

INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY ART FAIR

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STAND #7G06 / MAIN SECTION
IFEMA Pavilion 7 & 9
Madrid, Spain

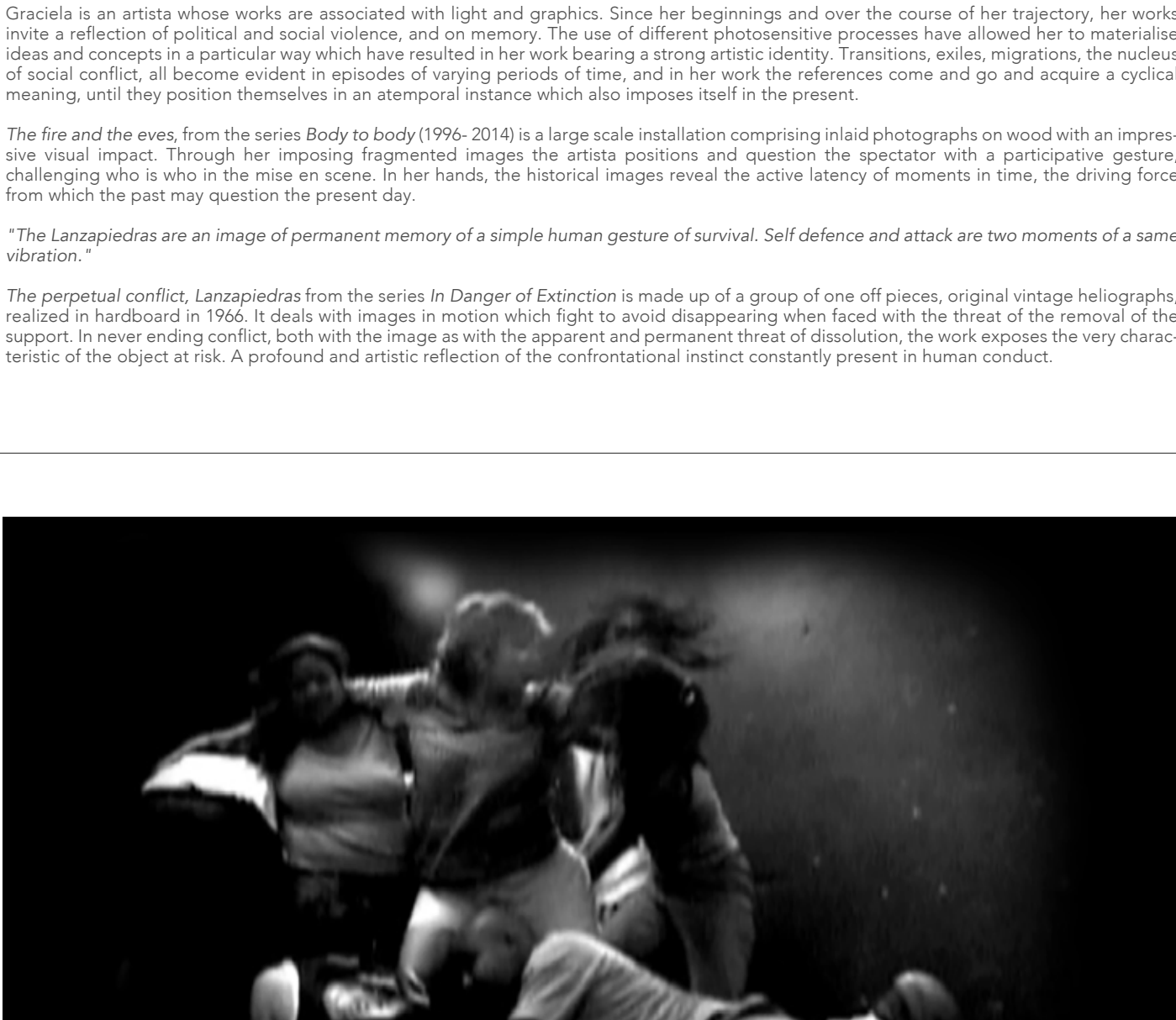


Adriana Lestido
Madre e Hijo de Plaza de Mayo
1983 | copia vintage 1984
45 x 35 x 21,2 cm.

