

PRESS RELEASE

HERE/NOW: Current Visions from Colombia

8 Mar – 30 Jun 2019

Locations: Framer Framed and Beautiful Distress House

Preview: 7 March, 15:00h at Beautiful Distress House

Opening: 7 March, 17:00h at Framer Framed

CURATOR: Carolina Ponce de León

ARTISTS:

Framer Framed: María José Arjona, Milena Bonilla, Clemencia Echeverri, Laura Huertas Millán, Guillermo Moncayo, Oscar Muñoz, Luis Roldán, Ana María Rueda, Carlos Villalón

Beautiful Distress House: Andrea Acosta, Fabio Cuttica, La Decanatura, Wilson Díaz, Nadia Granados, Nadège Mazars, Diego Piñeros García, Yorely Valero

Both locations: Más Arte Más Acción*, Stephen Ferry, Miguel Ángel Rojas

HERE/NOW: Current Visions from Colombia features twenty artists presenting contemporary art and photojournalism created in the context of Colombia. The exhibition explores these artists' responses to the shifting cultural, social and political landscapes of a country scarred by a 60-year long history of armed struggle. *HERE/NOW* is presented partly at Framer Framed, with a focus on contemporary works, and partly at Beautiful Distress House, where photojournalism plays a more significant role.

The exhibition brings together both established and upcoming artists, revealing how artistic perceptions on the country's history of political violence have shifted between generations. The artworks on view at Framer Framed can be characterised by the use of conceptual and metaphorical languages to speak of the human cost of the Colombian conflict. These are works that tend to be formally subtle, austere, imbued with a sense of mourning. A highlight is the installation *Narcisos* by Oscar Muñoz, that uses ephemeral materials to relate to memory, loss, and the precarious nature of human life. Muñoz, a recipient of the Prince Claus Award in 2013,

is one of the most significant contemporary visual artists in his country, and his work has gained solid international recognition in recent years.

In contrast, the works presented at Beautiful Distress House tend to exhibit perspectives that are more critical and cynical in tone and in which humour and irony are meaningful tactics. These works are less focused on the traumatic effects of political violence and more on the role of the media in defining the symbolic order that represents the war. The disparities in approaches and languages that rise between the two parts of the exhibition evoke the ungraspable nature of Colombian reality.

The exhibition also introduces the power of documentary photography, grounding the viewing experience with compelling images of the armed struggle. For this component of the exhibition, Ponce de León collaborated with non-fiction photographer Stephen Ferry. On view is Ferry's visual anthology *Violentology*, as well as works by other journalists who captured the Colombian conflict and the aftermath of the peace agreement settled between the Colombian government and the FARC in December 2016. These photographs are not meant to present a complete picture; rather, they form specific visual testaments of that experience.

Transcending the walls of the two exhibition spaces, the exhibition features an outside installation at NDSM wharf, by cultural foundation Más Arte Más Acción. The installation, *Re:Bandera*, consists of 12 selected flags designed by Colombian artists at a critical time when the country was at the eve of a new era of peace. The flags, bright and colourful when they were originally installed in Bogotá in 2016, are now tattered and torn. They reflect the high contrasts the country has been through in its struggle to defy political violence and gain peace.

HERE/NOW speaks of a time and place faced with the paradoxes of social conflict. By mixing the metaphorical languages of art with the more direct stance of documentary photography, the exhibition seeks to bring nuances and complexity to the understanding of the experience of life and art in the context of social conflict. The different visions featured in *HERE/NOW* stress the potential of visual culture in Colombia as a form of resistance and questioning, and affirm the crucial role it plays in building a memory of the present.

Curator

Carolina Ponce de León is an independent curator and art critic. She has served as the Visual Arts Advisor at the Ministry of Culture in Colombia between 2015 and 2016 and was appointed by the Ministry of Culture as the Visual Arts Advisor for the Year Colombia-France 2017. She was Director/ Curator of Visual Arts at the Luis Ángel Arango Library (1984-1994). She has also been curator of the Museo del Barrio in New York.

As an art critic, Ponce de León has published weekly columns in the main national newspapers such as *El Tiempo* and *El Espectador*. Her publications also include books, essays, articles and reviews. She has been an adjunct professor in the graduate programs of visual criticism and curatorial studies at the California College of the Arts in San Francisco. Carolina Ponce de León lives and works in Bogotá, Colombia.

HERE/NOW Symposium at Stedelijk Museum Sunday 10 March 2019, 11.00 -16:00, Teijin Auditorium

On the occasion of the *HERE/NOW* exhibition, a symposium will take place at the Stedelijk Museum, where the reactions of artists on the current social and political climate in Colombia will be a central topic. For the full programme, see Stedelijk Museum website.

Dates and locations:

Framer Framed

8 March – 30 June 2019

Opening 7 March, 17:00 hrs.

Beautiful Distress House (Ms. van Riemsdijkweg 41a, 1033 RC Amsterdam)

8 March – 3 April 2019

More info:

here-now.nl

framerframed.nl

* Artists participating in the *Re:Bandera* project of Mas Arte Mas Acción: Fernando Arias, Iván Cardona, Antonio Caro, Chócolo, Wilson Díaz, Nadia Granados, Ana María Millán, Edinson Quiñones, Miguel Ángel Rojas, Santiago Rueda, Saga Uno and Jaime Tarazona.

HERE/NOW is a collaboration between What Art Can Do Foundation /Simone Swildens and Framer Framed, curated by Carolina Ponce de León. The symposium has been organised in cooperation with the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. On the occasion of the exhibition there will be a small publication: HERE/ NOW: Current Visions from Colombia. Apart from the exhibition, an extensive public program will take place at Framer Framed and Beautiful Distress House. More information to follow.

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