

HERESIES



PEDRO MEYER



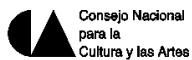
Heresies

Pedro Meyer



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For my sons
Julio and Pablo

For Nadia
Great accomplice in my life



Uncertain Destiny, 2006.
Pingyao, China.
Original digital file.

Presentation

Christian Caujolle

Where are we? Where are we of photography, image? In life, the relationship in the world, representation of the world of reality, the manufacture of reality while we are in the process of perception? And if all that was illusion?

As he takes stock, a jubilant - and opening more areas of freedom - on a half-century creation, Pedro Meyer requires us to ask these questions, finally, are philosophical and affect the essentials.

Scanner and make accessible the three hundred thousand images he made without any selections may appear as a provocation. It is, rather, a form of wisdom, a realistic compared to a practice. Propose to other selected on the basis of criteria thematic enhance its colours in India, his photos of family or his commitment to black and white with the Sandinista revolution reveals a form of humility struggling with the esteem that has itself.

It's strange, or at least disturbing one of the most brilliant representatives of documentary photography in Latin America is also the one who was appropriate, before everyone, the historical changes of the image using digital technology to create disturbing images, rehabilitating photomontage, using technology to continue to speak, which is certainly the key to a protean work and always curious.

Me comes to mind a rare moment in his studio Coyoacan, while printers accounted for beautiful prints digital and we were talking amicably that we were able or unable to see: Pedro Meyer has drawn on the shelves of its library journals, French nineteenth century, with original prints glued and he commented with passion. Here in this very moment, the questioning of the image and the place of photography took a physical dimension, Unique. Clash of time.

Save, describe, to show, show, it was about a young Mexican confronting the world to decipher and bring it into shape when he sought to understand it. Before everyone else he perceived intuitively first, so much more aware then, both the limits of photography and changes in which new technological advances the vouaient. And he asked, before anyone else this issue that we now seems obvious: is what photography is not primarily an image, is what we are not the victims - willing and enthusiastic -- Credulity to the representation.

True, false, testimony and documentation, illusion and reality, fiction and truth, point of view and dream, all these elements that underlie our ability to think images of the world are implemented in the proposals by Pedro Meyer.



This development, acts in practice with exhibitions and this book comes at a time when the perception of the images became more complex than ever. Indeed, never as many images have been made at the same time, and never have been erased so quickly after the shooting. Never has the world has also radically reduced its imagery, never questioning the nature, value, the issue of representation has been an equally important issue, an economic viewpoint, but also in terms value, values, aesthetics, ethics.

In revisiting a lifetime of practice images, by refusing to develop itself and offering everyone the opportunity to make its choice and build the reading of his vision, Pedro Meyer, who was the first to take into account the digital revolution and install, in fact, the difference between photography and image, opens once again a free space. That gaze, that of interpretation, that of discovery. He who has reinvented the photomontage, lout who testified struggles as well as the intimate tells us the basics: Open your eyes!

Summer 2008





Black. Sheep. Wizard.

Benjamin Mayer Foulkes

More than a retrospective, *Heresies* offers a prospective vision. Its horizons are not in the past, but rather the future. Nor is this a simple exhibition; it is a device: a heterogeneous set of discourses, installations, features, and material and symbolic procedures that go far beyond the exhibition of a corpus. *Heresies* pits us face to face with all that its craftsman has seen throughout his life, reshuffling it, and summoning us to observe it ever again, anew. For his part, Pedro Meyer is not just another photographer and artist among others; he is an entrepreneur, a polemicist, and an originator whose diverse facets invigorate, even more than they contradict, one another. How might we approach this creator and his oeuvre without overlooking his breadth and complexity?

After accepting Pedro's kind invitation to write about *Heresies*, I spoke with him at his home in Coyoacán during long afternoons in July, August, and September 2007. Only on rare occasions has an artist undertaken with such rigor a revision of his professional and personal pathways. From the beginning, I was struck by the realization that Pedro sought in me the witness, no less than the writer. It became clear to me that the tone of his words responded to the fact that he himself regarded this momentous project as a testament to his long personal and creative voyage (though this has not prevented him from involving himself in new undertakings even before completing *Heresies*, such as the Pedro Meyer Foundation and the remarkable exhibition comprising the work of forty-five Mexican photographers that he and Francisco Mata Rosas recently took to China). As our conversation evolved, it became increasingly obvious that such a testament was no simple compendium of his career, for whilst it evidences the principles that have governed it, *Heresies* renews and redeploys them with an intensity and with implications the consequences of which we can hardly foresee today. How might we immerse ourselves in this infinite universe, still in continuous expansion?

"I have always been an outsider"

Pedro Meyer was born in Madrid in 1935. His parents, Liesel Richheimer and Ernest Meyer, had fled from Germany to Spain in 1933, after Hitler's rise to power. His father had always felt an outsider in his native land, and was already working as a sales representative in the Iberian Peninsula and the Maghreb. In Spain those were complicated years for German-Jewish exiles: the Falangists had no regard for the Jews, and the Republicans had no regard for the Germans. One day, the consulate of

the Reich decided to "repatriate" the Meyers, who were sent back by ship and railroad via Italy. Already on board an armored train, crossing Austria en route to a concentration camp, some Red Cross representatives urged them to get off at Innsbruck. Since their passports had already been taken from them, Pedro's mother and aunt flirted with a Gestapo official and bribed him with two gold coins. Once off the train, they proceeded to make their way on foot to Belgium, carrying Pedro in a market basket.

They finally arrived in Brussels. His father obtained a loan and set sail for Mexico, where he began to import goods from Belgium. In the meantime, Pedro and his mother had to stay behind, subject to permits that had to be renewed every week, conditioned by the commercial deals closed in America by Mr. Meyer. After an entire year, at long last, Ernest was able to have his wife and son cross the Atlantic to join him.

In Mexico City, the milieu of German-Jewish exiles was a special one. A good part of the intelligentsia of Central Europe converged here, and the writers, artists, and politicians gravitated to the Meyer home. Every evening there were gatherings, rooms filled with cigarette smoke, and the presence of luminaries like the militant Czech journalist, Egon Erwin Kisch, the first Communist representative of Germany, Johannes Schroeter, and the novelist, Anna Seghers. Pedro's birthday parties were livened up by such personalities.

Ernest supported his intellectual friends, whose livelihoods were precarious. Always a pragmatist, he abstained from discussing his own political convictions. However, after the Nazi defeat, he tried to dissuade his comrades from returning to Europe; however, many of them went back to become part of the new political life, both in East Germany and Czechoslovakia, where several met their deaths as a result of the plots laid against the returning exiles.

During the war, German U-boats began to sink ships carrying Belgian merchandise; so Ernest started to export Mexican goods to Central and South America. When peace was restored, interest in Mexican goods disappeared; so the seasoned businessman ventured to Japan, where he established the Mexican Export Company to sell motorcycles, sewing machines, and condoms throughout Central America. As Pedro would remark many years later: "The photos that my father brought back from his business trips made me picture him as a sort of Marco Polo; they were images of faraway lands full of promise, dreams and fantasy, absolutely marvelous things." His father did not speak any Japanese, and when he remained at home, he attended to his business via telegrams in code. Eventually, the Mexican Export Company was displaced by Asian enterprises. To make a living, although he had never worked in industry, Ernest founded a plastics factory in Mexico.

On a certain occasion, traveling from Tokyo to Los Angeles via Honolulu, Pedro's father disappeared for an entire week. He had been arrested by the FBI as an alleged spy; after all, he had "Communist" friends. Although the situation was cleared up and

he was allowed to return to Mexico, the episode left a lasting impression on Pedro: the United States could be as totalitarian as any other country.

As for his family life, Pedro underscores: "My father was a formidable man." He notes his remarkable dedication to his work, his imagination, his refusal to complain in adversity, and his capacity to take on the unknown despite the fact he only studied up to middle school. "He was tenacious, loyal, and warm. He was also extremely shy." As for his mother, he recalls her sense of humor, her intelligence, and her ability to feel at ease in life. "She was attractive and very confident. Yet for some time she neglected to convey how much my papa loved me": the frequent absences of Mr. Meyer were taken by his son as a sign of disaffection, and Liesel was unable to transmit to Pedro how much his father loved him and how much effort was needed to make a living . . .

Regarding himself, Pedro says he has always felt an outsider. When he attended a Marist Catholic school, he was only one of five Jewish children among seven-hundred pupils. Required to attend catechism, he took along his own readings: the first book he chose, *The Three Musketeers*, was prohibited. Later, he was sent to a military academy in the United States, where he refused to march carrying a rifle (it seemed "utterly stupid" to him); while all of his fellow cadets graduated as officials, he graduated as a private. When he was thirteen or fourteen years old, Gerhard Herzog, a dear friend of his father's, gave Pedro a camera with which he produced his first contact strips; when at thirty-eight he announced that he had decided to dedicate himself professionally to photography, his father objected and suffered a severe attack of vertigo; he wished for his son to work on something more "serious" that would guarantee a proper standard of living for his family—yet it was precisely Gerhard who persuaded his old friend that prospects were not so gloomy after all. Pedro became a Mexican citizen before turning ten, yet here he has always been treated as a foreigner . . .

"And why photography?"

Pedro's path to become a professional photographer was not a direct one either.

He left his early studies in Engineering to receive a degree in Business Administration. He then began a graduate program in Architecture, which he also left unfinished in order to obtain instead a second degree in Business Administration. He never studied photography formally. To earn a living, he had set up a lamp business that grew to employ five hundred workers; when he told his partners that he would quit to become a photographer, they did not believe him and did not support him either. Then a serious accident occurred; the factory burned down and the blaze killed the production manager. Pedro did not want to leave his employees jobless, so he continued to work for another couple of years to rebuild the business. It was 1968, and as he dealt with all of this he managed to photograph the Mexican student

movement. Once the company was back on track, he gave away his shares to his partners—and left. He had a wife, a small son, and enough money for a month.

Pablo Meyer, his uncle, was an excellent photographer, as well as a dermatologist; Pedro named his first-born in his honor. Before he was thirty, Meyer had learned some photo technique from the janitor of the Mexican Photography Club. Later he took a correspondence course. When he began his career, he hardly knew anything about professional photography and none of his new colleagues wanted to help him. He had no equipment, yet he had commercial experience. He realized that he did not want to open a business related to photography, but to work as a photographer himself. He divided his time: having defined a minimum income per day, he devoted two weeks to supporting his family and two weeks to his personal oeuvre. He accepted no task that would put his plan at risk. Out of his own interest, he produced a piece on Chapultepec Park in Mexico City that turned out to be the first audiovisual produced in the country (a precedent for his later *I Photograph to Remember*); shown in New York by Leica, its synchronization was controlled by a reel-to-reel tape recorder and its fade-outs were the result of a play of propellers. Little by little, Pedro acquired more equipment. He chose his clients with great care, often pointing out to them that they did not need photographs at all.

He covered the presidential campaign of Miguel de la Madrid and was hired to do a book on *Petróleos Mexicanos*, the national oil company; the volume was never distributed. On receiving his advance payment, he invested it in the Stock Market, and his sound financial experience convinced him it was more efficient to become an investor in order to dedicate as much time as possible to his photographic endeavor. Later, he himself sponsored projects such as *ZoneZero*, for, as he remarks, “seeking funds can also be a huge waste of time.”

In the 1970s, he began to work on the *Colloquia of Latin American Photography*. A first-generation graduate from the Pan-American Institute of Higher Management, he figured that, if he had been able to exercise his leadership amongst businessmen, there was no reason why he could not do so among photographers. Then labeled as “bourgeois”, he produced a portrait of his mother sitting in her garden with her servants standing by her side: “I’m bourgeois, so what . . . ?”

To create the professional network he envisioned, Meyer sent out letters to each of the photographers he knew, and asked them about other colleagues. He gave thought to what could be done to improve the situation of his trade; on one occasion, he expressed his concerns to Manuel Álvarez Bravo, who dryly responded: “Every man for himself” (“Cada chango a su mecate”).

Pedro’s metamorphosis from businessman to photographer implied a radical change in his life. After twenty-three years of marriage, he divorced historian Eugenia Meyer, mother of his first son. He then shared eleven years with photographer Graciela Iturbide, a period in which they both significantly expanded their horizons.

After the death of his parents, he again separated and initiated a relationship with his English colleague, Trisha Ziff, with whom he had his second son, Julio. When later they each went their separate ways, he remade his life with photographer Nadia Baram, his current partner. She has known his work since she was nine and wrote an essay on *I Photograph to Remember* before ever meeting him.

“I am the least known of the well-known photographers”

With *Heresies*, Pedro Meyer ceases to be a photographer known for merely 400 images. Even though these few hundred photos have solidly grounded his prestige, historically there has been a significant disparity between his production and his published work. He has even become accustomed not to ask his admirers how many of his icons they remember. The entire corpus of his work today comprises over 300,000 photos. The discrepancy between 400 and 300,000 is not only immense, it is enigmatic. Pedro himself is pressed by the question: “So why did I take so many photographs, if I didn’t even exhibit them . . . ?”

In 2003, Alejandro Castellanos, formerly critical of his work, invited him to mount a retrospective at the Centro de la Imagen in Mexico City (the center for which Meyer submitted the original design in 1990 to Victor Flores Olea, then director of the National Council for Culture and the Arts). In the space assigned to his exhibition, there was only enough room for some 100 photographs. So what could he do with the remainder of his gigantic stock of images? Could he select two shots from his 16,000 photos on *Petróleos Mexicanos*, and only one of his 6,000 icons of Nicaragua? Given this opportunity, Pedro wished to exhibit everything he had kept to himself for so many years: he was determined to resolve the riddle of his own retrospective.

Meyer had in mind his experience with *ZoneZero*, the digital gallery, archive, medium of communication and exchange that had significantly reinforced his international fame (it is well worth remembering that, at the inception of *ZoneZero*, a good number of people dismissed his plans as those of a *megalomaniac*, insisting that in Mexico we lacked the resources, the organization, and the capacity to plan on that scale: “apparently, we did not even have the right to wish to do so,” Pedro recalls). So Meyer decided to structure his own retrospective as a vast database which would find expression in physical space under the form of exhibitions of selected images, printed in medium and large-scale formats, accompanied by the present volume, so long overdue. This digital transformation of the original scheme of his retrospective suggested to Pedro the possibility of adding to the Centro de la Imagen dozens of venues all over the globe in which to exhibit different selections from his digital files put together by various curators. Thus arose *Heresies*.

The dimensions of the project implied countless technical challenges. The software available on the market could only stock up to 30,000 photos, a mere tenth of the archive; so Pedro and his team set out to develop the necessary technology. This reawakened Pedro's interest in the conditions of the photographic profession: on the basis of the software developed for *Heresies*, today he promotes access to the work of other colleagues through the Pedro Meyer Foundation. The Foundation will be the eventual heir of his work, in charge of continuing with *ZoneZero* and *Heresies*, while at the same time fostering theoretical and historical research on photography and awarding recognition to those curators, government officials, writers, and collectors who contribute to its development in a special way.

Pedro opted in favor of placing everything online: the entire body of his analog and digital production, the publications where this production has appeared, letters and other historical materials, as well as the minutes from the formal meetings of the Mexican Council of Photography of which he was the promoter; he went as far as obtaining permission from his former spouses to incorporate their nudes. "The database is in itself almost a work of art; I say 'almost' because its overall structure is neutral, whilst an artwork tends to have character." The nature of *Heresies* is no less autobiographic than iconographic.

"The struggle with analog thought has been a recurrent theme in my life

"I am a camera-man," Pedro concludes. From an early age, photography has been a permanent presence in his life. As he describes:

My images are the trace of my perceptions and my history.
I have always questioned everything: education, the obligation to memorize, authority. Perhaps that is why I have photographed everything.
At certain moments of intense personal grief, capturing images was for me the only way to try to comprehend later on what was happening.
That feeling of strength that my father conveyed to me through his hands has remained with me forever. We would stay holding hands for a long while, in the meantime I controlled a photographic apparatus with my other hand.
I have often been asked how I could photograph my parents in the situations in which I have. Yet I always photographed my family: the camera was ever present among us, practically transparent to our eyes.

Photography has been the most important organ in Pedro Meyer's imaginary body, his very skin: it has given structure to his persona, it has sheltered him, it has

made his perceptions possible, it has encouraged his contact with others, and it has sustained his powers of articulation. In turn, this subjective epidermis has in turn been shielded, regenerated, strengthened, extended and enhanced by a most potent prosthesis: digital imaging.

Meyer was the buyer of the first Apple computer sold in Mexico. As he switched it on, his life changed forever; he found the implications of information technology immediately obvious and desirable: "I have always been perplexed by the fact that they should not be equally clear to everyone." Many of his critics opposed the new possibilities with which he began to work: from his perspective, his antagonists were gripped by "simple fear of change and the disintegration of the status quo, including the strongholds of power of professors and professionals." We know of the many years that Pedro has spent advocating digital photography and pitting himself against others; yet the virulence of the struggle only becomes clear once we take into account its religious undertow. For the digital mode is much more than a new technology: the transition from analog to digital is the correlate of the radical rupture of a certain theistic order. The displacement of the hierarchy by the network, the substitution of unidirectional transmission with interactivity, and the shift from oneness to multiplicity all presuppose leaving behind that *theo-logic* according to which a central point, in itself absolute, gives rise to a series of derived terms, ever more unfaithful to their source.

In *Heresies*, the traces of that rupture are made visible by the torsion operated by this device on at least three aesthetic institutions: the archive, the exhibition, and the retrospective.

