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charpentier

# Carlos Motta: *L'œuvre du Diable*

|

8 September - 6 October, 2018

Opening

Saturday, 8 September — 6pm - 9pm



*Self-Portrait With Death #1, 1996. Archival inkjet print. 6.2 x 114.3 cms (30 x 45")*

**Carlos Motta's** multi-disciplinary art practice documents the social conditions and political struggles of sexual, gender, and ethnic minority communities in order to challenge dominant and normative discourses through visibility and self-representation. As a historian of untold narratives and an archivist of repressed histories, **Motta** is committed to in-depth research on the struggles of post-colonial subjects and societies. His work manifests in a variety of mediums including video, installation, sculpture, drawing, web-based projects, performance, and symposia.

**Carlos Motta: *L'œuvre du Diable***, the artist's second solo exhibition at **mor charpentier**, presents a selection of works from 1996 to 2018 that investigate religious iconography, the representations of hell in the Catholic imagination, and the crucifixion of Christ, from a queer perspective.

In the lower gallery, **Motta** stages ***Requiem*** (2016), a three-channel video installation originally commissioned by the Museo de Arte Latinoamericano the Buenos Aires (MALBA) that exposes the tense historical relationship between the Catholic Church and dissident sexualities through a video triptych that offers alternative readings to the moral values endorsed by the doctrines of Catholicism and questions the narratives of deliverance and transcendence assigned to the death and resurrection of Christ. Influenced by the writings of Argentinian feminist and queer theologian Marcella Althaus-Reid, the videos

*Libera Me, The End of Crucifixion, and Inverted World*, are based on performative acts by Italian singer Ernesto Tomasini, Norwegian theologian Linn Tonstad, Italian bondage artists Stefano Laforgia and Andrea Ropes, and Motta himself, where the body is sexualized and politicized in pursuit of queer historical fictions that would recognize sexual and gender difference.

In the gallery's main space, **Motta** presents ***Self-Portrait with Death*** (1996), two early photographs that depict the then 18-year old artist posing naked with a skull reinterpreting the 17th century vanitas motif; his ***L'église Saint-Eustache, Paris Drawings*** (2000), a series of small pencil sketches that reflect the artist's preoccupation with Catholic imagery and the ways in which it mediated his own sexual coming of age; ***Circle VII*** (2018), a new installation of small circular wood engravings that reproduce fragments of art historical illustrations of the sodomites who populated the seventh circle of hell in Dante's *Inferno*; and ***L'œuvre du Diable*** (2018), a new series of discursive paintings made with the artist's own blood and that of his lover that spell ecclesiastical Latin and Greek words used to describe sexual deviance and moral transgressions.

Throughout the exhibition **Carlos Motta** asks the viewer to consider what would happen if we imagined a future reached by paths traditionally deemed impossible.

Can we consider a radical reform of the Catholic

doctrine, one that would take into account the lives of persons who have traditionally been excluded due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, or ethnicity? Would such an incursion bring the end of the Church as a colonial institution? Is an “impossible future,” a future

worth fighting for? Through speculation and fiction, the exhibition scrutinizes the present moment and the defining influence that the Catholic Church has played in shaping morals, individual and collective subjectivities, and the contours of society.



**Carlos Motta's** (b. 1978, Colombia) work was the subject of the survey exhibition *Carlos Motta: Formas de libertad* at the Museo de Arte Moderno de Medellín, Colombia (2017) that traveled to Matucana 100, Santiago, Chile (2018).

His solo exhibitions at international museums include, *The Crossing* (2017), Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; *Histories for the Future* (2016), Pérez Art Museum (PAMM), Miami; *Réquiem* (2016), Museo de Arte Latinoamericano the Buenos Aires (MALBA) (2016); *For Democracy There Must Be Love* (2015), Röda Sten Konsthall, Gothenburg; *Patriots, Citizens, Lovers* (2015), PinchukArtCentre, Kiev; *Gender Talents* (2013), Tate Modern, London; *La forma de la libertad* (2013), Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, Mexico; *We Who Feel Differently* (2012), New Museum, New York; *Brief History* (2009), MoMA/PSI, New York; and *The Good Life* (2008), Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; among others.

