
Enrique **Rottenberg**
DOSSIER 2010-2015

Sleeping with...

Dormir con... **2010**

This is a series that creates a testimony. Throughout the entire island of Cuba, hundreds of very diverse bedrooms were photographed, always encountering the unique characteristic of the Cuban idiosyncrasy that made it all possible: their hospitality. Traversing the boundaries of public space in order to introduce ourselves into a home's most private place, where people spend a third of their lives, where they dream, lay sleepless, undress, procreate... The absence of its inhabitants gives life to the settings, objects, decorations, floors and walls, telling us the individual and collective history. (These images share the silence and the feeling of Suite Habana, by Fernando Pérez).

Una serie que crea testimonio. A lo largo de la isla de Cuba fueron fotografiados centenares de los más diversos dormitorios, encontrándonos con el rasgo de la idiosincrasia cubana que lo hizo posible: su hospitalidad. Traspasando el umbral del espacio público, nos introducimos en el lugar más privado del hogar, allí donde las personas pasan un tercio de sus vidas, sueñan, se desvelan, se desvisten, procrean... En ausencia de sus habitantes, el ambiente, los objetos, las decoraciones, los pisos y paredes, se animan a través de la historia individual y colectiva. (Las imágenes comparten el silencio y el sentimiento de *Suite Habana*, de Fernando Pérez).



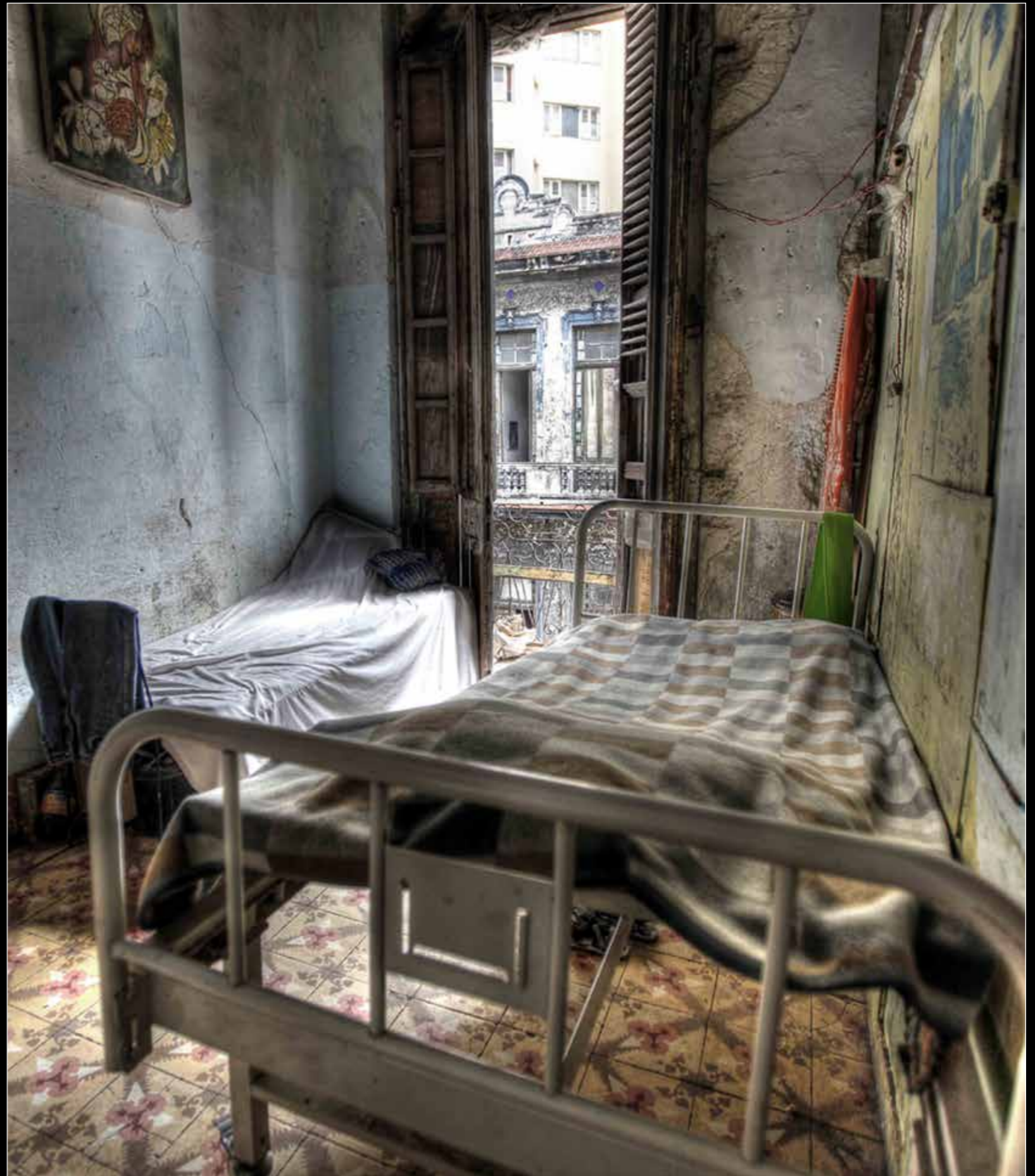
Blue / Azul
Sleeping with... / de la serie *Dormir con...*, 2010
digital print / impresión digital

59 x 39 inch / 150 x 100cm
35 x 23 inch / 90 x 60 cm



Red / Rojo
Sleeping with... / de la serie Dormir con..., 2010
digital print / impresión digital

47 x 31 inch / 120 x 80 cm
35 x 23 inch / 90 x 60 cm



Two bed / Dos camas
Sleeping with... / de la serie Dormir con..., 2010
digital print / impresión digital

47 x 39 inch / 120 x 100 cm
35 x 28 inch / 90 x 70 cm



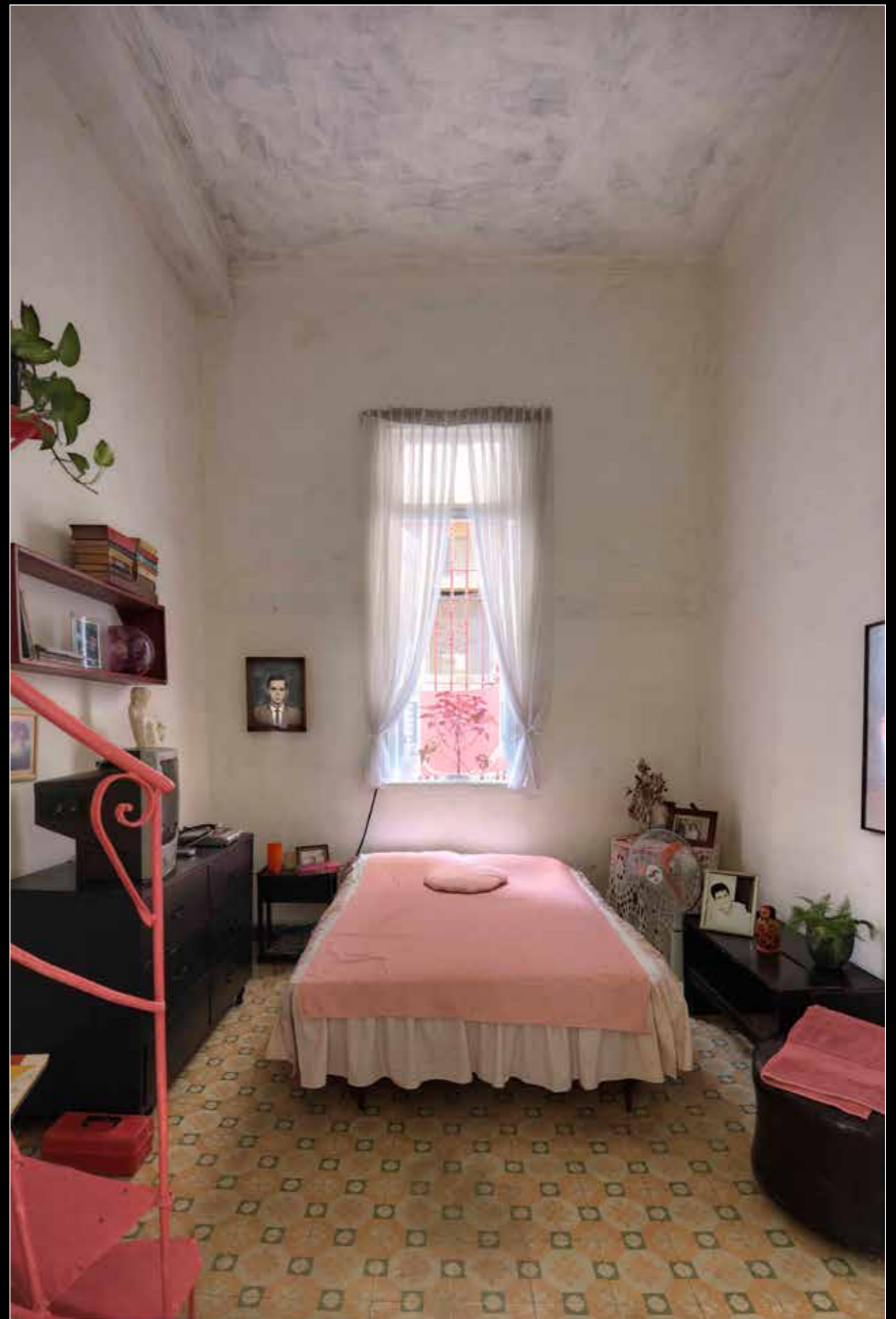
Two rooms / Dos cuartos
Sleeping with... / de la serie Dormir con..., 2010
digital print / impresión digital

31 x 47 inch / 80 x 120 cm
23 x 35 inch / 60 x 90 cm



Dogs / Perros
Sleeping with... / de la serie *Dormir con...*, 2010
digital print / impresión digital

31 x 47 inch / 80 x 120 cm
23 x 35 inch / 60 x 90 cm



Pink / Rosado
Sleeping with... / de la serie *Dormir con...*, 2010
digital print / impresión digital

47 x 31 inch / 120 x 80 cm
35 x 23 inch / 90 x 60 cm



Easter / Semana Santa
Sleeping with... / de la serie Dormir con..., 2010
digital print / impresión digital

47 x 31 inch / 120 x 80 cm
35 x 23 inch / 90 x 60 cm



Virgin/ Virgen
Sleeping with... / de la serie *Dormir con...*, 2010
digital print / impresión digital

31 x 47 inch / 80 x 120 cm
23 x 35 inch / 60 x 90 cm

Self-portraits Autorretratos **2011-2014**

These are staging's of imaginary beings with their plots and traumas, universal myths and personal fantasies, the dark sides of their neurosis and their social status. These are the result of intimate psychoanalytical sessions between me and the camera, that once and a while allow me to lighten the burden of being.

Puestas en escena de personajes imaginarios con sus tramas y traumas, mitos universales y fantasías personales, oscuros lados de la neurosis y de la condición social. Salidos de las citas psicoanalíticas entre yo y la cámara, para aligerar de vez en cuando el peso de la existencia.



