

MADE IN L.A.

2012



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|
L.A.
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2012

ORGANIZED BY
THE HAMMER MUSEUM
IN COLLABORATION WITH
LA>ART

HAMMER MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
LOS ANGELES

DELMONICO BOOKS · PRESTEL
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THE PROPELLER GROUP

The Propeller Group—made up of Phunam Thuc Ha, Matt Lucero, and Tuan Andrew Nguyen—is an art collective that takes the form of a media production company based in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, and Los Angeles. Treating television, film, video, and the Internet as tools to create and disseminate art and non-art projects to mass audiences, the Propeller Group has skillfully manipulated and mobilized the language of media through interventions into the world of marketing and advertising, the fashion industry, television, cinema, galleries, and museums. Rigorously mining the operating mechanics of various industries that produce popular culture in our contemporary age of mass information, the group has been able to intervene in and at times appropriate entire systems of production in order to position art projects across myriad cultural spheres to reach diverse global publics. Creating television shows, commercials, and media campaigns that are then transformed into complex installations for museum contexts, the Propeller Group reorients art historical trajectories that aim to blur the boundaries of art and life to create a new approach that considers these practices in light of our digitized social landscape.

TVC Communism (2011), the project produced by the Propeller Group on the occasion of *Made in L.A. 2012*, encompasses an experiment that attempts to rebrand the ideologies of communism through an instrument of capitalism's advertising machine: the television commercial. Working with the creative team at TBWA\Vietnam, a branch of the agency behind Apple's "Think Different" campaign, the Propeller Group has created a cutting-edge global marketing program that revisits the philosophical underpinnings of communism in order to rebrand this economic system, placing it in a positive light for audiences in the United States. This two-part project encompasses a five-channel video installation made during the think-tank sessions of TBWA\Vietnam's creative team. Recording all members of the team with five cameras positioned at the center of the table, the Propeller Group makes visible the apparatus of marketing and branding through a five-channel installation presented in a room-size pentagonal structure of freestanding walls. Presenting the documentation of TBWA\Vietnam's brainstorming and discussion sessions, the Propeller Group gives viewers access to the process

used to construct consumer campaigns, calling attention to the similarities that these operations have with the propagation of seemingly opposing political ideologies.

An outgrowth of this process is the creation of a commercial that articulates the new vision of communism crafted by TBWA\Vietnam. Exhibited alongside the video installation that unveils the process of its creation, the commercial will also be aired locally on television and radio as a way to expand the project beyond the confines of the museum to other realms of popular culture that are influential for contemporary artists. Operating as both an installation and a citywide marketing campaign, *TVC Communism* highlights the complex processes that these artists undertake in the creation of their work, drawing our attention to the historical relationships between cinema, media, and contemporary art forged in Los Angeles.

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