



GRIMMUSEUM

9th NOVEMBER—14th DECEMBER 2013

UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHERS by ANDRÉS GALEANO

Opening 9th November 2013 19-23h

Performance *Indexical* by Andrés Galeano 9th November 20h

Performance *Iperf 1.0.3* by Andrés Galeano 16th November 20h (5 euro entrance)

Grimmuseum is pleased to present **Unknown Photographers**, the first Andrés Galeano's solo exhibition in Berlin. The show encompasses the results of a two-years research around the language of photography and the aesthetic reactivation of personal discarded pictures deriving from family albums and amateur photographers. On display are 28 works from the series **Unknown Photographers** - which consist of more than hundred pieces - together with a selection of photographs from the personal collection of the artist. The video-documentation of the performances **Indexical** and subsequently **I.Perf 1.0.3** will be projected throughout the exhibition.

Galeano has build up an extensive collection of found photographs, which have been neglected in Berlin closets and basements: a large amount of available personal pictures freezing a vast range of joyful and astonishing moments in the daily life as well as in important circumstances. Following an iconographic method, Galeano has arranged the photographs into categories paying special attention to the iteration of gestures, poses and exposure mistakes.

This way of proceeding is not aiming at a universal definition or a formula of lineage trough amateurish and personal photographs, since the collection serves as an organizing system and not as the display logic. The superimposition of the single pictures follows namely a more open approach, which varies according to photographs form and content. In this sense the integrity of the picture is formally respected, although it undergoes a partial covering resulting in a shift both on the aesthetic and conceptual field.

A strategy that – with some differences – leans on the German iconographic, philosophic and artistic 'traditional' interest for the photographic reproductions, with Warburg and Benjamin as forefathers for a descent of scholars and artists - often sort of collectors – who, through the lens of Barthes, have deployed and inflected this approach with manifold results. Peter Piller, Hans-Peter Feldmann, Joachim Schmid and the English John Stezacker are some of the artists/collectors who have been deeply investigating in this direction. With **Unknown Photographers** and the performances **Indexical** and **I.Perf 1.0.3** Galeano relies on these experiences but diverges on some peculiar aspects.

If collecting reflects the need for control in order to investigate the material, the contact and coupling of the pictures follows a more impulsive process, concealing some of the topics, which captivate Galeano's interest also through previous projects and through other means of expression, primarily performance: the failure of the photograph as the impossibility to catch something out of sight, indicating as the failure of indexing, and the flop of documenting performance are some of the main philosophic questions inspected, flanking a personal longing for the height and all its implications. Most frequently browsing his collection or his portfolio you can find flight, birds, airplanes, rainbows, mountains, and dozen of other gestures and poses.

This predilection has eventually brought Galeano to accumulate photographs in which a diagonal or vertical matrix is constantly present, and seems to mirror a soar instinct which often involves body, view and thought of everyone experiencing an important →



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→ moment in its life. A nearly impossible take-off which **Unknown Photographers** translate in moment of 'heaven on earth', snapshots and photographs where the skies seize power on the sight.

Galeano uses photographs as objects with a substance, but not as a sculpture in the strict meaning, neither as a collage-maker. Though his combination shapes poetic besides surrealistic compositions or fluent as well as clashing movements, the photographs remain physically isolated giving the idea of a provisional and accidental occurrence.

Joachim Schmid - epitomizing his approach to photographic reproductions - stated in 1989: "No new photographs until the old ones have been used up!" Recycling old family album photographs Galeano seems to place himself on this path. Nevertheless he is not using up the picture, his recycling brings not to a depletion of the resource. His use of the photographs is physically revocable and it sound more as a hint to the 'undo' of an image editing program. After all we are not developing family album photographs anymore, just touching and re-touching them on a display.

Text by Mario Margani

Andrés Galeano was born in Spain in 1980. He holds a Philosophy degree at the University of Barcelona, a Photography diploma at the Freie Fotoschule Stuttgart and a Sculpture/Free Art degree at the Kunsthochschule Weißensee Berlin. He works with drawing, photography, video and performance and has realized exhibitions all over Europe and Canada. He lives in Berlin and has been curating the performance art programme **Extension Series** at Grimmuseum, **¡POESÍACCIÓN!** at Instituto Cervantes and co-organizing the **Month of Performance Art Berlin**.



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Indexical is almost a minimal performance thought to be repeated with variations in different contexts, while collecting the pictures that are documenting it on the way.

Afterwards these photographs will generate a documentation of documentations which questions itself.

This performance stems from my collection of second hand family pictures. Among the various elements that stimulate my collector's enthusiasm in these pictures, I would stress the ones in which a person points at something with his or her finger. In this gesture there are several iconographic echoes, which took me to be willing to explore it in a performance that would dialogue with the photographic medium. Therefore, **Indexical** investigates the forefinger (or index finger) and the inherent indexicality of photography and performance, taking as a starting point one of the most apparently naïve manifestations of photography: the snapshots destined to photo album.

Indexical refers to a determinate context in which a certain enunciate or gesture achieves a specific meaning.

Therefore expressions such as 'I', 'you', 'here', 'there', 'now', 'this', are considered indexicals for antonomasia. Indexicality is one of the essential property of a picture or a performance; in other words, its intrinsic semantic dependency in a given situation and in a given context. As Roland Barthes states: "...every photograph is an extension of the gesture of signalling with your finger and this pure deictic language is impossible to avoid. Photography says: this, this is, it is like that, like this, and nothing else..." Something similar could be said about a performance: it happens here and how, this and that happens, it addresses an actual 'you'.

Drawing a hermeneutical loop, **Indexical** comes from photography and go back to it; becoming bidimensional surface, captured instant, fragment, abstraction, and, using my previous words, documentation of documentations. As photographic source it faces fingers that are often point out of the framing, denoting a certain impossibility to know what was pointed at, inside and through the picture. This loss of a referent highlights once again the conflictive relation between performance and photography, the immense contrast between being image, and being in a real situation, and the vastness of what it is outside the photographic frame.

This performance puts its index finger on the sore spot of photography.

Text by Andrés Galeano