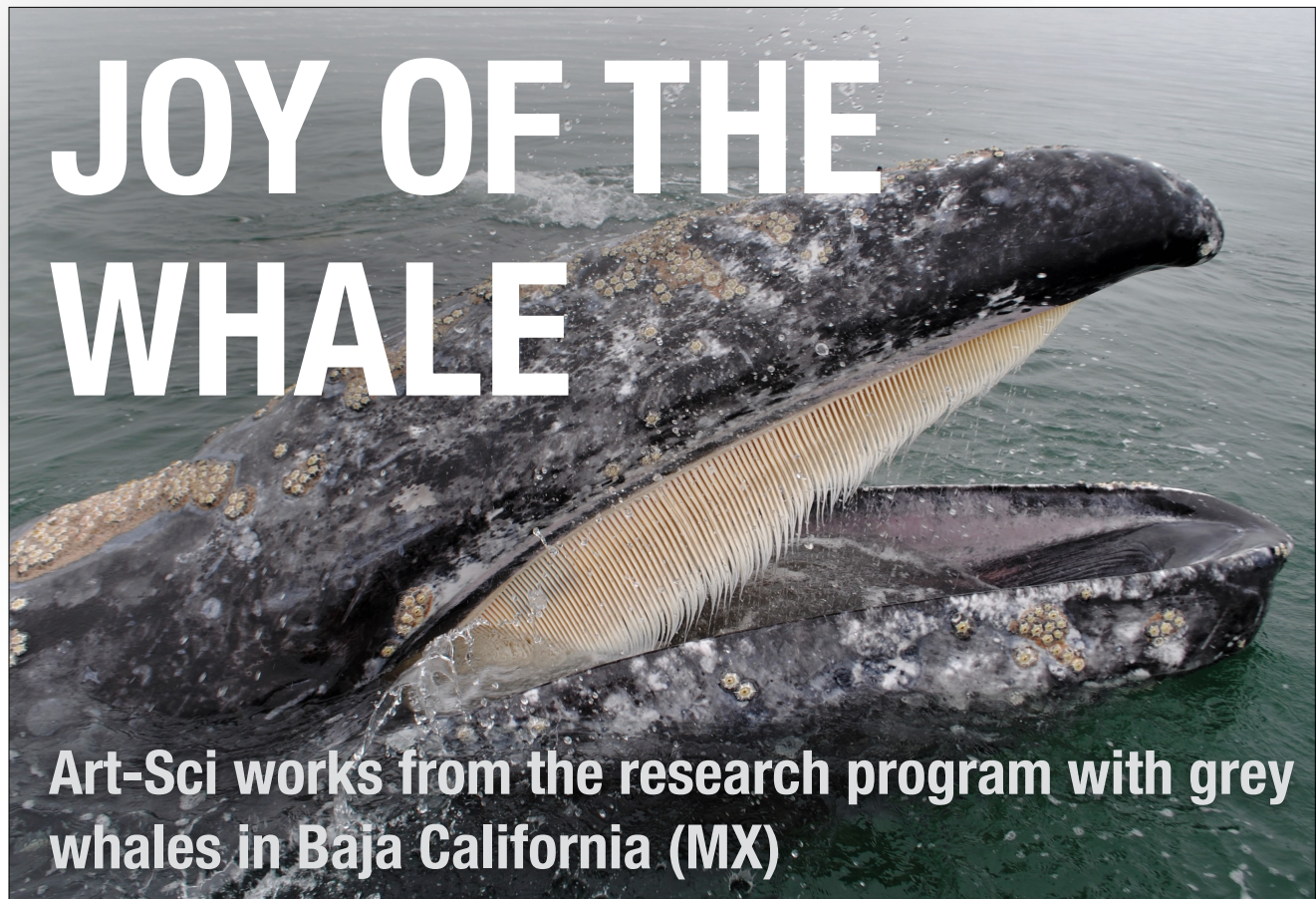


STULTIFERA NAVIS INSTITUTOM

Presents



Exhibition Catalogue

December 7, 2019

624 Victory Blvd, Burbank

LA Film Boutique

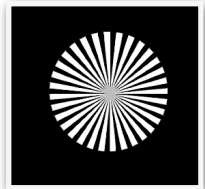
<https://www.lafilmboutique.com>

+1 818-861-7468



,ACT

FONCA



PUNTA MARISCAL ECO-TOURS



ROOM TEXT

In February of 2017, for the first time, poetry was read to the whales.

A two-man crew vessel and local fishermen made this expedition possible. The event took place exactly in the same area wherein the 19th Century whaling bordered them nearly to extinction at the Ojo de Liebre Lagoon (Baja California Sur, MX). Now this place is a unique winter sanctuary where the grays reproduce and give birth to their calves, just before starting the longest annual migration in the natural world.