EXHIBITION PROPOSAL

JACQUES BEDEL
MARCELO BRODSKY
MILAGROS DE LA TORRE
FACUNDO DE ZUVIRÍA
ADRIANA LESTIDO
GRACIELA SACCO
SILVIA RIVAS
GABRIEL VALANSI

In the contemporary world, artists tend not to utilize photography as a means to produce an image, rather, they use the image as an instance in which to deconstruct the photographic language. The selection of artists represented here are recognized within the Latin American photographic tradition, but where their defining commitment to social reality cannot be summarized by the reiteration of the well-known documentary reportage. Instead, they are able to reinvent and strengthen their approach to photography by investigating the multiple layers of its own language. Traditional documentary photography relies on the ability of an issue to convey a message of its own language. Traditional documentary photography relies on the ability of an issue to convey a message in order to raise awareness. These eight artists do not believe in Photorealism, neither do they assume that the purpose of art be to communicate 'ideas'. They wish to experiment in their quest for a new beauty, which through its tensions and ambiguities, manages to appeal to the senses and emotions of the viewer. They rely on sensitivity (*aisthesis*) as a means of transforming or questioning the ways in which we perceive and inhabit reality (and the images) that surround us. If their art is political, it becomes so via the materials and methods chosen. This is achieved in the ways they take appropriate or sabotage foreign images and also through the ways in which they dispose the elements in space. Ultimately, their art is political because it is presented as a decision making place, and as a mise en scène of subjective alternatives, able to defy standardized or predictable modes that condition our routine affections.



Graciela Sacco
Rosario, 1956
"To defend is to attack fear"

Graciela is an artist whose works are associated with light and graphics. Since her beginnings and over the course of her trajectory, her works invite a reflection of political and social violence, and on memory. The use of different photosensitive processes have allowed her to materialize ideas and concepts in a particular way which have resulted in her work bearing a strong artistic identity. Transitions, exiles, migrations, the nucleus of social conflict, all become evident in episodes of varying periods of time, and in her work the references come and go and acquire a cyclical meaning, until they position themselves in an atemporal instance which also imposes itself in the present.

The fire and the eyes, from the series *Body to body* (1996-2014) is a large scale installation comprising inlaid photographs on wood with an impressive visual impact. Through her imposing fragmented images the artists positions and question the spectator with a participative gesture, challenging who is who in the mise en scène. In her hands, the historical images reveal the active latency of moments in time, the driving force from which the past may question the present day.

"The Lanzapiedras are an image of permanent memory of a simple human gesture of survival. Self defence and attack are two movements of a same vibration."

The perpetual conflict, Lanzapiedras from the series *In Danger of Extinction* is made up of a group of one off pieces, original vintage heliographs, realized in hardboard in 1966. It deals with images in motion which fight to avoid disappearing when faced with the threat of the removal of the subject. In never ending conflict, both with the image as well as the apparent and permanent threat of dissolution, the work exposes the very characteristic of the object at risk. A profound and artistic reflection of the confrontational instinct constantly present in human conduct.



Silvia Rivas
Buenos Aires, 1957
"Sometimes a sentence is to play the game indefinitely"

Everything from outside is an unanswered question. The images document a sensation, a conviction of the existence of an environment that is inaccessible, the tenacious insistence to overcome the obstacles and the figure of this impediment circulate as movements of the same piece. The body is the limit and this limitation is the only certainty.

The contact of one body with another is the only reference, there is no secure environment, balance is precarious, the surface of support disappears. The force of gravity conceals itself somewhere and conflict is the anchor, at times, the only purpose of gestures is to fill empty spaces. Altering all spatial awareness, there is something in their form, the artist places emphasis not only on the formal qualities of each, but also in their ability to slow down and accelerating its movements, men and women piled one on top of each other form an almost abstract mass of human bodies enmeshed which push, fall, fight, measuring their own limits and those of others - the image dramatizes the constant oscillation of the bodies and reactivates the failure of the collective action.

As if tangled up in a maelstrom ribbon of anxiety, the bodies highlight again and again the impossibility of perceiving the actions of the other. Sound accompanies their gestures, without necessarily being referential, yet there isn't an audio narrative, rather a mere strength which is expressed visually.

Monochrome, frequently present in Rivas' works, indicates the continual problem of gaze and of time. An interest in the way in which man captures objects in his environment and emphasises their reality gives texture to Rivas' aesthetic, but also complicates a reclusive capacity of the art work: their interference with the spectator, their ability to penetrate bodies and produce dialogues. The works of Silvia Rivas centre on the power of art, which from its peculiarity is able to transform the relationship which we maintain with the world we live in.



Jacques Bedel
Buenos Aires, 1947

Jacques Bedel is a painter, designer, sculptor and architect, whose work stands out for its investigative characteristics, its conceptual content and experimentation with different materials which they incorporate, demonstrating the artist's strength in the different disciplines in which he has shown the versatility of his interests. The diversity of his instruction is evidenced in the works which show both fragility and grandeur simultaneously. Consistently meticulous and delicate, his more recent works frequently explore the resource of shadow, concentrating on the capacity for light to construct spaces and areas that are immaterial.