If, classically speaking, the archive is erected, and concedes access, in the name of some transcendental principle, the *Heresies* database is founded on the name of a subject (pedromeyer.com) and access to it is granted free of charge in accordance with the terms of a contract between private parties: what a significant challenge this poses to contemporary institutions that house documents while exercising all sorts of controls over them! Although we might well expect this scenario to result in the construction of new local religion focused on the name of an Artist-God (as would naturally occur in characteristically modern, analog contexts), this does not occur here for at least four related motives: first, the digital turn taken by Meyer transforms the overall nature of *Heresies* into something open, interactive and, in the last resort, ineffable; second, the quantity and quality and materials deployed—including analog, digital, personal, commercial, private, public, professional and not-so-professional, documentary, and fictive photographs, as well as newspaper cuttings, pages from magazines, electronic versions of books no longer available, and so on; third, the autonomy enjoyed by its readers insofar as they remain able to put into play their own preferences and opinions while they navigate across countless screens in a personal, flexible, and non-chronological manner—at the pace and scale of their liking; and

fourth, the maker of *Heresies* cannot remain in control of his making . . . In fact, Pedro is as surprised by the discoveries made by the curators in the midst of his archives as are the rest of its visitors—his icons gaze at him as much as they gaze at all of us when we observe them: to the extent that the question emerges: whose is the name that upholds the uncertain edges of *Heresies*, that of Pedro Meyer, or that of any one of its visitors?

All of which also impedes any fulfillment in *Heresies* of the theistic design to convey any stable, clear sense, or ultimate meaning for the ensemble or any of its parts. Thus, the selection of images made for the present volume, as well as the list of subjects provided to assist online navigation through the corpus, the personal findings made by each one of the viewers, and each of the exhibitions curated on its basis, are nothing but mere attempts, ever unfinished, of clarification. For at the very moment it offers us innumerable routes to make selections and organize the wealth of materials, *Heresies* withdraws from any conclusive reading: each of the exhibitions that conform it demonstrates only its *own* strict impossibility.

That is why *Heresies* is no definitive ordering of a rich creative career. Its temporality corresponds not to a history that would reveal a past truth, but rather to the promise of a realization always yet to come. Though in a more subtle way, as the viewer explores Pedro's images, that traumatic, inexpressible something once again breaks through: "Capturing images was for me the only way to try to comprehend later on what was happening." To observe Meyer's images is to invoke the retroactivity of a subsequent comprehension lacking in the present. In this way, *Heresies* effects with the retrospective what has already taken place in our critical age with the self-portrait and with autobiography, genres that destroy what they claim to represent: just as the subject is in truth the residue produced by the operations of the portrait and the writing of a self, so too the active substance of *Heresies* is the remainder left by the rhetoric of the retrospective —the prospective horizon of a work and of a life always to come. . .

So we now can see that the solution to the enigma originally posed to Pedro by his own retrospective was not solely one of method. The shift that he finally brought about in his response to it allows us also to explain the nature of the traditional disproportion between his production and its circulation, as well as the strength of the solution proposed by him.

Ordinarily, Meyer attributes that disproportion to the political and aesthetic narrow-mindedness that dominated Mexico for so many decades, to his bad luck (the books containing his work were often the object of censorship by some governor in office, or else his publishers passed away before concluding their task), as well as to the discretion that he preferred to keep during the years when he led professional photographers. Yet, his overcoming of the original conditions for his exhibition at the

Centro de la Imagen—in a process that involved replacing the frontiers of an official cultural institution by those associated with the borders of a subject—clearly marks the rise of digital over analog procedures. And only a digital interface allowed Pedro to go beyond the traditional opposition between private and public, feasible and unfeasible, to allow the emergence of that formidable skin fostered by him for so many decades and mobilized by an inner impulse—whose ultimate capacity is decide—even more than by a desire to communicate. This opportunity was decisive for this photographic apparatus, continuously present in his earlier family and personal life, to develop into a device spanning a wide array of subjects in varying spatial and temporal settings, while at the same time widening its spectrum: from single, plain images to multiple icons set in relation to words, sounds, movement, rhythm, and narrative . . .

Clearly, then, the immediate precedent of *Heresies* is *ZoneZero*, a project which grew out of *I Photograph to Remember*, in turn the result of his enthusiasm for that first Apple computer and his previous work on the first audiovisual in Mexico . . . and so on, leading us back to his first photograph, pursuing in reverse the heretical path along which analog is historically, and structurally, surpassed by digital.

"At that moment, I was unaware of the metaphor of the black sheep . . . "

Now I remember my first photo: a little black lamb that had been born from a white sheep. In 1947, I was walking in the valley in La Marquesa with my first camera, a Brownie. I set about watching a sheep that was in labor; and I could not believe my eyes as I saw how it delivered a little black creature. I got my camera ready and I shot that little black lamb that was stumbling before me.

Of all the tales I heard Pedro tell in these recent months, none seemed to condense so plainly and precisely the drive behind his persona and his production as the recollection of this first image—lost today, and therefore not included in *Heresies*. The first portrait by Pedro, in whose later work so many portraits and self-portraits can be found, can also be considered his first *self-portrait*.

What is it composed of? Pedro: the black sheep; his mother: the white sheep; his father: the ram that does not appear in the photo. The fact that Mr. Meyer does not appear in the scene does not mean that he is not figure in it; on the contrary, the captivating nature of the drama attested to by young Pedro in the valley of La Marquesa precisely had to do with the *virtual* presence of that ram—the color of whose fleece we cannot be sure of—that would have not only fertilized the white sheep, but would mark the very possibility of the distinction between herself and her

offspring. It is perhaps this tacit presence of the father, as well as the pressing need of the son who wishes to ensure this paternal existence to make possible his differentiation from his mother, that motivates the only grievance directed by Pedro to his parents: his mother's momentary omission in conveying to him his father's love as professed from a distance. It is perhaps this same implicit presence of his father that moved Pedro to stage, as his inaugural photographic shot, what we could well entitle here *Self-Portrait of Son with a Present Mother and a Remote Father*. Not by chance, wherever Pedro may be there is always dissension; for him, the affirmation of his singularity is always the affirmation of his bond with his father –ever elsewhere: "I am a black sheep, so what. . .?"

Yet Pedro does not only stir conflict: at once, he identifies with the black sheep and realizes the photogram . . . As in each of those hundreds of thousands of later occasions, on this first opportunity his glance behind the lens (located on the exterior perimeter of the scene of the bucolic maternity) is placed at the very same point where that father –now an exile, now a traveler– can be found. Rhizome of that luminous dermal film that from then on would outfit the persona of Pedro, in the presence and absence of his father –as well as beyond– whose personal and professional span would be ever greater, to the point of reaching the remarkable scale of endeavors, such as *ZoneZero* and *Heresies*, capable of corroding the very foundations of the photographic statu quo of his time. Diaphanous skin that Pedro will insist continuously on sharing with others by way of his support and promotion of photography, photographers, and photographing, not merely as a technical, artistic, social, economic or political activity, but rather as an existential gamble: the black sheep transmuted into a wizard . . .

A few days ago, finding myself adrift in the torrent of Pedro's words and images, unsettled by all it had mobilized in me, suddenly my mind was stormed by a robust triad of voices: *Black. Sheep. Wizard*. Initially taken aback, I soon understood that their juxtaposition condensed the copious impressions triggered in me by *Heresies*. So I decided to make this triad mine and use it as a heuristic instrument the better to orient myself in the vastness confronted. What do these terms suggest? They are not descriptive; they do not form a series; they do not involve analogy. Instead, they serve as a sort of haiku, a musical score without duration, or as that sort of unconscious representation that psychoanalysis has termed *imago*. A forming form: the logic of their peculiar bind is that which would have governed Pedro's existence and work from the onset—as well as the fascinating relation between them.

Black: gloom, distance, contrariety, aperture, chance . . . To suffer uneasiness in one's land before exile; to feel always an outsider; to be amongst Marists and read *The Three Musketeers*; to refuse to carry a weapon in a military academy; to receive a camera from a paternal friend and confront opposition from one's own father regarding its professional exercise; to give away the shares of one's business to

respond to the call of a vocation; "to be bourgeois, so what...?"; to be a foreign national . . .

Sheep: *birth, protection, entrapment, nullification* . . . To flirt with a Gestapo officer to save one's family; to walk from Innsbruck to Brussels carrying one's son in a basket; to start all over again and yet support those in need; to come face to face with death in the process of recovering one's long lost homeland; to be a businessman and fall under arrest by U.S. agents as an alleged spy; to decide to end an industrialist's career but refuse to leave one's employees empty-handed; to learn photography from the janitor of a photography club . . .

Wizard: *decipher, transversal, invention* . . . To be a German-Jewish intellectual and strike piñatas; to establish a Mexican Export Company in Japan; to play Marco Polo at home; to make one's living as a businessman and photograph the student movement of 1968; to work as a photographer in search of other photographers; to supply photos and advise against photography; to cover the costs of one's own projects to save time; to be terminally ill and pretend to fly before the camera of one's son (*I Photograph to Remember*); to hold one's father with one hand and operate a photographic apparatus with the other; to begin by photographing a black lamb and launch six decades later the *Heresies* project; to reduplicate one's first portrait and self-portrait with the image of the mime playing wizard in the plaza of Coyoacán (the homepage of pedromeyer.com) that today figures –and feigns– to be the self-portrait of one's *persona* even more than of one's person . . .

Three folds of the same skin. Three folds of the same prosthesis. Three angles of one being. Three angles of his endeavor. Three that are three –and one. A heretic is always also a Wizard; yet there is no Wizard without Sheep; much less, without Black.

BENJAMÍN MAYER FOULKES. Psychoanalyst, researcher, and cultural promoter. Founder of 17, Instituto de Estudios Críticos. He holds a master's in Critical Theory from the University of Sussex, and a Ph.D. from the national university in Mexico, the UNAM. His work on psychoanalysis, philosophy, history, and art has been published in Spanish, English, Italian, French and Portuguese. In the field of photography, he is well-known as one of the international exponents in the debate on photography taken by the blind.

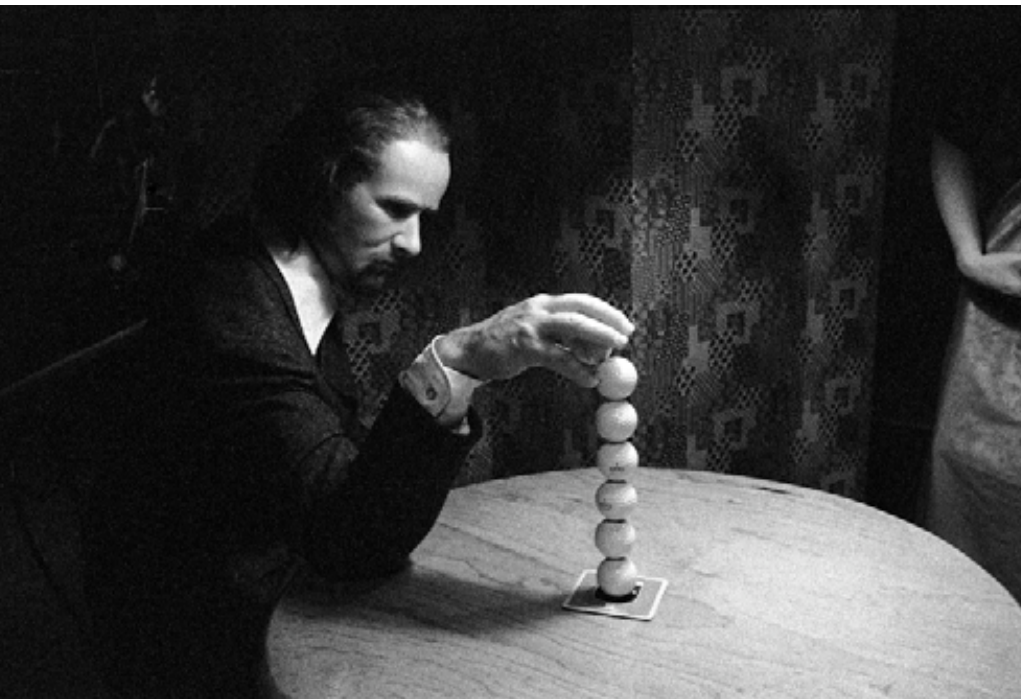
“Pedro Meyer’s digital work inverts the notion of cinema as a series of ‘frames in movement’ by redefining photography as ‘static cinema,’ a process similar to that of memory distilling multitudes of visual impressions in a single paradigmatic image”.

Paul Wombell





Yuman Shadows, 1984.
Yuma, Arizona, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



Life's Balance, 1988.
San Francisco, California, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



Shipping Dreams, 1990 | 1993.
Utah, USA.
35mm b/w negative | Digitally modified image.



Roadrunner, 1984.
Yuma, Arizona, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



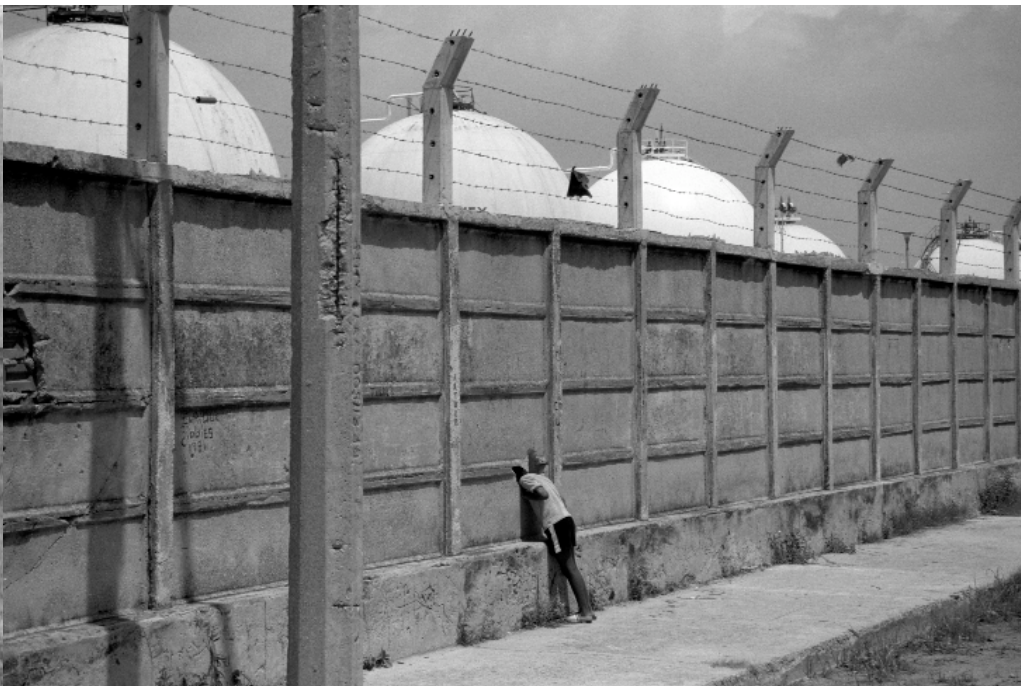
The Pause on the Road, 1985.
Tucson, Arizona, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



All American Canal,
1989.
Yuma, Arizona, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



Emotional Crisis, 1990 | 1993.
Texas, USA.
35mm b/w negatives | Digitally modified image.



You're in Denial, 1987.
Ciudad Madero, Tamaulipas, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



Happiness Sold Here, 2006.
Houston, Texas, USA.
Original digital file.

• *The Light Meter*, 1976.
Arles, France.
35mm b/w negative.



A Threatening Storm, 2004 | 2004.
Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.



We All Are Doves, 2004 | 2004.
Coyoacán, Mexico City, Mexico.
Original digital files | Digitally modified image.



Black Devil, 2005 | 2005.
Chalma, Estado de México, Mexico.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.



The Announcement, 1980.
Ocumicho, Michoacán, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



The Lady and Her Servants, 1977.
Mexico City, Mexico.
6x7cm b/w negative.



Petrus, 1976.
Stonehenge, England.
6x8cm b/w negative.



Paulus, 1961.
Mexico City, Mexico.
6x8cm b/w negative.



The Meyers, 1940 | 2000.
Mexico City, Mexico.
6x8cm b/w negative and original digital file | Digitally modified image.



A Decisive Moment, 1962.
Mexico City, Mexico.
6x8cm b/w negative.



Fanning, 1982.
Florence, Italy.
35mm b/w negative.



Self-Portrait in Hell, 1978 | 1978.
New York, N. Y., USA.
Polaroid 3.5x4.2" | Modification during developing.

El Asombrado, 1985.
Ecuador.
35mm b/w negative.





Rock Festival, 1971.
Avándaro, Estado de México, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



The Gospel and the Guerrilla, 1978.
Nicaragua.
35mm b/w negative.



The Junkyard, 1977.
Salamanca, Guanajuato, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



Reality Check, 1979.
Pula, Yugoslavia.
35mm b/w negative.



The Five O'clock News, 1986 | 1993.
Houston, Texas, USA.
35mm b/w negatives | Digitally modified image.



Grandma's Picture, 1987 | 1998.
Ciudad Madero, Tamaulipas, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative and scanned image | Digitally modified image.



Mexican Migrant Workers, 1986 | 1990.
California, USA.
35mm b/w negatives | Digitally modified image.



Picnic at Tiffany's, 1990.
Reno, Nevada, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



Violence in San Francisco, 1987.
San Francisco, California, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



The Bullet Wound, 1979.
Nicaragua.
35mm b/w negative.



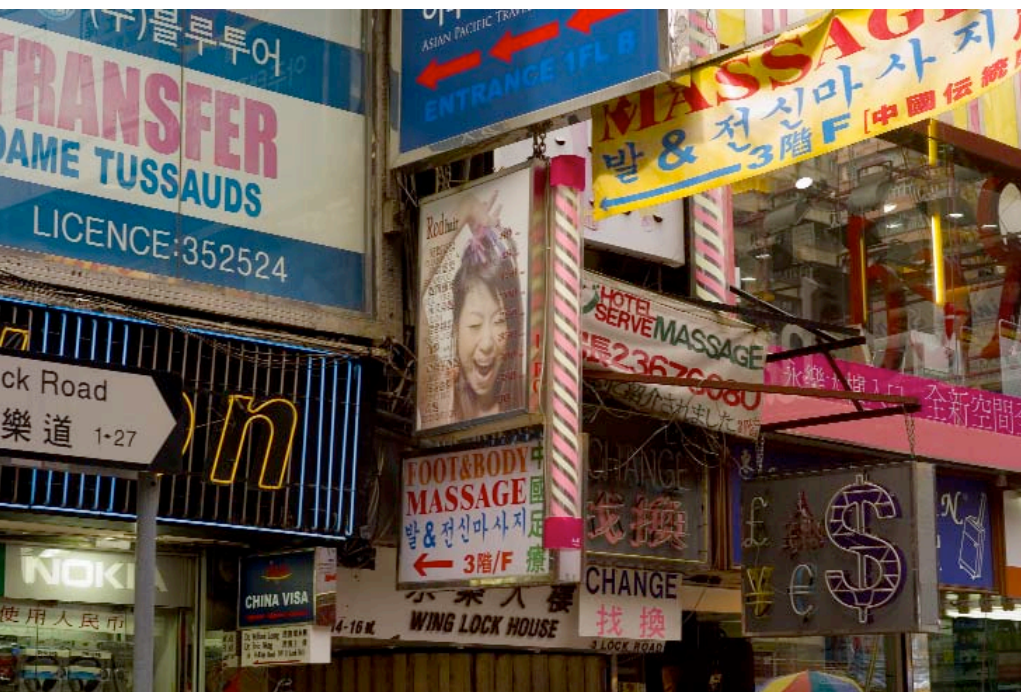
*The Breakfast, Rosi Mendoza
and Her Friend, 1975.*
Mexico City, Mexico.
6x7cm b/w negative.



