

**PINTA PARC 2023**

Peru Contemporary Art Fair
19.04.23 - 23.04.23
Casa Prado, Lima, Peru

ROBERTO HUARCAYA | 1959, Peru

**Booth #2 | Solo/Duo Projects | *Danzas Andinas*
Atrio Site-Specific Project | *Amazogramas*
2nd Floor Hall Site-Specific Project | *Danzas Andinas***

Rolf Art is pleased to announce its participation in the upcoming edition of **Pinta PARC 2023** –Peru Contemporary Art Fair– that, celebrating its 10^o anniversary, will take place from **April 19 to 23, 2023** at Casa Prado, Lima, Peru.

Standing out through a multiple presence at the show, Rolf Art presents exclusively the work by one of the most distinguished and committed contemporary artists from Peru: **Roberto Huarcaya (1959)**, displaying a selection of his monumental photograms from the series ***Amazogramas* & *Andean Dancers***, visual representations of the regions of Peru and the Andean culture.

Displaying a **site-specific project in the atrium of Casa Prado** –a highlighted institutional space at the fair’s entrance– Rolf Art presents a colossal photogram at a monumental scale from the series ***Amazogramas (2014-2020)***. The piece, of more than 15 meters long, pays homage to the Amazon Rainforest through a process whereby this natural environment produces a photographic representation of itself. Shot at night in Bahuaja Sonene, a Natural Reserve in the Amazon jungle of Peru, this piece involved positioning a 90m long photosensitive paper through the jungle’s dense foliage. Its forms were then projected onto the paper through the aid of a small flash and the light of a full moon. The photographic images were developed using the water of a nearby river, which added mineral sediments and pigments to the surface of the work.

In the **Solo/Duo Projects** section –dedicated to contemporary artists who insist on rethinking modernisms under the prism of their practices– curated by **Florencia Battiti**, Rolf Art’s proposal for **booth #2** gathers a careful selection of unpublished medium-format pieces from the series ***Danzas Andinas (2018-2020)***, which portray a group of scissors dancers, hand-intervened by the artist with Van Dyke Brown. Recognized by Unesco in 2010 as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, this traditional dance of Andean culture derives its name, *Danza de las Tijeras* [Scissors Dance], from the two polished metal sheets, similar to those of a pair of scissors, that the dancers clash in a movement of resistance against Spanish domination. The exhibited pieces were made through a complex process of photograms emulsified with Van Dyke Brown pigment, on which the artist placed pre-Columbian fabrics -more than 1000 years old- for transferring the texture, shape and density of the original textiles on the bodies of the dancers, as if they were dressing hundreds of years ago to go dancing against the conquest.

The proposal is completed with another **site-specific project in the 2nd floor hall of Casa Prado**, featuring a photogram composed of 6 pieces of 1 x 2.10 meters each, which portrays a group of Andean musicians that integrate the traditional Yawarfiesta festival in Koyurqui, Abancay.

Finally, within the program **Open Files** –a series of videos focused on the artists and their works– which is part of the **Media Point** section produced by **Verónica Santalla**, will be presented a video about Huarcaya’s work produced especially for Pinta PARC 2023.

We hope you can join us!



AMAZOGRAMAS (2014) IF NATURE IS THE ANSWER, WHAT WAS THE QUESTION?

Just over two years ago, the artist Roberto Huarcaya started a project that took him, along with other artists – invited by the ecologist organization WCS (Wildlife Conservation Society) – to Bahuaja Sonene, an Intangible Natural Reserve in the Amazon jungle at South West Peru. Throughout the first year, Huarcaya made several trips in which he found it impossible to “represent” the vast web of emotions that the Peruvian jungle provided. A similar stagnation, we imagine, than the one felt by photographer Frank Hurley when confronted with the vastness of the landscape on his expedition to Antarctica led by Sir Ernest Shackleton in 1914, when he placed his camera in front of the immense ice desert. Two landscapes – Amazonia and Antarctica, which are front and back of nature’s majesty –are able to generate similar uncertainty.

Huarcaya made the decision to disregard the sophisticated cameras he had used during his first journeys. Instead, he chose to go back 175 years, and recover one of the first procedures used in photography: the photogram. The photogram is a technique that, without a lens or a camera, allowed accurate reproductions of objects. Its “official” inventor, William Henry Fox Talbot, while describing his first experiments with the technique, wrote with astonishment: “Nature draws itself.” Huarcaya’s solution to the philosophy of representation that paralyzed him, was admitting the landscape’s superiority: to stop being an author – a monolithic authority – and become a mediator. One can’t use the parameters or methods of a cartographer or biologist to represent experiences that aren’t visible. It had to be the Peruvian jungle itself, the one who wrote its own story with light; with no foreign authorship. That was the only way to activate photography’s empathic neurons, and emulate nature when she lets time go by slowly, so the circles of life can be completed. That was the only way in which he could aspire to include nature’s dualities simultaneously: - life and death, order and chaos, reality and fiction – coexisting in this primitive, overwhelming, mysterious, and aggressive mutant territory that is the Peruvian Amazon rainforest.