Through his investigation of the supports and margins of perfection, he realizes works which explore the sublime, positioning us to face to face with what is further than the immediate, reconstructing works with superimpositions of images which lose reference, missing the familiar (ostranene) and which only through light reveals beaut created by a half-light.

In his versatile and diverse body of work which includes photography, sculpture, installation and painting, the artist has always maintained an inextricable relationship with books, developing a format of book art with different variables throughout his career. The work *Ad Infinitum* (2013) could be interpreted as a consequence of this recurrent obsession of Bedel's, the idea of a neverending book, or the infinite configurations which make up a publication or the grouping of pages and folds.

Behind its undeniable beauty, this work involves a profound conceptual, mathematical and philosophical study, realized by the artist through which he explores the reverending possibilities which the same order can present. This object of Jacques Bedel addresses the poetic quality of criminality. His street demonstrations are illustrated through overlapping and the revealing nature of light, it deals with images lurking with an unsettling ambiguity, and which are visualised as fluctuating between the delicate presence of their aesthetic and the dense political content which they reveal.



Milagros de la Torre
Lima, 1965

The work of Milagros de la Torre stems from a close and detailed observation of the stillness of objects and archives. To achieve here objective, the artist employs photography as an instrument which fixes and pauses while fragments and constructing an alternative discourse of reality. Producing series in which the objects find themselves, related due to their function, their imprint or their form, the artist places emphasis not only on the formal qualities of each, but also in their ability to reveal certain social, political and economic aspects evidencing the hierarchy of things, of language and of discourse. In this way, the artist interprets as a diverse body of work which includes photography, sculpture, installation and painting, the artist has always maintained an inextricable relationship with books, developing a format of book art with different variables throughout his career. The work *Ad Infinitum* (2013) could be interpreted as a consequence of this recurrent obsession of Bedel's, the idea of a neverending book, or the infinite configurations which make up a publication or the grouping of pages and folds.

In this sense, Milagros de la Torre conceives her photographic practice as a strategy to shape the perspective processes that organize in advance the world which surrounds us, so as to be able to construct an alternative narrative. The construction of meaning as of certain strategies of contemporary photography such as fragmentation, decontextualisation, alienation, the concentration or inflected repetition reveals to us the rhetoric of the footprint and from his particular viewpoint. According to the author, the difference between a documentary realist or a pictorial approach approach proposes a dialogue based on the idea of frontality, a representation of geometry and of the image as a synthesis. Documented with obsession and a singular vision, closed metallic shutters bearing inscriptions, imprints and traces of the passing of time depict an anonymous poetry of a city and its people.

The last steps (1991) by Milagros de la Torre reconstructs one of the most terrible paths in Peru's social and political history having gained access to records stored at the State Archive in the Palace of Justice in Lima. Together with numerous files, the archives bring together a startling collection of objects classified as "evidence" of crimes committed over the last decades (some of them famous, and others unfortunately lost in anonymity). These vestiges, displaced from their violent context, are captured by the photographer as fragile testimonies of a violent and fragmented memory, destined to remain tucked away in a forgotten archive. By taking as its basis evidence that is now part of a state institution, the documentary treatment of this series questions the legitimacy of political discourses attributed to Peru's recent and painful history. Faced with this evidence, the discourse of "not wanting to see" is discredited reopening deep wounds.



Adriana Lestido
Buenos Aires, 1955

All the photographs of Adriana Lestido there is a constant emphasis on the experience of time as a process which gradually reveals an inner voice. All of her series contain the idea of time which flows, which constructs an emotional climate, which shares the vision of both the artist and her subjects. Their points of view are inseparable and yet autonomous at the same time. The temporary nature of the document is also the moving element of each image in itself.

All of her series show a subtle confrontation between themselves, and comprise a process of introspection, their documentary nature is merely a tool to achieve an approximation and a stylistic norm, which fades over time, allowing the appearance of something else, which encapsulates the emotional experience of a shared moment, between the photographer and life itself (or what is the same, between art and life).

She worked for La Voz and Página/12 as a photojournalist throughout the 80s and early 90s, but it was in 1982 during her second week at La Voz when one of her most powerful images capturing the tension between formal strategies and conceptual depths. The curatorial profile of the gallery challenges the supposed "realism" of these representations of conflict. Gabriel Valansi's images are, in other words, like the sensitive skin which touches the horror impossible to represent. The use of repetition, accumulation and the transformation of some images into others, produces obstructed effects. This abstraction imprints a disturbing beauty which questions and unsettles the very place where we direct our gaze.