**Motta** participated in *Incerteza Viva*, 32nd Bienal de São Paulo (2016); *Burning Down the House*, 10th Gwangju Biennale (2014); and *Le spectacle du quotidien: Lyon Biennale* (2010). His films have been screened at the Rotterdam Film Festival (2016, 2010); Toronto International Film Festival (2013); and Internationale Kurzfilmtage Winterthur (2016); among many others.

**Motta** won the Vilcek Foundation's Prize for Creative Promise (2017); the PinchukArtCentre's Future Generation Art Prize (2014); and a Guggenheim Fellowship (2008). Carlos Motta's work is in the permanent collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Guggenheim Museum, New York; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Barcelona; Museu Fundação Serralves, Porto; and Museo de Arte de Banco de la República, Bogotá; among many other institutional, corporate and private collections around the world.

# List of works

## Ground floor

### **Circle VII (2018)**

#### **Wood Engravings**

Laser engravings on basswood

7.62 cms (3") diameter

Pedestals: 116 x 36 x 36 cm (45.6 x 14.1 x 14.1)

birchwood and plexiglass

Unique pieces

#### **#1**

Fragment from an illustration in *La Commedia*, with commentary by Christophorus Landinus (Brescia, Boninus de Boninis, de Ragusia, 31 May 1487), which balances the poignancy of Dante's encounter with Brunetto Latini and the graphic nature of the punishment that sodomites are subjected to in the seventh circle of hell in Dante's *Inferno*.

#### **#2**

Fragment from Federico Zuccari's depiction of *Inferno 15*, in his drawings from *Inferno* (1585-1588), where the sodomites in hell are labeled "VIOLENTI CONTRA NATURA" (The Violent Against Nature).

#### **#3**

Fragment from Francesco Scaramuzza's second depiction of *Inferno 15*, in his pen-and-ink drawings of the *Commedia* (1853). As Virgil and Statius confer at far right, and as Dante leans forward and raises both palms just to the left of them, two of the lustful pause at left and a third approaches in the middle of the image.

#### **#4**

Fragment from Francesco Scaramuzza depiction of *Inferno 15*, in his pen-and-ink drawings of the *Commedia* (1853), where a balding, bearded, rather fleshy, and not so youthful Brunetto Latini grabs a bit of Dante's robe in his right hand, reaches up with his left, looks at the Pilgrim, and takes a step up the slope on which Dante stands.

#### **#5**

Fragment from Joseph Anton Koch's sketch *Inferno 15* (mid 19th century), which represents the fifteenth circle of hell in Dante's *Inferno*, where Dante bends over from a low parapet and raises his hands just above a figure of Brunetto Latini striding between two slightly distant groups of other sodomites.

#### **#6**

Fragment from Gustave Doré's illustration of the seventh circle of hell in Dante's *Inferno*, in *The Doré Illustrations for Dante's Divine Comedy* (1857-1861), where the figures in the background duck their heads and sometimes stumble as they attempt to avoid the fire raining down on them.

#### **#7**

Fragment from Alberto Martini's ink-on-cardboard illustration for his *Commedia* cycle (1901) where Brunetto Latini's head and left shoulder protrude above a cracked ledge and partly eclipse a horizontal band of running figures leaning to the right.

#### **#8**

Fragment from Alberto Martini's drawing Purgatorio 26, for his *Commedia* cycle (1901), which depicts images of "Soddoma" and "Gomorra" aflame, as well as a labeled scene of "Pasife" crawling into a hollow bull.

