

[Gossip]

Earlier this month, we swung by Andréhn-Schiptjenko, catching a chat with renowned Mexican-born artist and stellar guy Martín Soto Climent before the opening of his first solo exhibition at the gallery, 'Gossip'. The works bear his signature characteristic of working intricately with the sensual choice of material that is women's pantyhose. As such, our conversation informs thoughts about "the gaze" and duality between masculine and feminine seated in his work, and the pursuit of a sexual impulse that is essential to all of his practice. "When I work around a sexual energy and impulse, I want it to be at a level where everyone can assimilate it, based on their own experiences in life", he says.



Martín Soto Climent 'Gossip (Three souls for one night)', 2020, tights, plexiglass mirrors, mounted on cedar wood boxes. Courtesy the artist and Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm/Paris

C-P: It being your first here, how did you approach conceiving this exhibition at Andréhn-Schiptjenko?

M.S.C: I met Ciléne (Andréhn) in Mexico three or four years ago and it was a fairly slow and organic process arriving to this stage, meeting prior at different places over the years and having discussed the possibility of doing something together. I had

time to really think about how to approach the idea of doing what is not just my first exhibition with the gallery, but my first in Sweden. I chose these boxed pieces you see in the exhibition from a series of work called 'Gossip' which uses materials which are very representative of my practice; women's pantyhose and tights. It's a work that means a lot for me, because it intersects being between sculpture and flat object, but more so it represents depth and what goes on inside. I've never been in Sweden before but somehow I have an idea in my mind of life here which appears very much the opposite of Mexico where life is led much on the outside. It's not only that Swedes live inside a lot but also that they appear to live inside themselves a lot more. So, I thought of these pieces as a way to start a dialogue with this new environment and being here for the first time ever.



Installation, Martín Soto Climent 'Gossip', courtesy the artist and Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm/Paris

C.P: Looking at some of the patterns and structures of the larger works, I come to think of the iconic Japanese photographer Daido Moriyama. I've just been writing recently about "the gendered gaze" and I think that's an interesting notion to think of, in terms of your work. If I knew nothing about you or had never seen any of your work before, I would likely have regarded some as having an apparent femininity about them, not just based on the material but also the aesthetical execution and expression. Interestingly, the works that bring Moriyama to mind however makes me think more predominantly of a heterosexual male gaze on the female presence. How conscious are you of these things?

M.S.C: Totally conscious. All of my work stems from an erotic impulse that I follow. My work derives from a very precise concept which emphasizes a certain feminine energy which I believe is very crucial for the growth and development of all our societies. Each element in nature and around us is the result of a duality between polar opposites and a fluid transition between them; whether male or female, black and white or night and day. I think of the idea of yin and yang and how nothing is just one thing over the other. Similarly, my work is neither extremely masculine or feminine, it's actually both.



Martín Soto Climent. 'Gossip 69', 2020, tights, plexiglass mirror, mounted on cedar wood boxes. Courtesy the artist and Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm/Paris

C-P: How does this exhibition at hand sit with your past trajectory and expand on it?

M.S.C: That's a good question. With these female tights, there was a moment in my life when I hated working with them because I was invited to do so many things with the same material that it started to feel like just yet another object. It's a material I've explored since ten years now and it's not so much about the fetishism; because my approach is to explore the capacity of the object, but I know what implications may exist based on what the material represents literally. Again, as a first introduction to my work here in Sweden, I thought it would be good to work with it but I did move forward and take a leap, through these larger panels that you yourself relate to Moriyama. It might not be so obvious but the inspiration is the notion of galaxies, stars and universes, all of which marks the point of beginning of something.



Installation, Martín Soto Climent 'Gossip', courtesy the artist and Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm/Paris

C-P: I tend to think about intrinsic sonic and organic systems looking at the series 'Gossip'; my thoughts are immediately brought to the audible realm. The shape of the ear seems to be recurrent as a fixture for instance.

M.S.C: Yes, there is the title 'Gossip' which reinforces that impression and also alludes to the oral and sound; something that is shared and said in an air of intimacy. I like that there is a connection to language and the inherent power of language, since the concept of gossiping is about transmitting something from the interior that possibly is meant to be secret and be held confined. What is also intended is for the boxed sculptures to evoke the idea of speaker boxes, so there you actually have sound again.



Photo: Ashik Zaman

C-P: You mentioned fetishism and I brought the gendered gaze up. The sort of implications your work would have, should differ so much depending on the cultural context or where you are. I'm thinking of a difference between how it might be viewed here by a larger group of people, and perhaps other parts of the world which are not as relatively feminist. Do you see this; that people respond differently to your work when you travel?

M.S.C: Yes, totally, sometimes people will tell you things that really surprise you about your work and you wish you had the same images in your own mind, and sometimes you are very impressed too by perception of others. When I work around this sexual or sensual energy and impulse, I want it to be at an essential level where everyone can assimilate it based on their own experiences in life. I think society, due to for example religious constructs, has told us since long to suppress these sexual impulses that are the essence of life and to be guilty about them, whether male, female, straight or gay, these impulses have been suppressed. What's so fascinating about humans is how so much derives from these impulses; which we use to create, and transform and so forth. For us the impulses never stop. These impulses can also turn into images which are painful, but perhaps that shouldn't mostly have to be the case. It's not necessary.



Martín Soto Climent, 'Gossip (Voluptuous moment)', 2020, tights, plexiglass mirror, mounted on cedar wood box. Courtesy the artist and Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm/Paris

C-P: It's clear as we speak how consistently you work, given the pursuit of this sexual impulse that drives your work. Are you seeing that new interests are gradually finding you that you want to elaborate on in time to come?

M.S.C: The work opens itself up to new possibilities to you but sometimes you are not ready to act on it, and it takes due time to get there, especially if you work constantly and with an agenda of projects that await ahead. The whole art system is governed by "rules" and it can be difficult to shift these rules around in a way that is convenient to you at any given moment. Working with galleries it comes down to a format that also takes into account what makes sense for the galleries, and then with institutions there are other considerations and realities. What's important is that I've never wanted to be an artist who just mechanically produces art in a factory. I still do everything you see, by myself. It's all my work which might explain the time process involved when it comes to shifts.

Gossip

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www.andrehn-schiptjenko.com

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