Pigs / Puercos
Self-portraits / de la serie Autorretratos, 2011
digital print / impresión digital

20 x 30 inch / 50 x 75 cm



s/t
Self-portraits / de la serie *Autorretratos*, 2011
digital print / impresión digital

39 x 26 inch / 100 x 67 cm
47 x 32 inch / 120 x 80 cm



Leopoldo
Self-portraits / de la serie Autorretratos, 2011
digital print / impresión digital

39 x 26 inch / 100 x 67 cm
47 x 32 inch / 120 x 80 cm



Eva y Adán
Self-portraits / de la serie Autorretratos, 2011
digital print / impresión digital

63 x 41 inch / 160 x 105 cm



The lady with the dog / La dama del perrito
Self-portraits / de la serie Autorretratos, 2014
digital print / impresión digital

39 x 26 inch / 100 x 67 cm
47 x 32 inch / 120 x 80 cm

The invisible / Invisible
Self-portraits / de la serie Autorretratos, 2011
digital print / impresión digital

41 x 28 inch / 105 x 70 cm





The boxer / La boxeadora
Self-portraits / de la serie Autorretratos, 2011
digital print / impresión digital

35 x 24 inch / 90 x 60 cm

Confession / Confesión
Self-portraits / de la serie Autorretratos, 2011
digital print / impresión digital

39 x 26 inch / 100 x 67 cm
47 x 32 inch / 120 x 80 cm





La Carmen
Self-portraits / de la serie Autorretratos, 2011
digital print / impresión digital

20 x 30 inch / 50 x 75 cm



With you / Contigo
Self-portraits / de la serie Autorretratos, 2011
digital print / impresión digital

35 x 53 inch / 88 x 134,5 cm



Don Quixote / Don Quijote
Self-portraits / de la serie Autorretratos, 2012
digital print / impresión digital

24 x 35 inch / 60 x 90 cm

Washbasin / La palangana
Self-portraits / de la serie Autorretratos, 2011
digital print / impresión digital

71 x 47 inch / 180 x 120 cm



Forgotten Olvidados

2013

A witness of the forgotten souls that live in bygone colonial homes, ghosts with no present and without memories; witnesses of those forgotten who have forgotten themselves. (One more tribute to Memorias del Subdesarrollo/ Memories of Underdevelopment, by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea)

Un testigo para las almas desoladas que habitan en las casas coloniales de antaño, fantasmas sin presente y sin memoria; un testigo para aquellos olvidados que se han olvidado a sí mismos. (Un homenaje más a *Memorias del subdesarrollo*, de Tomás Gutiérrez Alea)



Juan y Juancito
Forgotten / de la serie *Olvidados*, 2013
digital print / impresión digital

20 x 26 inch / 50 x 65 cm



The bureaucrat / El burócrata
Forgotten / de la serie Olvidados, 2013
digital print / impresión digital

20 x 28 inch / 50 x 70 cm



El gordo y el Flaco
Forgotten / de la serie *Olvidados*, 2013
digital print / impresión digital

20 x 30 inch / 50 x 75 cm



Antonio y Emilio
Forgotten / de la serie *Olvidados*, 2013
digital print / impresión digital

20 x 30 inch / 50 x 75 cm



Mario y Miguel
Forgotten / de la serie Olvidados, 2013
digital print / impresión digital

20 x 26 inch / 50 x 65 cm

For sale

En venta

2013



Buy Trix 1
For sale / de la serie En Venta
digital print / impresión digital

24 x 35 inch / 60 x 90 cm
47 x 32 inch / 120 x 80 cm

Buy Trix
For sale / de la serie En Venta
digital print / impresión digital

24 x 35 inch / 60 x 90 cm
47 x 32 inch / 120 x 80 cm





Fly to China with Cuban Airlines
For sale / de la serie En Venta
digital print / impresión digital

24 x 35 inch / 60 x 90 cm
47 x 32 inch / 120 x 80 cm



Cristina for President
For sale / de la serie En Venta
digital print / impresión digital

24 x 35 inch / 60 x 90 cm
47 x 32 inch / 120 x 80 cm

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*After and before / Antes y después
For sale / de la serie En Venta
digital print / impresión digital*

24 x 35 inch / 60 x 90 cm
47 x 32 inch / 120 x 80 cm



Cuba Wall Street
For sale / de la serie En Venta
digital print / impresión digital

24 x 35 inch / 60 x 90 cm
47 x 32 inch / 120 x 80 cm

Cuts

Las cortadas

2013

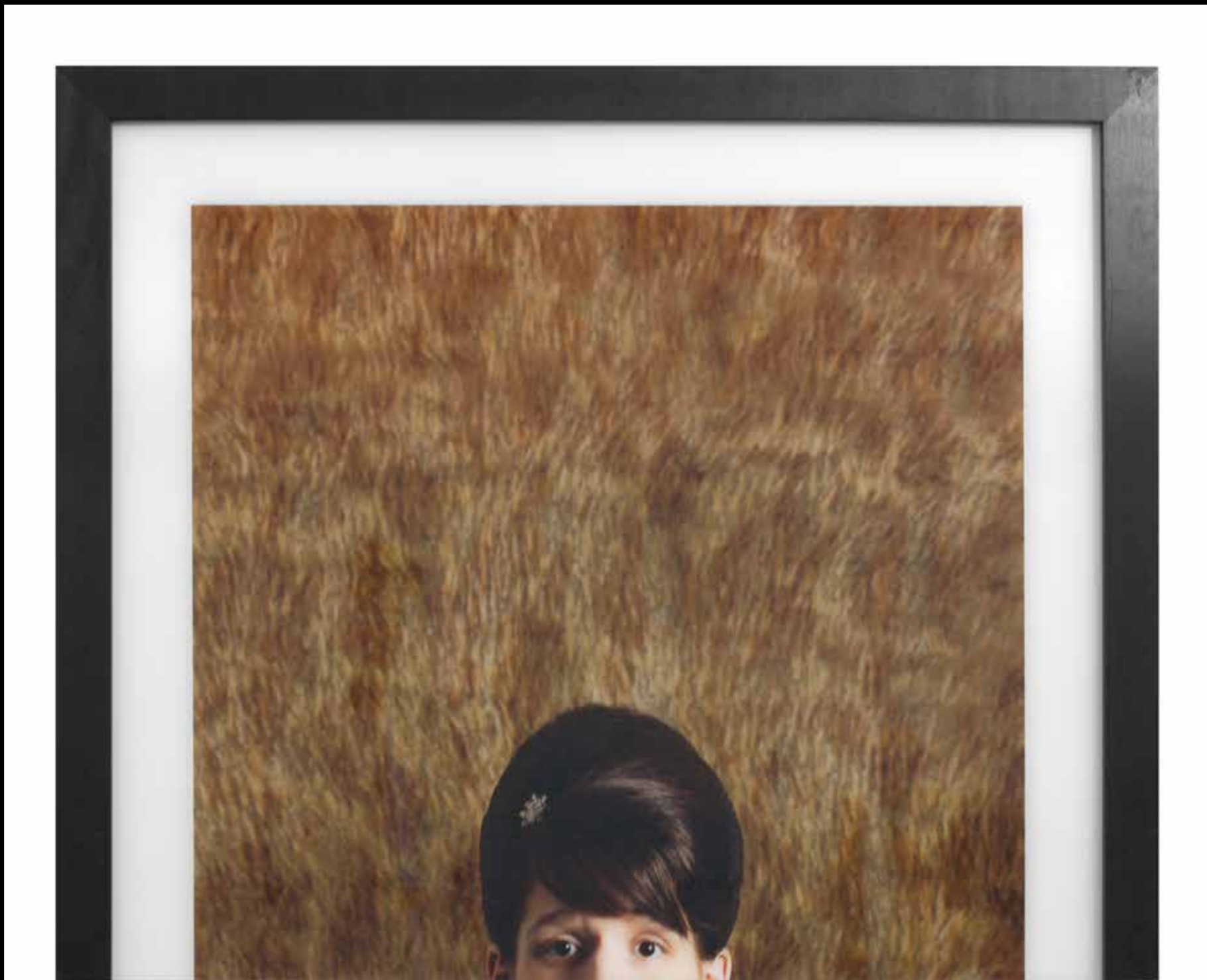
If a portrait invites us to the inner self of a person, in order to discover their internal fissures, what happens when the image itself has a fissure? An unfinished image takes the spectator to share the incompleteness inherent to subjectivity and life itself, its divisions and gashes. These are portraits that expose the interior exile which for many is the main objective.

Si el retrato nos invita hacia el interior de la persona para descubrir sus fisuras internas, ¿qué sucede cuándo la imagen misma porta la fisura? Una imagen inconclusa lleva al que la contempla a compartir la incompletud inherente a la subjetividad y a la vida, sus divisiones y desgarres. Retratos que ponen en evidencia el exilio interior que para muchos se hace objetivo.



s/t
Cuts / de la serie *Las cortadas*, 2013
digital print / impresión digital

33 x 32 inch / 85 x 80 cm



s/t
Cuts / de la serie *Las cortadas*, 2013
digital print / impresión digital

33 x 32 inch / 85 x 80 cm



s/t
Cuts / de la serie *Las cortadas*, 2013
digital print / impresión digital

33 x 32 inch / 85 x 80 cm

Utopia

19 women and one bed

19 mujeres y una cama **2012**

This is a photographic installation of a social installation. Only one bedroom, the common context for all of them. In one of the most ordinary neighborhoods, in which ordinary women have become more independent, but not without any less contradictions. The nude is not a stylistic resource; it focuses on their individuality, on the intimate being of each one of them, to which they have to find a place and meaning, within the limits of their reality.

Una instalación fotográfica de una instalación social. Un solo dormitorio, un contexto común para todas. En el más común de los barrios, mujeres comunes que se han vuelto quizás más independientes, pero no con menos contradicciones. El desnudo no es un recurso estilístico; insiste en la individualidad, en el ser íntimo de cada una de ellas, al que ellas tienen que darle lugar y sentido dentro de los límites de su realidad.



19 women and one bed / 19 mujeres y una cama
2012
digital print / impresión digital

16 photos 15 x 23 inch, each one / Versión de 16 fotos de 38 x 58 cm cada una
25 photos 15 x 23 inch, each one / Versión de 25 fotos de 38 x 58 cm cada una



19 women and one bed / 19 mujeres y una cama
DETAIL / DETALLE



19 women and one bed / 19 mujeres y una cama
DETAIL / DETALLE

The Line

La Fila

2014

Women that obey us, defy us, and accuse us; women who we are all part of: sons, husbands, brothers, fathers, in debt and guilty, prisoners of their enigma, sharing their destiny; women that march in line under the law of consensus and look at us from there: Where are those women going?

Las mujeres que nos obedecen, nos desafían, nos acusan; las mujeres de las cuales somos todos parte, hijos, maridos, hermanos y padres, deudores y culpables, presos de su enigma, partícipes de su destino; las mujeres que bajo la ley del consenso marchan en fila y desde allí nos miran: ¿hacia dónde van esas mujeres?



DETAIL / DETALLE



The line / La fila
2014

digital print / impresión digital

64 x 512 inch / 163,5 x 1300 cm

The Dance

La Danza

2014

Millions of men on this planet dance to the rhythm of a song they do not understand, and infernal dance that forces them to follow the music as they can, if they hope to be part of the social groups.

Project

This installation is a celestial blue cube, the same color as the underwear. Inside it becomes a black circle, to which a 160 x 1800 cm digital photograph printed on photographic paper is glued. In the center of the circle a basket with celestial blue underwear is placed. The light reproduces the rhythm, creating an effect of motion. Kusturica's music sounds in a loop. Once spectators enter the installation they become part of the dance, emphasizing the effect of including them through their access to the basket full of underwear.

Millones de hombres de este planeta bailan al ritmo de una canción que no comprenden, en una danza infernal que los obliga a mantener el paso como pueden si pretenden ser parte de sus grupos sociales.

Proyecto

La instalación es un cubo con cubierta plana, de color azul celeste, el color de los calzoncillos. En el interior, se convierte en un círculo de color negro, al que va adherida la fotografía digital sobre papel fotográfico de 160 x 1800 cm. En el centro del círculo se coloca una cesta con calzoncillos celestes. La pieza musical de Kusturica suena en lup. El espectador al entrar dentro de la instalación se convierte en parte de la danza, acentuándose el efecto de sumatoria a través del acceso a la cesta de calzoncillos.

