

GAZELLI ART HOUSE

ALINKA ECHEVERRIA : SOUTH SEARCHING

Exhibition Dates:

22.05 - 27.06.2015

Private View:

21.05.2015 | 6-8pm

Location:

Gazelli Art House

39 Dover Street

London W1S 4NN



©Alinka Echeverria, Untitled (Ch1 University Student)
Becoming South Sudan Series, 2011

Gazelli Art House is delighted to announce its first solo exhibition of multi-award-winning photographic artist Alinka Echeverría.

Following Echeverría's first solo museum exhibition in the United States*, *South Searching* encompasses four separate bodies of work seen together for the very first time. Referring to both the personal journey of the Mexican-British artist, as well as the quest of the people in her work, the exhibition examines how our cultural perspective has influenced the way certain political movements and anthropological phenomena are represented and remembered, as well as the relationship between knowledge and belief.

Echeverría's most recent body of work, *M-Theory*, presents a poetic interpretation of South Africa's struggle against Apartheid. Through photographic prints of the fingerprints of prominent figures of the struggle, such as Nelson Mandela and Deputy Chief Justice Moseneke, the artist distils the complex question of how the epidermis of man, became a determining factor in his life within a system of racial oppression. Consistently intrigued by the divergent modalities of visibility within representation, Echeverría plays with the macro and micro of personal biography versus official history, through the metaphor of the fingerprint as the ultimate mode of identification. Questioning the representation of a persona, the fingerprints create an entity of their own, abstracted through their magnification, visually alluding to telescopic views or microscopic views of that which we cannot see with our bare eyes.

In *Becoming South Sudan*,* Echeverría turns to a different form of representation by exploring the act of wearing as a mode of becoming, self-determination and self-reflection. Through powerful, sometimes confrontational portraits, Echeverría captures the gaze of individuals at a pivotal time in 2011, when the Republic of South Sudan finally gained Independence after decades of war. Interested in the historical moment of the birth of a country, the artist explored the representational constructs of what it meant to suddenly become a Nation State and unite sixty-nine tribes under a national ethos.

A selection of works from the artist's acclaimed body of work, *The Road to Tepeyac*, and a complimenting audio work *And So It Was Told*, also displayed on the first floor of the gallery, captures devout pilgrims carrying their personal image of the Virgin of Guadalupe during the annual pilgrimage to Tepeyac Hill in Mexico City, the site of her miraculous apparition.* This photographic sequence which launched Echeverría's career, deconstructs the philosophical, psychological and anthropological relationship between an invisible presence and its materialized expression.

Providing a conceptual framework for all the above series, *Deep Blindness* displayed on the second floor of the gallery, explores the liabilities of gaze and the connection between seeing and knowing. Using a combination of different mediums from sculptural, photographic representations to video and audio works, this long term project addresses our willful denial, to 'see' beyond fixed ideas of meaning based on our experience, education and culturally cultivated symbols. A key work in the project, *Ixiptla*, is a purposefully flattened photographic braille sculpture describing the apparition of the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe, questions the role of vision in systems of belief, the perception of image, and how it is embedded in language and constructed codes of communication.

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Notes for Editors

- * *Alinka Echeverría : Faith and Vision*, at The California Museum of Photography, was the artist's first solo museum exhibition in the United States, October 2014 - January 2015.
- * Prologue "Becoming South Sudan" was written by Emma Lewis, Curatorial Assistant of Photography and International Art at the Tate Modern, in 2011.
- Alinka Echeverría was born in Mexico City in 1981. A 2008 graduate of The International Center of Photography in New York, she additionally earned a M.A. in Social Anthropology at The University of Edinburgh.
- Named 'International Photographer of the Year' of 2012 by the Lucie Awards, Echeverría previously won the HSBC Prize for Photography in 2011. She has also been shortlisted for the FOAM Talent Award, Magnum Expression Award and nominated for the Paul Huf, Prix Pictet, and the inaugural FT/Oppenheimer Funds Emerging Voices Awards, among others.
- Her second solo museum exhibition will take place at the Johannesburg Art Gallery in July 2015.
- Alinka Echeverría will be exhibited at the Havana Biennial, May-June 2015.
- The artist's most recent body of work, *M-Theory* was made with support from the British Arts Council, Nirox Foundation, Nelson Mandela Foundation and Ahmed Kathrada Foundation.
- The Road to Tepeyac - since its recognition as winner of the HSBC Prix Pour La Photographie in France (2011), this series has been exhibited at sixteen locations worldwide including The Wittliff Collections, Texas (2013), Museo de America, Madrid (2013), Centro Cultural Recoletas, Buenos Aires (2013), Moscow photobienal (2012), Maison de la Photographie, Lille (2011), L'Arsenale, Metz (2011) and Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris (2011).
- A selection of works from the series *Becoming South Sudan : Ch 2* will be displayed in PhotoLondon, May 2015, to coincide with Echeverría's solo exhibition at Gazelli Art House.
- According to the Catholic tradition, Tepeyac (also known as Tepeyac Hill) is the site where Saint Juan Diego met the Virgin of Guadalupe in December of 1531, and received the iconic image of the Lady of Guadalupe. The Basilica of Guadalupe located there is one of the most visited Catholic shrines in the world.

Contemporary art gallery **Gazelli Art House** supports and presents a wide range of international artists, presenting a broad and critically acclaimed program of exhibitions to a diverse audience through international exhibition spaces in London and Baku. Gazelli Art House was founded in 2003 in Baku, Azerbaijan where it held exhibitions with Azeri artists. After hosting conceptually interlinked off-site exhibitions across London, founder and Director of Gazelli Art House, Mila Askarova, opened a permanent space on Dover Street, London in March 2012. As part of Gazelli Art House's on-going commitment to art education, the gallery hosts a series of events and talks to run alongside each exhibition.

Press Information:

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