

Alexander Apóstol

Venezuelan Pastoral

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March 16th - May 11th, 2019

Opening
Saturday, March 16 — 6pm - 9pm



Alexander Apóstol, *Regimen: Dramatis Personae*, 2018

On the occasion of the gallery premiere of the monumental portrait ensemble **Regimen: Dramatis Personae** (12th Shanghai Biennial, 2018), mor charpentier seeks deeper into the roots of Venezuelan national identity questioning as a cultural construction amongst Alexander Apóstol's body of work. The show opens a dialogue between his latest black and white photographs and the former **Ensayando la Postura Nacional** (2010) series. Both projects, produced almost one decade apart, explore the notion of history and nation as narrative, as a fable of stereotyped social body an identity.

In the Elizabethan theatre, the cast of characters in a play was referred as the "Dramatis Personae". The choice of this title is far from arbitrary: In the centre of Alexander Apóstol's reflection on the construction of Venezuelan cultural identity is the idea of theatricality. Costumes, make up, and even poses of these sixty black and white portraits, speaks of an exaggerated fiction. The point is to insist in the underlying dramatization involved in any attempt of historical narrative, particularly regarding the Revolucion Bolivariana in Venezuela. Apóstol's catalogue of characters, willingly exalts the clichés and stereotypes associated with the political spectrum of the country, but could be applied to other times and territories in Latin America or worldwide.

Conceived almost ten years prior to the project for the Shanghai Biennial, the **Ensayando la Postura Nacional** (2010) series of video and photography, vastly anticipates many of the key conceptual elements of this grand collective portrait. Alexander Apóstol restages the iconography of Pedro Centeno Vallenilla, inviting the models to take the mannerist unnatural poses of the characters and try to embody that vision of National identity in which colonial stereotypes were combined with an exotic, hypersexualized, vision of the indigenous body.

Whereas **Ensayando la Postura Nacional**, focused the attention on post-colonial tensions linked to race and class, in **Regimen: Dramatis Personae**, the question of sexual identity becomes much more present. Models for these new photographs are all transgender individuals or drag performers, and they're all involved to a certain extent in the fight for civil rights in Venezuela. The choice of these models draws the spotlight over the situation of exclusion and discrimination of dissident sexualities and identities in Latin America. In Alexander Apóstol's work, the artificial, constructed, aspect of gender identities and the icons conforming a national "identity" meet in the same discursive level.



Régimen: Dramatis Personae, 2018
La votante populista de antes - La votante populista de ahora

List of works

Ground floor

Régimen: Dramatis Personae, 2018

**El policía enmascarado - El dictador - El líder extranjero - El Caudillo - El héroe - El poder de los soles y la sombra
El policía enmascarado impune - El lobby dogmático de la izquierda europea - El estudiante - El demócrata enjuiciado
El preso político lanzado al vacío - El indígena que ha sido marginado y que vió esperanzas - La periodista amordazada
El lobby pragmático de la derecha americana**

C-prints - 90 x 60 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

Régimen: Dramatis Personae, 2018

La votante populista de antes - La votante populista de ahora

C-print - 90 x 60 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

Lower floor

Régimen: Dramatis Personae, 2018

El héroe C-print - 120 x 90 cm

Edition of 3 + 2AP

La reina de belleza que no conoce otra historia

C-Print 90 x 60 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

Ensayando la Postura Nacional, 2010

El Cacao

C-Print - 144 x 222 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

Ensayando la Postura Nacional, 2010

Video, color, mute (format adapted for the exhibition)

20 min

Edition of 5 + 2 AP