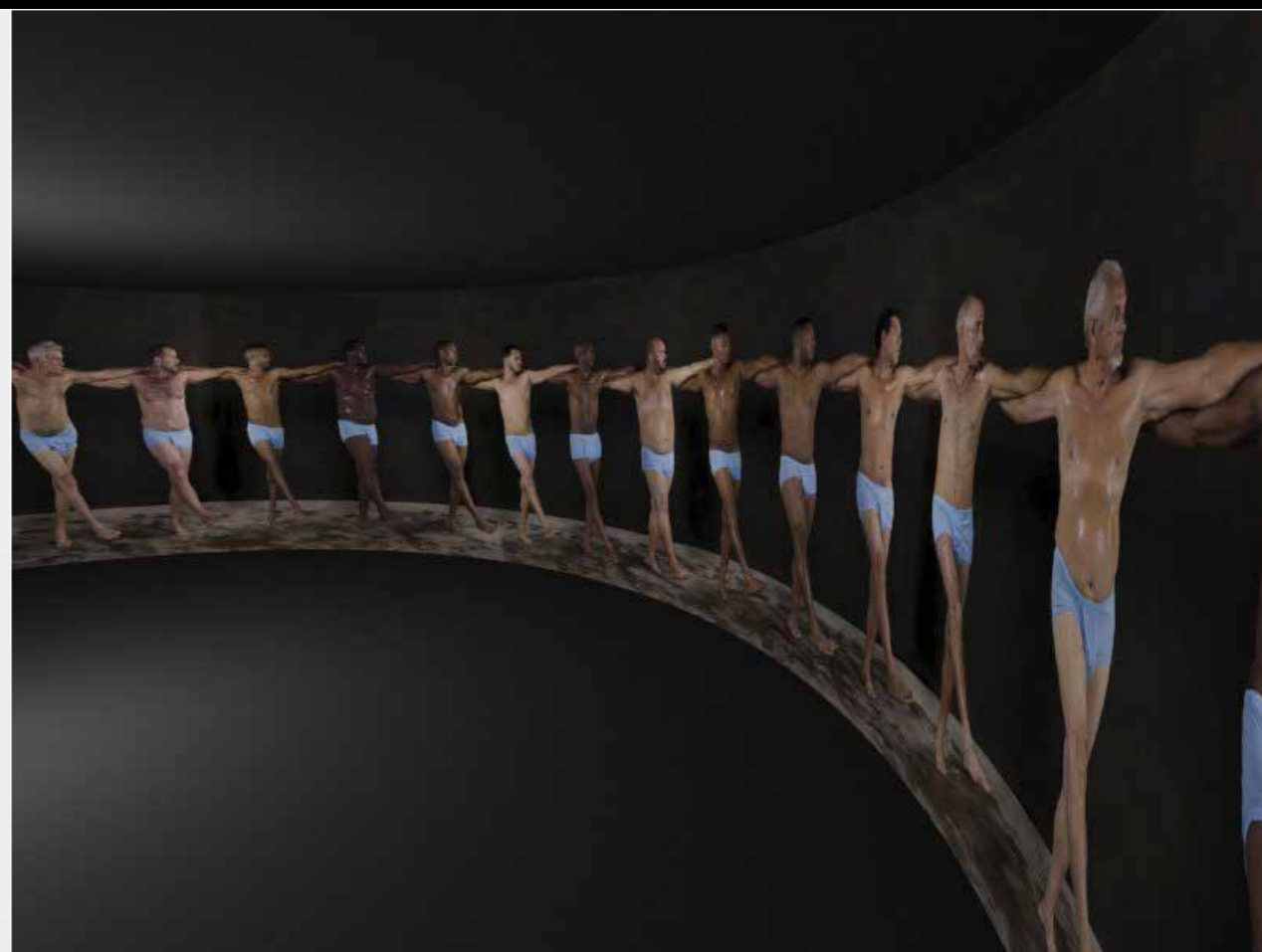
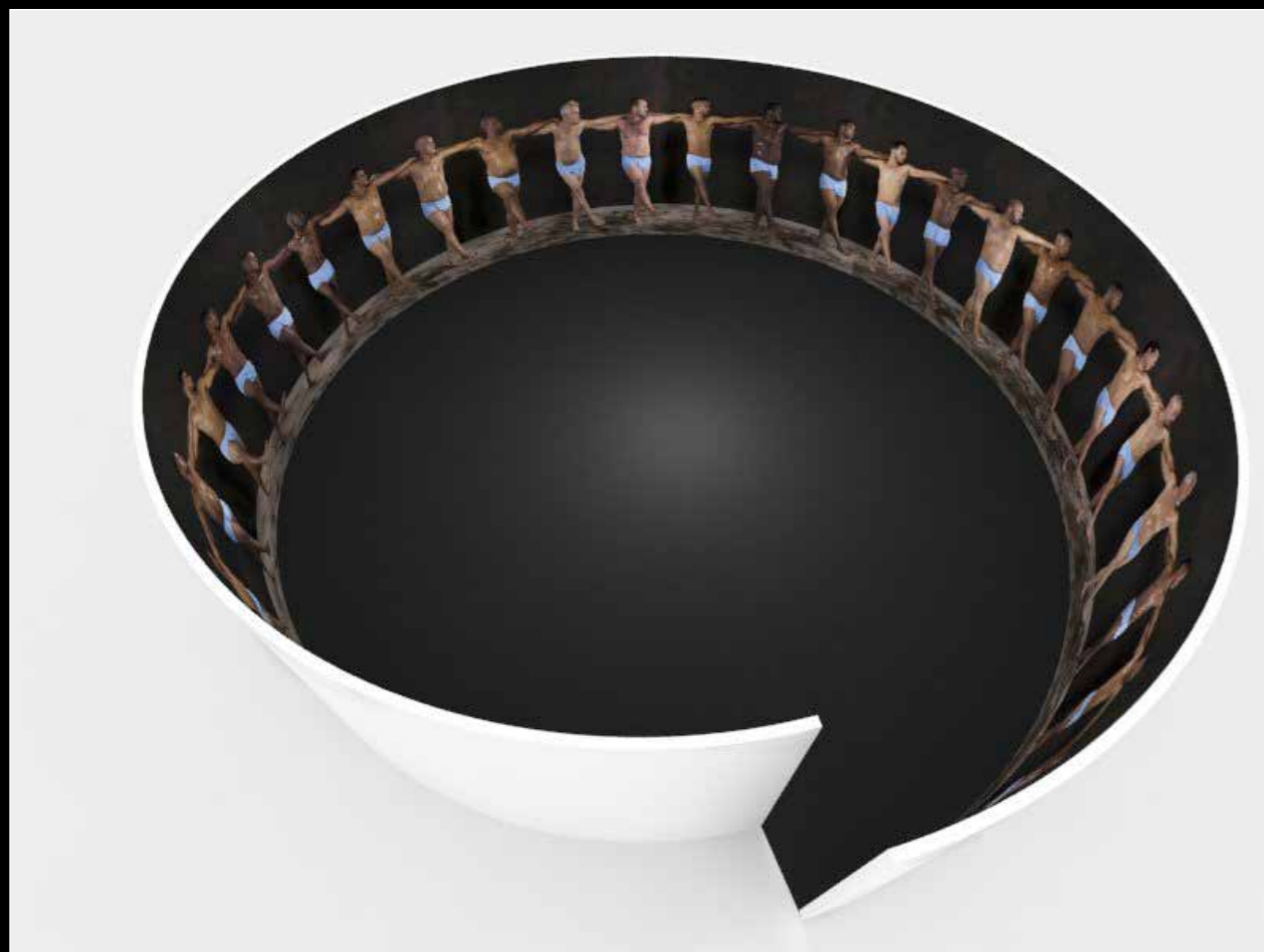


DETAIL / DETALLE



The dance / La danza
2014
digital print / impresión digital

63 x 709 inch / 160 x 1800 cm



The dance / La danza
2014
Installation / Instalación

945 inch x 2776 inch diameter / 2.40 m x 7 m de diámetro

SEE ATTACHED VIDEO VER VIDEO ANEXO

The big egg

2014

George Orwell in his work "1984" exposes the gray world of totalitarianism that makes people love the Big Brother above all. The Big Egg is the other side of the flag they defend, the real conditions of existence and survival; both allegories lead us to the contradiction of any political system, the attempted solution through the engineering of consensus and its effects on the man-mass.

George Orwel desenmascara en su obra 1984 el mundo gris del totalitarismo que hace a la gente amar al Big Brother por encima de todo. El Big Egg es la otra cara de la bandera que defienden, las condiciones reales de existencia y supervivencia; ambas alegorías nos conducen a la contradicción de todo sistema político, el intento de solución a través de la ingeniería del consenso y sus efectos sobre el hombre-masa.



The big egg
2014
digital print / impresión digital

39 x 55 inch / 100 x 140 cm

Centipede Ciempiés

2014

The centipede belongs to the phylum Arthropoda:

An arthropod (from Greek arthro-, joint + podos, foot) is an invertebrate animal having an external skeleton, a segmented body, and jointed appendages. Their versatility has enabled them to become the most species-rich members of all ecological guilds in most environments. Arthropods are characterized by their jointed limbs and cuticle. The arthropod body plan consists of segments, each with a pair of appendages. The rigid cuticle inhibits growth, so arthropods replace it periodically by moulting. Their two nerve centers are by association, highly developed in social insects. It will govern in them the colony conduct and the gregariousness of it. (From English Wikipedia)

El ciempiés pertenece a la división de los artrópodos.

Los artrópodos (Arthropoda, del griego: «articulación» y «pie») constituyen el filo más numeroso y diverso del reino animal (Animalia). El término incluye a animales invertebrados dotados de un esqueleto externo y apéndices articulados. Se caracterizan por tener su cuerpo y sus patas articulados, es decir, divididos en piezas que se mueven. Sus dos centros nerviosos son de asociación, están muy desarrollados en los insectos sociales. Van a regir en ellos la conducta de la colonia y el gregarismo de la misma. (Wikipedia)











Centipede / Ciempiés
2014
digital print / impresión digital

63 x 984 inch / 160 x 2500 cm

The crazy years

Los años locos

2015

En los prósperos años 20, nace el prototipo de lo que hoy es concebido como la belleza de la mujer. La enorme influencia del cine y la fotografía nos diseñó una mujer joven, blanca, rubia y delgada, a quien entre muchas cosas le concedió también el derecho a la felicidad.

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The crazy years / Los años locos
2015
digital print / impresión digital

42 x 176 inch / 107 x 500 cm



The crazy years / Los años locos
DETAIL / DETALLE

The wall

La pared

2015



The wall / La pared
2015
digital print / impresión digital

45 x 77 inch / 115 x 195 cm
94 x 160 inch / 240 x 407 cm



The wall / La pared
DETAIL / DETALLE

Help

2015



Help
2015

photography installation / instalación fotográfica

71 x 35 inch / 180 x 90 cm

71 x 14 inch / 180 x 35 cm

71 x 35 inch / 180 x 90 cm

A kiss history

Historia de un beso **2015**



A kiss history/ Historia de un beso
2015
digital print / impresión digital

63 x 79 inch / 160 x 200 cm

Enrique Rottenberg, the artist of a disturbing oddness

Brief Biography

The artistic career of Enrique Rottenberg is as plural as his identity. Born in Argentina in 1948, to Jewish parents of Polish-Russian descent, he emigrated alone to Israel at the age of 13. After finishing school and serving in the army, he started a real estate business, while at the same time completing his studies in Philosophy at the University of Tel Aviv. He started producing films and studied at the Camera Obscura Film Institute. Among his best known films are: *Nagua*, *Bar 51*, *Himo the King of Jerusalem*, *The Elected*. He was director and screenwriter of the film *Isaac Finkelstein's Revenge*, which won 7 Awards from the Israeli Film Academy and represented Israel in 1994 at the Academy Awards. In 1993, he arrived to Cuba where he currently lives and creates. Here he wrote the novel *Cejalinda*, (published under the title: *La mujer de su vida*, Quarto, Spain, 2006), as a bridge between self-analysis and his philosophy of life. In Cuba he began his photographic work.

