

Press release

Oscar Muñoz

18.02.-08.04.2023

Opening: Saturday, 18 February, 11 am - 2 pm

carlier | gebauer is pleased to announce Oscar Muñoz's first solo exhibition in the Madrid gallery. The exhibition will include two major works by the artist, one of the most significant artists working in Latin America today.

*"My work focuses on the signs of this immemorial setting - the impossibility of definitively retaining and fixing past events- and strives as well to provoke memory by using a similar device, that is, by focusing on impermanence and the intangible. Invariably employing the photographic act and its chemical nature as both reference and metaphor, and entering especially on the genre of portraiture"**

Since the 1990s, Muñoz has developed a reputation for his use of ephemeral materials to explore elusive phenomena such as history, memory, loss, and time. His hybrid works combine photographic processes with drawing, painting, printmaking, installation, video, and sculpture in an attitude of alchemical experimentation. Muñoz's work stages scenarios in which we witness the accumulation, dissolution, deterioration, or disintegration of the image. Manipulating evanescent elements like water, dust, heat, sun, and time, he has poetically reflected upon the fleeting nature of the human condition through unconventional formats such as mirrored portraits activated by breath or a vanishing self-portrait made with water on hot cement.

The video installation *El Coleccionista (The Collector)*, a long, slender shelf spans the wall of a darkened room bearing sheets of blank white paper in various sizes. A spectral, practically transparent man slowly navigates the length of the wall, placing pictures on the shelf or otherwise moving, removing, or rearranging them. A collection of faces appears and disappears in these images: celebrities, politicians, art historical figures, and anonymous individuals. As an accumulation of intersubjective experiences—of seeing and being seen—this wide range of photographic material melds together as a fluctuating stream of memory, ranging from snapshots and newspaper photographs to studio portraits and mugshots.

The inherent instability of the image and its relationship to the processes of memory, particularly as it relates to history and political events in the artist's native Colombia is equally present in the work *Domestic*. The installation in white marble representing the missing portraits of a family reflects on the memorializing role of photography.

Oscar Muñoz (b.1951, Popayán) lives and works in Cali, Colombia where he founded the independent non-profit space Lugar a Dudas. He has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions internationally at venues such as MoMA, New York; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Fondation Cartier, Paris; SFMoMA, San Francisco; Jeu de Paume; Paris, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; and The Museo Tamayo, Mexico City. Among other biennials, his work has been featured in the 51st and 52nd editions of the Venice Biennale. His most recent solo exhibition travels from Phoenix Museum of Art, Phoenix (2021) to Blanton Museum of Art, Austin (2022).

Muñoz's works are in important public and private collections including the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, USA; the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA; the Daros Collection, Zurich, Switzerland; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, USA; the Museo del Barrio, New York, USA; The Hirshhorn Museum, Washington D.C, USA; the Museum of the Americas, New York, USA; the Fundación la Caixa, Barcelona, Spain; the Tate Modern, London, UK; MAMBO,

Bogotá; Daros Collection, Rio de Janeiro; UBS Collection; Colección Banco de la República de Colombia; FRAC Picardie; Colorado Art Museum; MEIAC, Badajoz, Spain; LACMA, Los Angeles, USA; Colección Jumex, Mexico City, Mexico; JP Morgan Collection; MALBA, Buenos Aires, Argentina; MOMA San Francisco, USA; and Kadist Foundation, France.

* Oscar Muñoz, conference, “Fotografía Global Ahora”, at Tate Modern, London, November 2006.