

PRESS RELEASE



Santiago Porter
 De la serie | From the series Bruma III Costa | Coast
 Año | Year 2012
 Fotografía | Photography
 Impresión inkjet sobre papel de algodón | Inkjet print on cotton paper
 61 x 73 cm. | 24 x 28,7 in
 Edición | Edition 7 + A/P

BRUMA | Santiago Porter

Opening 14.12.17 - 7pm.
 14.12.17 - 16.03.18

ROLF ART is pleased to announce the opening of the individual exhibition of Santiago Porter, BRUMA, on Thursday, December 14, starting at 7pm, at Esmeralda 1353, Buenos Aires, Argentina. The exhibition admission free can be visited from Monday to Friday from 11 am to 8 pm until Friday, March 16, 2018.

Santiago Porter has been dedicated to developing the BRUMA series from 2005 to the present, deeply exploring the relationship between the appearance of things and their history.

[...] This obstinacy with the foggy remains of history responds to something that Santiago Porter seems to seek untiringly; though it comes together in Bruma, it was already outlined in his earliest projects as an artist, when he would photograph empty rooms, just as they had been left before moving elsewhere, or, years later, when he made portraits of objects left behind by those killed in the attack on the AMIA (Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina – Argentine Jewish Mutual Association). His photographs always look to make the essential message of these vestiges legible, be they personal and private or public and collective: *nothing and no one disappears completely, nothing and no one can become total absence.*¹

BRUMA, proposes an approach from the genesis of the production of the series through a careful selection of recognized photographs with other unpublished, in dialogue with notes, notebooks, sketches and paintings that the artist has created in the search, exploration and completion of this solid body of work, giving an account of its origin and worldview.

Within the framework of the exhibition's closure will take place the presentation and launch of the eagerly awaited monographic book of the artist together with Ediciones Larivière, an editorial volume that reports for the first time on the production process of more than ten years of work, compiling and gathering all the body of work of BRUMA in its chapters I, II and III, with their respective buildings, monuments and landscapes, and accompanied by an exquisite and profuse text by Paola Cortes Rocca.

¹ Paola Cortés Rocca

Excerpt from the text Vestiges of the Future from the BRUMA publication- Santiago Porter, Ediciones Larivière, Buenos Aires, 2017

Vestiges of the Future

Only he who can view his own past as an abortion sprung from compulsion and need can use it to full advantage in the present. For what one has lived is at best comparable to a beautiful statue which has had all its limbs knocked off in transit, and now yields nothing but the precious block out of which the image of one's future must be hewn.

Walter Benjamin[1]

[...] The aftertaste of everyday life, the fossils of violence and the residue of history flash like lightning in every vestige-trouvé captured by the photographer's camera. They speak to us in silence—as photography generally does—of a time that never fades away, but coexists with this other one that we call the present. Bruma registers this temporality—out of synch, parallel, disjunctive and convergent—and looks at the world as if it were an archeological site of the layered sediments of time or a magical pad of paper, where strokes engraved with the force of the indelible persist below the surface. From Bergson to Proust, from Benjamin to Freud, these two figures—the archeological site and the pad of paper—have been emblematic of certain reflections on involuntary memory, that which emerges even when there is no will to recall, or is composed out of mnemonic shreds from different eras.

The vestiges in Bruma are indelible strokes, erasures and stains on the pages of history, artifacts and fossils that pertain to tales from other eras that persist in the present or explore truncated futures. The objects, laden with irony or kitsch—the outlandishness that combines a tank with an image of the little Virgin of Luján or the monument to the fallen in the Malvinas War, shaped like a bullet, to name just a few—are there to point out that the sleep of reason creates monsters. These images show a different time, one out of step with the pace of history, progress or reason; they capture the loose points in the visible, legible weave of history that constitute what Benjamin called the “optical unconscious”. [13] In its broadest sense, the term refers to the capacity of photographic language to decompose movement or to capture an unforeseen situation, as if it were a lapse or a slip of the eye. In its most productive dimension, it implies carrying a message that may not seem to be dedicated to us at first glance, but manages to reach its destination one way or the other. These images offer something in the order of truth at the exact spot where we least expect it, in some detail that might well go unnoticed, in a slight shift of perspective, in the conditions the shot was taken in or, as is the case here, in the landscape of the death rattle of the State, in the vestiges of the nation's bad taste, in the unavoidable remains of bloody, puerile histories. The relationship that Bruma draws between this aspect of things and their histories transforms the photographer into an archeologist of the contemporary, imagined as a fictional past-future. His images are themselves the rubble of the past's persistence in the present, but they are also the flawed project and the past that would have been but never took place, tales of a future desired and the incalculability of what is yet to come.¹

¹ Paola Cortes Rocca

Excerpt from the original text of BRUMA- Santiago Porter, Ediciones Larivière, Buenos Aires, 2017

[13] Benjamin proposes the notion of optical unconsciousness in his first essay in 1931, “A Short History of Photography” and once again in “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”

Santiago Porter b.1971, Buenos Aires

Santiago Porter's photographs are an essay about time and with time. He is not pretending to write a new story but to explore what is written in its margins, everything that has not been monumentalized and for that reason is still beating softly underneath. Because to evoke the past from the present moment is a challenge to the way we think we are, who we were and—why not—who we will become. Time leaves a mark at every step and behind it, with which Porter builds his inventory.

For him photography is a necessity rather than a choice; this is not an instantaneous exercise in which images are recorded without time mediating: with contemplative patience and metric concentration, Porter composes his photographs deploying resources that retain our attention and guide us to the idea or mobile that led him to make them. His photographs do not show us things as they are, instead they exacerbate the sense acquired when being photographed. This is the evocative capacity that metonymy has, and that to Porter means the challenge of saying more with less.

With a precious technique, front frame and with a large scale, his pictures seem sufficient with just one denotative effect. It is the act of shooting, transforming objects into images, making the weight of history more tangible and present. The real aim of Santiago Porter's images is to serve to a constructive memory that questions the past and thus provides the board for another game of history.¹

Born in 1971, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

He has been awarded with distinctions and received many accolades, such as the Guggenheim Scholarship (2002), the Antorchas Foundation Scholarship of Buenos Aires (2002), the First Award of Photography by the Central Society of Architects of Buenos Aires (2007), the Petrobras – BA Photo Award (2008), the National Scholarship by the National Fund of Arts (2010) and was selected to participate in the Artists' Program of the Di Tella University (2011). He has published numerous books such as *Pieces* (2003) y *The absence* (2007). He has been featured in important leading national and international publications. His work has been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Colombia, Ecuador, Chile, United States, Spain, France, Germany, Switzerland and Egypt. Nowadays, his work is part of important national and international collections such as Museum of Latin American Art of Buenos Aires (Argentina), National Museum of Fine Arts (Buenos Aires, Argentina), Museum of Modern Art of Buenos Aires (Argentina), Museum of Contemporary Art of Rosario – (Argentina), Provincial Museum of Fine Arts Emilio Caraffa (Córdoba, Argentina), Museum of Art and Memory of La Plata (Argentina), Petrobras Collection (Argentina), Rabobank Collection (Argentina), J.P Getty Museum Collection, JP Morgan Chase Collection, et al. He lives and works in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

For more information contact Camila Knowles
(+5411) 4326-3679
press@rolfart.com.ar | info@rolfart.com.ar

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Rolf Art, Buenos Aires

Esmeralda 1353 | C1007ABS
Buenos Aires | Argentina

¹ Ana Schwartzman
Excerpt from the text *Endgame*