In 2010, his series *Sleeping with...* (*Dormir con*) was exhibited at the Cuban Photo Library (National Photography Museum), which is now part of this institution's collection and of several others. Among his most important series are: *Self-portraits*, *The Family*, *Forgotten*, *Cuts*, *On Sale*, as well as large format works such as: *The Line*, *The Big Egg*, *The Roaring Twenties*, and the photo installations: *19 Women and One Bed*, *The Centipede*, and *The Dance*, gathered under the misleading and always deceiving word *Utopia*.

Photographic Work

The photographic work of Enrique Rottenberg may be considered controversial, satirical, manic-melancholic, shameless, empathic, alarming...The reasons behind the attraction that it causes, whether it be of allure or tension, laughter or pain, surprise or rejection, beauty or horror, are diverse, but they all seem to be gathered in a certain way under Schelling's definition of the term: the disturbing oddness - the ominous (*unheimlich*): "(...) everything that was intended to remain secret, hidden, has come to light."

But yet, everything that seems obvious and familiar becomes paradoxical and borderline absurd.

Perhaps Rottenberg's photography as an unsuspecting heir of the film imagery, tries to represent timeless and motionless scenes, stunned characters, suspended environments, frozen stories, as if each and every one of them were shocked from suddenly coming to light, while remaining irremediably suspended. But this is the face-surface that is capable of opening towards another movement and another time, unknown, unusual, disjunctive: the other scene – the fantasy, and the other side of reality.

There's a certain movement that never ceases to reveal itself in Rottenberg's work, repeated and distressing, building its multiple layers, which go from the farcical to the edge of reality, from oneiric shadows to the brutal light of the vigil, from self-narcissism to mass psychology, from finding a way out at any price, all the way to encountering the irreconcilable. In these provocations there's a struggle, away of resisting. Resisting the orders and those who dictate, but also the dominated and defeated; the gods, the myths, the mimicry and consensus, but to some instance of resisting to destiny itself, to all the established and pre-established destinies, even that off finiteness and the indecipherable meaning of life? But Rottenberg is a born storyteller, perhaps because stories are a necessity of life, unlike in death.

He is also a destroyer of mirages. He has the ability to afflict the subject, until he reveals some invisible, strange place within himself. The looks of his portraits are incisive, painful, powerful, and at the end of that open crack primary helplessness looms. In his compositions he uses eloquent backgrounds, as if what is behind the scene were the undertone of their meaning and their senselessness.

Rottenberg's language is paradoxical, hence that feeling of surprise and perplexity: on one side he's directly affective unwilling to create metaphors; his images are screams, sometimes deaf and others strident, onomatopoeias, moans, silences. Indeed, it seems the desire to recreate metaphors is absent; they make themselves and are imposed at a later time, like the poetry of the mundane. The disruption of the compositional syntax, the variety of colors used, the exposed textures, the bluntness, are what create a "style", and at the limit, an enigma. A wandering language without a home land, of an identity that escapes from the identical, always becoming: becoming-man, becoming-woman, becoming-animal, becoming-mass, becoming-another...

Enrique Rottenberg, el artista de la inquietante extrañeza

Biografía

La trayectoria artística de Enrique Rottenberg es plural y diversa como lo es su "identidad". Nacido en la Argentina en el año 1948, de padres judíos de origen ruso-polaco, emigra solo, a Israel a la edad de 13 años. Terminada la escuela y el servicio en el ejército, se desarrolla al mismo tiempo como empresario en el sector inmobiliario, finaliza estudios de Filosofía en la Universidad de Tel Aviv, comienza a producir largometrajes de ficción y se gradúa de la Escuela de Cine Cámara Oscura. Entre sus filmes más conocidos se encuentran: Nagua, Bar 51, Himo al Rey de Jerusalem, El electo. Fue director y guionista de la película La venganza de Isaac Finkelstein, (la cual obtuvo 7 premios de la Academia de Cine Israelí y representó a Israel en el año 1994 para el premio Oscar).

En el año 1993, el "azar determinado" lo lleva a Cuba donde vive y crea actualmente. Escribe la novela Cejalinda, (publicada bajo el título La mujer de su vida, por Quarto, España, 2006), convirtiendo el "autoanálisis" en "filosofía de vida", de ida y vuelta. En Cuba inicia su trabajo fotográfico. Entre sus series más conocidas se encuentran: Dormir con..., Autorretratos, La Familia, Olvidados, Las cortadas, así como las obras en grande formato como la Fila, Los Años Locos, Big Egg, las instalaciones fotográficas: 19 mujeres y una cama, La danza, Cien pies, reunidas bajo el siempre equívoco término de Utopía.

Obra Fotográfica

La obra fotográfica de Enrique Rottenberg puede ser considerada como conflictiva, satírica, maniaco-melancólica, impúdica, empática, alarmante... Los motivos que están detrás de la atracción que causa, sea esta de fascinación o tensión, risa o dolor, sorpresa o rechazo, belleza y horror, son diversos, pero parecen dejarse reunir de cierto modo bajo la definición que dio Schelling al término la inquietante extrañeza - lo ominoso (unheimlich): "(...) todo lo que estando destinado a permanecer en el secreto, en lo oculto, ha salido a la luz." Pero también y a la vez, todo lo que parece evidente y familiar se vuelve extraño, paradójico y en el límite, absurdo.

Quizás, heredera incauta de la imaginería cinematográfica, la fotografía de Rottenberg, parece representar escenas sin tiempo y sin movimiento, personajes pasmados, ambientes suspendidos, historias congeladas, como si todos y cada uno de ellos estuvieran estupefactos de aparecer de pronto a la luz, a la vez que quedan en un suspenso irremediable. Pero esta es la faz-superficie que es capaz de abrir a otro movimiento y otro tiempo, desconocido, insólito, disyunto: la otra escena, la de la fantasía, y la otra escena de la propia realidad.

Hay un movimiento que no cesa en la obra de Rottenberg, repetido y angustioso en el fondo, que construye sus múltiples capas, que va de la teatralidad al borde de lo real, de las sombras de lo onírico a la luz brutal de la vigilia, del narcicismo del yo a la psicología de las masas, de encontrar la salida a cualquier precio hasta el encuentro con lo que no puede reconciliarse. Hay, en esas provocaciones, una lucha, una forma de resistir. A los órdenes y a los que dictan, pero también a los dominados y a los vencidos; a los dioses, a los mitos, a los mimetismos y los consensos, pero en cierta instancia al destino mismo, a todos los destinos establecidos y pre-establecidos, ¿hasta el de la finitud y el sentido indescifrable de la existencia? Rottenberg es un fabricante de historia, pues la historia es necesidad de la vida, en su diferencia con la muerte.

También es un destructor de espejismos. Tiene esa capacidad de afectar al sujeto, hasta que este le revela algún lugar invisible, extraño a sí mismo. Las miradas de sus retratos son incisivas, poderosas, y al final de la grieta abierta, asoma el desamparo originario. En sus composiciones usa fondos elocuentes, como si lo que está detrás de la escena fuera el trasfondo de su sentido como de su falta de sentido.

El lenguaje de Rottenberg es paradójico, de donde también esa sensación de sorpresa y perplejidad: por un lado es directamente afectivo sin voluntad de re-crearse en metáforas; sus imágenes son gritos, a veces sordos y otras, estridentes, onomatopeyas, gemidos, silencios; por otro lado, las metáforas se hacen solas, como efecto secundario, inmanentes a los afectos, y se imponen en un tiempo posterior, como la poesía de los prosaicos. Es la violentación de las sintaxis compositivas, variedad de colores encontrados, texturas expuestas, el mostrar sin rodeos, lo que crea un estilo y, en el límite, un enigma. Lenguaje errante, sin patria, el de una identidad que se escapa a lo idéntico, siempre en devenir: devenir-hombre, devenir-mujer, devenir-animal, devenir-masa, devenir-otro...

Curriculum **Vitae**

Enrique Rottenberg

1948 Argentina–Israel–Cuba

Educación

Philosophy - University of Tel Aviv

Filmmaker - Academy of Cinema Tel Aviv

Enrique Rottenberg had an important career in Israeli cinema as a producer, director and screenwriter. Six of his feature films received awards from the Israeli Film Academy. He lives in Cuba since 1994. He is the author of the novel in Spanish The love of his life, published by Quarto, Spain, in 2006. He began his photographic work in 2008.

Collective exhibitions

Utopia: XII Biennale of Havana, FotoFAC, Cuban Art Factory. Havana, 2015.

Nobody knows what a body can do: FotoFAC, Cuban Art Factory. Havana, 2014.

From the sublime to the ridiculous: FotoFAC, Cuban Art Factory. Havana, 2014.

Close up to Cuba: Kunsthalle HGN. Duderstadt, Alemania. 2014.

Different Identity: FotoFAC, Cuban Art Factory. Havana, 2014.

Labyrinth: FotoFAC, Cuban Art Factory, Havana, 2014.

PhotoTel Aviv: Tel Aviv, 2014.

PhotoTel Aviv: Tel Aviv, 2013.

Cuba, image y possibility II: Melbourne. Austria, 2013.

Cuba, image y possibility I: Fine Arts National Museum. Brasilia, 2013.

Sex in the city: Gallery La Acacia, Havana, 2013.

Thinking in common Thoughts: Photo Gallery of Cuba, Havana, 2012.

Borderless I: Havana Biennial. Morro Cabaña. 2012.

Borderless II: Havana Biennial. Larramendi Gallery. 2012.

Ambito 21: Women, object or subject?: Latin American Photography Conference, Casa Oswaldo Guayasamin, 2012.

Sports in Arts: Open Space, Revolution and Culture, Havana, 2012

Cuba - Absolut Revolution: Arte x Arte, Buenos Aires, 2011.

Solo Exhibitions

Utopia: Kunsthalle HGN. Duderstadt, Germany. 2015.

Enrique Rottenberg exhibits: Fotogram, Amsterdam 2011.

Sleeping with...: Rita Castellote, Madrid, 2011.

Sleeping with...: Globs, Vienna 2011.

Self-Portraits: Video Art Festival, Camaguey, 2011.

Sleeping with...: Photo Gallery of Cuba (National Museum of Photography), Havana, 2010.

Educación

Filosofía - Universidad de Tel Aviv

Cineasta - Escuela de Cine de Tel Aviv

Enrique Rottenberg tiene una importante trayectoria en el cine israelí como productor, director y guionista. Seis de sus largometrajes de ficción fueron premiados por la Academia Israelí de Cine. Reside en Cuba desde el año 1994. Es autor de la novela en español *La mujer de su vida*, editada por Quarto, España, en el año 2006. Comenzó su trabajo fotográfico en el año 2008.

Exposiciones colectivas

Utopia: XII Bienal de la Habana, FotoFAC, La Fábrica de Arte Cubano. La Habana, 2015

Nadie sabe lo que puede un cuerpo: FotoFAC, La Fábrica de Arte Cubano. La Habana, 2014.

