

ALINKA ECHEVERRIA :
M-THEORY

Exhibition Dates:

21.05 - 22.06.2015

Artist Reception:

23.05.2015 | 3-5pm

Location:

Museo Casa de África
Obrapia 157, e/ San Ignacio y
Mercaderes, Havana, Cuba



©Alinka Echeverria, *M-Theory II, I, IV*
Platinum-Palladium Prints, floated on museum board and framed in hardwood stained frames. 2015

Following Alinka Echeverría's recent first solo museum exhibition in the United States*, we are delighted to announce the participation of the Mexican-British artist and anthropologist in the XII Havana Biennial, opening May 21st 2015. The title of exhibition references her most recent body of work *M-Theory*, a poetic interpretation of South Africa's struggle against Apartheid. Presented in the Museo Casa de África, the exposition highlights the historical relations between South Africa and Cuba from an aesthetic perspective.

Through photographic prints of the fingerprints of prominent figures from 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. 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. The series touches upon the associations made between the presence of an individual - their outreach, their power, their influence over one another - and society. The removal of the individual's personal data from the imagery questions the extent to which we own our identities.

Transcending their original function as indexes, *M-Theory's* topographical images create an entity of their own, abstracted through their magnification, the fingerprints visually allude to telescopic views or microscopic views of that which we cannot see with our bare eyes.

"By altering the aesthetics, Alinka Echeverría transforms the fingerprints of eight men who fought against apartheid in South Africa into abstract graphic landscapes of beauty. Beyond the implicit racial and social differences of the skin, these photographs function as affirmative signs of strength and will.*"

By examining the historical connections between South Africa and Cuba from an artistic perspective, *M-Theory* reflects on the way both nations have historically connected to meet broader, cross-cultural, objectives such as freedom, peace and unity in the wider context of the 'South-South cooperation', a framework for dialogue, collaboration and cultural exchange between countries and peoples of the South.

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.

* Quote by Laura González Flores, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM, Mexico. González Flores curated *M-Theory*, XII Havana Biennial 2015.

• *M-Theory* was made with support from the British Arts Council, Nirox Foundation, Nelson Mandela Foundation and Ahmed Kathrada Foundation. "M-Theory" will open simultaneously with the artist's show at Gazelli Art House London. The works on show at the Havana Biennial will be donated to the artistic heritage of the House of Africa.

- A poem entitled *Sigils of The Unsayable* by South African writer Kevin Bloom in response to *M-Theory*, will be displayed in conversation with the works presented at the XII Havana Biennial.
- Established in 1984, the **Havana Biennial** was founded in an attempt to provide a presence for Latin American and Caribbean art and culture in a Western-controlled and shaped art scene. Since its first edition, The Havana Biennial has focused its attention on artists from Southern non decision-making centres whose works represent concerns and conflicts that are common to their regions.
- Photographer and anthropologist, Alinka Echeverría has been devoted to artistic production since 2008. The apparent motif of her work, cultivated throughout her time spent in Mexico, Cuba, Sudan and South Africa, is the theoretical and formal investigation of semantic shifts found within the medium of photography: documentary (*The Final Curtain*, 2009), political (*Becoming Sudan*, 2012) and the ritualistic (*The Road to Tepeyac*, 2010).
- 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.

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