Calcutta Express, 2004 | 2005.
Calcutta, India.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.



Taxi Service, 2004 | 2004.
Mexico City, Mexico.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.



The Massage is the Message, 2007.
Hong Kong, China.
Original digital file.



Cultural Misinterpretations, 2004.
Calcutta, India.
Original digital file.

Rickshaw Art, 2004.
Dhaka, Bangladesh.
Original digital file. ●

Russian Junk Food, 2001 ●●
Moscow, Russia.
Original digital file.





Raquel Tibol, 1977 | 2000.
Mexico City, Mexico.
6x7cm b/w negative | Digitally modified image.



David Alfaro Siqueiros After Being Released from Jail, 1964 | 2000.
Mexico City, Mexico.
6x8cm b/w negative | Digitally modified image.



Medium Format, 1977.
Mexico City, Mexico.
6x7cm b/w negative



Tamara Garina, 1977.
Mexico City, Mexico.
6x8cm b/w negative.

The Cornered Virgin, 1975.
Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.





The Accountant, 1978.
Mexico City, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



Josephine, 1976.
Mexico City, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



Bird Worship, 1984.
Yuma, Arizona, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



His Life Line, 2002 | 2002.
Ajusco, Mexico City, Mexico.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.



Revival, 1989.
Camden, Maine, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



Franchise, 1985.
Ecuador.
35mm b/w negative.



The Parthenon, 1996.
Nashville, Tennessee, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



The Curtain Has Fallen, 1985.
Mexico City, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



Mexico City Earthquake '85, 1985.
Mexico City, Mexico.
35mm b/w negatives and color transparency.



And He Said, 1984.
León, Nicaragua.
35mm b/w negative.



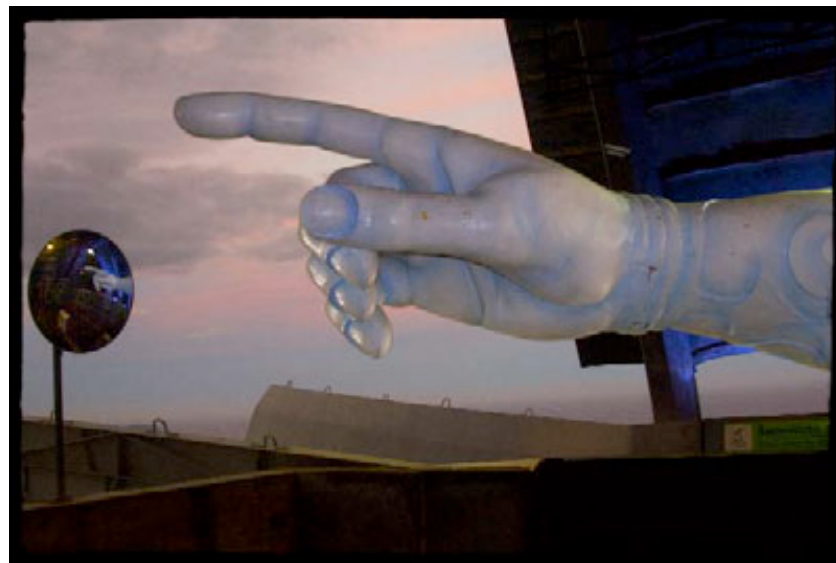
The World in Black and White, 1984.
Managua, Nicaragua.
35mm b/w negative.



Saturn The Devourer,
2004 | 2006.
Dhaka, Bangladesh.
Original digital files |
Digitally modified image.



Fifth Avenue, 2007.
New York, N. Y., USA.
Original digital file.



God's Finger, 2005 | 2005.
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
Original digital files | Digitally modified image.



American Missiles, 1989.
Los Angeles, California, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



Buried Liberty, 1985.
Mexico City, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



Homage to Nicaraguan Soldier, 1979.
Managua, Nicaragua.
35mm b/w negative.



Homage to Nicaraguan Soldier with Sandinistas, 1979.
Managua, Nicaragua.
35mm b/w negative.



Leaders, 1979.
Managua, Nicaragua.
35mm b/w negative.



Beauty Pageant, 1990.
Kentucky, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



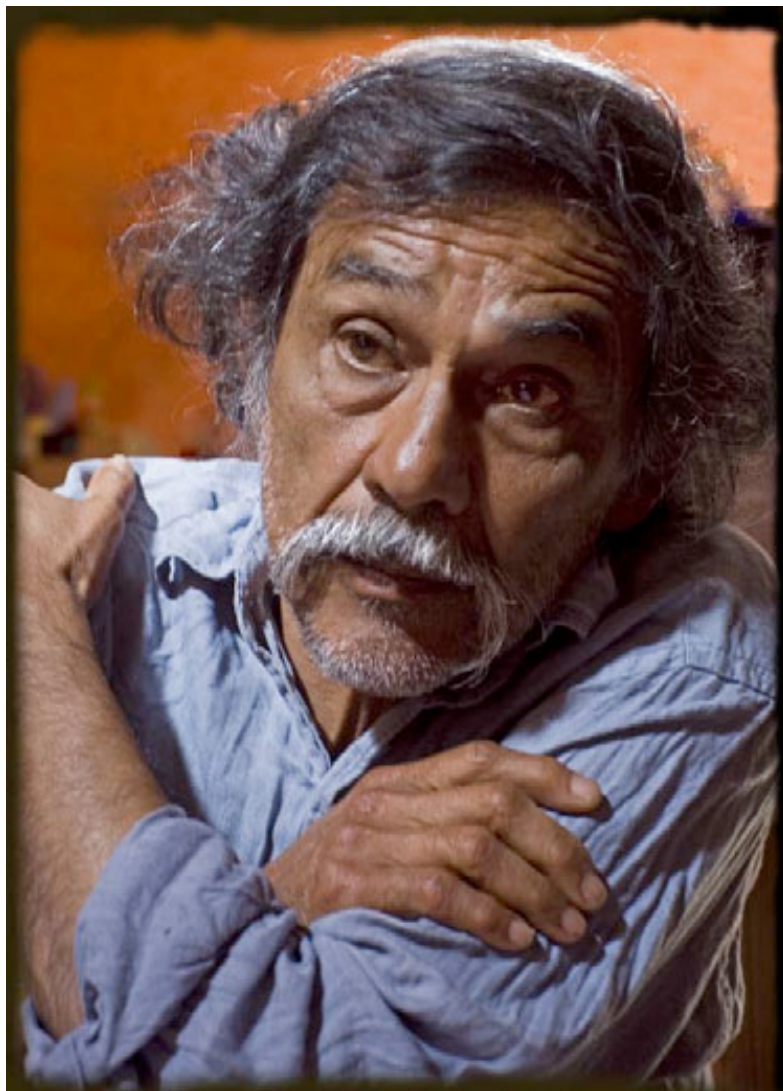
Tightrope Walker, 1990 | 1993.
Kansas, USA.
35mm b/w negatives | Digitally modified image.



Retirement Community, 1985 | 1992.
Yuma, Arizona, USA.
35mm b/w negative | Digitally modified image.



The Strolling Saint, 1991 | 1992.
Nochtitlán, Oaxaca, Mexico.
35mm color transparencies | Digitally modified image.



Francisco Toledo, 2005. 
Cholula, Puebla, Mexico.
Original digital file.



The Sad Violinist, 1979.
Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



Juan de la Cabada, 1977.
Mexico City, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



Trisha Ziff, 1988.
Los Angeles, California, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



The Prophecy, 1985 | 1993.
New York, N.Y., USA.
35mm b/w negative | Digitally modified image.



Monumental Chair, 1989.
Washington, D.C., USA.
35mm b/w negative.



Biblical Times, 1987 | 1993.
New York, N. Y., USA.
35mm b/w negatives | Digitally modified image.



KKK, 1975. ◉
Texcoco, Estado de México, Mexico.
6x7cm b/w negative.



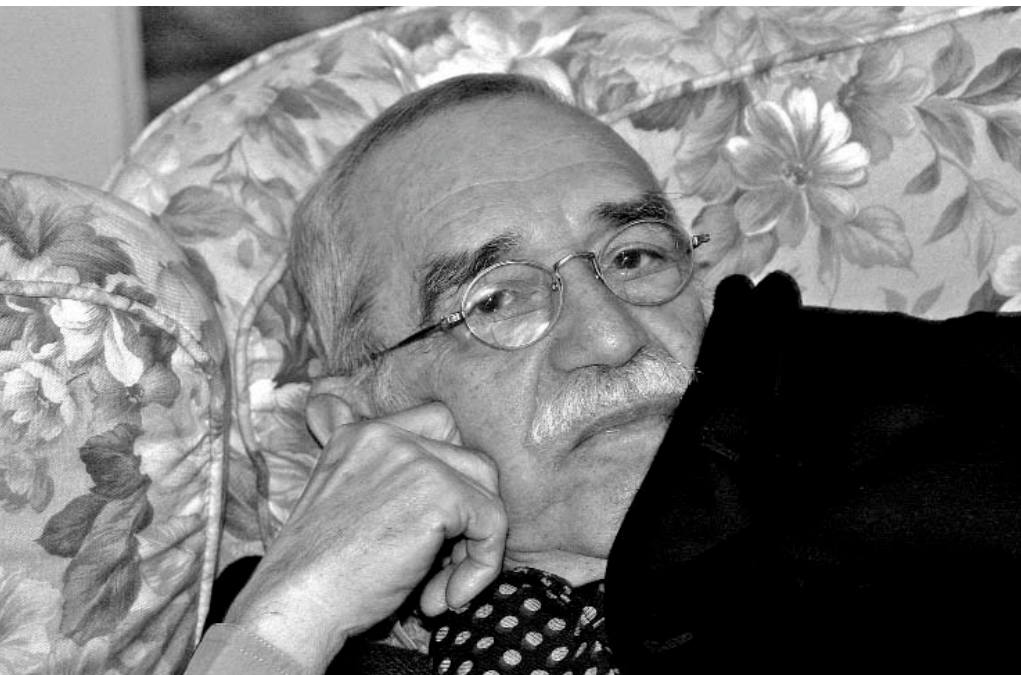
The Lady of the Mole and Her Friends, 1982.
Ecuador.
35mm b/w negative.



Borges on Fifth Avenue, 1985 | 1994.
New York, N.Y., USA.
35mm b/w negatives | Digitally modified image.



*Revival Meeting in
Times Square,
1987 | 1993.*
New York, N.Y., USA.
35mm b/w negatives |
Digitally modified image.



Gabriel García Márquez, 2000.
Los Angeles, California, USA.
Original digital file.




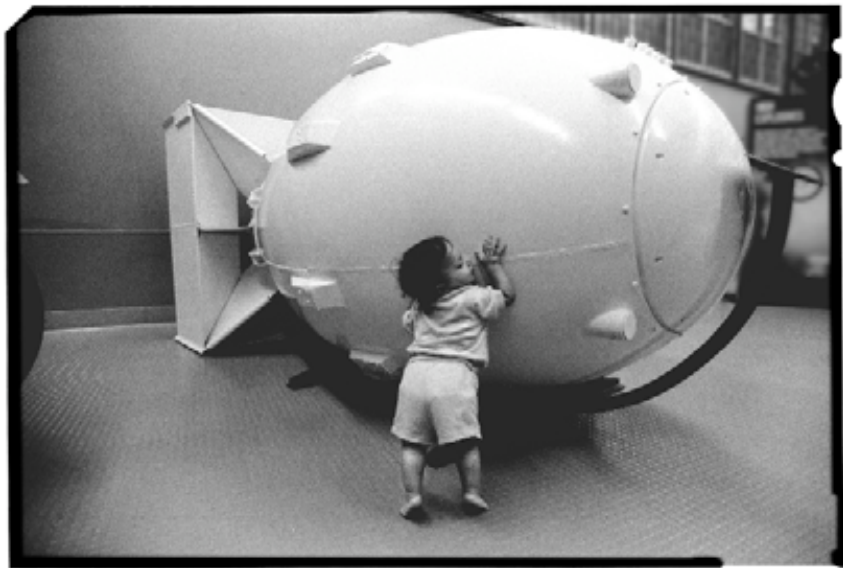
Parakeet on the Shoulder, 1988.
Los Angeles, California, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



Cardboard People, 1988.
Malibu, California, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



Grandma Guns, 1984. 
Yuma, Arizona, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



The Atomic Bomb on Exhibition, 1991.
Los Alamos, New Mexico, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



Fire Fighter, 1987. ◉
Minatitlán, Veracruz, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



Holy Saturday, 1965.
Mexico City, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



Wet T-Shirt Contest, 1990.
Panama City, Florida, USA.
35mm b/w negative.

Global Warming, 1987. ●
Ciudad Madero, Tamaulipas, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



MJF-1

MJF-FS-2



The Bureaucrat, 1987.
Mexico City, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



Champion of Checkers, 1987.
Mexico City, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



Bangladeshi Pilot Flying Over Tokyo, 2004 | 2008.
Dhaka, Bangladesh.
Original digital files | Digitally modified image.



Checkers in Little Haiti, 1990 | 1993.
Miami, Florida, USA.
35mm b/w negative | Digitally modified image.



Collective Baptism, 2005.
Vale do Amanhecer, Brazil.
Original digital file.



American Coffin, 2006.
Yosemite, California, USA.
Original digital file.

Workers Without Borders, 2006. ●
Los Angeles, California, USA.
Original digital file.



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LES NI TERRORISTAS
NO VENIMOS A
ROBAR JAR ISOL

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workers'
struggle
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RADIO EN ESPANOL

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MARCH
TOMORROW
WE VOTE

Justice
&
COALITION
No to
deportation
&
criminalization
of immigrants

SECURITY

SECURITY

SECURITY

SECURITY

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Martin Luther King, 2006.
Los Angeles, California, USA.
Original digital file.



Blacks with Mexican Flag, 2006.
Los Angeles, California, USA.
Original digital file.



We Were Already There Before the Americans Arrived,
 1989 | 2008.
 El Paso, Texas, USA.
 35mm b/w negative | Digitally modified image.



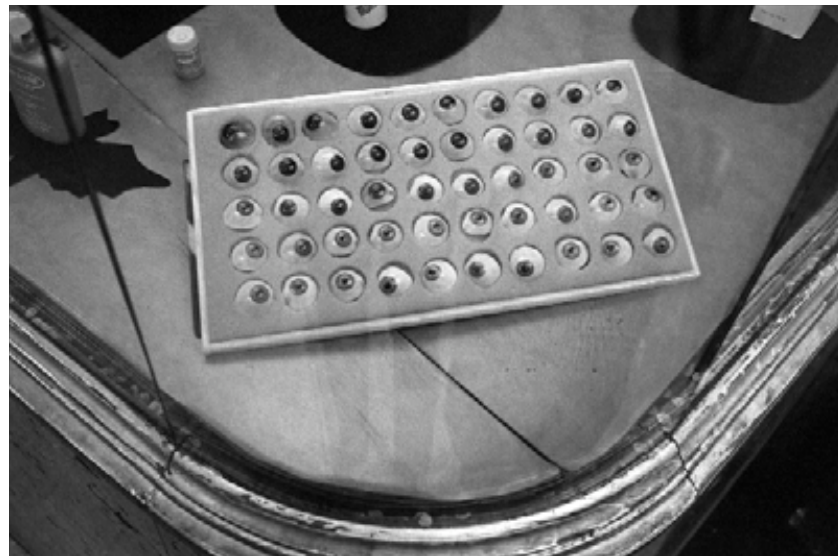
Five Dollars with Che, 1990.
 Los Angeles, California, USA.
 Scanned original document.



Safety Net, 1986.
New York, N. Y., USA.
35mm b/w negative.



Seven Thirty in Ascona, 1990.
Ascona, Switzerland.
35mm b/w negative.




Various Points of View, 1985.
Mexico City, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.

◉ *Control Panel*, 1987.
Coatzacoalcos, Veracruz, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



Free Fall, 1984.
Managua, Nicaragua.
35mm b/w negative.

Looking for Oil, 1987. 
Centla, Tabasco, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.





The Unconventional Gaze, 1974.
San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico.
6x8cm b/w negative.



From Here to Eternity, 1975.
Baja California, Mexico.
6x8cm b/w negative.



He is Ours, 1983.
Nanchital, Veracruz, Mexico.
35mm color transparency.



The Two X, 2004 | 2004.
Mexico City, Mexico.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.



God on the Blackboard, 1982.
Ecuador.
35mm b/w negative.



In Fashion, 1982.
Bielefeld, Germany.
35mm b/w negative.



Do You Believe in God?, 1979.
Graz, Austria.
35mm b/w negative.