Through empathy, one can access knowledge; but, according to research, mirror neurons are active during childhood and it is very difficult to activate them in the adult period. Maybe 175 years is too long and now, in the XXI century, spending our time studying is no longer considered a priority in our society. According to Zygmunt Bauman, what we are looking for now, in this era of liquid modernity, are results and immediate benefits, that is, liquidity in a strict financial sense. Very few ask photography to imitate nature and to take hours or days to generate an image in the darkness of a lab. Huarcaya is one of them: that’s why he walked the lost steps of the past and achieved what he couldn’t during two years of previous visits to the jungle.

The expedition undertaken by Huarcaya probably had his own interior search as a destination; and it was that relationship between experience and introspection that gave him access to different and more effective solutions. In any process that we use to obtain answers, time is a galvanizing and protean element. A beautiful metaphor of that process is found in photographic paper, which slowly shows its latent image – its answer – within a container of developer. The examples, metaphors and allegories provide us with images that help us understand the world in its most minuscule or anecdotic dimensions, as well as its metaphysical ones.

Alejandro Castellote, 2016



ANDEAN DANCERS (2018-2020)

The last few years have seen Huarcaya experimenting almost obsessively with old photographic techniques to achieve images of Peru equivalent to the *Amazogramas*. If the starting point had been the Amazonian forest, it was natural to portray in an analogous way the other two great geographical regions of Peru: the Andes mountain range and the Pacific coast.

"Scissor Dancing Children" is the most recent production in this line of work. It is a photogram of a group of scissor dancing children of Lima. Recognized by Unesco in 2010 as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, this dance derives its name from the two sheets of polished metal, similar to those of a pair of scissors, that the dancers clash, to make a noise similar to that of a bell, while they dance. Its origins are linked to the *taki onqoy* ("disease of dance"), messianic movement emerged in the Andes of southern Peru around 1560, which was born from the conversion of a healing ritual, through trance and dance, into a movement of resistance against Spanish and Catholic domination. Already in the twentieth century, the dance of the scissors is associated with both the patron saint festivities of catholic roots and with the celebrations of the Andean agrarian calendar. The massive migratory process of the Andes to the cities of the Peruvian coast, which has taken place since the middle of the last century, has taken this dance to the urban context, where it has become a manifestation of folkloric character, although it still maintains ritual aspects, since it continues to believe that each dancer derives his skill from a *huamani* or deity and the dance is transmitted from master to disciple and implies rites of initiation; therefore, it remains a strongly identitarian practice in cultural terms.

To achieve the piece, the children lay on the photographic paper to create a photogram of themselves. Huarcaya then digitized fragments of Patacancha's *Andegramas* and printed them by inkjet on translucent photosensitive paper that was used as a negative to re-expose the photogram, this time using the Van Dyke brown technique. The image is accompanied by an audio track with music from the scissors dance performed by the children portrayed.

We are, then, before a monumental piece, not only by its dimensions, but by the way in which it amalgamates different meanings of singular transcendence. By combining - like a palimpsest - the portrait of the children of an Andean community, recognized by the protection of their traditions, with the portrait of other children, cultists of a dance of Andean cultural resistance in the middle of that globalized city that is Lima, the piece acquires important resonances: as a portrait, in it survives the process, so dear to Huarcaya, to depart as an author to allow its subjects to portray themselves, while emphasizing childhood as the constituent nucleus of identity. On the social and cultural level, the piece alludes to the demographic changes of the last decades in Peru and to the consequent process of cultural hybridization that has made Lima, after more than 400 years of living almost from behind the country, in a culturally Andean city. All this derives, in a historical plane, in the inauguration of a new era, marked by the tinkling of the scissors in the hands of children and the joyful rhythm of their dance.