De lo sublime a lo ridículo: FotoFAC, La Fábrica de Arte Cubano. La Habana, 2014.

Close up to Cuba: Kunsthalle HGN. Duderstadt, Alemania. 2014.

Diferente Identidad: FotoFAC, La Fábrica de Arte Cubano. La Habana, 2014.

Laberintos: FotoFAC, La Fábrica de Arte Cubano. La Habana, 2014.

PhotoTel Aviv: Tel Aviv, 2014.

PhotoTel Aviv: Tel Aviv, 2013.

Cuba, imagen y posibilidad II: Melbourne. Austria, 2013.

Cuba, imagen y posibilidad I: Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. Brasilia, 2013.

Sex in the City: Galería La Acacia, La Habana, 2013.

Thinking in common Thoughts: Fototeca de Cuba, La Habana, 2012.

Borderless I: Bienal de la Habana. Morro Cabaña. 2012.

Borderless II: Bienal de la Habana. Galería Larramendi. 2012.

Ámbito 21: Mujer ¿Objeto o sujeto?: Jornada Latinoamericana de la Fotografía, Casa Oswaldo Guayasamín. 2012.

El Deporte en el Arte: Espacio abierto, Revolución y Cultura, La Habana. 2012.

Cuba – Absolut Revolution: Arte x Arte, Buenos Aires. 2011.

Exposiciones personales

Utopia: Kunsthalle HGN. Duderstadt, Germany. 2015.

Enrique Rottenberg expone: Fotogram, Amsterdam, 2011.

Dormir con...: Rita Castellote, Madrid, 2011.

Dormir con...: Globs, Viena, 2011.

Autorretratos: Festival de Videoarte, Camaguey, 2011.

Dormir con...: Fototeca de Cuba, La Habana, 2010.

Enrique Rottenberg

1948 Argentina–Israel–Cuba

Publications

Catalogue Utopia, 2015, Kunsthalle HGN

The Allure of a Gaze (Body Photography in Cuba by Rafael Acosta de Arriba), Edic. Polymita, 2014.

Catalogue Close up Cuba, 2014. Kunsthalle HGN.

Catalogue Cuatro Estaciones 2013. Acropolis Cultural Establishments.

Catalogue Dormir con... 2010. Acropolis Cultural Establishments.

Collections

Fototeca de Cuba (National Photography Museum) Collection, Cuba.

MOCA Los Angeles Collection, U.S.A.

Rubin Foundation Collection, U.S.A.

Kunsthalle HGN Collection, Hans Georg Nader, Germany.

21c Museum Hotels, U.S.A.

Madeleine Plonsker, U.S.A.

Private Collection

Hans Georg Nader. Germany.

Jay Rodríguez. Cuba.

Gil Shavit. Perú.

Tracey Riese. Estados Unidos.

Marjory Grave. Estados Unidos.

Henry Heuser Jr. Estados Unidos.

Anne May. Estados Unidos.

Josh Aronson. Estados Unidos.

Madeleine Plonsker, Estados Unidos.

Sarah Willeman, Estados Unidos.

Publicaciones

Catálogo *Utopia*, 2015, Kunsthalle HGN

La seducción de la mirada (Fotografía del cuerpo en Cuba por Rafael Acosta de Arriba), Edic. Polymita, 2014.

Catálogo *Close up Cuba*, 2014. Kunsthalle HGN.

Catálogo *Cuatro Estaciones*, 2013. *Acropolis Cultural Establishments.*

Catálogo *Dormir con... 2010. Acropolis Cultural Establishments.*

Colecciones

Fototeca de Cuba (Museo Nacional de Fotografía Cubana)

MOCA (Los Angeles), U.S.A.

Fundación Rubin, U.S.A.

Kunsthalle HGN, Germany.

21c Museum Hotels, U.S.A.

Madeleine Plonsker, U.S.A.

Colección privada

Hans Greog Nader. Alemania.

Jay Rodríguez. Cuba.

Gil Shavit. Perú.

Tracey Riese. Estados Unidos.

Marjory Grave. Estados Unidos.

Henry Heuser Estados Unidos.

Anne May Estados Unidos.

Josh Aronson Estados Unidos.

Madeleine Plonsker Estados Unidos.

Sarah Willeman, Estados Unidos.

Texts / Textos

Discovering Enrique Rottenberg and the FAC

By A.J. Twist

Cuba has long been an incubator for extraordinary and unique fine art. It can be a collector's dream for spotting emerging artists and inventive techniques. Plus you never know when and where you might run into a piece that will make you freeze in your tracks and drop your jaw as you are as tounded by the pure beauty a piece or pieces. It could be on the Prado on a Saturday morning where artists show their works along the tree-lined walkway, in a tiny shop snuggled down a tiny corridor, through a doorway off of Obispo Street, or it may be in some of the more traditional galleries such as the Fototeca de Cuba in Old Havana. For me it last happened at the Fabrica de Arte Cubano (The "FAC" as it is more commonly known) located in a former olive oil factory in the Vedado district of Havana. There my heart skipped a beat as I came face to face with the photographic works of Enrique Rottenberg. Suddenly I found myself immersed in a colorful and fantastical world that drew on some of the familiar elements of Havana (distressed interiors, colorful costumes, dissolute lives, worn, tired and resigned faces). Yet the artist had transformed these characteristics into true masterpieces that would fit comfortably beside a Rembrandt or a Warhol if you were a museum curator looking to expand the collection.

Enrique Rottenberg is one of those true Renaissance men who comes by the handle honestly. Prior to his relatively recent imminence as one of Cuba's premiere photographers and resident artists, Rottenberg has at one time been a film producer, who has produced six films (including one, "Isaac Finkelstein's Revenge", that he was screenwriter and director and was nominated for a foreign Oscar in 1994); a novelist ("La mujer de su vida" published in Spain in 2006); and a real estate developer (including the Miramar Trade Centre in Havana, built by Rottenberg and his associates in 1993 shortly after he moved to Havana from Israel). Born in Argentina some 66 years ago to Jewish parents of Russian and Polish decent, he immigrated to Israel on his own at the age of 13 where he eventually built a thriving real estate empire. There is no doubt this man's interests are diverse and global. Yet his photographic career is a relatively recent endeavor (since 2010) but already he is making an impact on the international art community. This summer he shows in Berlin. Previous exhibits have included shows in Australia, Argentina and Amsterdam. Enquiries from the U.S. and Canada have been steady but this is a gentleman who is in no rush to have his works consumed by the masses for purely economic gain. Rather than choose the more traditional commercial art venues his only real interest, at this point, is in showing in major contemporary art galleries and museums.

At the FAC, where he was a driving force in getting the multifaceted complex off the ground, the collection I came across included images from his series "Sleeping with...", which are a number of photographic studies of various Havana bedrooms, the incredible "19 Women and 1 bed" project which involved the sitting for the photographer from a truly varied number of women from one neighborhood in Havana; and *Self-portraits* (2011-2014) which are a series shot in one of the most famous mansions in Havana where the artist interacts with his inner fantasies or issues while incorporating the mansion and various actors and costumes within his mind.

All of these photos are there for the viewing at the FAC and I suggest you get there soon. This artist is one to watch and his adopted homeland may soon prove to be not big enough to contain his talent. View them soon. He is well on his way!

The Fábrica de Arte Cubano is located at 26 Calle 26, corner of Calle 11, Vedado, Havana. Tel (+537) 838-22-60.

The Bedroom: On the Threshold of Myth and Worldliness

By Rafael Acosta de Arriba

It has been said that photography has two subject-matters: life and photography itself. The output of images has cluttered the world we live in, overfilling it with every imaginable kind of icon: advertising, marketing, political, religious, etc. However, the images in these artworks stir deep-rooted emotions and lead the individual to dwell on the most intimate human feelings. This is what *Dormir con...* deals with, an exhibition that is appreciated for many reasons.

Rottenberg, Argentinean-Israelite residing in Cuba, who is quite acknowledged within the European film world and also as a narrator, has taken to experiment with photography (at least concerning the expositive character of his work). They both set off on a journey all along Cuba, from east to west, in the pursuit of shooting every bedroom whose atmosphere and setting they found suggestive or distinctive.

The outcome is but a minimum fraction of what these two artists photographed in myriad Cuban homes. Their journey was therefore inwards, towards the inner nature of Cuban idiosyncrasy itself, to the utmost intimate place where people feel, rest, go to sleep, suffer, reflect, make love, listen to music or watch television. In short, to the room where we spend approximately the third part of our lives. At once some thoughts come to our minds: How much suffering and helplessness were threshed there? How many hopes and deceits have these walls witnessed? Photography is endowed with the gift of stirring up such ideas and suggestions. No wonder it is one of the strongest visual links with memory, with our experiences.

The concept of photopoetry was coined since Ansel Adams' times when he stated his own personal credo: "A great photography is the full expression of what you feel about the subject matter that you are photographing in the deepest sense, and therefore it is the authentic expression of what you feel about life itself." There is nothing more evident than this concept to summarize the esthetic attitude of these two artists in this exhibition. Feeling and talent are in perfect communion.

They have attempted and achieved to give shape to their sense of everyday life reality by means of their artworks. A great part of this sense of reality (where the image starts) has been skillfully combined by using technique and their craftsmanship (where the image is completed) and thus were able to accomplish their pursuit by the power of suggestion which their artworks possess (where the image speaks to us) The efficient color scheme enhances even more the ensemble.

The symbol of the bedrooms goes through human history. The precariousness of the rooms that feature in the exhibition must not be considered as part of a mania that arose in the nineties and consisted in shooting the city decay. I must warn that there is a cardinal difference. In most of the photos that overfilled books, magazines and exhibitions at that time, featured the decay of the city and the people during the so called "special period", and most of the time they lacked a solid esthetic purpose. They dealt with precariousness and decay directly, without any kind of intellectual or visual mediation. They were just a sort of misfortune inventory. They consisted of walls ravaged by time, wrecked streets, cars that had become running junk, undernourished people, untidy and vulgar registers of the scum of our society at the end of the twentieth century. However, in many of these attempts, the esthetic discourse was lacking, as well as the poetic vision that suggests dwelling on the causes of those social issues.

I would also like to point out that these images suggest an ethical issue as well. It focuses on the importance these bedrooms have for the people who inhabit them, no matter how pitiful their state. There is no doubt that their dwellers wish for a better place, which is a normal feeling in the evolution of the human being, enhanced when living in need or privation. Photographic art does not refute this, it only discloses it harshly. In other words, these rooms make up the reality, there is no place else, and this fact makes the critical understatement of the images quite legitimate. How important could a bedroom be despite its modesty, humbleness or precariousness? This is an open question suggested by the images of Rottenberg and Otero. For the time being, we appreciate their responsibility in the way they have dealt with the images as well as in the preparation of the exhibition, while we shall keep on dwelling on these spaces, the source of simple, intimate and great stories. With their photos, Rottenberg has touched the essence of myths and sacredness.

El dormitorio entre el mito y lo terrenal

por Rafael Acosta de Arriba

Se ha dicho que la fotografía posee dos grandes temas: la vida y la propia fotografía. Producir imágenes ha devenido su función normal en este mundo atiborrado de iconos publicitarios, comerciales, propagandísticos, políticos, religiosos y de diversa índole. Pero estoy pensando ahora mismo en las imágenes que surgen desde el aliento poético, que motivan la reflexión y tocan las fibras íntimas de las emociones humanas. De eso se trata en Dormir con..., una muestra que se agradece por muchos motivos.

Enrique Rottenberg, argentino-israelí, reconocido realizador de la cinematografía israelí, narrador y ahora estrenando sus armas en la fotografía, recorrió nuestra geografía de oriente a occidente con la misión de capturar los ambientes y atmósferas más sugestivos de dormitorios de toda índole, calidad y ambientaciones disímiles.