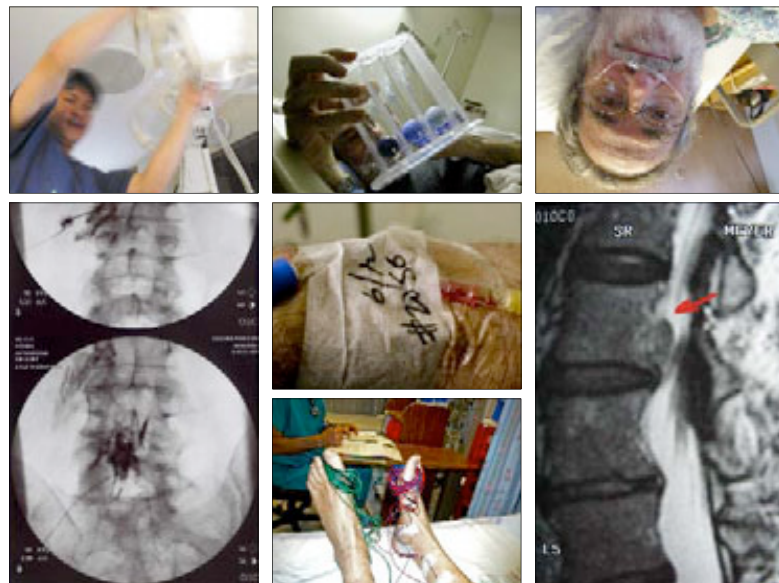
Closed Mind, 1982.
Los Angeles, California, USA.
35mm b/w negative.




Idea Bank, 2000.
London, England.
Original digital file.



The Fall (Self-Portrait), 2002 | 2008.
Quito, Ecuador.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.



The Fall (Self-Portrait), 2002.
Los Angeles, California, USA.
Original digital files.

HIV Carriers, 2004. 
Calcutta, India.
Original digital file.





Little Pearls, 2004 | 2008.
Dhaka, Bangladesh.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.



Alicia Alonso, 1979. ◉
Havana, Cuba.
35mm b/w negative.



Ash Wednesday, 1975.
Texcoco, Estado de México, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



Hasidic Jews in Melrose, 1989.
Los Angeles, California, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



At the Bar, 2005 | 2005.
Brasilia, Brazil.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.

Desires, 1977. ◯
Mexico City, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative | Montage with positives.

Ronald in the Sky, 1990. ∞
New York, N. Y., USA.
35mm b/w negative.







Legs to the Wind, 1990.
Los Angeles, California, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



The Lord of Michoacán, 1979.
Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacán, Mexico.
6x8cm b/w negative.

Er-Comrade Mao, 2006 | 2006.
Beijing, China.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.

Juárez, 1985.
Nezahualcóyotl, Estado de México, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.





The Bag in the Market, 1984.
Chalma, Estado de México, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



Alter Ego, 1983. ◉
Coyoacán, Mexico City, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



Jesus Saves, 1984.
Yuma, Arizona, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



The Temptation of the Angel, 1991 | 1991.
Magdalena Jaltepec, Oaxaca, Mexico.
35mm color transparencies | Digitally modified image.



Rituals, 2004.
Calcutta, India.
Original digital file.



Symbols, 2004.
Calcutta, India.
Original digital file.



*Guangzhou
Chicken, 2007.*
Guangzhou, China.
Original digital file.

*Emmanuel Lubezki, ©
2002 | 2002.*
Los Angeles,
California, USA.
Original digital file |
Digitally modified
image.

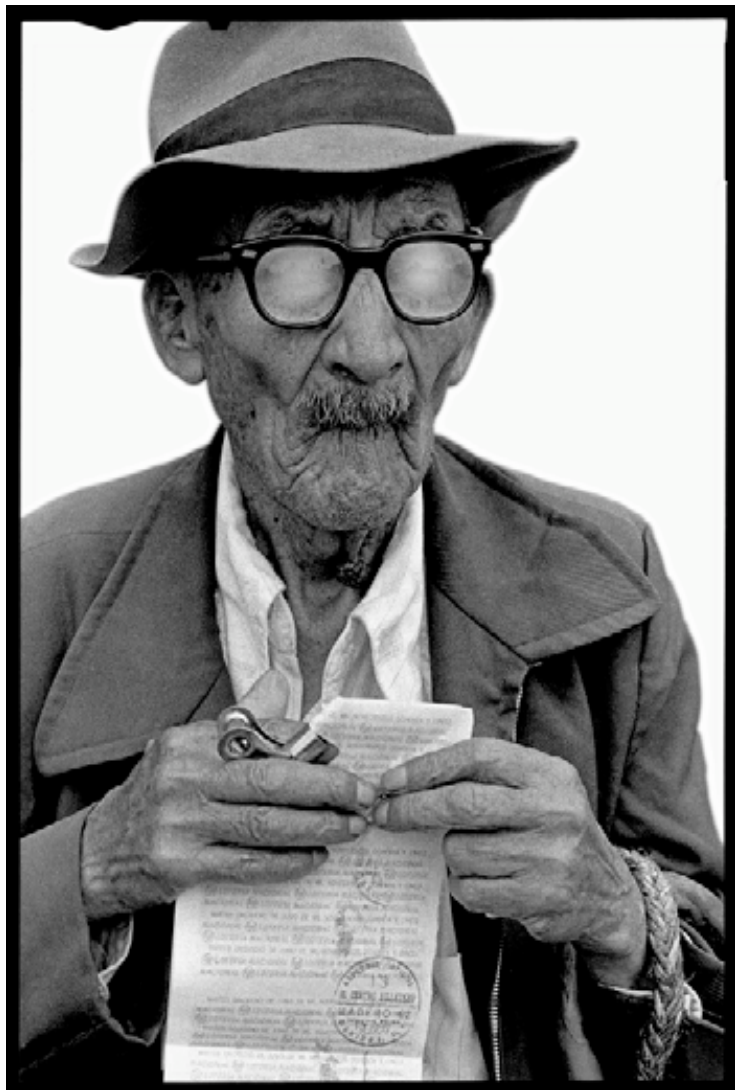




◉ *The Welder*, 1987.
Reforma, Chiapas, Mexico.
35mm b/w negativ



◉ *The Poet*, 1982.
Juchitán, Oaxaca, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



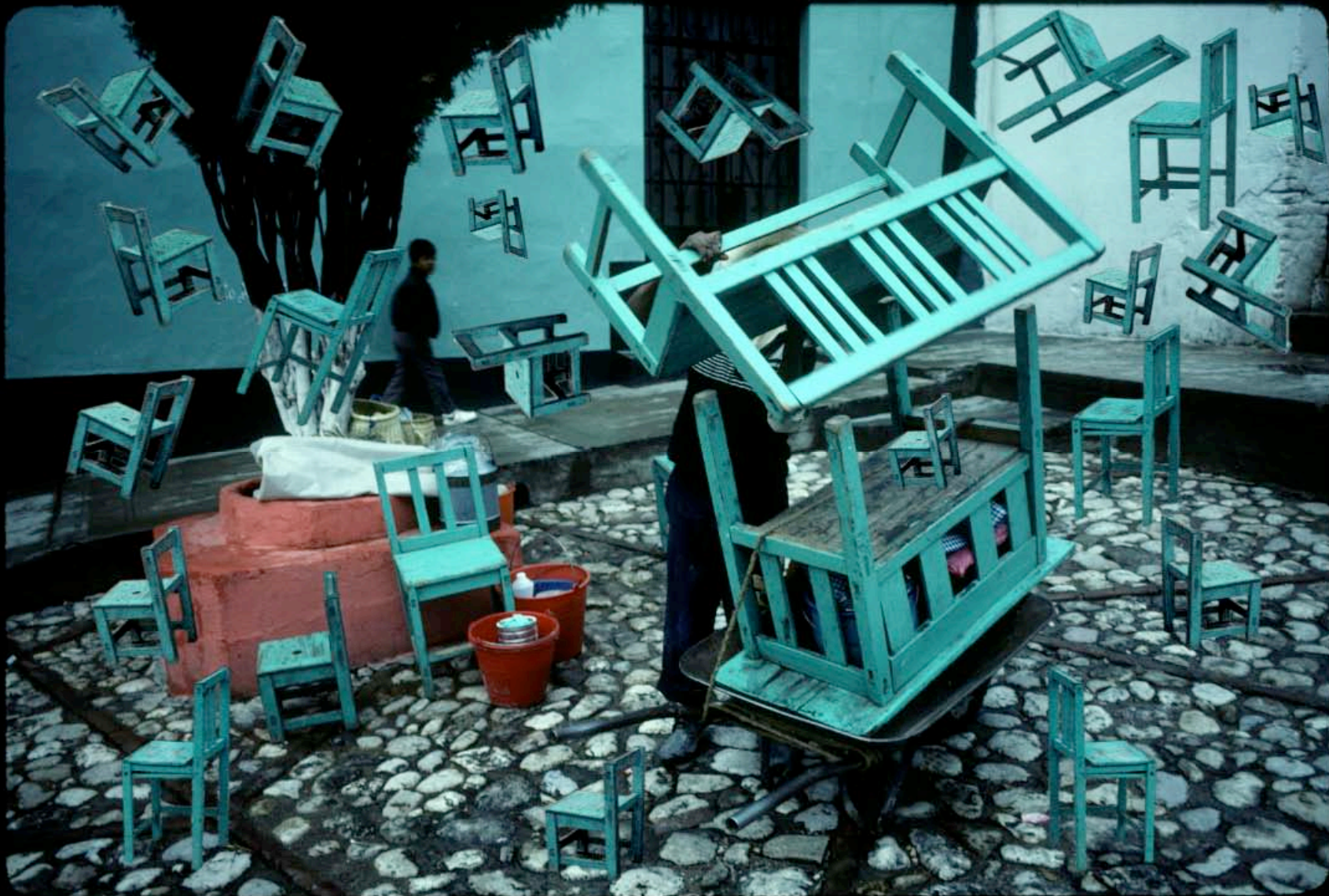
The Lottery Vendor, 1985 | 2000.
Coyoacán, Mexico City, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative | Digitally modified image.

◦ *Sandino*, 1984.
Estelí, Nicaragua.
35mm b/w negative.



The Xerox Copy of My Life, 1999.
Los Angeles, California, USA.
Original digital file.

• *Wooden Face*, 2006 | 2007.
Pingyao, China.
Original digital files | Digitally modified image.




Explosion of Green Chairs,
1991 | 1993
Tlaxiaco, Oaxaca, Mexico.
35mm color transparencies |
Digitally modified image.



The Angel, 2005 | 2005.
Chalma, Estado de México, Mexico.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.



Vermeer in Havana, 1979. 
Havana, Cuba.
35mm b/w negative.



Manuel Álvarez Bravo and His Good Reputation Sleeping, 1974 | 2000.
Coyoacán, Mexico City, Mexico.
6x6cm and 35mm b/w negatives and scanned image | Digitally modified
image.



English Tourist in Florida, 1991 | 1995.
Orlando, Florida, USA.
35mm b/w negatives | Digitally modified image.



Regarding the Pain of Others, 2008 | 2008.
Coyoacán, Mexico City, Mexico.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.



The Swamp Cleaner, 1987.
Sánchez Magallanes, Tabasco, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



Love Advisor, 1986.
Houston, Texas, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



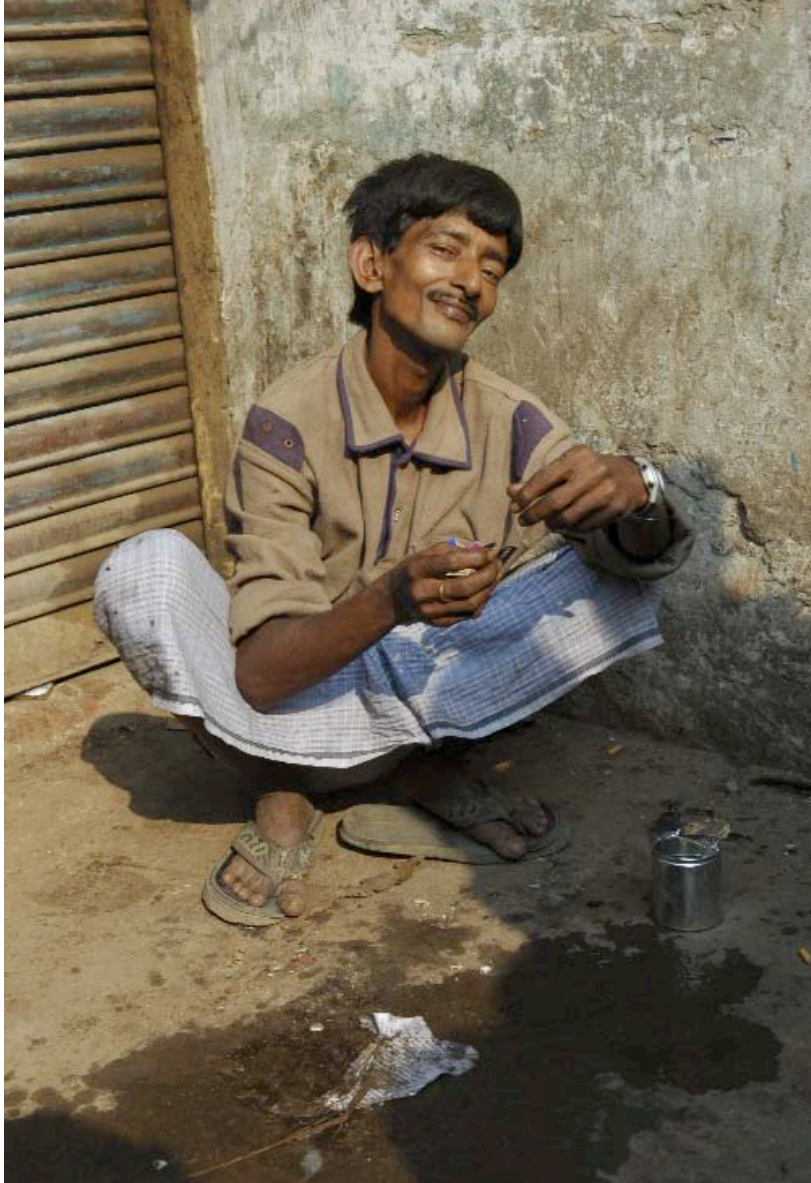
Eye Bar, 1982.
Los Angeles, California, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



The Wounded Guerrilla, 1979.
Managua, Nicaragua.
35mm b/w negative.



Somoza Destroyed, 1979.
Managua, Nicaragua.
35mm b/w negative.



Shaving on the Street, 2004.
Dhaka, Bangladesh.
Original digital file.

◉ *Parakeet Man*, 2001.
Moscow, Russia.
Original digital file.



Miracles, 2004.
Trindade, Brazil.
Original digital file.



Saint Lucia's Eyes, 2007.
Coyoacán, Mexico City, Mexico.
Original digital file.



A Cry in the Dark, 1988.
New York, N. Y., USA.
35mm b/w negative.

• *The Miner's Light*, 1982.
Essen, Germany.
35mm b/w negative.



The Devil in New York, 1985.
New York, N. Y., USA.
35mm b/w negative.



Story of the Homeless, 1988.
Los Angeles, California, USA.
35mm b/w negatives.

Homeless with a Teddy Bear, 1988.
Los Angeles, California, USA.
35mm b/w negative.





Graffiti in Los Angeles, 1989.
Los Angeles, California, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



The Cook in Havana, 1979.
Havana, Cuba.
35mm b/w negative.



Romeo y Julieta, 1979.
Havana, Cuba.
35mm b/w negative.



My Father Flying, 1987.
Mexico City, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



Ernest Consoling My Mother, 1985.
Houston, Texas, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



The Last Time We Were Together, 1988.
Mexico City, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



The Black Veil, 1976.
Mexico City, Mexico.
6x7cm b/w negative



Self-Portrait with My Parents' Grave, 1989.
Mexico City, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



The Man that Flew, 1990.
Los Angeles, California, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



Three Chinese Wise Men, 2007 | 2008.
Beijing, China.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.

Landscape with Snow in Chicago, 2002 | 2008.
Chicago, Illinois, USA.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.





Walking Billboard,
1987 | 1993.
New York, N. Y., USA.
35mm b/w negatives |
Digitally modified image.



In Search of Freedom, 1985.
New York, N. Y., USA.
35mm b/w negative.



The Heretic, 1975.
Texcoco, Estado de México, Mexico.
6x8cm b/w negative.



The Gaze, 1976.
Tepito, Mexico City, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



Completely Sad, 2005 | 2005.
Mexico City, Mexico.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image. ●



Good Friday, 1984.
Chalma, Estado de México, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



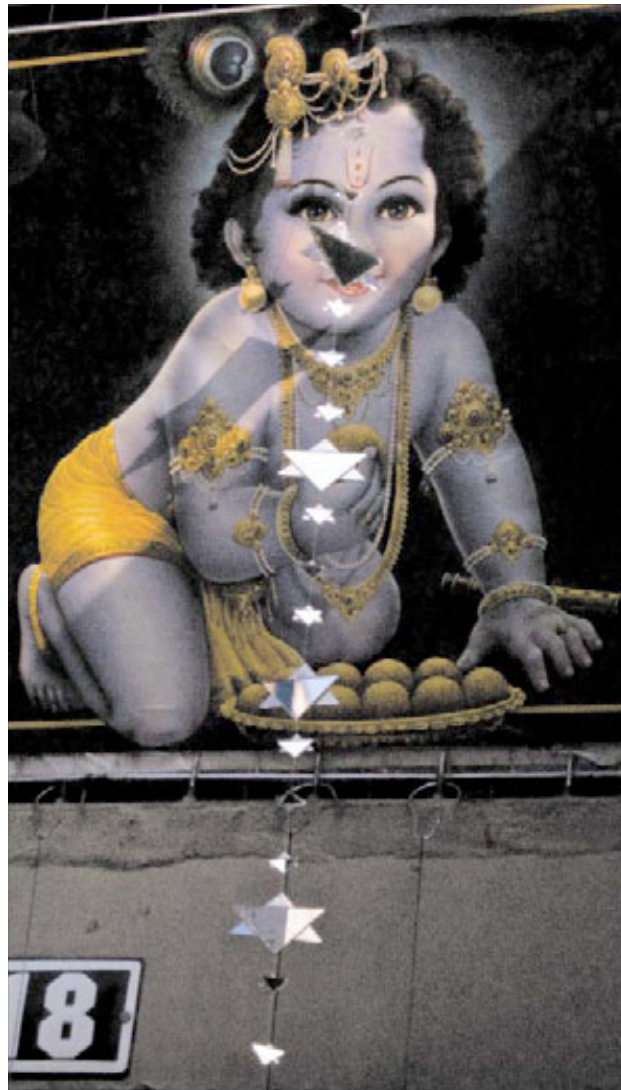
Murder, 1976.
London, England.
6x8cm b/w negative.



