

Do Ask, Do Tell:

Male Homoerotic Art from Latin America (1970s – 2016)

Opening Reception: Friday February 12, 6-9 pm

Exhibition runs through March 12, 2016

Gallery Hours: Monday to Friday 11-6 pm

Curated by Juan Ledezma

Henrique Faria Fine Art is pleased to present *Do Ask, Do Tell*, a group exhibition that explores “the artistic construction of homosexual difference in Latin America and the strategies that such a construction have generated to disrupt entrenched forms of the region’s art”. Presenting works from the 1970s, when the gay rights movement began gaining traction, through to the present day, this show not only aims to highlight social changes within the last fifty years and how the images depicting male homoeroticism have evolved with improved social acceptance, but to shed light on the identity struggles these artists have faced within their own bodies, the cities they lived in and the greater national and pan-Latin American cultures to which they pertained. The diversity of mediums and artistic styles seen here reflects the appropriation of conceptual and abstract-geometric visual languages, movements with strong foundations in Latin America, for the purposes of self-expression and declarations of desire as well as specific geographic contextualization.

Art historian and curator Juan Ledezma describes these spaces (the body, city and nation/continent) in the exhibition text as “territories of experience”, which, through the lens of this exhibition, have been mapped out in terms of alterity and queerness. A central work in the exhibition is Claudio Perna’s *Vang-Urgente* (1985), a collage in which photographs of male figures are superimposed over a map of South America, effectively creating a personal cartography of desire where distance isn’t measured in miles or kilometers but rather by the size of a lover’s lips. The spirit of a unified continent is implied here, as is the optimism that opening up borders will open up possibilities for all who live within it.

The exhibition argues that “identification—involved in the bid to ask, to tell—proceeds in terms of the strategic inscription of queerness that Lee Edelman has called “homographesis”: the multiplication rather than the constriction of self-identifying marks; the production of ever estranged, always renewable signs through which to rediscover difference and use it as a creative instrument.” Artists including Miguel Ángel Rojas and Alair Gomes use the city and its allowance for anonymity and invisibility to capture moments on camera that would otherwise go unnoticed. Rojas’ series *Sobre Porcelana* (1969) and Gomes’ *Untitled #19* from the series *Sonatinas* (1977) both capture the interactions between two males that occurred with the urgency and innocence, respectively, that the action unfolding was unnoticed. The clippings and articles found in Hudinilson Jr.’s untitled notebook from 1988 demonstrate how alternative social networks were constructed and bolstered using publications and pamphlets that could be printed and distributed easily to the urban populace.

Of course, as artists looked outward to find a sense of identity within their environments, they also looked to their own bodies as a source of ‘self-identifying marks’. Hudinilson Jr., Perna and Pedro Terán made intimate, and at times excruciating, investigations of their bodies and those of their lovers, while Carlos Leppe and Álvaro Barrios summoned forth more latent aspects of their personas. As Ledezma concludes in his text, the featured artists “constructed alternative ways for coordinating Latin American-ness and queerness into a non-normative framework for shared life”. This exhibition is meant as an inclusive invitation, to ask and to tell, and as a standpoint for personal expansion rather than restriction.

Participating Artists:

Sergio Avello

Álvaro Barrios

Alfredo Boulton

Celso Castro

Armando Cristeto

José Gabriel Fernández

Alair Gomes

Valerio Gámez

Arturo Herrera

Hudinilson Jr.

Eduardo Kac

Carlos Leppe

Carlos Motta

Claudio Perna

Miguel Ángel Rojas

José Sigala

Pedro Terán

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