El resultado es una mínima fracción de lo que fotografiaron estos dos artistas en decenas y decenas de dormitorios de los hogares cubanos. Se trata pues de un viaje hacia adentro, al interior de la naturaleza del ser nacional, al sitio íntimo donde la gente siente, reposa, dormita, sufre y padece, reflexiona, hace el amor, escucha música o ve televisión, en fin, ese espacio donde permanecemos aproximadamente la tercera parte de nuestras vidas. Las reflexiones vienen de inmediato a nuestras mentes: ¿Cuántos sufrimientos e impotencias no se desgranaron en los mismos? ¿Cuántas esperanzas o decepciones no se habrán despertado o esfumado bajo esos techos y paredes? La fotografía posee ese don único de provocar tales ideas y sugerencias, no por gusto es uno de los más fuertes vínculos visuales con la memoria, con nuestras vivencias.

El concepto de fotopoesía viene elaborado desde Ansel Adams quien expresó al exponer dicho credo: “Una gran fotografía es expresión plena de lo que uno siente sobre lo que está fotografiando en el sentido más profundo, y por tanto, es la auténtica expresión de lo que uno siente hacia la vida en su conjunto.” Nada más claro para englobar la actitud estética de estos dos artistas en la presente muestra. Sentimiento y talento en perfecta comunión.

Ellos han intentado (y logrado) organizar su sentido de la realidad de la vida con sus obras, pues gran parte de ese sentido de la realidad (donde comienza la imagen) lo han combinado con destreza a partir de la técnica y el oficio (donde la imagen se completa) y culminaron felizmente su tentativa con el acierto de la capacidad de sugerencia de sus piezas (donde la imagen nos habla). Sobresale en este punto la eficaz solución cromática que tanto realce brinda al conjunto.

El símbolo del dormitorio atraviesa la historia humana. La precariedad de los aquí fotografiados no puede considerarse parte de una manía surgida en los noventa de fotografiar las ruinas de la ciudad. Advertido sobre esta diferencia cardinal. En muchas de esas fotos que colmaron libros, revistas y exposiciones se mostraba la decadencia de la ciudad y las gentes durante el denominado Período Especial, la mar de las veces sin una intencionalidad estética bien argumentada, era la precariedad y el deterioro directos, sin mediaciones intelectuales o visuales, una suerte de inventario de desgracias. Eran colecciones de paredes llagadas por el tiempo, calles destrozadas, automóviles convertidos en chatarra rodante, personas desnutridas, registros desaliñados y pedestres de lo más desafortunado de nuestra sociedad en la recta finisecular. Pero en muchas de esas tentativas faltó el discurso estético, la visión poética que sugiere meditar sobre tales resultantes sociales.

Una última evocación, estas imágenes sugieren también una cuestión ética, lo importante que pueden ser tales espacios -a pesar de su calamitoso estado- para las personas que los habitan. De seguro todos sus inquilinos desean poseer un espacio mejor, sentimiento natural de progreso en el ser humano, que se refuerza cuando se vive en la inopia o próximo a ella, el arte fotográfico no lo niega, solo lo expone con acritud, es decir, son estos espacios y no otros. Son una realidad, y eso ya legitima el sentido crítico de las imágenes. ¿Cuán importante puede ser un dormitorio a pesar de su modestia, humildad o precariedad? Es una pregunta abierta que nos sugieren las imágenes de Rottenberg. Por lo pronto, agradecemos la responsabilidad con que han trabajado las imágenes y la preparación de la exposición, mientras seguimos pensando en estos espacios, surtidores de historias simples, íntimas y grandes. Con sus fotos Rottenberg ha tocado las esencias del mito y lo sagrado.

Journey to maturity

By Dana Gillerman

The danger of photographing the margins is even greater when done from a stranger's external viewpoint. But in the series of self-portraits, Rottenberg turns himself too into a "strangers", a deviant. Here too there is a voyeuristic gaze, but this time it is turned on the photographer himself. In this case the deviance is not just in the bizarre he stages - naked on all fours in a pigsty, or as a naked referee in a boxing match between two naked women - but also, principally, in the presentation of his aging body. In each case, he presents his body in the fullness of its years, next to a woman. There is a feeling of powerlessness and impotence in these scenes, and a great fear of ruin - the destruction of the body and loss of virility. This series presents youth side by side with old age and bestiality. Rottenberg exposes himself and his body to the viewer's gaze, just as he exposes his subjects. In this sense, Rottenberg himself becomes the Other, the marginalized. He loses his place as a functioning man, and becomes invisible. Women are not threatened by his presence. They barely see him, and from his point of view there is nothing more threatening than this. Age is one of the most repressive and silencing things in western culture. An old man becomes transparent, invisible. In his research into old age, Prof. Haim Hazan writes about removing the old from public discourse, and turning them into ghosts hovering between life and its negative. "The otherness of old age beyond the cultural, not to say beyond the human," he writes. "It returns the human, so to speak, to his crude, pre-cultural existence, his natural, even bestial state." Thus one may understand Rottenberg's metaphorical use of animals, whether he dons a tiger costume or turns himself into a pig in a sty.

Cuba, with its austere bedrooms, women and fishermen, is not a western country. Old age is presented there as an inherent part of the daily lives of the women, the fishermen, the family, and perhaps this is precisely what augments Rottenberg's otherness, reflects his journey to maturity and aging, which has something of the beauty and ugliness, time and compassion, of all those images he chose to immortalize with his camera.

El camino a la madurez

por Dana Gillerman

El peligro de fotografiar lo marginal se vuelve mayor cuando se hace desde fuera; pero Rottenberg, a través de la serie “Autorretratos”, se auto margina. Otra vez curiosa, pero esta vez sobre sí mismo, a través de situaciones bizarras que pone en escena; por ejemplo, desnudo en cuatro patas desde un corral de puercos. Pero más que nada, declara a través de su desnudez que está envejeciendo. En sus fotos muestra sus años, se coloca al lado de mujeres, dando la sensación de impotencia en todos los sentidos y un enorme temor a su final, final de su cuerpo y de su virilidad. De la misma manera que muestra en las otras series a sus fotografiados, en esta Rottenberg nos descubre su propio cuerpo, para ser “otro de sus fotografiados”. Por momentos deja de ser el hombre que domina para exhibirse como invisible, su presencia no es una amenaza [[para las mujeres]] y, desde su punto de vista no hay amenaza no hay amenaza mayor para él. La vejez es una de las cuestiones más reprimidas y omitidas en el mundo occidental, un hombre viejo pasa a ser transparente, invisible. En su investigación sobre la vejez, el profesor Haim Jazan habla de la omisión del personaje del viejo del discurso público que lo convierte en fantasma: Devuelve al hombre a la sensación de un producto no elaborado anterior a la cultura, a la naturaleza y a su condición animal”. Puede que eso nos ayude en parte a entender en Rottenberg el uso metafórico de animales, ya sea vistiéndose como una pantera o como un puerco más entre los puercos.

Cuba, sus dormitorios humildes, sus mujeres y sus personajes, no pertenecen a un país occidental. La vejez encuentra allí una parte inherente a la vida cotidiana de las mujeres, de la familia; quizás eso hace más fuerte lo extraño de Rottenberg; muestra su camino a la madurez, donde hay belleza y fealdad en todas aquellas cosas que eligió eternizar con su cámara.

The History of Cuba as told by its beds

by Orlando Luis Pardo Lazo

Insomnia is a very persistent thing. But wakefulness can be even worse. Nietzsche asked to see people asleep to get a glimpse of their true nature. Photographers Carlos Otero and Enrique Rottenberg are satisfied with empty beds, beds alone, as landscapes of a country, without the protagonists of lost plans and ongoing nightmares. Cuba no longer a bucolic sheet but an indoor sheet with digital treatment. A democratically anti-demographic Cuba (Malthus more than Marx), where all listened but no one portrayed themselves.

We are talking about the latest exhibition at the Fototeca de Cuba, 307 Mercaderes Street, Plaza Vieja in Havana, Cuba: “Sleeping With...” that remained open to the public from November 4 for a whole month. The two creators visited more than 700 Cuban homes to ensemble their pile of mattresses. The number is awesome. And all opened their bedrooms for nothing, except maybe a small slice of aesthetic eternity. The click as a sort of aura of the Cuban artist, since both consider themselves as such, even if Rottenberg (filmmaker and narrator) is Israeli.

It does not seem such a bad idea to narrate the homeland from where the homeland rests horizontally, from where it lies less as a homeland and more as a possibility, from where Cubans are less biped and more potential corpses, from where we obey social discipline less and sexual desire more. From where we pee as babies and old men, existential extremes. It's as if we opened Pandora's bed. And then arises the intimate story of the nation, its remotest niches that don't fit any Gross Domestic Product or Social Development Index. It is the whispering triumph of the bed chamber lying on the thousand and one speeches on foot at the square.

The photos of “Sleeping with...” are hyperplastic. From anthropological documentalism one jumps, in part thanks to professional software, to an unrealism of almost gothic atmospheres in their Creole misery or bourgeois glamour turned to ruin. They don't offend. They don't get us involved. Light is lunar, neat pixel by pixel, saturating the framing until rendering flat, despite the open and blinding angles: the work of a miniaturist, a haiku made in Nikon. They sometimes remind us of those kitsch paintings sold in dollars at the artisans fairs located not far from the gallery. But a certain amazement saves them. A certain terror of abandoned objects. Certain pity of fellow countrymen rescues them at the last minute, even as unlikely images of a floating shipwreck with the fatum of perpetuity.

I would like to inhabit any of the beds showcased by Otero and Rottenberg. There is an illusion of life in that emptying of baroquism. There is ambience of eccentric stage, of atypical collage or Cubanese caricature, of under-surrealistic short circuit between a sewing machine and a laptop.

The presentation speech at the inauguration was performed by essayist Rafael Acosta de Arriba: “A trip to the inner self, to the inside of the nature of our national being”.

And, it is indeed the delicious diary of a trip from the capital to the provinces, from art-deco to the art of deconstruction. But in any case, what the Otero and Rottenberg trademark translates of Cuba, maybe unintentionally, is that ineffable and never inspired “over-nature” that a Cuban poet dreamt, from his chair or his bed maybe today inventoried in his home-museum located in 162, Trocadero St.

“Sleeping with...” or Awakening without... A contagious idea. What about photographing tables? Or garages? Or bathrooms? What about nibbling from the cake of what like a whole was always a cosmic chaos that never clotted? I should return several times to the Fototeca de Cuba. I suspect that among the aleph of objects that bounce in each photo it is possible to extract more than one diagnosis. And that polysemy is, of course, very political. And it is even more contagious.

Sleeping with...: the portrait of an absence

by Cristina Díaz

Sleeping with... the series of photos by artists Enrique Rottenberg and Carlos Otero tells a different story that contrasts with the incessant public spectacle with which the lives of Cubans tend to be perceived, immersed in music, clamour and unmotivated bustle.

We are introduced to people's most secret space, the one of dreams, through photos of the most private place of a home, the bedroom. These are photos to the intention of anonymous dreamers, the "unknown soldiers," as Enrique Rottenberg called them in his opening speech thanking the thousand people throughout the island who opened their doors to the widest of their hospitality.

The absence of inhabitants in the photographs fills the environments with subjective content, giving soul to objects that contain bits of the story of each character as well as their diffused national and personal identity. These portraits of absence call on our own ability to dream, summoning the spectator's consciousness and unconscious: from within the bedroom to the inside of us.