Mortal Discipline, 1981.
Puebla, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



The Candidate's Mask, 1981.
Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico.
35mm color transparency.



David and His Stars in São Paulo, 2007 | 2007.
São Paulo, Brazil.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image. ◉



Dead in the Tub, 1990.
London, England.
35mm b/w negative.

◉ *Godzilla's Leg*, 2007 | 2008.
Guangzhou, China.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.



Holy Week in Coyoacán, 2002 | 2002.
Coyoacán, Mexico City, Mexico.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.



The Head of Saint John the Baptist and the Potato Chips, 2006.
Coyoacán, Mexico City, Mexico.
Original digital file.



Calcutta Red, 2004|2005.
Calcutta, India.
Original digital file | Digitally
modified image.



The Slaughterhouse, 1985 | 2005.
Villahermosa, Tabasco, Mexico.
35mm color transparency | Digitally modified image.



Virgil on the Greased Pole, 1991 | 1992.
Nochistlán, Oaxaca, Mexico.
35mm color transparencies | Digitally modified image.



Homage to the Dead in the Soviet Gulags, 2001.
Moscow, Russia.
Original digital file.



Replicants, 2004.
Calcutta, India.
Original digital file.



Mexican Serenade, 1985 | 1992.
Yuma, Arizona, USA.
35mm b/w negatives | Digitally modified image.



Waiting at the Met, 1989.
New York, N. Y., USA.
35mm b/w negative.



At the Mount of Olives, 1972.
Jerusalem, Israel.
35mm b/w negative.



Crossing the Desert, 1989.
Yuma, Arizona, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



The Esoteric Trailer, 1990 | 1993.
Winslow, Arizona, USA.
35mm b/w negatives | Digitally modified image.




Fishing for Dreams, 1975.
Texcoco, Estado de México, Mexico.
6x7cm b/w negative.



The Naughty Little Horse, 2005.
Singapore.
Original digital file.



Fruits of the Sea, 1982. 
Juchitán, Oaxaca, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



And Where is the Abundance?, 2004.
Calcutta, India.
Original digital file.

• *Musicians*, 2004 | 2005.
Dhaka, Bangladesh.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.



Nostalgia for the Future. Homage to Josep Renau, 2004 | 2008.
Tokyo, Japan.
Original digital files | Digitally modified image.



The Charmer, 2004 | 2005. 
Calcutta, India.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.




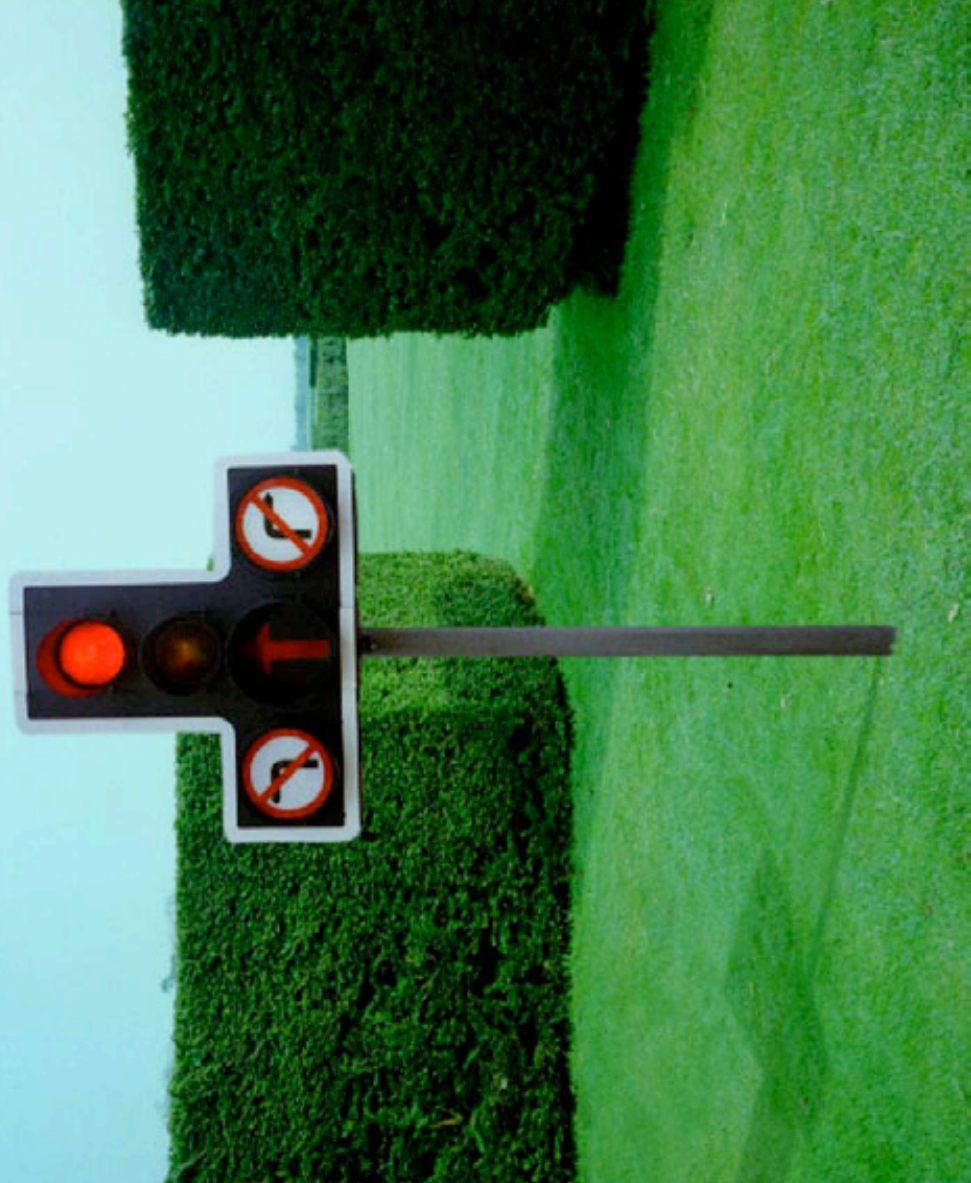
The Tree of Life, 2005.
Shanghai, China.
Original digital file.



Nadia Baram, 2007.
Coyoacán, Mexico City, Mexico.
Original digital file.

Mind Game, 1994 | 1994. 
London, England.
35mm color negatives | Digitally modified image.

From Conquest to Reconquest, 1992 | 1992. 
Oxnard, California, USA.
35mm color negatives | Digitally modified image.





The Arrival of White Man, 1991 | 1992.
Magdalena Peñasco, Oaxaca, Mexico.
35mm color transparencies | Digitally modified image.



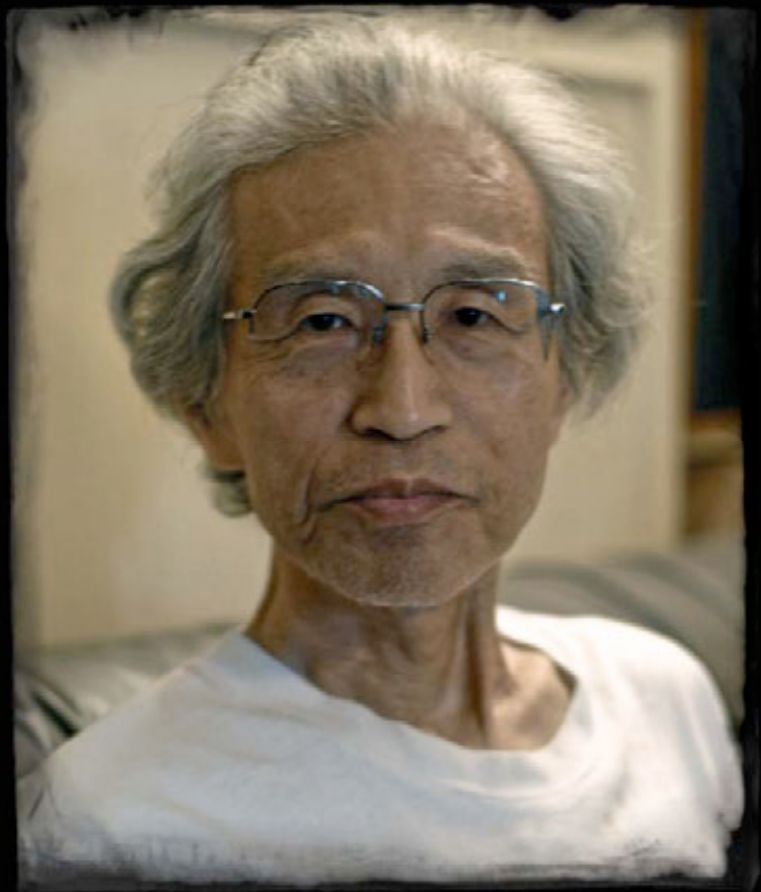
Perry Farrell, 1988.
Tehachapi, California, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



Men in Black, 2006.
Tokyo, Japan.
Original digital file.



Black Men in White, 2002.
Eastern Cape, South Africa.
Original digital file.



Goro Kuramochi, 2006.
Tokyo, Japan.
Original digital file.



The Pingyao Twins, 2006 | 2006.
Pingyao, China.
Original digital files | Digitally modified image.

Adolfotógrafo, 2005 | 2005.
Mexico City, Mexico.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.

Dr. Wang's Brushes, 2007. ∞
Guangzhou, China.
Original digital file.







Blind at Mass, 1991 | 1993.
Teotitlán del Valle, Oaxaca, Mexico.
35mm color transparencies | Digitally modified image



The Camera's Brushes, 2004 | 2004.
Trindade, Brazil.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.



This isn't Duane Michals with a Pipe, 1986.
Houston, Texas, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



Vishnu, 2004 | 2005.
Calcutta, India.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.



Rickshaw in Reds, 2004.
Dhaka, Bangladesh.
Original digital file.



Rickshaw in Blues, 2004.
Dhaka, Bangladesh.
Original digital file.



The Little Church on the Corner, 1986.
Coyoacán, Mexico City, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



Wedding in Coyoacán, 1983.
Coyoacán, Mexico City, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



City of Palaces, 1987.
Mexico City, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.

◉ *Stagehands at the Temple, 1980.*
Puebla, Puebla, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



Tightrope Walker, 1989.
La Villa, Mexico City, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



Dentureless, 1974.
Coatzacoalcos, Veracruz, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



The Red Balloon, 2001.
Las Vegas, Nevada, USA.
Original digital file.



Norka Korda, 2004 | 2005.
Coyoacán, Mexico City, Mexico.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.



Mona Lisa in the Wax Museum, 1988.
San Francisco, California, USA.
35mm b/w negative.



Yue Minjun and the Enigmatic Smile, 2007. ●
Beijing, China.
Original digital file.



Buddhist Monk at the Egyptian Pyramids, 2007.
Shenzhen, China.
Original digital file.



The Small Deity, 2005 | 2005.
Singapore.
Original digital files | Digitally modified image.


The Kiss, 2001. ●
Coyoacan, Mexico City, Mexico.
Original digital file .





Clay Goddesses, 2004.
Calcutta, India.
Original digital file.



Victoria's Secrets, 2007. 
Los Angeles, California, USA.
Original digital file.



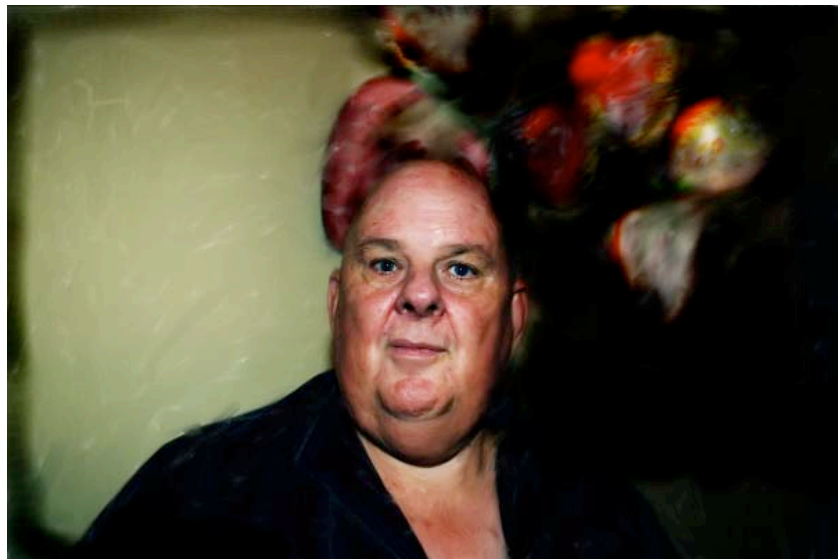
Betty Page Tattoo, 2006.
Tokyo, Japan.
Original digital file.



The White Puppy, 2006.
Tokyo, Japan.
Original digital file.



Sohini Sengupta, 2004.
Calcutta, India.
Original digital file.



Les Murray, 2004 | 2004.
Tampico, Tamaulipas, Mexico.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.



María Félix and Paradise, 1980.
Guanajuato, Guanajuato, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



Nora Astorga, 1978. ◉
Nicaragua.
35mm b/w negative.



Rosalyn Doherty, 2000.
Los Angeles, California, USA.
Original digital file.



Reyna de América, 1980. ◉
Dorey, Hidalgo, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



Palms in the Office, 1987.
Mexico City, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



The Storyteller, 1991 | 1995.
Magdalena Jaltepec, Oaxaca, Mexico.
35mm color transparencies | Digitally modified image.



Shanghai Tang, 2005.
Shanghai, China.
Original digital file.



Dhaka Drama, 2004.
Dhaka, Bangladesh.
Original digital file.



Taxi Driver, 2007.
Los Angeles, California, USA.
Original digital file.



Yellow Neighborhood, 2005.
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
Original digital file.



The USSR Flag, 2001.
Moscow, Russia.
Original digital file.



McDonald's Logo, 2001.
Moscow, Russia.
Original digital file.



Time for Prayer, 2004.
Calcutta, India.
Original digital file.



Many Gods, 2005 | 2005.
Singapore.
Original digital files | Digitally modified image.

The Miracle of the Fish, 2004 | 2006. 
Dhaka, Bangladesh.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.





Christ Babies, 2001 | 2008.
Mexico City, Mexico.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.



The Virgin's Blankets, 1983.
La Villa, Mexico City, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



The Corner of Three Hats, 1979| 1 999.
Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacán, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative | Digitally modified image.



Fire in the Church, 1982.
Ecuador.
35mm b/w negative.



Children Looking at Death, 1985.
Ecuador.
35mm b/w negative.



Where is the Money?, 1985 | 1999
Ecuador.
35mm b/w negatives | Digitally modified image.



The Little Fellow and the Prostitutes, 1979.
Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacán, Mexico.
6x6cm b/w negative.



Last Supper, 1981.
Sonora, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



Mexican Politician, 1981.
Aguascalientes, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



Come Caca, 1981.
Sonora, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.



The Sadness of the Devil Fish, 1955.
Acapulco, Guerrero, Mexico.
6x8cm b/w negative.



Gregorio Fuentes and His Friend, 1983.
Cuba.
35mm b/w negative.





Irony with Earring, 2004 | 2004.
Trindade, Brazil
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.

Survival of the Fittest, 2007 | 2008.
Guangzhou, China.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.



Behind the curtain and a list of gratitudes

Pedro Meyer

Any nonconformist view within any field may be perceived as "heretical"
by others within that field who are convinced that their view is "orthodox"
Wikipedia

Usually, there is curiosity to know what goes on behind a complex project that, like Heresies, is filled with labyrinths which may seem interesting. Americans satisfy such interest by "the making of", a tradition that comes, principally, from the cinematographic industry, in which they show how the film was made in the margins of the film; thus, not only is satisfied the curiosity of knowing all the anecdotes, but it is also possible to learn something about the procedures themselves, and will always be something to be thankful for.

The access to that "privileged" information is generally quite valued. We are seduced by the proximity to everything that, somehow, has remained hidden, deliberately or not. In other words, we are pleased by being able to glance at the other side of the moon for it creates a sort of complicity, in this case, between the reader and me, the photographer-author. I am glad of having the possibility of doing so. Once made clear that I will present this narration just as a respectful appreciation to the readers, I proceed then to unfold the events.

The quest of making a retrospective started about six years ago in 2002. Alejandro Castellanos, director of "Centro de la Imagen" in Mexico City, extended me a formal invitation to exhibit there an overview of the last 5 decades of my photographic work.

Given the interest I felt over the invitation to compose a retrospective, my first question was: Which and how many photographs could I exhibit? Soon I realized that, if it was possible to only show 120 images because of exhibition design purposes, the big question to answer was: Which ones, in particular, I was going to present? I took a note pad and started to jot down the great topics developed throughout my work. The number collected was nearly 20. A quick arithmetic division made the following clear to me: If I was to exhibit 120 images, I could only use 6 images per topic. I can be said that these simple calculations marked the beginning of the course of this adventure that has taken me 5 years of systematic production in order to solve the problems of such dilemma.

There were 80 thousand photographs in my files on one specific theme, The United States; 18 thousand on another, the oilmen, some others with 20 thousand... and so on until reaching up to 300 thousand images. It was obvious that "selecting" only six photographs per theme was not only a banal proposal but also unacceptable. The process was looming to turn into a reduction to absurdity. What six photos could represent a thematic series of 80 thousand images?

As much as I revolved about this issue, the figures would not accommodate nor had a place where to move. On one hand, the number of photographs in an exhibition faces the real limits of the physical spaces of any gallery, and, on the other hand, the visitor's appetite to see a determined photographic universe becomes, also, pretty tightened.

Not being enough, with that sort of absurd decantation the images from my files would have been lost forever by not having even a reason to be reviewed with views to be considered in this exhibition. The latter ended up being a complete logistical nonsense.

With these considerations, the first thing I did was to inform Alejandro Castellanos that I was declining his kind invitation to create the retrospective, as I couldn't find a formula to resolve the accommodation of the photographs in a more reasonable fashion.