Surprisingly enough, whales were very enthusiastic about human poetry. After our initial contact and for three consecutive years of expeditions, we have exhaustively documented these unusual reactions to human cultural expressions. Through this experience, we also found out that the whales have shown atypical gestures suggesting that they were at times in a constant effort to try to listen to us.

All of this made us think about the necessity of studying the proclivity of these particular species of cetaceans to interact with humans and the fact that those interplays seem to be increased when our acts are mediated by strong emotional spirits.

Since then, Stultifera Navis Institutom has established an ongoing art residency program that encourages artists to interrelate with these ancient creatures. At this time, we continue to study the behavior of these marine mammals and the impact of human activity in their natural habitat, with the collaboration of scientists and educators. Through these actions we are convinced that art, science, and environmentalism are not dissociated efforts of the human experience, but a network that could help us make a positive change, to understand, and to take care of this amazing animal.

What is poetry for? For centuries that question has been wandering around the activity of writers. Creative exploration propounds an answer: for the Joy of the Whale.

Fernando Martín Velazco

Captain
Stultifera Navis Institutom

SECTION I - WHALES IN CULTURE

For centuries, the relationship between humans and whales has been, certainly problematic. In antiquity, marine mammals were interpreted generally as evil monsters menacing human sailing. Folk tales from innumerable cultures portrait the sea as the whale's domain, and its ruler, as a fierce controller.

With the modern era the whale image turned into an endless source of wealth and energy. During the 19th Century whaling industry was the most lucrative business in the world, and turned into the first global market. The consequences: whales almost got extinct.

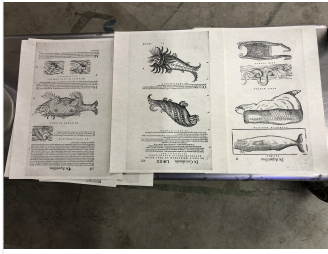
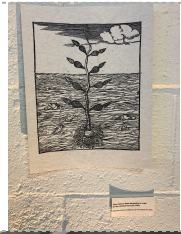
One of the crucial scenarios of that process were the Baja Lagoons in the Pacific Coast of Mexico. Isolated for centuries, the Baja peninsula remained as an unexplored territory for the western civilization until 1857, when American whalers arrived and in a few years, they dramatically reduced the population of grey whales that used this place as a winter refugee.

Whales reputation has been transformed in the last decades. Since the whaling ban in the seventies, pop culture has transformed their image to a one more friendly to us, and also science studies of their behavior have got aware of their prodigious intelligence and their importance for the environment equilibrium.

Art has followed all this transformations. The intimidating mythological figures gave turn, first to the old-fashioned naturalist portraits, and then to the contemporary touching registers of the marine world.

In the book of *Psamls*, a poet talk about the Leviathan as a creature that plays in the sea. We think about the possibility to be part of its games. But aren't we talking about fairy tales...

Works

1	Cartography Video (3,840 x 2,160)	Landscapes from the Ojo de Liebre Lagoon without whales.	
2	Aeolus triangle Pieces in two boxes	Drone felt to the lagoon and recovered one week later.	
3	CONRADI GESNERI MEDICI TIGURINI HISTORIAE ANIMALIUM LIBER IV : QUI EST DE PISCUM & AQUATILUM ANIMANTIUM NATURA : CUM ICONIBUS SINGULORUM AD VIUUM EXPRESSIS FERÉ OMNIBUS DCCXII	Conrad Gesner 16th Century works compile all the knowledge of their time about nature species and interpret them in illustrations. Despite it was not product of scientific knowledge but an accumulation of chronicles, myths and symbolic associations, contents appeared in them surprise by their accurate descriptions. Remarkable is the description of grey whales, who species disappeared from the Atlantic Ocean before the modern whaling (and when the book was published). For many decades scientists believed that the Atlantic grey whales were a different species from those in the Pacific, but recent archeological discoveries confirmed that they were the same. Gaesner's descriptions are based in the testimonies of the 1st Century Pliny the Elder, who describe how the orcas attack the grey's calf. That behavior, for long believed a sailor story, can be observed in the Monterey Bay in California during the annual migration of gray whales.	
4	Terzo Volume <i>Delle Navigazioni et viaggi</i> M. Gio. Battista Ramusio (1552) Discorso sopra la relatione di Francesco de Ulloa	It is the first documented testimony about the abundance of gray whales in the Pacific Coast of the Americas Continent. The chronicle relates the exploration voyage of Francisco de Ulloa, captain serving the Spanish conqueror Hernan Cortés in 1540. One of the sailors, Francisco Preciado, tells that some day since their navigation, they were rounded by more than 500 hundred whales, who constantly approached the ship and scratched against it. For long time, the testimony was interpreted in Europe as a fantastic story of the New World, very common in that period. But now, based in the location of the ship and the known behavior of the whales, we can interpret that he was writing with absolute truth.	
5	Huichol whale Native craftwork Private collection	Grey whales are absent in most testimonies of the colonization of Baja peninsula until the 19th Century. The native people who used to inhabit that region before the European colonization is already extinct. With the integration of whales as part of the pop culture, artisans have introduced them to the native imaginary in a lot of regions in Mexico. This work belongs to the Huichol people, a culture characterized by their long annual migrations, something they have in common with the grey whales.	
6	"Ballenas de Pacífico" Culler and beers (Take one)	Whales are huge. Pop culture in the Northwest Mexico has integrated that notion calling "ballenas" (whales) to the big size beers. Maybe that's why some people associate whales with friendship and joy.	