In 1991 Adriana Lestido captured a scholarship for the Hasselblad Foundation to carry out her photographic project *Imprisoned Women*. These photos were taken in the Prison #8 of Los Hornos, La Plata, Argentina. Over the course of a whole year, Adriana Lestido visited the prison regularly on a weekly basis in order to take images of the imprisoned women and with their children. The images are crude and heart breaking, at times with a descript backdrop, which represent various women, literally, inscribed with the names of the absent men who they love, or perhaps those women who once loved them.



Facundo de Zuviría
Buenos Aires, 1954

His work could be interpreted as a diverse catalogue of urban lettering representative of Argentina, where small stores and characteristic middle class dwellings, and some facades where the style is difficult to ascertain. The simplicity and austerity present in many facades and in some details indicate traces of an identity which the artist appropriates as part of the elements which he then chooses to show the structure of the images, both artistically and from his particular viewpoint. According to the author, the difference between a documentary realist or a pictorial approach approach proposes a dialogue based on the idea of frontality, a representation of geometry and of the image as a synthesis. Documented with obsession and a singular vision, closed metallic shutters bearing inscriptions, imprints and traces of the passing of time depict an anonymous poetry of a city and its people.

Siesta Argentina (2013) is a polyptych consisting of twenty-four small scale photographs, where the artist portrays pubs, hairdressers, dry cleaners and housing facades that are undoubtedly part of the intricate urban landscape and collective memory of Buenos Aires. These places also carry innumerable imprints and markings which time has engraved upon them. The remains of posters, billboards, and incomplete graffiti overlapping, even in their anonymity or indecipherable meaning, are grafts that turn the city skin into a living archive.

Suddenly something forces the gaze to return and look again, leaving behind the security which the recognition of the familiar provides. Most of these images show stores closed in broad daylight. None of these images evoke the tranquility of a Sunday, nor do they suggest the rest afforded by a nap. They convey something else entirely. Each image captures the silent tensions, aspirations and miseries that were present in the Argentinian society during 2001 and 2003, the period of one of the most violent and devastating social and economic crises.

The shadow of a threat emerges gradually in *Siesta Argentina*. This immense shadow that in some way transformed the face of the city, becomes visible through the rare beauty which stands out from these photographic images. The series brings up something that is invisible to sight. In his own way Zuviría illustrates this crisis, which is never fully explicit in the images, but that could never be silenced.



Gabriel Valansi
Buenos Aires, 1959

Gabriel Valansi devotes his work to an investigative critique of violence as an object of contemplative fascination and its appeal in the collective imagination. For the artist, the truth of photography does not lie in its representation, but rather in its capacity to capture a mood, a certain way of being in a certain period of time. The artist Lestido was assigned to cover the protest that would be happening in Plaza de Mayo, where thousands would demand answers about those 'disappeared' at the hands of the military dictatorship. The photograph depicts a mother holding her daughter, both crying out in desperation and anger for a husband and father who would likely never return. History and its significance, just as the palpable emotions captured in a single photograph, led to the image becoming one of her most celebrated and recognizable works.

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Marcelo Brodsky
Buenos Aires, 1954

The March of the Rector, Mexico (1968); Paris (1968); USP, SP (1968); Cordobazo (1969); Archival photographs intervened with hand written texts by the artist. Hard pigment inks on Hahnemann Fine Art cotton paper. 412 x 39,3 cm. each one.

"The photographic trace is opaque until its meaning is written" Walter Benjamin

Marcelo Brodsky's project offers a subjective narrative in which the photograph acts as a memorial.

In many Latin American countries, the '60 has been characterized by political and economic instability, and has seen a succession of revolutionary movements and repressive military regimes, the emergence of guerrilla movements as well as transitions toward democracy. In this climate of political upheaval which required an urgent response, many Latin American artists increasingly sought to break with the purely photographic specifications of the medium, by bringing text and image together in their work. This new visual approach provided them with an effective tool for self expression and communication. As photography is a medium that rapidly and realistically records reality, text provided them with a new way of expanding or altering the meaning of the image. Through these formal inventions the artists attempted to portray the complexity and violence of the world which surrounded them, also often in a bid to sidestep censorship.

The series from 1968 which portrays *The March of the Rector, Mexico (1968); Paris (1968); USP, SP (1968); Cordobazo (1969)*, continue a process of reformulating existing material, what has become a distinctive characteristic of his output. What these images have in common is an era and conflict. On their surface, Brodsky has inscribed marks and annotations in brilliant colours which detail and at the same time hide the future (as yet uncertain) of the past that they have captured, offering a contemporary view of this tumultuous period in history.