

UNFINISHED PORTRAIT

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Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Chen Ching-Yuan, Liliana Porter, Teresa Margolles, Carlos Motta, Oscar Muñoz, Rosângela Rennó

February 3 - March 31, 2018

Opening

Saturday, February 3 — 6pm - 9pm



Teresa Margolles, *Pesquisas (Inquiries)*, 2016

From the first known portrait, carved in ivory twenty-six thousand years ago, to our contemporary culture of infinite selfies, portraits are a timeless window to history. Both capable of speaking as anecdote and historical evidence, the portrait and its symbolic language remains a powerful form of expression, used by contemporary artists to address head-on the convoluted history and politics of our times.

Unfinished Portrait presents over forty years of expanded portraiture, from **Liliana Porter's** *Line/Self Portrait*, with which she challenged the limits between photography and print making in 1976, to **Lawrence Abu Hamdan's** *Double Take*, a multimedia work from 2014 in which Hamdan questioned the adopted aesthetics of Arab portraiture by addressing its colonial origins.

The exhibition opens with **Teresa Margolles' *Pesquisas*** (2016) for which the artist photographed the portraits of disappeared women in missing persons posters in the streets of Ciudad Juárez. By reframing and amplifying these images, Margolles calls our attention to the reality of femicide and the impunity that allows it, but she goes way further by choosing to show us the faces of women laughing, coyly smiling, sometimes looking serious or

expectantly, but always calmly towards whoever was on the other side of the camera. Realising all these futures have been snatched without consequence, we are forced to individualise a problem that is often treated in terms of easily brushed away statistics.

In an adjacent niche, **Oscar Muñoz** presents a less intense if not less engaging take on street-based traditions of portraiture. *Biografías* (2002) is a work based on the unclaimed portraits taken by street photographers called "fotocineros" to pedestrians in Cali, Bogotá during the 90s. Muñoz recovered these images and reframed them in order to isolate a single face. Upon further observation of these black and white images, we realise that what we see is a strangely ethereal spectre of charcoal dust, floating, then disintegrating, then completely disappearing in what reveals itself as a sink. As all of Muñoz' work, the piece is strongly connected to themes of identity, representation, and the fragility of memory as linked to the objects, and indeed the trades and politics needed to record it, valorize it, keep it.

Somehow mirroring *Biografías*, the work *Vulgo* (1998-2003) by **Rosângela Rennó** addresses the importance of analysing and working from already existing images and

(not properly taken care of) archives in the construction of history. In her large format photographs, we don't see faces—the essence of portraits—, but different aspects of the head: the napes and crowns of inmates in the Sao Paulo penitentiary system. It is remarkable how much these images can tell about someone without telling on the identity of its subject. By colouring their crowns in pink and red, the artist injects back some humanity into these found negatives of long forgotten convicts.

The scope of the selection throughout the exhibition shows the flexibility of a form that even in its pictorial stance has been invigorated by artists of the likes of

Chen Ching-Yuan, a Taiwanese painter who in works like *In The Other Hand* (2014) explores the tensions of identity and national history in highly symbolic paintings, often in small, delicately crafted formats. This is **Chen Ching-Yuan's** first exhibition at **mor charpentier** and in Europe.

The exhibition closes with **Carlos Motta's** three untitled self-portraits (1998) in which we find in condensed form the wider notions of gender that have informed his later work. Motta dresses, undresses, morphs before our eyes, presenting himself as he is, as we want him to be, the theatre of the self gets played in his, as in all portraits.

List of works

Ground floor

Liliana Porter

Line/Self Portrait, 1976, printed 2012

Modern gelatin silver print made from the original film negative

27 x 21 cm (10.62 x 8.26")

Edition of 3 + 2 AP Printed by Chuck Kelton on Ilford

Multi-grade paper and selenium toned

Teresa Margolles

Pesquisas (Inquiries), 2016

Installation, 30 prints of photocopied images of disappeared women that cover the walls of the streets of Ciudad Juarez since the nineties until today.

30 posters, 100 x 70cm (39,37 x 27") each

Edition of 1/10 + 2 AP

Oscar Muñoz

Biografías (Niña), 2002

Series of 9 chromogenic prints

50 x 50 cm (20x20") each print

Edition of 3 + 2 AP

Biografías (Bacán), 2002

Series of 9 chromogenic prints

50 x 50 cm (20x20") each print

Edition of 3 + 2 AP

Lower ground

Carlos Motta

Untitled, 1998

Archival inkjet prints

38,5 x 31 cm (15.15 x 12.2")

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

Lawrence Abu Hamdan

Double Take: Leader of the Syrian Revolution Commanding a Charge, 2014

Installation

Picture on canvas 1: 54.39 x 39.96cm (21,2 x 15,3")

Picture on canvas 2: 54.32 x 40.17cm (21,2 x 15,7")

Video, color, sound, 11"

Chen Ching-Yuan

In The Other Hand, 2014

Oil on mixed media

11 x 11cm (4,33 x 4,33")

Unique piece

Rosângela Rennó

Vulgo [Alias], 1999 - 2003

from originals of Museu Penitenciário Paulista

Canson RC Photogloss Premium 270gr

168 x 122 cm (66,1 x 48,03")

Edition of 3 + 1 AP