SECTION II - ARTIST RESIDENCIES

During February-March, 2019, the Stultifera Navis Institutom made the third expedition of the cycle “The Leviathan Games”, aimed to make multidisciplinary research with grey whales in the Ojo de Liebre Lagoon in the Baja Peninsula. During this period more than 30 artists and environmentalists voluntarily took part of it, sharing their abilities, knowledges and creativity to better try to understand grey whales and their winter ecosystem.

Result of their presence in the camp, some artists produced works related to the grey whales or the neighboring ecosystem. These are strongly marked by the knowledges and experiences acquired during their period of residency.

Stultifera Navis Institutom promotes artists residencies with an own expeditionary methodology. Different from the classical sedentary laboratories, our expeditions displace the cultural practices to extreme peripheral scenarios. Results are diverse, but have in common the strong interest about natural world and the preservation of its diversity.

Works

1	The Leviathan Games Emblemata Miguel Canseco & Fernando Martín Velazco Draw series (5) Ink & paper	Based on the Renaissance tradition of <i>Emblemata</i>, artworks that synthesize heroic experiences and the acquisition of surprising knowledges, this collection joins 5 of the most relevant experiences of The Leviathan Games cycle. The pieces are made in strict respect to the Filippo's Picinelli (1604-1679) emblematic manual, and uses Ovid's quotes following the Renaissance tradition. Art works are followed by a text that extend the description of each particular discovering.	
2	Map from “Ojo de Liebre Lagoon” Miguel Canseco Ink & paper	This map is a cartography of the one-week experiences from the Were-were Collective in the Ojo de Liebre Lagoon. Its trace corresponde to the geography of the lacustrine body, but also to their emergent symbols.	
3	JONÁS Miguel Canseco Ink, decoration & paper	Inspired form the Jonah's Biblical story, this design interpretes the relation with the marine giant as a path to the sacred revelation.	

4	Whales graveyard Pablo Da Ronco Photography series (3)	During one navigation the expeditionaries found a camp in the lagoon discovered by the low tides. An outstanding number of corpses of grey whales were found there. Da Ronco portrait a recent dead of a whale in contrast with the remains of decompositions from long ago. Place for new life and for death, the Ojo de Liebre Lagoon constitute a heritage for these cetaceans: the place were their ancestors remain.	
5	Proximity landscapes Claudia Fatamorgana Photography series (5)	This emergent photographer work is based in the notion of landscape as a place build my an image. Textures in objects construct the relief, colors the geography. A shore, some soft sand from a dune, salt harvesting, spikes covering the sea, the side of a dead whale; proximity landscapes from a dynamic scenario.	
6	Tuparan's descent Eustolio Pardo (Tolo) Digital print	A Baja's native legend from the extinct Pericú people talks about an underwater cave where the god Niparaya, the creator of the land and sea, imprisoned his enemy Tuparán, deity of the war. The place, which location is a mystery, is guarded by grey whales. For the ancient people of Baja the absence of the cetaceans could untie great catastrophes.	
7	The cave whale Eustolio Pardo (Tolo) Linocut print in Rosavira	Inspired by the iconography of the Cave Paintings in Baja, Tolo elaborate a whale as part of a series of the biodiversity who characterize the peninsula.	
8	The Leviathan Games: Interventions Video	After some first fortunate encounters reading poetry to the gray whales, we stablished this practice as a continuos research program called "The Leviathan Games". We came back the next years and stablished a camp there, from where we go in small boats to find the whales in the mornings and register their response to our cultural stimulus. Poems, songs, dances. Even rituals, or revelation of secrets. It turned in a kind of laboratory for creators, that come voluntarily to show their work to a very interested cetacean public.	

SECTION III - THE FISHERMAN, THE ARTIST

Promote citizen science is one of the main challenges to have a true environmental culture. One of the most satisfactory discoveries of our expeditions was the guidance and friendship of Paco Jimenez Franco, a local fishermen and amateur photographer.