Enrique Rottenberg, award-winning Israeli filmmaker with seven feature films, also a writer and photographer, has been living in Cuba for more than 16 years. It is in Cuba where his passion for photography was born. Constantly moved by subjective and internal conflicts, by the dark side of the heart, always with a tone more comical-tragic than dramatic, more human than epic, he uses his camera to steal the soul, always questioning ethics and power in the exercise of art.

Carlos Otero is a Cuban photographer who arose from the deep sea as champion of several national and international underwater photography events, work that has been showcased in many places. His present work has an acute social involvement and an incisive sensitivity to his country's present and the people who live there.

Beds contain a cycle. It is usually where life is conceived and where it ends. In the interval, the bed is the permanent witness of our loves and disappointments, of nightmares and sleepless nights, of solitude and company, of our dreams. It is not an allegory, not a symbol, it is concretely that bed, that mirror, it is that red and those dogs on the wall.

The images express an emphatic silence, a petrification of time, a disturbing perpetuity. Faceless, voiceless, as in the great Cuban movie *Suite Habana*, *Sleeping with...* makes us see what is not in our every day tamed vision.

Enrique Rottenberg's relentless utopia

by Cristina Díaz Erofeeva

Utopia is not a happy term; it's a necessary principle. It can barely support itself, largely depending on judgments, tending to stand unequivocally on the side of idealization, and collapsing in any application, in which it does not turn into its own opponent. It becomes necessary to expose it to its original contradiction, which it was founded by Thomas More ("Of a republic's best state and of the new island Utopia, truly golden book, no less festive than helpful", 1515-1516): the nowhere of an illusion of a perfect society, so other inherent contradictions may appear within it. You can't speak of utopia in art without asking the question (hardly rises well) regarding the transformation potential of art itself: between the formal-symbolic invention and the ethical-political effectiveness.

There is a certain movement that never ceases to reveal itself in Enrique Rottenberg's work, the artist of the "disturbing strangeness", building its multiple layers, which go from the farcical to the edge of reality, from oniric shadows to the brutal light of the vigil, from finding a way out at any price to encountering the irreconcilable.

In Enrique Rottenberg's recent compositions, gathered by under the misleading word Utopia, there is explicit movement from the self to the masses, from a self-referential subject to the artificial masses: man-mass, woman-mass, people-mass... Social mechanisms unfold on large formats, articulated bodies, connections, forming machine-like devices which consensus engineering puts into motion. These are photo installations of social installations, which make one or the other of its constructive elements visible, all acting on us without us actually realizing it, alienating elements brought to evidence. From its scaffolding emerges a social imaginary for minorities, understood by Deleuze as those are not represented in the consensus model, but rather those marginalized from it, lost, all invisible under cloak of the proposal of how to be happy, how to get goods, how to be recognized, how to exercise our sexuality, of ambiguous political ideals and even of standardized beauty, the Utopias of the social institutions.

A single bedroom formed by many bedrooms which are actually the same bedroom, is the set which the artist staged for 19 women and a bed; each one of them is torn from the privacy of their body and of their being by the camera. How can you give them, or at least offer them, some freedom, during that moment of staged loneliness and abandonment from themselves, during that instant in which memories and dreams concur before going to sleep? How can they find in that bedroom –an intimate place – but reduced by the artist to a single common context for all of them, a unique sense to their existence, within the oppression of their daily life which is the prison of their desire; how can we save them now during this revealed uprooting?

When someone walks by *The Line*, they see bodies. Women's bodies lined up, arm to shoulder, disciplined, standing in line with a static, militant movement; you have to walk together with these women to recognize their faces and to discover their constant, incisive, almost persecutory gaze, in which you become the one being watched and questioned. Under those looks, the worn, imperfect, inopportune, bodies become real life experiences, symbols of suffering, struggle and inconclusive hopes, which are still present, and finally becoming a sign of resistance.

In an opposite tension, the men of *The Dance* appear in a dancing pose. *The Dance* is a cross section of a spiral made of circular space and time, with forced rhythm and steps, under a loop melody that repeats a song by Emir Kusturica – "Ovo Je Muski Svet" ("This is a man's world") - whose meaning is not understood by the men who dance it, but who holding on to each other keeping step as best they can: this is the spiral of repetition-revolution. Standing within it, gazing at each expression, at every gesture, makes the eye dance until you feel vertigo. At first, they're all repeated, they're all the same, they're all like one, until the differences start appearing, then emphasized, and the relationship is no longer with the whole group, but with each one; you must endure to overcome the stunning theatricality, and the amusing insinuation of the basket

full of underwear: welcome to the dance or resist the temptation. The temptation of reading in a newspaper about the death of 300,000 people in Syria over the last three years, just as a mere figure, without any feeling of distress that could cross all the way through the massiveness of these statistics, sinking your face in it, the life and death of each one. 300,000 feels like none.

Rottenberg's satire is not just a manner of relieving angst, but of facing the pain, a permanent opposition to the canons which exclude so many people. That is why his characters are the so-called ordinary people call, John Doe, as he says, or Jane Doe. Maybe that's why he turns to *The Crazy Years*, during which the carnival cheered up the fortunate ones. A bright red dance ensemble, smiling seductive women who do not conform to the cinema or magazine standards, who are not blond, nor thin, nor young, and behind their smiles they hide their shame. Obviously, it is not to them, to whom the glory and the right to happiness is awarded.

The sinister navel of the utopias is their deep core, their cause, and their outcome. The Spanish newspaper *El País* published (4/05/2015): The government of Colombia and the FARC have agreed on a Truth Commission. This is an Orwellian title. Rottenberg's *Big Egg* makes the gray world of 1984 become current: they love their Big Brother more than anything, men and women, fist to fist, defend their flag. But the artist plays a prank on them, he tells them –tells us (because they do not see him, they are us) - the sun of your flag, are your actual conditions of existence –a fried egg – although they make them believe (fear and worship) their big brother –their totem and master of the truth; the struggle of each of us, is to survive every day, and that is why we pay the exorbitant price of turning the oppressor into a sun and we give him our soul. Imposed ideals and imposed reality are two sides of the same flag, but the yearning for happiness shall never be reduced to a fried egg, and both are widely exploited by the dominating powers.

From this work of making visible, sensible and audible the behaviorism of mass being which we are used to, and of which we are insensibly part of, what is really surprising is the effect: Rottenberg's photo installations, far from reproducing the effacement of the individual, enhance the uniqueness of each One, making it leap from the panoramic shots. In place of de-subjectivizing the masses, an otherness is evoked. How to understand this secret? Works that conjure alienation produce a de-alienation effect (even ephemeral); they make the individual rebels himself from his anonymity. This is the principle of the immanent utopia of creation. Standing on the ominous side of transcendental utopias, they evoke the sensation of certain emancipation, by recognizing the humanity of the other. Because what else is this about, if not about the shame of being human. Yet however, pointing the finger towards the gray zone (by Primo Levy) of every co-existence system (and the systems for non-existence) and abandoning necessarily the hopes that sustains it, some dignity may be recovered.

Some of Rottenberg's images are screams, sometimes deaf and others strident, onomatopoeias, moans, silences. Indeed, it seems the desire to recreate metaphors is absent, they make themselves and are imposed at a later time, like the poetry of the prosaic ones. A piece that seems to distance itself from the discourse of mass installations, which speaks the language of the immediate sensation, but a silent image, almost dumb: its title is *The Wall*. A distant sound like an echo, transmitting by the textures of the algae with the colors of extinction, embedded in a wall –the prehistoric mural – under which two beings, the human couple, the origin of the conceited species, were buried; here no story is possible. But Rottenberg is a story maker, perhaps because the story is a necessity of life, unlike death. And it is also a destroyer of mirages. That's why, and despite everything, standing before this photograph we still have time to think about what rouses us (as well as what do not discourages us), and maybe of admitting, for once, that the dominion over the others and over nature (including "own nature") is only reached in delirium, and the great deliriums of humanity have led to its greatest disasters.

But it will never be too much to repeat with Deleuze: we must listen to the small deliriums, the minorities' muffled sighs and neglected convulsions, which as Deleuze says, not due to their numbers but due to their lack of mold: they are becoming. Rottenberg's works give rise to these majority minorities, they host them, and they open a space for their becoming. Becoming mass, becoming man, becoming woman, becoming animal...

The Centipede is a work that condenses Rottenberg's relentless utopia. Its visual impact expands sensations. But what is the centipede? An arthropod, the largest phylum in the animal kingdom, its body is articulated to its multiple legs, divided into moving parts and as social insects they're characterized by a gregarious behavior. There are 50 women of whom we can only see their hundred feet, allowing them to walk, subjugated under the golden mantle of the utopia of which they are not the authors, but rather the participants. This space creates a movement that unlike *The Dance* is not circular but infinite in another way: first, the obliquity of the installation allows us to perceive the long and always sequential movement with a single view; the Centipede's starting point and the destination of its journey is dark and unknown; but it's the viewer who moves closer towards the details of the photograph and backs away to be in contact again with the whole entity, and that repeated movement from the entire work to the part, and the from part to the whole entity, by the viewer, creates the centipede's territory and the possibility of de-territorialization (Deleuze) for all those who enter the installation.

The artist does not intend to change the world and doesn't offer a program to do it, he can't do it. But when names it utopia, his creative act also becomes a political act, not in anxious anticipation, but rather torn from the creation process which the work bears in itself. Deleuze says that it is not so much about utopia, as it is about a fantasy common both to the artist and to the people; and once again using his words, it is essential to say that these works by Rottenberg appeal to the missing people. They do not point to an ideal or towards a better future, but rather take the place of the missing people because they need it. To do it, Rottenberg has no other option than to go through the nightmare that is present in every dream, the dark side of social utopias, which lead to totalitarianism, religious fundamentalism, the consumption of consumer societies.

Finally, the artist surrenders, the reality overcomes any fiction, even the most anti-utopian. He recognizes this, and after doing so, produced a work in which the totalitarian utopia already defeated, useless and worn out as an old shoe, and thrown away, rises from the depths of the ocean, in its external features, a super-realist absurd. On the shores of the ocean, on barren cemented soil, the renovated drunks of an army of young women resurfaces, strong and willing, with turtle helmets (wisdom is always delayed and endangered), standing firmly during a troop review in front their commanders with a fish helmet (which does not speak because it already knows everything), with a crab helmet (the one who walks back), an octopus helmet (which has many arms that converge at its mouth and hyper-developed eyes). This, of course, is our own fantasy, which is always on the side of reality, trying to diminish the absurd, understanding the incomprehensible, reconciling with the impossible; and thus utopia, an absurd concept, but a needed principle, will only cease to so by creating another utopia.

Perhaps love is the most resistant to dialectics of this sort, and sums up the problem of any utopia much better: "A fish may love a bird, the problem is where will they live?" (Shalom Aleichem, *Fiddler on the Roof*).

La implacable utopía de Enrique Rottenberg

por Cristina Díaz Erofeeva

Utopía no es un término feliz; es un principio necesario. Difícilmente se sostiene, depende en mucho de juicios de valor, tiende a colocarse unívocamente del lado de la idealización, y se derrumba en cualquier aplicación, cuando no se vuelve en su contrario. Es necesario abrirlo a su contradicción original, con la que fue fundado por Tomás Moro (Sobre el mejor estado y la nueva isla Utopía, librito verdaderamente dorado, no menos festivo que provechoso, 1515-1516): el no lugar de la ilusión de una sociedad perfecta, para que tras ella puedan aparecer inherentes otras contradicciones. No se puede hablar de utopía en el arte sin que no se presente la pregunta (que no encuentra un planteo pertinente) por el potencial de transformación del arte: entre la invención formal-simbólica y la eficacia ético-política.

