galvanized steel vitrines hang on the walls, which surround a sound installation comprised of a six-channel speaker system knit into winter jackets hanging on a steel clothing rack. Beyond this sits a found wooden stool on which lays a portrait of the disciple Judas Iscariot, taken from the Last Supper sculptural display belonging to the Cathedral of Cuenca in Spain.

Since her graduation from Frankfurt's Städelschule in 2015, Colmegna has carried on an epistolary relationship with the artist James Mathewuse, illustrator for the 1980s teen book series *Sweet Valley High*. Over the years Mathewuse has sent Colmegna, as both gifts and trade, many of his proofs, containing notes from his editors at Random House set against pencil drawings of teen girls in the throes of adolescent high school drama in the fictionalized "Valley." Colmegna also sent Mathewuse photographs of turning points from her own adolescence and young adulthood, and she commissioned Mathewuse to illustrate these pictures in the distinctive cover style of the book series in pastel on velvet. These and other ephemera are collaged with magnets into glass enclosed, wall-mounted bulletin boards, looking like announcement displays and shadow boxes found in a typical school hallway or gymnasium, replete with sliding doors and lock-and-key. Related to this evocation is Colmegna's sound work, comprised of recordings with actors and found recordings from a number of contemporary social spaces: the airport, the café, the discotheque. In some, the individuals interact with themselves, showering, sleeping, and typing on computers. In others they are in conversation, getting to know one another, hanging out with friends, working out the logistics of their shared lives, and other scenarios. These emanate from the jackets, playing quietly from their sleeves, armpits, collars, and pockets. They generate a barely audible hum in the gallery.

In the beginning of this past summer Colmegna contacted the Brotherhood of the Cathedral in Cuenca, Spain in order to negotiate an exhibition loan of their statue of Judas Iscariot, the disciple who betrays Jesus Christ in the book of Matthew in the New Testament. Colmegna's objective in corresponding was diverted in the process, alighting instead on the artist and gallery commissioning the Church to produce X-ray and 3D scans of the statue, as well as a series of photographs and videos, in order to document the look of his body language from all angles at this moment of treason. The image exhibited here from this series contains the Judas statue in profile, his lips pursed and gaze extending beyond the camera, with his fellow disciples at the Last Supper pictured behind him, slightly out-of-focus.

Colmegna's sculptures, paintings, installations, photographs, and videos contain such a strange, uncanny feeling as, in the act of seeing, the work circles back quickly to one's own self-understanding in relationship to others.¹ They are highly relatable in that they deal with spaces of knowledge for nurturing, educating, training, and controlling humans – schools, churches, clubs, and dinner parties. In a decentered situation such as now, where media of global power abuses eclipse and obscure microcosms of conflict in everyday life, these works are perhaps especially relevant.²

Victoria Colmegna (b. 1986) lives and works in Buenos Aires, Argentina. This is her first solo exhibition in the United States.

¹ Silverman, Kaja, *World Spectators*, Stanford University Press, 2000.

² Parker, Emily, "Silicon Valley Can't Destroy Democracy Without Our Help," *The New York Times*, November 2 2017