

*Unmasked Appropriation*

Emmanuel Cortés

18th November - 1st December 2019

Opening : Thursday 14th, 2019 18:00 - 22:00



© Raoul Rul

The group of work Emmanuel Cortés is presenting focuses on the portrait and what it has signified to humans historically and currently. It is the power of 500-year-old colonial iconography and the instant marvel of a selfie manifesting itself in the artwork of a Mexican-American immigrant working in Brussels. It is through these portraits that the artist explores the multiple aspects of his personal culture. A “culture” here is not a singular corpus that one belongs to or comes from, but the network composed of the connections between a person and their cultural influences.

The complex series of self-portraits allows you to enter into the world of the artist. The child of immigrants, an immigrant himself, a warrior, such as his ancestors fighting the first Spanish armadas, a simple man giving you the key to the features of his life that caused him pain in the western white patriarchal world we live in. Granting you access to his culture through the experience of a Mexican who was not Mexican enough for his heritage and not American enough for his peers.

This gallery in Saint Gilles serves as a sacred space, where you can wear and mask your fragility with pride. You can hide from mockingbirds and camouflage yourself by being so-called “woke.” In the end, you are in a white space, surrounded by white faces attempting to persuade “the other” that they are on their side. To reiterate, this is a sacred space, one dedicated to hiding, masking, and flaunting that which you are not.

This gallery is a white box built for you. The artist has consecrated this space during November to allow you to mask yourself with his culture. Outside of this sacred space, you should not be allowed to.

Emmanuel Cortés (*Manny Manster*) is a mix between an artist and an urban planner. Mexican by blood, Chicagoan by heart, and Brussels sprout for love – he has been based in Brussels since 2017. With a Masters in Urban Planning from the University of Illinois at Chicago and a background in fine arts, Cortés questions his world through sculptural objects and functional art. He is the product of a lower-class immigrant household, making art with free stuff.

His work is inspired by the chaotic nature of the urban environment, decomposition and the imperfect. Urban decay and erosion are experienced physically in the elements and infrastructure of a city, and in the sociopolitical systems by which people live.

Reimagining the decay and erosion he experiences into functional art is a challenge he takes on by combining found materials and traditional media. He has only recently began to use fabric as a medium and also makes custom clothing.

Exhibition display by **Investigations Géométriques**

Practical info :

The exhibition is open on Sundays from 14:00 to 18:00 and by appointment
cunst.link@artistcommons.net or +324 84 964 171

Cunst-link is an artist and curator-run non-profit space in Saint-Gilles, Brussels. Born from the initiative of the artistic platform the Artist Commons, that aims to collectivise artists’ strengths, to share training, rehearsal, and performance spaces as well as human and material resources.

Cunst-link is a research and exhibition space to make new collaborative relationships between visual artists and performers and to explore the range and possibilities of these exchanges.