Paco spent great part of his time in the sea. We estimate that he had been in more than 4,000 whale watching tours in his life, so is not adventurous to affirm that he is a gray whale specialist. That allows him to anticipate himself to a whale jump, identify when a mother wants her calf to play with humans, and know when an unusual behavior is happening. When the occasion is there, Paco takes a shot.

This collection is a little sample of his work. The relevance of local people watching the whales behavior is fundamental to better understand how to take care of the marine environment and to consolidate networks of knowledge overseas.



Paco Jiménez Franco (Culiacán, 1958)

He is fisherman, carpenter, photographer, and proud father of two daughters. He was very young when his family moved to the Baja Peninsula searching for best opportunities in life. After having different trades he focused himself on a small hard-working Fishing Cooperative in the region of Guerrero Negro.

For two decades he has worked as a whale-watching tourist guide during the winters. His passion for grey whales made him get involved in volunteer work monitoring actions to take care of the coastal environment, and more recently, he has become an essential part of the Stutterers Navis crew as the boat pilot.

Paco makes ritual of his time at sea through the application of photography. This has allowed him to capture very unusual behaviors in grey whales and other species. His work is a remarkable example of how the local communities could help us to better understand the environment and endangered species.

We share his works as an effort to bring attention to his contributions. Profits will be used as an economic stimulus to Paco, to keep being a volunteer guardian of that natural sanctuary, and also to improve his photographic gear.

Portraits courtesy by Fabio Da Ronco

Works from Paco Jiménez Franco

Placenta 15 x 10 cm (2)		Jump 15 x 20 cm (3)	
Work (Uprising) 15 x 10 cm			
Calf 12 x 22 cm		Rest 15 x 10 cm	
To one world to the other 30 x 20 cm (2)		Piojos 30 x 20 cm	
Profile 15 x 6 cm		“Barbas a remojar” 10 x 15 cm 19 x 9 cm 15 x 10 cm	
			

Joy of the Whale, by Stultifera Navis Institutom

Art-Sci works from the research program with grey whales in Baja

This exhibition is a project brought to you by **LA Film Boutique**

Producers

Rodrigo Iturralde

Ernesto Joven

Curatorship & museography

Fernando Martín Velazco

Artists

Miguel Canseco

Pablo Da Ronco

Claudia Fatamorgana

Eustolio Pardo (Tolo)

Paco Jiménez Franco

Management

Kate Malone

Technical advice

Héctor Barrón

Álvaro Robles

Juan Vargas

The Leviathan Games was supported by the program of grants Art, Science & Technology 2018 from the National Autonomous University of Mexico and the National Fund for Culture and Arts

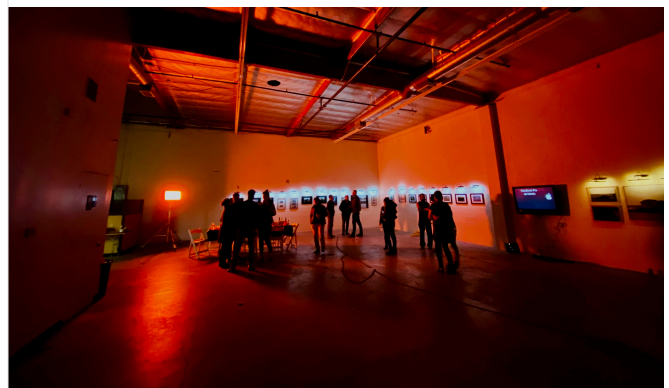
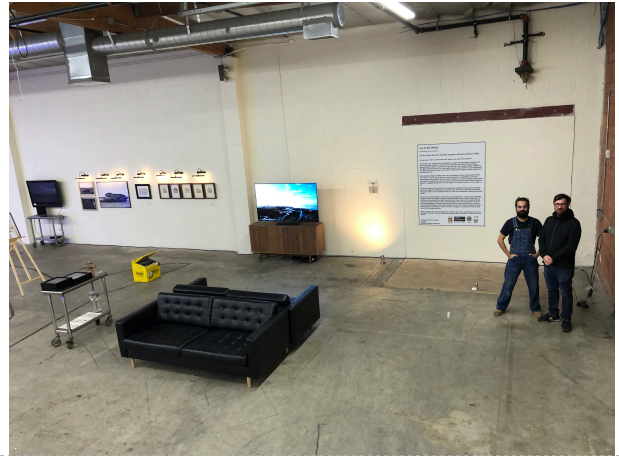
Print and ink sponsored by Canon

Works available for sale and loan at LA Film Boutique

info@lafilmboutique.com

+1 818-861-7468

PHOTOS







www.stultiferanavis.institute