I was taken up by several interesting doubts and truths, such as what would be the possible excuse to have taken all that plenty of photographs throughout my life, which now circumstances threatened to bring them to oblivion. I'm already exaggerating if I say that I have published some 400 photographs in the course of my career. I did not publish anything regarding several themes; the reasons are difficult to expose here, but it wasn't because I doubted the goodness of the material itself.

Accepting that all that amount of work would remain unpublished and buried in the anonymity was, in fact, to recognize the futility of this entire photographic project. I spent weeks contemplating possible solutions, none of them being more successful than the previous one. In any case, the only viable alternative was to forget about one or another part of the file, thus letting go an important piece of the memory of my own life. But then I thought that my case was not unique nor the only one; that, even if the number of images changed from one photographer to another, the problem ended up being quite similar. What happens then to the photographer's archive?, Doesn't the content of images portrayed die too at the moment in which a file suffers such an unfortunate fate like the one about to happen to mine?, Why no one had thought in a solution to these problems?

I was overtaken by sadness in those days. On one hand, my personal life was facing the breaking up of a more than ten years sentimental relationship, and on the other hand, I should acknowledge the possible "death" of my collection and the

contents portrayed in it. That put me in the totally undesirable situation of having to face the utter futility of all the effort made during those prior five decades. I learnt from my father that when things appear to be difficult, one always have to find new solutions to the problems, and not be carried away by feelings of loss. So, I did that during the following weeks. I spent every hour thinking on what could be the alternatives. I must recognize that the more I thought of it, the more frustrated I felt for I couldn't find some possible option.

My favorite place for solving problems is under the shower, letting the shower drift by all along, from the head to the back; that relaxes me and puts me in a state of meditation, which has often given me the necessary clarity to see the solutions that I couldn't find before. One good day occurred to me. I had finally found a pretty simple solution which from that moment it was only a matter of finding the way to put it into practice. I called Alejandro Castellanos to schedule a meeting as soon as possible in order to talk about my recent strategy. I was interested on his response about my new approach. We got together, and I explained how I had envisioned to address the problem: my idea was to move on with the original proposal of showing the retrospective at "El Centro de la Imagen" although it had to be done in parallel with other complementary systems. It largely meant to slip out from the orthodox way retrospectives have always been done.

It became clear to me that I needed to take advantage of my experience with the internet on the years we have been producing the web site *ZoneZero*. Also, each one of the themes in which I had divided my work had to turn, firstly, into a specific exhibition that contained between 50 and 200 photos individually, and that these were presented simultaneously in the web as well as in "Centro de la Imagen". This way, not a single theme would be lost. On the contrary, everything would be displayed with the same diffusion possibilities that I already was able to demonstrate by means of *ZoneZero*. For example, if the circumstances dictated that a specific theme could only be represented by six photographs in "Centro de la Imagen", it wouldn't matter anymore because the most significant images of that subject would also be seen in the web. One thing would complement the other, giving context to what is represented on the walls of the museum. Merging the online exhibition with the physical one would open several and new possibilities. While a museum can show the printed work in large sizes, the web can show a larger quantity of images and, opposite to the previous, can also reach a larger number of people. While we had already solved the main axis on how to address the issue about the spaces and the number of works to show. Still, the elaborated problem of how to handle physically the selection process of the images was pending. It seemed easy for us conclude that the only solution was to scan all the images, arrange them in a data base so that the person in charge of the curation of a theme could do it from a comfortable place.

As it usually happens with this sort of audacities, discussed in meetings as “the right solution”, this one is only a tentative approach, full of speculations. And this case was not different. Very soon, new difficulties started to show. Of course, nobody had thought of what the scanning of so many images represented, much less, which program was going to handle that volume of photographs online.

Being almost 70 years, I realized that in that moment I was getting into an adventure that could easily exceed me in every aspect. Moreover, more than one tagged me as megalomaniac when facing the boldness of my dreams. At times, and this seemed to be one of them, the intention of some critics is not to give a constructive opinion with knowledge of cause, but only to vent their own unresolved concerns. However, whatever that consideration was, the important thing was not to look good in the eye of third parties but to safeguard the history of a lifetime as a photographer, mine, the one that was at the brink of drowning in the mud of abandonment. Of course my strategy assumed the risk of ending in a possible shipwreck, but I thought that this sinking, as such, would at least give me the satisfaction of having drowned in the act of attempting the rescue of this work.

From the beginning, the work process was that of trial and error. This was the basis upon which this whole project was sustained. There were no prior routes that could be followed neither experiences to find support. Soon we learned that we must create the program that would run in the Internet, the one we ended up using; we also learned based upon the trials and errors, which machines were more suitable for the scanning and the printing process tasks. One of the most complex issues was the definition of the fields in which we had to divide the information of each photo, so that the data base could also locate the image on search. All the elements of the browsing were result of intense debates: where and how would each button be in the web page of this base, at what speed would the server present each image in the web, how could we find a fair balance between an optimum speed and a greater diversification of the services that would be offered from our data base.

We learned a lot during this process. Interesting aspects, such as observing the way in which the data base was used by the different curators invited; discovering things that were not quite obvious to them, and others that showed solutions that we had not thought about.

Something that, by the way, is not unusual in the field of creating programs to run from a computer, and happened to us, was the adjusting of all problems on the spur of the moment. Needless to say that having placed all the collection in a data base, which access is planetary, transformed a death file into one alive. We barely are in the dawn of the benefits that could be brought out from this system. Hence, I believe that we are creating a new consciousness about the impact on the work of an author when it is available online in this fashion, in contrast to what we had before: a file totally and literally useless with no way out.

Suddenly we saw that the results of the work for a single museum, El Centro de la Imagen, had the potential to be shared at the same time by other institutions in the world. The hard part was to get to where we found ourselves: having resolved the issue of how to transform a dead file into one alive and, thus, giving support to the decantation process for both, each theme in the file for its exhibition online and the images that could be exhibited in the physical spaces. Once having the solution for one museum, offering the project to several more was relatively simple.

This reminds me the question the critics making to me when being before this project: Why doing it in so many places at a time? It is obvious that by transgressing the traditions, I would have to face front something that I have assumed several times before. The title of the exhibition itself, *Heresies*, announces it. But I have not answered clearly yet. The purpose of making an exhibition in several places simultaneously is because the new technologies allow us to do things in new and interesting ways. The last exhibition that I made and moved in many countries, called *Truths and Fictions*, traveled during nearly seven years consecutively in many different museums. It was really nonsense to talk about new visions and show an exhibition that had been traveling for so long.

By presenting *Heresies* all around the world and at the same time in so many museums, we are also inaugurating a new criteria of curation; among other reasons, because the times are accelerating (something that at my 72 isn't that bad), the cooperation between institutions is increasing and, which is more provocative, each one of the exhibitions will be different from the others. The exhibitions where “one measure” should fit to everyone are left behind.

We opened the way to find new forms; not only to see the works, but on how to transmitting them. Hence, if that “delusion” of which I was accused had achieved all these results, then it was worth to experience it. Having imagined and made come true an integral project, even if others think that is such a novelty that verges on an outrageous idea, it only manifests what already is around us and inevitably, by fortune, is intended to another future. I think of the *global* and the *local* as values mutually present in the lives of all of us.

If *Heresies* is scary to more than one is because they don't consider themselves as part of this global and digital community. In that sense, the project not only responds to the world economic globalization, but also to the artistic one. Turns out that in the world there are as many museums as film projection rooms; however, nobody would think that every projection room produced and showed only films of their own production. It wouldn't make sense, but that is how most of the museums operate. I'm not suggesting that they abandon their own production, but to circulate it with the same dynamics and fluidity that the film distributors have achieved nowadays. I can see the economical problems that the cultural institutions are facing everywhere; however, I cannot see them wanting to adopt many of the

actions that lead to a rethinking of the costs of their own operations. The *Heresies* project has tried to contribute with some ideas on that direction.

Well, there is still an important matter which I have not addressed yet: the development of the *Heresies* book and all the corresponding acknowledgements.

The first time I met with my colleagues from *ZoneZero* to plan the book, we were all aware of the common discussions that tend, wrongly, to priorities one media over the rest (either printed work book, digital work online, video, etc.); instead of taking advantage of the virtues and singularity that each one of them may provide. On this breach is how we tried to understand the role of this publication, knowing that is a very important media of representation for a specific audience. With time, we developed a way, say organic, to conceive it. One thing led us to the other. This way, we imagined the possibility of having some images to be seen printed in this book, in large size at the museum halls or projected in any of its walls or screens, as well as to be seen in the web page or from an iPod with synchronised soundtracks. The notion of the ubiquity of the image was left behind.

In this trial and error process that I mentioned before, we came up with the task of thinking what would be the role of the present volume. We concluded that a way to answer ourselves was by defining what the book should not be. We knew it was impossible to look at as a catalogue of the exhibition, for this lead us to the absurd question: Which one of all the exhibitions? Although the online gallery would be the same for everyone, the museum exhibition would be different. This made us rethink the first question: Why a book if we had already covered that field with the online gallery?

Given our continuous reflections, we came to realize that the book transcended the simple memory of an exhibition; it was part of a representation system and for that reason it must be done to create an important object for many people. (In fact, I believe that the books of photography will have a very specialized niche as sanctuary objects, and their economic and utilitarian version will be a complement that can be provided from the web and with the web) thus, the quality of this publication should be impeccable in its kind on order to differentiate, solidly, from the electronic representation on a computer screen. In the same way, both media would have to be intimately bonded: on one hand, the fine printing on paper and on the other, the web pages with their luminous pixels. As it can be foreseen, the making of this book, within the *Heresies* context, lead us to review the publishing editorial canons in order to adapt them for the purposes of the project.

The designers in charge of shaping all these ideas, and the ones that came up later, assumed a very delicate task. Therefore, progressing without knowing our path beforehand wasn't a simple challenge. When Azul Morris and Urs Graf rapidly understood that this project was getting out of the usual parameters, they search for different alternatives for the design of the book. After a series of plans and tests that

would not satisfy anybody, regarding how and what images would compose the book, we decided to ask Francisco Mata to be the photographic editor of the project. His task was to do whatever he thought could work best, according to his criteria.

Without a doubt, a difficult task regarding the margin of freedom he had, but as soon as we saw his first results, he made us clear that he knew which way to go, and we followed. Mata did not only have a sensible idea on how to assemble this story; his experience as a photographer also allowed him to come close to the images he was selecting with the optics that sometimes escapes from those who do not have this office. In collaboration with Martha Covarrubias, Francisco Mata gave the finishing touches to conclude the with the design and the electronic start-up of this volume.

Maria Luisa Valdivia would do as much with the texts of each one of the curators, assuming the difficult work of synthesizing what is said; for example, from 10 sheet to one, for only them would occupy 200 pages. This way the texts could fit in, in a brief synopsis fashion from the essays that 20 curators wrote while exploring the boundaries of this archive. The full text of each curator was linked to web site which was announced next to their review.

Something similar to this occurred with the "traditional" curriculum of the author. To include it, according to the orthodoxy of the books of art was, I felt, a waste of pages. In addition to that it would be obsolete by the moment publication, it took space from many of the photographs that, consequently, could not be displayed, and it was absurd. Therefore, like the texts of curation, it was more suitable to only provide the internet address in the book for further consultation. It is to mention that we would also be taking the unique advantages of the electronic support by making constant updates, so that the information doesn't become obsolete as it happens when it is printed in a book, in a definite way.

When I finally started to show to several parsons the model of the book, whom I thank them for their valuable comments and observations (Patricia Aridjis, Antonio Turok, Yolanda Andrade, Raúl Ortega, Gabriella Gómez Mont), I realised that an interesting part of the exchange with those friends and colleagues were laid in the comments and anecdotes to which I referred as I was reviewing the book. That, of course would be lost in the printed pages. Hence for us to find a solution, which finally consisted on offering the buyers of the book and exclusive Internet address of *Heresies*, where they could listen to the comments around the images, just as I was sharing them with these friends, like a guided lecture.

Even though we finished making the retrospective as originally proposed by Alejandro Castellanos, It is also true that we have done something that goes beyond that. I would like to think that the *Heresies* project can be added to the dialogue, at different levels, around the evolution of the photography itself. Starting from the way of making exhibitions to the creation of a data base and its multiple uses; from the revision of the forms in which the impression of a work can be done by digital means

to the conceptual discussion of the photographic media itself, now with its permanent reciprocity between the analogue and the digital, like the production of this volume and its web links.

I can only start by recognizing the amount of efforts poured here. To start, the integration of the different media used in the complexity of *Heresies* has been a long time labor, carried out by a large team. At a certain moment there were more than 35 souls working three shifts. Thanks to the collaboration of a very nurtured group of students, that were doing their social service, it was possible to scan so many images. Also, according to the demands of the project, people from very different specialties have been working with us: programmers, designers, historians, curators, librarians, anthropologists, psychologists, musicians, editors, photographers, writers, translators, printers, accountants and other professionals.

Particularly, I appreciate the will of all the curators that decided to join me on this innovative venture, at least to their mechanics to carry out their selection. The familiarization levels with the electronic media that was used was not equal for everyone, but was their desire to see how far they could get during their incursion. In this way, everyone contributed with their best intentions and the desire to make the process their own. The project dimensions and the time available forced us to look for a solution, which in the eyes of some critics, would be outrageous. Having 20 curators working simultaneously, I repeat, has been a watershed, that if not understood in terms of a new paradigm, would only be perceived as an excess.

Even though every curator of a determined theme would review the images and the photographic nature of its particular project, and for that we were going to need several voices, in the book was missing an introduction of me, which could explain, somehow, the author itself. It was the curator I was looking for, neither was the task of a poet; it was rather to look at the human being behind the camera to give us access to a realm that is not of public domain. I thought Benjamin Mayer Foulkes gathered two insurmountable qualities, his Psychoanalyst profession and his know closeness to the world of photography. The interviews were long, and the result of his observations is the introduction of this volume.

For the presentation of this volume I allowed myself to invite Christian Cajouille, one of the most appreciated photograph commentator, curator and editor in Europe as well as a long time friend, to guide the reader to navigate the various waters of *Heresies*. I cannot but appreciate and give all my recognition to his willingness to join in this project.

The realization of each part or component of this project has been possible thanks to the orchestrated and diligent supervision, from her computer, of our *ZoneZero* webmaster, Iliana Ulloa Gil, who with special patience, not only supervised that all of us were doing our job, but would also intervene with her own creative design solutions. Orchestrator woman who, at the same time, had to keep the rhythm

of the band, play her own instrument and march in the procession. Without her unconditional support, it would be hard to imagine this project as something accomplished on time and quality. José Luis Bravo and Benjamin Franco, our web masters, before the arrival of Iliana Ulloa, were, without a doubt very important for the future of this project.

The design team –led by Ehekatl Hernández Chalé and Elisa Rugo, with the support of Marisol Molina Serrano and Johan Trujillo Argüelles, as well as from María and Jesús Hernández Moreno, PaulaPastrana Chávez, Mario Eliud López Morales and Irene Méndez Graf– made possible not only that the images could be seen from the data base, but also made them available for the fine printing, destined for the museums and this book. The design of the galleries online, the web site and all that is relative to our electronic visual communication, was assisted by this remarkable team.

The coordination of research and documentation of my whole archive was leaded by Valeria Pérez Vega, my oldest collaborator in *Heresies*. She was at the birth of this project until its current realities. Miguel Santos Méndez, with his prodigious memory, always knew how to lead the images in the best direction corresponding to the data base. With the patience that honours his name was slowly weaving the net of photographs and documents that holds the data base.

Emilio Figueroa Torres has been our secret weapon. Without him it would be very unlikely that the project would be finished by now. His skill to solve programming problems, always with a smile, has been something that has left me full of admiration for him, at any time.

The first stage of the translations was leaded by Rodrigo Muñoz Nava and Catalina Shadwell Hand; on the other hand, Debra Nagao Ogawa made the whole translation of the book, and meticulously took care of its English edition. Thanks, without a doubt, to all of them.

The image printing for the museums was in the hands of Carlos Escobar, who, along with his partner Héctor Ramírez, was crucial to achieve a continuous and efficient production.

Ana Lilia Pérez Buendía, our accountant and Víctor Manuel Palacios, our lawyer, have been key pieces to maintain a project like this within total fulfilment of its obligations.

The Social service of countless students that collaborated in this project was supported by several education centers, to whom we show our most sincere gratitude: Centro de la Imagen, Universidad Tecnológica (Unitec), Escuela Activa de Fotografía, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (UAM) and Universidad del Valle de México (UVM).

It is impossible to mention all of those, who somehow, supported us in the several stages of this project, as Mariana Gruener, who contributed with the educational program that we have proposed to the museums. All of you know what you did and

what you brought in. In this way, you can also consider this project as yours as a whole, and of course, with our gratitude.

I could not conclude without recognising the support and friendship of two crucial persons for the birth of this book. One of them is Fernando Ondaraza, who kindly saw the first model of the book and transmitted his enthusiasm to Lunweg in Barcelona. Thanks to that, started to cascade all sorts of efforts in order to be the editors of this book. The other person is Benjamin Juárez who, being the head of Cenart (Centro Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes) here in Mexico City, had the audacity of looking for some economic support via Conaculta (Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes) for this book to have the resources to take off; in this way expressing his interest for the proposals stated in this novel project of *Heresies*, launched from Mexico and initially promoted by Alejandro Castellanos from Centro de la Imagen.

I have left until the end a very special gratitude. It is for my current partner, Nadia Baram Larralde, wherever I turned she would always have something valuable to give, both on the aspects of daily work, her vision as photographer, and in our relationship. Having her as an accomplice of my life has turned it into an adventure parallel to *Heresies*

Pedro Meyer | June 14th. 2008

Sailors and the Looking Glass

Francisco Mata Rosas



Why take photos? This question pervades all of Pedro Meyer's work. He explains it is "to remember"; to imagine and dream could be another possible answer; to bear witness to one's own life, it is evidence; to share what one cherishes over the years, it is generosity.