Hay un movimiento que no cesa de inscribirse en la obra de Enrique Rottenberg, construyendo sus múltiples capas, que va de la farsa al borde de lo real, de las sombras de lo onírico a la luz brutal de la vigilia, de encontrar la salida a cualquier precio hasta el encuentro con lo que no puede reconciliarse.

En las nuevas composiciones de Enrique Rottenberg reunidas por el artista de la “inquietante extrañeza” bajo la equívoca palabra Utopía, hay un movimiento explícito del yo a las masas, de un sujeto autorreferencial a la masa artificial: hombre-masa, mujer-masa, pueblo-masa... En grandes formatos se despliegan engranajes sociales, cuerpos articulados, conexiones, formando dispositivos maquínicos que una ingeniería del consenso pone en marcha. Son instalaciones fotográficas de instalaciones sociales, que hacen visible uno u otro de sus elementos constructivos, los que operan sobre nosotros sin que sepamos de ellos, elementos alienantes puestos en evidencia. De su andamiaje emerge un imaginario social para las minorías, entendidas con Deleuze como aquellas que no están representadas en los modelos del consenso, más bien al margen de ellos, perdidas, invisibles, pero mayoría en fin, bajo el manto de la propuesta de cómo ser feliz, cómo adquirir bienes, cómo ser reconocido, cómo ejercer la sexualidad, de ideales políticos ambiguos y hasta de belleza estandarizada, de las Utopías de la institución social.

Un único dormitorio compuesto de muchos dormitorios que finalmente se revela el mismo, es el set que arma el artista para 19 mujeres y una cama; cada una de ellas es arrancada por la cámara de la intimidad de su cuerpo y de su ser. Cómo darles a ellas, suponerles al menos, en ese momento de soledad escenificada y de abandono a sí mismas, instante en el que concurren los recuerdos y las ilusiones antes de dormir, una cierta libertad? Cómo pueden encontrar ellas en ese dormitorio - lugar íntimo - pero reducido por el artista a un único contexto, común para todas, un sentido singular para su existencia, dentro de la opresión de su cotidianidad que es la cárcel de su deseo; cómo socorrerlas ahora en ese desarraigo revelado.

Cuando alguien recorre La fila, ve cuerpos. Cuerpos de mujeres alineados brazo con hombro, disciplinados, dispuestos en la línea de un movimiento estático, militante; es preciso caminar con esas mujeres para reconocer los rostros y descubrir en ellos una mirada constante, incisiva, casi persecutoria, donde uno es quien deviene mirado e interpelado. Bajo esas miradas los cuerpos desgastados, imperfectos, inoportunos, devienen experiencia de vida, marca de sufrimiento, de lucha y de anhelos inconclusos, aún presentes, y finalmente, signo de resistencia.

En tensión opuesta, los hombres de La Danza, figuran en pose de baile. La danza es el corte de una espiral hecha de espacio y tiempo circular, de ritmo y paso obligado, de melodía en loup que repite una canción de Emir Kusturika - “Ovo Je Muski Svet” (“Este es un mundo de hombres”) - cuyo sentido los hombres que danzan no comprenden, pero enlazados uno a otro mantienen su paso como pueden: es la espiral de la repetición-revolución. Permanecer dentro de ella recorriendo cada expresión, cada gesto, hace danzar la mirada hasta producir el vértigo. En un primer momento, todos se repiten, son los mismos, son uno solo, hasta que la diferencia aparece, se acentúa y la relación ya no es con el todo sino con cada uno; es preciso permanecer para superar el aturdimiento de la teatralidad y aún la insinuación simpática de la cesta de calzoncillos: bienvenido a la danza ó resiste a la tentación. A la tentación de leer en un periódico la muerte de 300 000 personas en Siria en los últimos 3 años como una cifra, sin que ningún sentimiento de angustia pueda atravesar la masividad de la estadística, hundiéndose en ella el rostro, la vida y la muerte de cada uno. Se siente 300 000 como ninguno.

La sátira de Rottenberg no es un mero modo de aliviar la angustia, sino de enfrentar el dolor, una permanente oposición a los cánones que dejan fuera a tantas personas, dejándoles dos maneras de incluirse, o como manipulados o como marginados. Es por eso que sus personajes son la llamada gente común, John Doe, como él mismo dice, o Jane Doe. Tal vez por eso recurre a Los Años Locos, en los que el carnaval animaba a los afortunados. Un cuerpo de baile de rojo fuerte, de mujeres sonrientes y seductoras, que no cumplen con el estándar del cine y las revistas, ni son rubias, ni delgadas, ni jóvenes, y tras su sonrisa se esconde la pena. Obviamente, no es a ellas a las que se les conceden las glorias y el derecho a la felicidad.

El ombligo siniestro de las utopías, es su núcleo profundo, su causa y su desenlace. El periódico español El País publica (4.05.2015): el gobierno de Colombia y las FARC han pactado una Comisión de la Verdad. Este es un título orwelliano. El Big Egg de Rottenberg hace actual el mundo gris de 1984: ellos aman al Big Brother por encima de todo, ellos y ellas, puño con puño, defienden su bandera. Pero el artista les juega una pasada, les dice - a nosotros (pues ellos no lo ven, ellos somos nosotros) - el sol de vuestra bandera, son sus condiciones reales de existencia - el huevo frito - aunque les hagan creer (temer y adorar) al big brother - su tótem y amo de la verdad; la lucha de cada uno de nosotros, es por sobrevivir cada día y es por ello que pagamos el altísimo precio de convertir en sol al opresor y de entregarle el alma. Los ideales impuestos y la realidad impuesta son dos caras de la misma bandera, pero el anhelo de felicidad no se reducirá jamás al huevo frito, y ambos son explotados ampliamente por los poderes dominantes.

De este trabajo de hacer visible, sensible, audible un sujeto-masa al que habituados y parte de él, somos insensibles, lo que sorprende es el efecto: las instalaciones fotográficas de Rottenberg, lejos de reproducir el borramiento del individuo, muestra la singularidad de cada uno, desde los planos panorámicos, la hacen saltar. En el lugar de la desobjetivización de las masas, una otredad es evocada. ¿Cómo entender el secreto? Obras que conjuran la alienación, producen un efecto (así sea efímero) de des-alienación; hacen que el sujeto se rebele por un segundo de su anonimato. He aquí el principio de la utopía inmanente de la creación. Poniéndose del lado ominoso de las utopías trascendentales, desahogan la sensación de una cierta emancipación, a través del reconocimiento de la humanidad del otro. Porque de qué otra cosa puede tratarse aquí sino de la vergüenza de ser humano. Y sin embargo, apuntando con el dedo a la zona gris (de Primo Levy) de todo sistema de convivencia (y sin-vivencia) y necesariamente abandonando las esperanzas que lo sostienen, alguna dignidad se recupera.

Hay imágenes en Rottenberg que son gritos, a veces sordos y otras, estridentes, onomatopeyas, gemidos, silencios. De hecho, parece ausente la voluntad de recrear metáforas, ellas se hacen solas y se imponen en un tiempo posterior, como la poesía de los prosaicos. Una pieza que parece alejarse de la discursividad de las instalaciones de masa, habla el lenguaje de la sensación inmediata, no tramitada, una imagen silenciosa, casi muda: su título es la Pared. Un sonido lejano como un eco, transmiten las texturas de las algas del color de la extinción, incrustadas en un muro - mural de la prehistoria - en el que dos seres, la pareja humana, origen de la especie engreída, quedaron sepultados; no hay historia posible. Pero Rottenberg es un fabricante de historia, quizás porque la historia es necesidad de la vida, a diferencia de la muerte. Y también es un destructor de espejismos. Por eso, y a pesar de todo, todavía estamos a tiempo ante esta fotografía de pensar en lo que nos anima (tanto como en lo que nos desanima), de admitir tal vez, o de una vez, que el dominio sobre los otros y sobre la naturaleza misma (comprendida "la naturaleza propia") sólo se alcanza en el delirio, y los grandes delirios de la humanidad han provocado sus grandes desastres.

Pero nunca será demasiado repetir con Deleuze: hay que escuchar los delirios pequeños, los ahogados suspiros y las desatendidas convulsiones de las minorías, que como Deleuze dice no lo son en número sino en su falta de molde, son devenir. Las obras de Rottenberg dan lugar a esas minorías mayoritarias, las alojan, abren un espacio a su devenir. Devenir masa, devenir hombre, devenir mujer, devenir animal...

El Ciempiés es una obra que condensa la implacable utopía de Rottenberg. El impacto visual expande sensaciones. Pero qué es el Ciempiés? Un artrópodo, el filo más numeroso del reino animal, su cuerpo articulado a sus múltiples patas, está dividido en piezas que se mueven y, en tanto insectos sociales, se caracterizan por una conducta gregaria. Son 50 mujeres de las que sólo podemos ver sus cien pies, los que les permiten andar, subyugadas, bajo el manto dorado de la utopía de la cual ellas no son las autoras, pero sí partícipes. El espacio crea un movimiento que a diferencia de la Danza no es circular pero infinito en otro sentido: primero, la oblicuidad de la instalación permite percibir el desplazamiento siempre seriado desde una única vista; el punto de partida del ciempiés y el destino de su caminar es oscuro y desconocido; pero es el espectador quien se desplaza acercándose

a los detalles de la fotografía y alejándose para retomar el contacto con el todo, y ese desplazamiento repetido del todo a la parte y de la parte al todo realizado por el espectador, crea el territorio del ciempiés y la posibilidad de desterritorialización (Deleuze) para el que entra en la instalación.

El artista no se propone transformar el mundo ni ofrece un programa para hacerlo, no lo puede hacer. Pero cuando nombra la utopía, su acto creativo es también un acto político, no en la anticipación ansiosa, sino desgarrado del proceso de creación que la obra lleva en sí misma. Deleuze dice que no se trata tanto de utopía como de una fabulación común al artista y al pueblo; y tomándole una vez más las palabras, es imprescindible decir que estas obras de Rottenberg invocan al pueblo que falta. No apuntan a un ideal ni a un futuro mejor, sino que se colocan en el lugar del pueblo que falta porque necesitan de él. Para hacerlo, no tiene de otra que atravesar por sí mismo la pesadilla que se encuentra en todo sueño, el lado siniestro de las utopías sociales, las que dan lugar a los totalitarismos, los fundamentalismos religiosos, las sociedades de consumo del consumo.

Finalmente, el artista dice rendirse, la realidad supera cualquier ficción, aún la más anti-utópica. Lo reconoce, y tras hacerlo, produce una obra en la que la utopía totalitaria ya vencida, inútil, desgastada como un zapato viejo, y tirada, resurge de las profundidades del mar, en su aspecto extremo, un absurdo superrealista. En las orillas del océano, sobre un árido suelo cementado, resurgen renovadas las filas de un ejército de jóvenes mujeres, firmes y dispuestas, con cascos tortugas (la sabiduría siempre retardada y en extinción), en pleno pase de revista frente a sus comandantes con casco pez (el que no habla porque ya lo sabe todo), casco cangrejo (el que camina para atrás), casco pulpo (el que tiene muchos brazos que convergen en la boca y ojos híper- desarrollados). Esta, por supuesto, es nuestra propia fantasía, que siempre está del lado de la realidad, pues trata de reducir el absurdo, entender lo inentendible, reconciliarse con el imposible; así la utopía, concepto absurdo, pero principio necesario, sólo dejará de serlo creando otra utopía.

Quizás el amor es el que más resiste a las dialécticas de esta índole y resume mucho mejor el problema de cualquier utopía: "Un pez puede amar un ave, el problema es dónde van a vivir" (Shalom Aleijem, El Violinista en el tejado).

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