

YOSHUA OKON

Born in 1970, Mexico City, Mexico

Lives and works in Mexico City, Mexico,
and Los Angeles, USA

Alongside improvised and orchestrated video performances, in which he often invites strangers to participate, Yoshua Okon produces installations and photographic works.

Staphylococcus, a photographic installation that takes the shape of staphylococci bacteria, which can cause a wide variety of diseases through toxin production or invasion, comments on the parasitical nature of politicians. The 80 cut-out portrait heads – taken from political campaigning and propaganda posters around Mexico – are mounted at different distances from the wall, without any references to political affiliations or election promises. Like the staphylococcus bacterium itself, they might be harmless, but they could be deadly.

Speaking of his staged situations and participatory performances, Okon says, 'these interventions act like detonators that dislocate social codes, bringing about uncontrolled and unexpected effects.' His *Ceiling Tile* project took place at the Daimler Chrysler building in Mexico City in 2002. Playing with the relationship between private transgression and public humiliation, and with personal privacy and corporate surveillance, the resulting installation purported to give an intimate view of office life. Ceiling tiles in one office-space were replaced with photographs, supposedly of the occupants of the workstations above. The candid camera reveals a worm's eye view of bored workers caught misbehaving and flouting business protocol; drinking, having sex, using drugs and painting their toenails.