No one can photograph a subject that is not within one; no one chooses subjects alien to one's very being, everything is generated from within, it is all the product of who we are, what we want, what we believe in, what we doubt, what angers us to the point of fury, what makes us laugh, what makes us tremble, what fills us with indignation, on which side we are on. "Photography is like meeting up with old friends," the photographer once said.

"Everyone photographs with one's own eyes" is often said when referring to something that is actually much more complex: each individual who photographs his or her ghosts photographs him/herself. So, let's return to the specific question, why does Meyer take photos? The answer is on these pages, but it goes hand in hand with another query: why do we like to see photos?

When a fixed image takes on movement before our eyes, when a photo reeks of blood, death, birth, the sensuality of skin; when we can catch a whiff of the aromas of China and India, or when our senses are filled with the odor of the soil of Latin America, then we can hear what Meyer's figures have to say to us. Their breath resounds in our eyes. He photographs to feel, to make others feel, to remember what we did not know, to feel what we did not recall. Journeying to the doors that open before us in this book is also walking through our history, what we already possess and what we have yet to construct.

Photography has always succeeded in confusing us; we are not sure if we really remember or if what we hold in our memory is an image. Often we have no other way of proving it than a photo. Did a dwarf surrounded by whores exist? Did people ever fight for ideals? Was there a generation of young people who believed in a better world? Are we going toward that world? Is it really possible to wake up and have breakfast at the foot of a bed, blanketed by so much tenderness and peace? Maybe we like to photograph and to see photos because they draw us in like a looking glass, but not those in which we can see our reflection, but rather the kind described by Lewis Carroll.

We like subversion and the unknown. Who better to accompany us than Pedro Meyer? Like a seasoned storyteller, he sits down and beckons to us to join him around the fire on a starry night to hear of his journeys, his adventures, so he tells us his stories and gives us a taste of what the future holds. We take whatever suits us and integrate it into our history.

This has always been part of his world: he calls together, organizes, provokes, evokes, and at times overturns everything. This book was no exception. Making it meant using outside languages. It was necessary to seize cinematographic montage, the virtuosity of a DJ, oral tradition, the power of the demiurge, codices, Maya stelae, videoclips, crime fiction, comics, poetry. Ultimately, all languages had to be used so that when we look at his work, we realize Pedro turns to photography in order to live. Clearly, appealing to dialogue, amidst divergence and concurrence to give life to this Golem was necessary, so finally, after navigating together for weeks, all of us sailors were able to reach this port, and now you, dear reader, shall determine the next destination.

CURATORS

The Art of Storytelling: *I Photograph to Remember*

Jonathan Green



All photography is "instantly posthumous," Susan Sontag once said. This aphorism seems to beat in each honest scene from

life expressed in *I Photograph to Remember*, which is one of the most significant and key projects Pedro Meyer has undertaken in his entire career.

Jonathan Green explains the history of this work and brings to memory his intimate story. He tells how at the end of the 1990s, he saw Pedro's material for the first time and was struck by his enthusiasm to transfer it to cd-rom, "a format that was just starting to have an impact in the new world of multimedia." Meyer was also beginning to do digital photography –when most photographers in Mexico were still unfamiliar with it or were rejecting it– and therefore, as Green notes, *I Photograph to Remember* "is a conceptual bridge between his analog work and the digital work that followed," where "the expressive and panoramic image of his father flying" invites the metaphor of this transition.

The depth of emotion is expressed there, but the curator explores further. He signals how the intense Meyerian story opens by using his images as "innocent family photos" to reach a natural climax, although it seems severe to us; the use of black and white creating "tension between the white hospital gowns and darkness ever on the lurk"; the proximity of his voice and images brought in harmony with music by Manuel Rocha; expressing such compassion and tenderness for each fleeting instant; and like a corollary in the last question uttered by Liesel Richheimer to her son Pedro: "Why couldn't we be this close all our lives?"



Original text:
<http://www.pedromeyer.com/galleries/i-photograph/indexsp.html>

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You are Helped to Walk into Life, and You Are Helped out of Life, 1987.
 Mexico City, Mexico.
 35mm b/w negative.

Pedro Meyer's Self-Portraits

Vesta Mónica Herrerías Cuevas



Throughout his life, Pedro Meyer has been creating an album with images of himself.

That act of capturing each instant of his own existence, before seeming banal or egocentric, triggers a series of reflections in terms of the diverse readings that his self-portraits offer.

On that track, the curator finds the vocabulary and syntax of the photographer-photographing himself. The fictitious or real situation; the credible, which is always found in the photographic image more than the fidelity to appearance of the subject portrayed; the element of how to remember an "I myself" in ongoing change and with all of his expressions, gestures, masks; the notion of identity and what this implies, the recognition of his own search.

Mirrors and shadows also multiply and spread the dimensions of Meyer's self-portraits. The idea of "being the other" in each circumstance, confrontation, and dilemma –recalling the almost ontological stories of Jorge Luis Borges, for example– is revealed by Pedro Meyer as an introspective, although uninhibited or even provocative act, which positions us face to face with that perfect illusion that each one of us has of our image.

Thinking in these terms is like recapitulating life or reflecting on the continuous "metaportraiture" of oneself with one's surroundings. In Pedro's case, in addition, it is knowing he is "half camera-half human"; to follow understanding that he lives in the mirror, the unfinished but finite "I", fragmented and imagined, fictitious, that constructs truths based on the utopian logic of "I myself." That is where Vesta Mónica Herrerías also discovers that "the imaginary I of Pedro Meyer has been manifested through as many bodies and faces as the aspects of the personal search of this creator."



Original text:
<http://www.pedromeyer.com/galleries/selfportraits/indexsp.html>

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Searching for My Identity, 1985.
 Amsterdam, Netherlands.
 35mm b/w negative.

A Small Step for Meyer . . .

Gustavo Prado



" . . . A giant leap for mankind," continues the celebrated phrase from July 20, 1969, uttered by Neil Armstrong when he

touched down on the lunar surface. Why did curator Gustavo Prado resort to this as the title for his text on the world of entertainment captured by Pedro Meyer? Although the most direct response may be found at the end of his lines—alluding to Pedro's pioneering work, which gave rise to the use of the digital medium for photographic creation, the reference is also pertinent for the spectacular quality of those lunar images that, just as the actions or scenes staged in front of Meyer's camera "were made to be seen."

Around 300,000 photos are in this series, showing "the ongoing presence of a deep understanding of the power of the image, and through it, of the mass media's all-encompassing strategy of articulation. In this awareness . . . , sense of humor and opportunity come into play to see with a gaze of wonderment how the mirror of reality is broken and occasionally from among the pieces emerge impossible characters . . . acting out their own carnivals." There are the "specific plots," but also the "inferred" ones: the catwalk of uses and fashions that "sum up the changing spirit of eras and places."

But "what is made to be seen," the curator clarifies, "is a broad term that may cover almost any activity, not to say all photography. Thus, in this case, he proposes to go "toward infinity and beyond" to "seek out the 'show' in the total corpus of images of 'Meyerland' . . . and to observe his way of thinking, his visual experience."



Culminating Moments of Existence

Elizabeth Ferrer



"Beyond the comfortable frontiers of portraits of friends and family," as a young photographer at the end of the 1950s,

Pedro Meyer began to capture religious festivals and rituals in Mexico. Although his archive includes pictures of religious activities in other parts of the world—such as Europe, China, India, the United States, and Israel—above all else, he is "one of the great photographers of Catholic ritual in Mexico," comments Elizabeth Ferrer.

Multitudes in procession and the most intimate acts of devotion are the duality that Meyer examines by approaching the spiritual; simultaneously public and private terrain. The pilgrims who come each year to the Basilica of Guadalupe or the faithful witnessing the reenactment of the Stations of the Cross in Ixtapalapa are those who give Pedro the best images of the "physical complexity and psychological intensity" of religious fervor. At the same time, in the use of the mask—which from pre-Hispanic times "marks the temporal suspension of everyday life—Meyer sees "a tool to understand the overall complexity of the I, both internally and externally. In fact . . . it allows for a sort of unmasking."

Far from the picturesque, the photographer manages to reflect the "strange intersections" between episodes of great spirituality and common or mundane activities that arise around rituals, including those surrounding death. Pedro knows of this. As may be seen in *I Photograph to Remember*, he lives with certainty of the end, and without any bias, he creates his own iconographic ritual. In the words of the curator: "Meyer has exalted the power of the camera to capture the culminating moments of existence, those that represent the eternal, universal quest for spiritual meaning; . . . he convincingly shows us that the spiritual can always be found all around us."



Original text:
<http://www.pedromeyer.com/galleries/shows/indexexp.html>

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Financial Advisor, 1987.
New York, N. Y., USA.
35mm b/w negative.

Original text:
<http://www.pedromeyer.com/galleries/religion/indexexp.html>

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The Vantage Point, 1986.
Ixtapalapa, Mexico City,
Mexico. 35mm b/w negative.

Politics of the Image: Meyer and Latin America

Alejandro Castellanos



When Pedro Meyer left behind his industrial activities in 1974 to devote himself fulltime to photography, it took him only three years to become a founding member and president of the Mexican Council of Photography and to organize the First Latin American Photography Colloquium. Since that time, "his greatest contribution has taken place thanks to the balance that he has kept between reflection and practice . . . " because "Meyer's ideas have triggered some of the major debates on images in Mexico and Latin America."

Alejandro Castellanos recalls the controversy on the identity of photography in Latin America, associated with "compromised" reality that scorned "alienating" experimentation," and how Pedro "assumed a position and risk by situating his discourse at the crossroads of those problems." After making us see that Meyer's images in Latin America are "a constant coming and going in discontinuous processes that cannot be appreciated from a single perspective," the curator resorts to Ortega and Gasset, Enrique Dussel, and Gabriel Zaid to observe his images as a er— is the specific genre to identify the relationship between "the other like me"; then based on *The Lady and Her Servants*, he evokes the contradictions in Latin American societies; and with *I Photograph to Remember* he introduces reflection on the connection between memory, technology, and representation, which together with *Truths and Fictions*, demonstrates "the possibilities opened up by the digital age." Finally, in *ZoneZero* he situates what he calls "the politics of the imaginary," because that is where Meyer has been able to "generate an alternate meaning for the global cultural tradition" of the image.



El Asombrado, 1985.
Ecuador.
35mm b/w negative.

The States of Pedro Meyer

Fernando Castro



Pedro first got to know the United States more than fifty years ago. Since that time, when he was a student at Babson

College in Massachusetts, he has visited the American union some twenty times and has amassed a collection of more than 55,000 images. What is peculiar about this work, other than its range and the fact it covers more than half a century? In his curatorial text, Fernando Castro answers that question. He begins by reflecting on the permeable divisions between the genres of this iconographic complex — documentary photography, photojournalism, and street photography (with hints of Cartier-Bresson), to examine several of his qualities.

The context (whether the situation or background of scenes) and the connections between the subjects photographed there (human or otherwise) are seen at the crucial moment by Meyer to show some social incongruence with irony and a certain human condition with compassion; exoticism is present when he displays it, as if they were a collector's curiosities, those "social behaviors that could only have occurred in the United States"; at the same time, posing shots or editing others appear and offend purists of the documentary genre because Pedro the heretic says that "truth is not necessarily betrayed" by digital manipulation of images. And he proves his postulate, for example, in the pair of projects carried out with images taken in the United States, Mexico, and Latin America: *Us and the others* (1986) and *Truths and Fictions* (1993), in which the border lines are at the cultural difference and photographic questioning of those realities. However, there is also the singular vision of the Pedro Meyer's United States: it is how he sees "evolution that has taken place in the lifestyles and dominant ideas on the medium and the world in general"; in photographing "the good, the bad and the ugly of the subproducts of that massive society."



The Twin Towers, 1989.
New York, N. Y. usa.
35mm b/w negative.

Original text:
<http://www.pedromeyer.com/galleries/latinafrica/indexsp.html>

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Marginal Notes on Cuban Photography

Juan Antonio Molina Cuesta



"The possibility of relating the work of the well-known Mexican photographer Pedro Meyer, with contemporary Cuban

photography" is what Juan Antonio Molina offers us by finding those connections—the most representative ones—in a vast universe of over 5,000 images shot by Meyer during his trips to Cuba between 1978 and 1986.

In four concise notes, the curator gets to the root of that possibility: first he reflects on and proposes that the definition "Cuban photography" should be understood as "the Cuban element in photography" or the construction of its imagery; in this way, Pedro Meyer can "enter and exit" with a dynamic passport. The three following notes are devoted to specifics of Meyer's photography in terms of what is Cuban.

In street shots, passed by gazes of complicity between the photographer and subjects, who make frank and friendly visual contact, they address the camera or are absent, and sometimes even turn their back to it.

The series of shop displays "where cult is rendered to fantasy," and where Pedro plays by exploring in depth to find out "what is empty and what is full," "opaqueness and transparency," "the logical and the absurd."

Finally, the photos of women with toilet-paper-tube hair curlers that give a touch of the picturesque, while revealing a private use that has become public and fashionable, revealing the relationship of "masculine vs. feminine gaze" in confrontation. For the curator, this resource of capturing the gaze looking at the camera—which is summed in this series—takes on a special, distinctive importance in Pedro Meyer's work in Cuba.



Romeo y Julieta, 1979.
Havana, Cuba.
35mm b/w negative.

October 2, Is Not Forgotten!

Rogelio Villarreal



In the 1960s, young people in many parts of the world expressed their inconstancy against the prevailing order and sought

new freedom and ways of being. Although the student rebellion broke out in a peculiar way in Mexico, it managed to consolidate itself as a true movement. A year synonymous with the student movement, 1968 in Mexico was a time of protest marches, rock music, placards, the army and special police forces, the granaderos, the supposed communist threat, the 19th Olympics, the massacre at Tlatelolco, society's response, political prisoners and the missing, the rallying cry of "October 2, Is Not Forgotten!"

Pedro Meyer was present at these events as a citizen and a visual witness. With his analog camera he shot 1,140 black-and-white photos; some out-of-focus, "the result of hurrying, shoving, and running" —described by Rogelio Villarreal in his text, which serves as a sort of chronicle describing the events and mood that pervaded since July 22, 1968. Perhaps the mood is what the curator highlights most in Meyer's images: how "they reveal, frame by frame, young people filled with enthusiasm, open and essentially healthy to a certain degree"; in addition to attesting to the union of a society that was becoming stronger.

Something that cannot be overlooked is Pedro's creative quest; that is to say, not as a reporter, but rather as an artist who composes a shot. There are images endowed with this quality, such as the one where a Zapata, in the background, seems to back up the other placards advancing en masse and filling the shot, the street. And these were, of course, the photos that were the covers in 1971 of the most important journalistic and literary accounts of the 1968 movement:

Luis González de Alba's *Los días y los años* and Elena Poniatowska's *La noche de Tlatelolco*.



Rousing from a Car, 1968.
Mexico City, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.

Original text:
<http://www.pedromeyer.com/galerias/cuba/indexsp.html>

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Nicaragua, 1978-1984

Wendy Watriss



On November 4, 1978, the Saturday supplement of the Mexican newspaper *Unomásuno* devoted pages to Pedro Meyer's coverage entitled "Ernesto Cardenal on the Gospel amidst M-1 Rifles." The newspaper continued to give Meyer "a daily platform to report on the war" in Nicaragua, at a time it was covered "only superficially by the mass media" in Mexico. Recalling those times, Pedro commented to curator Wendy Watriss:

I went there when I was 39 years old. I had just begun to devote myself fulltime to photography, and I had never worked or published anything in a newspaper. I had never done that type of professional photojournalism . . . Why Nicaragua? It was an important political story, a revolution or insurrection. I wasn't convinced that the photographers who were covering it were doing a good job, so I decided to face the challenge myself. Of course, this was connected with my own ideas. If I had lacked any political consciousness about what was happening there, I would never have gone to Nicaragua.

What Meyer did in that country was "committed photography," as the curator synthesizes and describes these images: "they *take* the viewer inside, but with safety" and "we *feel* what is happening during the hours of tromping through underbrush under the blazing sun, without water or a roof, decent uniforms, shoes, or above all weapons that work." "The images often *caress* the figures," for the most part members of the eclectic guerrilla army, young professionals, priests, "and a woman from the upper class, like Nora Astorga." But furthermore, there are those who were tortured by the Somoza forces, the cities that he ordered to be bombed, as well as the Sandanista victory celebration and one of his first public acts. Pedro Meyer truly managed to assemble a complete, historical narrative, although he also learned "a lot about the manipulation of images and the limitations of photography in that context."



Comandante Sacco, 1978.
Nicaragua.
35 mm b/w negative.

Migrants

Néstor García Canclini



From the almost 5000 images that Pedro Meyer accumulated from the early 1980s to 2006, curator Néstor García Canclini selected 50 scenes on "a variety of emblematic situations" revolving around Mexican migrants in the United States; he organized the material into five narratives.

The points of access to reach California, Arizona, Texas, or New York are documented not only in photos of the desert paths, but also in those displaying "the means of legitimating or legalizing the presence of foreigners." They include, for example, shots of storefronts offering "immediate marriage" or "amnesty." And since access also implies being able to work and live, Meyer went into Mexican barrios to witness their existence.

Monuments and Landmarks, Roles, Identifications and Indecisions are the other narratives the curator goes on to describe in "the ups and downs of migrants." They are a multicultural blend circulating in everyday spaces and leaving signs of their presence, symbols of identity, and personal claims regarding their alien status, such as "immigrants are workers, not terrorists." They are men and women who modify their gender roles in domestic life under these conditions and invent resources for self-identify in their group and among "others," but at the same time, serving to distinguish themselves from them.

At the end, the "stamp of 'migrants'" seems to mark them with a fate; that of those who "never finish settling and belonging"; a sort of indecision and of "coming and going": "Mexico, next right", "Mexico, next exit" ends Canclini, alluding to those images Meyer shot on the highway.



The Lettuce Man, 1985.
Yuma, Arizona, usa.
35mm b/w negative.

Original text:
<http://www.pedromeyer.com/galleries/nicaragua/indexsp.html>

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<http://www.pedromeyer.com/galleries/usa/indexsp.html>

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Images of Europe

Martin Lister



The entire collection of images tells a story. But when it is composed of 28,000 scenes taken in fourteen European

countries over the course of more than fifty years, it multiplies the narrative possibilities. This is the starting point for Martin Lister's text with the "wide-angle" story that Pedro Meyer tells in his "photos of travel" throughout Europe.

