

From Land to Air, a Trail of Life Experience

A contemporary gaze in Latin American photography

July 13th – October 7th, 2023

Throckmorton Fine Arts is pleased to present the exhibition “From Air to Earth, a Trail of Life Experience,” a show that unites the work of nine contemporary women photographers from Mexico, Cuba, Argentina, Spain, and the United States. The work taken in Latin America spans from the mid 1940’s to the first decade of this century.

The exhibition represents a continuity of the show presented by Throckmorton Fine Arts in 2015 “Women Pioneers.” With that initial exhibition, the gallery presented in one show the work of some of the most recognized Latin American photographers of the twentieth century: Tina Modotti, Lola Álvarez Bravo, Kati Horna, Mariana Yampolsky, Colette Urbjatel, Flor Garduño, and Graciela Iturbide. With this new show, the gallery explores the vision of eleven accomplished women photographers: Yolanda Andrade, Carmén Ballvé, Marilyn Bridges, Margo Davis, María García, Laura Gilpin, Margaret McCarthy, Isabel Muñoz, Tatiana Parceró, Marta María Pérez Bravo, and Betina Zolkower. These women dedicated their careers to capturing different latitudes and visions of Latin America through the photographic lens.

Their exploration of the territory through the camera revolves around different cultural, experiential, and artistic issues. It ranges from archeological landscapes of the Mexican Mayan ruins by Laura Gilpin (USA, 1891-1979) a pioneer photographer of indigenous communities, to aerial views of archeological sites by Marilyn Bridges (USA, 1948), and to the abstraction and visual experimentation present in the work by María García (Mexico, 1936), a photographer with a career of over sixty years who has not yet received the recognition she has long deserved. Like many women artist, she was overshadowed by the spotlight cast on her male peers by critics and art professionals.

Photography, like a writer with a pen or a draftsman with a sketchbook, has offered artists the ability to move, travel, see, and capture new and unknown horizons. In the specific case of women photographers, the act itself can be seen as a key to emancipation and freedom of expression.

In this exhibit, Throckmorton Fine Arts is eager to present the work of Carmén Ballvé (Spain, 1960). For over twenty years, Ballvé photographed the sugar field workers of the Mosquito Batey in the Dominican Republic. Her work, dedicated to the people of this community, started when she first visited the Batey in 2002 and saw, in her own words “*a place she thought was part of the past*” due to the harsh working and living conditions. Over the twenty years in which she visited and lived in the community, Ballvé created tight bonds that went beyond her photographic work with the people and families of the community. She witnessed children rapidly becoming adults. Other generations came by with little change in the Bateyes. The result of this beautifully printed series is an impressive body of work in which the images and portraits brim with poetry, dignity, and empathy towards the place and people she honors in her photographs.

Margo Davis (USA, 1944) is an artist who has devoted an important part of her career to traveling around Antigua, Brazil, the Caribbean, and Mexico. These journeys have resulted in a series of photographs where she openly portrays the essence of the people. In a similar approach of exploring new horizons, the gallery

presents the work of Margaret McCarthy (USA, 1953), who photographed in the late 1970's the standing stones of Mexico's archeological and pre-Columbian past.

Isabel Muñoz (Spain, 1955) is an exquisite photographer who sees the act of dance as a privileged subject to photograph. For this special women photographer's exhibition, we decided to present images from two of her series dedicated to the art of dance in Latin American cultures. In her series *Mythologies* (2012), dedicated to the revered figures and the myth of Bolivian primitive cultures, the dancers wear sacred masks as a tribute to Mother Earth, *Pachamama*. These original masks were borrowed for the performance from the collection of the Museum of Anthropology in La Paz. In her series dedicated to Cuban Dance (1995) one can see the sensuality of the body in movement reinforced by large exquisite platinotypes, a signature style of Muñoz's work.

Yolanda Andrade (Mexico, 1951) has photographed the city of Mexico and its people for more than fifty years. From the end of the 1970's to the early 2000s, she captured the urban landscape with film. Her images are an ode to the popular culture and its references, where the kitsch thrives alongside the theatricality of its characters.

Tatiana Parceró (Mexico, 1967) is a visual artist who, since the early nineties, has been exploring with her body as a territory while combining analogical and digital photography with cartographic drawings. She also incorporates anatomical drawings, codices, colonial and astrological maps in search of a reconstruction of identity, memory, or passage of time.

Marta María Pérez Bravo (Cuba, 1959) is another visual artist who utilizes self-portraiture as a medium in her photographs. Over the course of three decades, she has explored the notions and connections between the Catholic religion and the beliefs of the African-Caribbean Santería, an African diasporic religion that blends Yoruba and Catholic beliefs, recognizing divinity in all things. Her mystical images are exquisite black and white silver prints. In these prints, she intentionally blurs the edges of the image on the negative to create a dream-like photograph, through which she portrays her own reflections on her spiritual journey.

Betina Zolkower (Argentina, 1959) moved to New York in 1986. Since then, she has been taking photographs during her walks around both her adoptive city and her hometown in Buenos Aires. Although formally trained as a mathematician, Zolkower is an artist who can see and capture poetry in ordinary scenes and objects. Her photographs bring attention to something that may initially appear mundane at first sight, like the clothespins waiting on a rope in the picture "Remembrance" or the rolled sheets of paper she captures in the photograph "Magra Herencia." However, it is her capacity to reveal the inherent beauty in these details that connects many of us with the Proustian notion of memories. Overall, Zolkower's work shows her keen eye for detail and her skill in transforming everyday moments into compelling visual narratives.

The artists and the works selected by Throckmorton Fine Arts for this second exhibition dedicated to the female gaze in the Latin American panorama are by no means an exhaustive list, or do they pretend to cover all the artist who have used photography to portray the continent. Nevertheless, the exhibition is an invitation to continue exploring and supporting the work of women photographers. The photographs presented in this exhibit appeal to the best aspects of humanity, showcasing dignity, individual beauty, as well as singular and collective experiences in the same universe.

María Millan and Tania Sanabria, guest curators

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