Carlo Trivelli



BIO

Roberto Huarcaya (1959). Graduated in Psychology at the Universidad Católica del Perú (Lima, 1978-1984). Studied Cinema at the Instituto Italiano de Cultura (Lima, 1982) and Photography at the Centro del Video y la Imagen (Madrid, 1989), year in which he focused on photography. He taught Photography at the Universidad de Lima (1990-1993), at the Gaudi Institute (Lima, 1993-1997) and at the Centro de la Fotografía, now Centro de la Imagen (Lima, since 1999) of which he was founder and director until July 2022. Participated in the 6th Havana Biennial (Cuba, 1997); Lima Biennial (Peru, 1997, 1998 and 2000); Primavera Fotográfica of Cataluña (Spain, 1998); PhotoEspaña (Spain, 1999); 49th Venice Biennale (Italy, 2001); Polyptychs at CoCA, Seattle (USA, 2007); Dialogues at MOLAA (USA, 2009); Mois de la Photo (France, 2010); Daegu Photo Biennale (South Korea, 2014); among others. Some of his solo exhibitions include: Deseos, Temores y Divanes (Lima, 1990), Fotografías (Lima, 1992), Continuum (Lima, 1994), La Nave del Olvido (Lima, 1996, Paris, 1997 and Barcelona, 1998), Temps Rêvés (Paris, 1998), Ciudad Luz (Lima, 2000), Devenir (Guayaquil, 2003 and Santiago, 2004), Antológica (Lima, 2004), Entre Tiempos (Lima, 2005), Ambulantes (London, 2007), Amazogramas (Lima, 2014; Dina Mitrani Gallery Miami, 2015; Valongo Internacional Festival, Sao Paulo, 2016; Galería Parque Rodó in Montevideo, 2016; Art Museum of the Americas - AMA, Washington, USA, 2018-2019), Amazonía (Casa de América, Barcelona, 2019), Cuerpos develados (El Ojo Ajeno Gallery, Lima, 2021) and Océanos (Penumbra foundation, New York, 2022). His work is part of the Maison Européenne de la Photographie of Paris; the Fine Arts Museum of Houston; the MOLAA Museum of Latin American Art of California; the COCA Center on Contemporary Art in Seattle; MUAC-UNAM Mexico; the Museo de Arte in Lima; the Museo de San Marcos in Lima; the Fundación América in Santiago, Chile; the Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Wilfredo Lam in Havana, Cuba; the Hochschild Collection, Jan Mulder Collection and other private collections.

ABOUT ROBERTO HUARCAYA

Roberto Huarcaya is one of the most distinguished and committed contemporary artists in Peru. Since his appearance on the visual arts scene, he stood out for the ambition of his projects, in which the photographic medium has often been linked to other creative means in combinations of great solvency. Huarcaya has always been interested in reality as a space for creation. His proposals have frequently powerfully revolved around the construction of individual and collective identity facing situations that range from the banal everyday, going through the erotic as a turning point of freedom, to reaching the political plane. Exercising an anthropological point of view on the images he chooses to take, the artist combines his interest in nature with its forests, oceans and jungles, which are manifested in emblematic series such as "Amazogramas" (2014). Also the rural environment, customs, dances and children are addressed in "Danzas Andinas" (2018) and "Andegramas" (2017). His work aimed to pursue these projects with visual devices that transform their reading, questioning the photographic but without violating the support of the image itself, but rather allowing an open and critical experience towards its configuration. There are no territorial limits for the creative investigation of the artist because there are no limits in his commitment to penetrate intellectually and physically into each of those territories to achieve, through his own sensitive experimentation, translate it into images that recover from the history of photography, primal procedures, paradoxically innovative for today's photography. Since 2014, the artist has turned his attention to photography without camera and is producing 'photograms', returning to the very origins of photography and using a primitive technique to capture primeval realities. Through these works of photosensitive material of monumental dimensions, with a mixture of intuition and resonance, Huarcaya allows us to re-tie the sensitivity, which is like a palimpsest of our personal history, to a hectic sensory dynamics, in the chamber of the consciousness.

ABOUT ROLF ART

Rolf Art, located in Buenos Aires and founded in 2009 by Florencia Giordana Braun, is the only art gallery specialized in technical image in Argentina. Focused on contemporary Latin American visual arts, the gallery represents and promotes a selected group of artists & Estates that explores the limits of the image in its several expressions. The curatorial profile challenges the given conjuncture considering the social, political & economical background of artistic production as a determining factor for art's interpretation.

In order to promote the production and appreciation of contemporary art, Rolf Art develops a solid global program comprising research and archive work, exhibitions, sustained participation in leading international art & photo fairs, editorial and audiovisual projects, educational and training courses, institutional collaborations, and public & private acquisitions management; positioning the work of Latin American artists internationally and contributing to the legitimation of the visual expressions from the Latin American region worldwide.

WWW.ROLFART.COM.AR

For more information please contact:

Florencia Rugiero
Gallery Manager
ROLF ART
t.:+54.11.5936 7513
c.:+54.9.11.6835 3629
m.: frugiero@rolfart.com.ar
w.: www.rolfart.com.ar



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