

Stefan Brüggenmann was born in Mexico City in 1975 and has been exhibiting both in Mexico and abroad since the mid-1990s. He is part of a young group of artists working in Mexico today that has attracted much recent international attention for their irreverent, radical, and often collaborative approaches to art production. He works with and through established systems of institutional critique and conceptual art, but alters their canonical approaches to art production to allow ambiguity, irony, and play to enter the works. Brüggenmann lives and works in Mexico City.

Using all media, Brüggenmann's works often consist of small gestures, additions, or alterations to a given space, medium, or genre. At a solo exhibition at the Museo Carrillo Gil in Mexico City, Brüggenmann produced "Parking Lot" (1998) by carefully replicating the signage, divisions, and traffic information usually painted on the floor of parking garages onto the roof of the museum. By visually turning the roof of the museum into a parking lot, Brüggenmann not only answered to the complaints of many museum visitors, who often suggested in the visitor's book that the museum does not provide enough parking, he also carried out what could best be described as an almost canonical gesture of institutional critique. In the same year, Brüggenmann produced "Opening" (1998) for the Museum of Installation in London. For this work, he carefully removed the big pane of glass that makes up the front store window of the main exhibition space of the Museum of Installation, and leaned it against the length of the exhibition room. Still containing all the information it would usually display

to the passer-by, such as the name and the duration of the show, the window was neither functional as an advertisement nor as a climate and security barrier and instead was rendered into an esthetic object for the duration of the exhibition. For another exhibition at the Museum of Installation in 2001, Brüggemann displayed a neon sign spelling out: "This is not Supposed to be Here" (2001).

In 2000, for the exhibition "Promo" in Mexico City, which consisted of several billboards throughout the city that both advertised and made up the exhibition, Brüggemann produced a billboard that presented the image of a young beautiful woman lounging in a car's interior. The work's title, "Cutlass 92, automatic, 4 doors, electric, air conditioning, 135.000 km, cherry velour upholstery" (2000), identified the car as a standard second-hand model which could be listed any given day in the classified sections of a local newspaper. Through the conflation of image, title, and mode of display, Brüggemann produced a set of displacements that unhinge each element and precisely mirror the circular referentiality of the exhibition's initial premise. The billboard-size image could be seen as yet another example of the monumentalization of personal experience, reminiscent of photographic practices such as those of Nan Goldin or Wolfgang Tillmans, were it not for the title that identifies the work as a car advertisement. By using the strategies of corporate advertisement—add a beautiful woman to

whatever you want to sell—and display technology, the title also thwarts the function of the billboard by rendering its news value void.

The importance of titles as contextual markers and important tools in positioning a work's sphere of influence is at the center of another work by Brüggenmann. "Show Titles" (2000/01) is a list of 100 possible titles for exhibitions. One of them, "Zebra Crossing," was selected as the title for an exhibition at the House of World Cultures in Berlin. Other suggested titles include ironic catch words such as "One Hundred Dutch Teenage Girls," "Boring," or "Unproductivism." Other titles are thinly veiled references to art history, such as "Why Didn't You Make it Larger," and "Why Didn't You Make it Smaller," the famous questions for Tony Smith about his sculpture "Die" (1962) that served as a motto to Robert Morris' text "Notes on Sculpture" and were quoted in Michael Fried's seminal review of Minimalism, "Art and Objecthood." His irreverent citation of important movements, concepts, or quotes from recent art history combined with his ridicule of intellectual pompousness place Brüggenmann's work in a liminal zone, suspended between sincere criticism and a defiant gesture of humor or cynicism.