

# ARTFORUM

## Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle

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THE POWER PLANT CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY

231 Queens Quay West

March 11–May 29

As our eyes adjust, what emerges from the reddish gloom is a truck trailer, or the shell or shade of one, loaded with unmarked consoles, vague equipment, featureless tanks. Bisecting the room diagonally, *Phantom Truck*, 2007, is a glossy gray manifestation of a Platonic form: an Iraqi mobile biological weapons lab like the one described by Colin Powell in his 2003 case for invasion. Here, Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle has produced what the United States military could not. As the shape becomes visible—a spectral fiction, a phantom image, here more real than ever—its appearance is followed by the realization that this shadowy proposition pulled a nation into war.

Manglano-Ovalle proposes a political phenomenology—a “sensorium” in the tradition of Hélio Oiticica. In the adjacent room, the video *Always After (The Glass House)*, 2006, depicts the aftermath of the ceremonial smashing of a Mies van der Rohe facade. The discordant tinkling of glass and the amplified, reverberating swoop of a push broom accompanying slow-motion and soft-focus shots of coruscating shards are at once mesmerizing and disorienting. Even as modernism is slated for renovation, the piece suggests, its monumental influence washes over our bodies like reflections in mirrored skyscrapers. Yet this argument—that our perceptions crucially underscore our relationship to outside forces—relies on an outlying paratext provided by the gallery, which produces a creeping, second wave of realization: “Oh. This is *that* truck. This is *that* glass.”

Thomas Hirschhorn’s exhibition “*Das Auge*” (The Eye), also at the Power Plant, is an aggressive, sensational barrage that beats an association of categories (mass media, activism, fashion, war, porn) to a bloody pulp. In counterpoint, Manglano-Ovalle’s vacancies and voids represent the dark matter around which the huge machines of empire swing. Describing nationalism and capitalism via their inherent irrationality, both artists place us in perceptual confrontation with mysterious, overwhelming forms of power. Our eyes gradually adjust to the darkness.

— Travis Diehl



Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle, *Always After (The Glass House)*, 2006, film in Super 16 mm transferred to HD video, 9 minutes 41 seconds. Installation view.

CHRISTOPHER GRIMES GALLERY

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