#### **Self-Portrait with Death # 1**

76.2 x 114.3 cm (30 x 45")

archival inkjet print

Edition of 5 + 2AP

#### **Self-Portrait with Death # 2**

76.2 x 114.3 cm (30 x 45")

archival inkjet print

Edition of 5 + 2AP

#### **L'église Saint-Eustache,**

#### **Paris Drawings (2000)**

16 x 24 cm (6 x 9") each

pencil on paper

Unique pieces

#### **#1**

**Yo había estado antes acá, mi memoria se despierta, Jardín de Luxemburgo, Paris**

#### **#2**

**The Choir of Bells...**

#### **#3**

**St. Eustache, Paris**

#### **#4**

**Untitled**

#### **#5**

**Untitled**

#### **#6**

**Las putitas Jnal, Paris, Les Halles**

#### **#7**

**Untitled**

#### **#8**

**Naj Asleep**

#### **#9**

**Untitled**

#### **#10**

**Carli, Malu**

#### **#11**

**Ha sido un viaje dereriorante, no puedo enumerarte**

#### **#12**

**Untitled**

#### **L'œuvre du Diable, 2018**

Blood and gesso on canvas

50.8 x 76.2 cm (20 x 30") each

Unique pieces

#### **#2 EFFEMINATI** (Effeminate)

Carlos' blood and gesso on canvas

#### **#4 IMPURITAS** (Filth)

Carlos' blood and gesso on canvas

#### **#6 LUXURIA** (Passion)

Carlos' blood and gesso on canvas

#### **#7 MORBUS** (Vice)

Carlos' blood and gesso on canvas

#### **#8 OBSCENUS** (Obscene)

John Arthur's blood and gesso on canvas

#### **#10 SODOMIA** (Sodomy)

Carlos' blood and gesso on canvas

# List of works

## Lower ground

### **Requiem (2016)**

3-channel video installation  
Edition of 5 + 2 AP

### **Libera Me**

2:37 min  
HD Video, 16:9, B&W, Sound  
Featuring Ernesto Tomasini

Maverick Italian singer Ernesto Tomasini performs *Libera Me* from Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem* in drag.

### **The End of Crucifixion**

21:12 min  
HD Video, 16:9, Color, Sound  
Featuring Linn Tonstad

Queer and feminist theologian Linn Tonstad delivers a poignant critique of religious narratives referencing *Indecent Theology*, the work of Argentinian theologian Marcella Althaus-Reid.

### **Inverted World**

7:39 min  
HD Video, 16:9, Color, Sound  
Featuring Stefano Laforgia, Carlos Motta and Andrea Ropes

Carlos Motta, along bondage artists Stefano Laforgia and Andrea Ropes, perform an inversion inside a 16th century chapel, an action that references Caravaggio's *Crucifixion of Saint Peter* from 1600.

## Requiem

### Credits

#### **Libera me**

With: Ernesto Tomasini  
Music: "Libera Me" from "Requiem" by Gabriel Fauré  
Camera: Jonas Spriestersbach  
Assistant Camera: Dino Osmanovic  
Editing: Carlos Motta  
Editing Consultant: Irit Batsry  
Sound: Saverio Damiani  
Sound Design: Zachary Dunham and Ian Turner  
Translation to French: Arthur Gruson

#### **The End of Crucifixion**

With: Linn Tonstad  
Camera: Martina Radwan  
Assistant Camera: Travis Tomlinson  
Editing: Carlos Motta  
Sound: Ian Turner  
Sound Design: Zachary Dunham  
Post-production: Aleksander Bergan  
Translation to French: Arthur Gruson  
Production: Camilo Godoy

#### **Inverted World**

With: Stefano Laforgia, Carlos Motta, Andrea Ropes  
Camera: Jonas Spriestersbach  
Assistant Camera: Dino Osmanovic  
Editing: Carlos Motta  
Editing Consultant: Irit Batsry  
Sound: Saverio Damiani  
Sound Design: Zachary Dunham  
Viola: Concetta Abbatte  
Post-production: Aleksander Bergan  
Mural: San Francisco, early XVI Century, anonymous, Chapel at Associazione Culturale Dello Scompiglio, Vorno, Italy.

**REQUIEM** was commissioned as a live performance at Associazione Culturale Dello Scompiglio, Vorno, Italy, for the performance festival "Sui generis", June 2016, curated by Angel Moya García and Eugenio Viola. The video installation was commissioned by curator Agustín Pérez-Rubio for the Museo de Arte Latinoamericano the Buenos Aires (MALBA) in 2016.