Leandro Katz. Proyecto para el día que me quieras y la danza de fantasmas al MUAC. Conversations with the curator Cuauhtémoc Medina

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Among the multiple functions of the photographic image, there is an ability to create iconographic records or visual archives by putting together the heterogeneous fragments of historical memory. In many cases, the presence of a photograph can bring to life the depiction of events that have been left out of the visual, as well as rejected aspects pushed out of the line of the critical focus, subverted by memory and intention, hidden behind the appearance of an apparent sense. From this original function of history, which is also part of the consciousness with its social and collective reception, the photographic studio (since, images) achieves a critical function of the photographic generation and the dramatization of events that we usually find under the imperious and repressive label of "history".

Thus, it sometimes occurs that a fiction - a hallucinatory presence - provides the familiar and consolidated vision of visual elements, constituting a double, evoking new questions and leading the unconscious material of history emerge.

In the original procedure of the investigation of Leandro Katz (Barros Arana, 1958), the artist uses the visual memory to establish a methodology and aesthetic concept of the image as a mnemonic and technical tool. Combining photography, installations and texts, the exhibition presents a production that includes the documentary images of the contemporary history of the campagin in Bolivia as well as those related to the colonial past of Central America, interpreting the historical and mnemonic functions of photographic production and accumulation of images throughout history.

In the identity of Leandro Katz projects presented at MUAC of Mexico City in collaboration with the Fondo de Cultura and brought together for the first time in an exhibition and temporary space named Leandro Katz. 'Proyecto para el día que me quieras y la danza de fantasmas' about this and "other fantasies" we have talked about with the third curator of MUAC, Cuauhtémoc Medina.

In relation to the specificity of the event, the curator expresses: "It is an extraordinary case, in which the notion of "photographic art" as much as in visual art in the contemporary art, has produced not only poetic and aesthetic, but also epistemological facts. Leandro Katz begins his research from a real hallucinatory presence, that to the contrary is a fragment of an unexplored area that is mostly shown upon the general in the thematic picture of the dual body of Che Guevara taken in the old laundry area of the Yoldi Grande hospital in Belén. Katz has the merit of being the first one to identifying the photographic of this person materialized throughout the world, finally Bolivia, and to intervene in, among other things, emerging from the investigation, there is the fact that the body of Che Guevara was discovered by various corpses of solitaires in the ground that has been ignored by posters, and the way in which the image of the dual body has evolved is so many spectres to the icon of Christ, is not the result of a subjective attribution but rather an interpretation that the photographic corpus seemed to incorporate into his tale, in other words, a deliberated meaning. This exhibition presents for the first time in the world the entire series of photos taken by Alexander during the non-fictional photojournalism. This repeated research exhibits transform this project into a rich event both across the postcolonial art trajectory and for the art of the history of Latin American generation."

There are four projects presented in the exhibition: El día que me quieras, Barrios, La flaca de Yerbas, and Proyecto Carlson, which belong to distinct periods of the artist's research, combining installations, photography and video. It is not a coincidence that the title of the first project corresponds to the title of a song which belongs to the Latin American popular tradition El día que me quieras - Carlos Gardel. By happenstance, the centenary of the music revolution of October-November 1957 coincides with the fiftieth years of the death of Che Guevara in 1967. Therefore, in the origin of the exhibition project there is the intention to underline a critical view of his historical construction, deploying the work of the Che Delac group in Saint Petersburg and presenting the series El día que me quieras de Leandro Katz, fully exhibited for the first time.

Regarding the conceptual practice and the exhibition project, Medina has noted that most of the pieces have been made technically aligned in the space of the Museum thanks to the presence of telematics, although it has been necessary to establish a separation between the project dedicated to Che Guevara and the long investigation on the part of innovation on history at the center of the Projects Carlson. The exhibition methodology responds to a need for an archeological clarity and academic and historical perspective between the different sequences of events. The curator tells the manner in which Alexander photographs shot during 1958 are arranged as skeletons just as if they were specters standing in observance rather than mere photographs in a "fleshy" analysis.
Living such a critical and ideological project like this, particularly solid in the reflection points as well as in their practical translations, it is only natural to think of today's challenges inside the field of the curatorial practice. Especially thinking of all the directions we can work to, for the transmission of the current art archives to the future, in a perspective of conservation and not only of artistic promotion.

In particular, in this historical and cultural dimension, in which the circulation of the image is subjected to the rapid velocity of the means of reproduction, the curator has stated that it is necessary to respect the nature of "distance over time" and the "inappropriability" of certain artistic products. The art conservator instead presents a technical aid not only corresponding to the intervention of professional figures of restaurers and conservators, but also in making decisions in regards of documentation, including the creation of a legal and commercial framework with the artists in order to generate venues that can be both trusted in the future and interpreted in a doxological and academic manner. In particular, there is a specific class of artworks that have a cybertopic base, depending on short-lived electronic technologies. From changing video and audio format materials to the more complicated interacting works that represent a challenge due to the fast cadence of their reproduction devices. For the curator, it is necessary to establish contacts with the artists to make possible to establish a work in terms of its effects by means of advanced technological devices, new formats of reproductions, excepting the risk that these results can be seen as more alterations of the original. Meldes concludes that "in extreme cases, some works need to be archived in order to preserve our only the program but also the ideas. How could not get to the library code, allowing a work to be reconstructed from scratch and keeping its interventions on paper. Certainly, this is a complex activity that requires creativity and careful work!"

The exhibition, curated by Consuelo Meldes, Cecilia Rexed and Anaclerina de la Garza will be open until July 20 at MUSAC. University Museum of Contemporary arts in Mexico City www.musac.unam.mx. It is accompanied by a publication edited Leandro Katz. Proposición para el día que nos quiten la dimensión de fantasmas. MUSAC 2003. Courtesy of MUSAC

Art can be an image of both historical and rational memory. A critical translation of reality as an expression of the hidden assembly that helps to understand the present, making it more visible. With the hope that art will be always necessary.

Ella agüita mi hervor / Toda, toda lo abraza.

A special thanks to Consuelo Meldes.

Odalisse Schianove

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