Without forgetting the classic tourist shots (attractions, restaurants, friends . . .), here the professional photographer sets himself apart; whether in Berlin after World War II, captured in 35-mm transparencies where we can still see "the characteristic, clear blue sky produced by Kodachrome," or whether "in a globalized Europe driven by consumerism," as suggested by that photo Pedro shot juxtaposing an Armani ad, a Coca-Cola delivery truck, and "the severe totalitarian architecture in post-Perestroika Moscow."

Perhaps without consciously setting out to do so, Meyer has narrated European social transformation as well as the very media used to record it. However, with full intention, he has acted on the changing scene of photographic technology by being an "untiring advocate of the potential of photography." In this vein, Lister devotes part of his text to reflect, for example, on the democratization, speed, and opening up that the digital and internet world offer, faced with the possibility that this implies "losing more information than ever in the face of history." But when Meyer continues traveling through the world and adding narratives to his database, he shows there will always be a proper media for a mind open to the prospects of the future.



Images of México

Elizabeth Ferrer



A large part of Pedro Meyer's photography has been shot in Mexico, his home since he arrived from Spain with his

parents at the age of two. So it is not surprising that this collection numbers more than 80,000 images (for the moment) of a Mexico lived for more than half a century, reflecting Meyer's professional development and that of photography as a medium. The historicity of this iconographic complex is undeniable, whether seen diachronically or synchronically. It is in the shots of Mexico City and several regions of the country; from Pedro's initial experiments in the mid 1950s to the most recent; in black and white, color, or digital images.

Gradually appropriating photographic resources (genres and techniques) and avidly traveling through his country tracking down photographic visuals, Pedro documented moments as shocking as the 1957 and 1985 earthquakes that struck the capital. He shared "his desire for a more open society" when he photographed the 1968 student movement or the 1971 Avándaro rock festival and challenged "the iconic [notion] of . . . any official vision of the country" to show the other faces of the oil industry or politics in an election campaign.

"Only the number and variety of photos taken by Meyer in Mexico seem to define the country" that for years he has seen how life unfolds on its urban streets, towns, traditions, rallying cries, misfortunes and illusions . . . The daring nature of Pedro Meyer's photographic work resides in this everyday, collective, yet intimate, understanding. As Elizabeth Ferrer aptly notes: he "has been able to portray the realities of the people," rich or impoverished, because he has "a consummate ability to visualize the intensity and incalculable diversity of human life in Mexico, which would otherwise remain hidden."



Original text:
<http://www.pedromeyer.com/galleries/europe/indexsp.html>

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The Threepenny Opera, 1979.
Graz, Austria.
35mm b/w negative.

Original text:
<http://www.pedromeyer.com/galleries/mexico/indexsp.html>

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Zapata Heirs, 1991|2008.
Santa Maria Yucuhiti, Oaxaca, Mexico.
35mm color transparency | Digitally modified image.

Through the People of Rain

Deborah Dorotinsky Alperstein



For several months in 1991, Pedro Meyer traveled through the Mixteca Alta, in the state of Oaxaca, to prepare a

photographic piece for the magazine *National Geographic*. When the project was canceled, the more than 14,000 color slides were put away, and although a small part appeared in *Truths and Fictions* in 1993, most remain unpublished.

Obviously, its worth goes beyond its numbers. It contains what Pedro chose to see in the life of the Mixtec people. And it is the curator, Deborah Dorotinsky, who unravels it bit by bit. She begins by noting how the very name of this indigenous group – *Ñuu Savi*, People of Rain – appears in Meyer's contrasting images: between an eroded earth and a sky heavy with self-centered clouds, or a wasteland and life "ebullient and full of energy running in torrents uncommon for rain."

Pedro Meyer's Mixteca vibrates and seduces, because it is a landscape of everyday entities –earth and water, spirituality, work, and quest– except that it takes place at that latitude. Thus, we are trapped by the electric blues of his sky, the grittiness, the processions and murmurs praying openly or sheltered by a ray of light behind a window, the natural tension of personal and collective gestures portrayed in complicity or stolen, and the connection between those who migrate to be better off than those who stay home: the latter are welcomed with tasty meals, such as the ones offered by the "Comedor Fam. 'Mary'. *The best food. Hamburger's. Comida corrida y a la carte*"; while the others bear their new cultural baggage –including Batman and Mickey Mouse– so that the people of the rain take on other meanings. For Pedro Meyer's Mixteca, life continues changing its social landscape.



May You Find Yourself Amongst Giants, 1991 | 2008.
Magdalena Jaltepec, Oaxaca, Mexico.
35mm color transparency | Digitally modified image.

Once There Was a Face Attached to a Body

Pablo Ortiz Monasterio



The abundance of digital and analog photos that Pedro Meyer has created throughout his career revolves around one major theme:

the human being. The human subject appears in any group of his images, whether classified by country or by specific project, but formally speaking the representation of such a complex nature concerns the genre of portraiture. That is where curator Pablo Ortiz Monasterio reveals a constellation of intimate, public, and everyday realities . . .

Faces of relatives, collaborators, friends, and famous figures –of the likes of Norman Mailer, Jorge Luis Borges, and Gabriel García Márquez– together with those of so many anonymous individuals "who emerge from the struggle for liberation and daily life"; hands that protect, embrace, and speak of love in solidarity; bodies gently intertwined that are the portrait of lovers . . .

Yes, a multiplicity of gestures is reflected in the photographer's lens. However, in many of Pedro Meyer's portraits there are also "extremely deep layers" that bring "opaque, impalpable content to the surface"; meanings that are constructed, depending on their contexts, and that anchor stories. With *Mona Lisa in the Wax Museum* (1988) he portrayed not only the Gioconda, but also all of Western culture. Then with the man disguised as a camera, which "could also be read as a self-portrait of Meyer as photographer," this genre is interwoven with landscape. There are, obviously, portraits emblematic of Pedro's work: *The Lady and Her Servants* (1977) –his mother– and *The Meyers* (1940/2000). In the latter, for those who never posed together with their father, he creates a real portrait of himself (as both a child and adult) and his son Julio. Thus, the curator concludes: Pedro Meyer is a "kaleidoscopic photographer who allows us to see reality from multiple angles."



Original text:
<http://www.pedromeyer.com/galleries/portraits/indexsp.html>

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Original text:
<http://www.pedromeyer.com/galerias/mixteca/indexsp.html>

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Teodoro Césarman, 1975.
Mexico City, Mexico.
6x8cm b/w negative .

Political Theater: The Gaze of a Presidential Campaign

Álvaro Vázquez Mantecón



The great "libretto" to contextualize Pedro Meyer's photojournalistic coverage of Miguel de la Madrid's presidential

campaign shows a country governed by the same political organization for 71 years (1929-2000). It even inspired Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa to describe Mexico as "the perfect dictatorship."

De la Madrid was the second before the last president in this ironclad dynasty in power, so that his 1961 campaign did not seek electoral votes, but rather recognition of his investiture. Under the cover of "staged constructions that . . . recall those [events] devised to receive viceroys in New Spain during the colonial period," the candidate attempted to exude a charisma that he lacked, while Meyer's critical gaze was undertaking the "visual analysis of the nature of the regimen," observed Álvaro Vázquez Mantecón.

Pedro identified the ritualistic character of power "in terms closer to the realm of the sacred" enveloped in pomp, as well as the role of the actors who entered the stage or were behind the scenes: peasant groups, taxi drivers, laborers; "indigenous groups from Chiapas and their leaders with their briefcases and wristwatches"; some intellectuals, and of course, "the political class of the moment that, like a six-year court, mobilized itself around the candidate to stake out his position in the coming government." The anecdote recounted by the curator about the elderly man from Michoacán who asked Meyer whether Lázaro Cárdenas was still president of Mexico (having been so from 1934 to 1940), is one of the many tantalizing bits of this twentieth-century political comedy in Mexico.



Avándaro, 1971

Rogelio Villarreal



Three years after the 1968 student movement, there was still no official response from the Mexican government to

October 2 or demands for the democratization of public education. These were the reasons for the student march of June 10, 1971, which were again violently repressed. "The government continued its war against young people," observed curator Rogelio Villarreal.

Then how could a rock festival like the one held in Woodstock (1969) have taken place only three months after June 10? Given the radicalization of one part of those young people, who formed Marxist guerrilla groups in response to the repression, and the naiveté of others barely out of adolescence and coveting a wish to be revolutionaries, without any clear ideological or political program, authorities perhaps agreed to the idea of the festival to ease social and political tensions.

Based on the context, the curator then described what that concert on September 11 and 12, 1971, was like. The recreation of the mood in his text is as worthy as the images of Pedro Meyer, who was one of the few photographers who "captured the anxiety of thousands upon thousands of young people to taste freedom—even if just for one night." His shots feature the vigilant soldier from the Mexican army, more astonished than threatening; the mob trying to get to the site; the field battered by rain; and the overall diversion of almost two hundred thousand young people, many of them still children in 1968. So "the photo of a desolate Valley of Avándaro, full of trash with a fantasy-like forest in the background, remains as a sad allegory of the country in the following decades."



Original text:
<http://www.pedromeyer.com/galleries/mmh/indexexp.html>

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And Who Do You Vote For?, 1981.
Parral, Chihuahua, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.

Original text:
<http://www.pedromeyer.com/galleries/mexico68/indexexp.html>

Curator's E-mail:
rogelio56@gmail.com

Mexicanos al Grito de Guerra..., 1971.
Avándaro, Estado de México, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative..

Events that Shape History

Mariana Gruener



On September 19, 1985, at 7:19 am, an earthquake measuring 8.1 on the Richter scale shook Mexico City for two long

minutes. Pedro Meyer was in New York, serving on a grant panel for the Eugene Smith Foundation, but when he heard the news, he immediately returned to Mexico. He arrived on Friday, September 20, shortly after the second aftershock. "After making sure that his loved ones were safe, he went out to photograph the city's devastated streets," producing a body of almost 2,000 images.

"In several of these photos, aesthetics and the event are interwoven; . . . and that is both surprising and disconcerting," notes Mariana Gruener in her text. Perhaps it is because Meyer, in the face of the catastrophe, is forceful, sincere, and perspicacious. The power of his images seem equal in magnitude to that of the earthquake and its devastation: demolished buildings, rubble, death, "men and women hauling stones with their hands, with pickaxes, to save their loved ones."

Yes, the city in ruins –like the national flag that left behind the celebration of Mexican Independence on September 16– but also life that goes on: in the spunk of the boy who does his homework on his lap, on the sidewalks like the banks of a river where women wash clothes, in the humor of someone who put a manikin in the middle of the street as a sign to divert traffic, or in the alcohol-besotted "Viva Mexico" of a drunkard still toasting after the event is over.

This is how Pedro Meyer transcends photojournalism, by leaving a record of this event in the collective memory.



The Curtain Has Fallen, 1985.
Mexico City, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.

Sad Visual Universes

José Antonio Rodríguez



Since some fifty years ago, Pedro Meyer has been doing photographic work for a wide range of clients: companies and industries with different commercial interests: banks, publishers, museums, public institutions and parastatal ones, such as the government's oil company Petróleos Mexicanos.

In 1957, hired by Black Star, he documented the devastation of the earthquake in Mexico City. Many other projects followed; two from 1977 exemplify this phase: the photo series that served as magazine covers for *Sucesos para Todos* –whose allure blended Pedro's disturbing scenes with phrases like "Beauty contest or slave trade?"– and shots of industrial installations for the rubber company Negromex, "as if a human subject, as a model with which images are created" –wrote Meyer in July of that year.

These and the rest of the work he has been hired to do – for catalogues, annual reports, exhibitions, Christmas gifts, books, magazines, and even a political campaign– come to a total of approximately 57,000 images; an extensive archive that can be seen with other criteria and intentions. That is what José Antonio Rodríguez achieved in his text as curator, after clarifying: "in his work for hire, there are evidently some magnificent and elegant professional images . . . , but the discursive selection that I wished to construct did not go there." Of course, the curator's emphasis is on what he believes Pedro Meyer incisively and creatively saw beyond the work for hire: cities built of metal, landscapes filled with earth and sky, grayness; "a world of solitudes, somewhat mad, already decrepit, and on the verge of dying."



Nights of Uncertainty, 1985.
Mexico City, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.

Original text:
<http://www.pedromeyer.com/galleries/earthquake/indexexp.html>

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Original text:
<http://www.pedromeyer.com/galleries/work/indexexp.html>

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Celebrating Oil

Alfonso Morales



Based on the notion of time as a social institution, Alfonso Morales proposes the existence of a "Mexican time", whose

calendar has more memorable days to honor saints and virgins as well as national heroes, compadres [godparents], mothers, and even tacos; in other words, to commemorate collective identity.

After this initial chapter, what follow are aimed at a historical review of the oil industry in Mexico. They go from the first years of the twentieth century—with its exploitation in the hands of foreign companies—to the nationalization of petroleum, decreed by President Lázaro Cárdenas in 1938, that gave rise to the state-owned Petróleos Mexicanos (Pemex). The curator's well-documented text recalls political scenarios and the social atmosphere of those years to then contextualize the fiftieth anniversary of Pemex and how it came to be that Pedro Meyer—hired in 1987 to do a photo exhibition and a book (entitled *Los cohetes duraron todo el día* [The Skyrockets Lasted All Day])—built an iconographic discourse "loath to facile or demagogic enthusiasm" that, together with "the anti-Cardenist obsession of the president-elect," led to the disappearance of the publication.

However, if "Pedro Meyer's skyrockets" could not rise then (a possible metaphor of the "oil festival" that has also not yet been fully celebrated?), his images continue to be journals of the work and the emotion focused on that company that has become a symbol, because—as Meyer says in the preface to his book—"the office worker, the fireman, . . . the shoe repairman, and the tailor who fixes the clothes of laborers, the ice-cream vendor, the peasant and the fisherman of the region, among others, are also oil workers. For me, each one of them and their families, at any time of day or night, are also . . . oil workers," builders of that reality.



Celebrating Oil, 1987.
Minatitlán, Veracruz, Mexico.
35mm b/w negative.

Another Theory of Relativity: Truths and Fictions

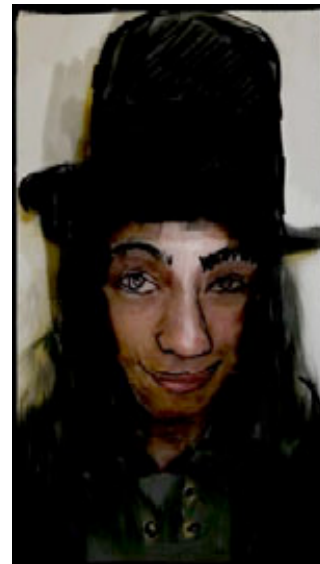
Jonathan Green



"By the end of 1990, Photoshop was in Pedro's computer, a 40-MHz Macintosh IIx, the most powerful at that time. With

the help of scanners . . . in addition to the recently developed illustration software Fractal Design Painter, Meyer's journey from analog to digital began": Jonathan Green recalls at the beginning of his text. This was the birth of *Truths and Fictions* in 1993, resulting in the first important exhibition of digital photography and the first cd-rom catalogue. Meyer hailed a new course for photography; another aesthetic, although linked to the documentary, would also be articulated with idioms from painting and film. "The computer was . . . an extension of [his] camera, a simpler darkroom" to manipulate his shots and "to create a series of iconic instants that . . . are closer to memory than instantaneous experience."

Truths and Fictions, just as memory, builds interpretations, archetypes, and symbols; it explores inner life. There, photographic temporality is relative, for past and present seem "synthesized in a perfect confection [of the image] in the present." Green says: "Pedro's theory on relativity is based on the premise of the constant apparition of photographic reality." And in that relativity, the curator proposes: the black-and-white images taken in the United States are *truths*, whose appearance of realism puts them there, but in the realm of the metaphorical, of the comparison creating new meanings; the majority of color images, shot in Mexico, are *fictions*, for they are closer to the pictorial and cinematographic genres, as well as allegory that "conceals reality" under layers of image and culture to show human spirit and emotion.



Merlin Ambrosius, 2007/2007.
Mexico City, Mexico.
Original digital file | Digitally modified image.

Original text:
<http://www.pedromeyer.com/galerias/pemex/indexsp.html>

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The Explorer...

Vicki Goldberg



Curator Vicki Goldberg begins her text with a brief historical survey of photography. In this review she

contextualizes the ages of photography and sketches out part of its nature. Phrases such as that of Jacques-Mandé Daguerre ("I have seized the light, I have captured its flight") and to which painter Paul Delaroche reacted in 1839 ("From today forward, painting is dead") seem to have exalted the advent of a new science, capable of replacing representative art par excellence. A sentence that time was accommodating . . .

What is certain is that "the potential of photography to create fiction was explored from the very year of its invention," the curator points out, which suggests the budding nineteenth century photographer is not a far cry from the contemporary artist creating the image in this digital age: both face the respective socio-cultural and technological experience of their time. Pedro Meyer has passed through this milieu of constant enquiry: "Meyer's 'explorations', as he refers to his digitally manipulated photos, could well be images accompanying stories of lost texts . . . fairy tales for adults" that "reconfigure the world" in an appropriate way for this time, whose visual interactive quality makes ordinary life seem a bore. Therefore, many of Pedro's explorations are "the everyday search and seeing what is ours" (such as the photo of the man who looks out behind spectacles that seem to have been erased by light); in finding the decisive moments, but also in creating them to make their "fictions" more real. So at times "his work is strange because it is not strange enough," and consequently, he poses almost ontological questions: "how close is this to reality?" and "can we trust our eyes?"



The Meyers, 1940/2000.

Mexico City, Mexico.
6x8cm b/w negative and original digital file | Digitally modified image.

Traveling in the Digital Age

Patricia Mendoza



Like awakening to another day is a "predictable meeting with the unpredictable," Patricia Mendoza's text is a Lewis Carroll-style journey, in which she is Alice seduced by fate and the risk that—as in a Paul Auster story—awaits her behind her computer screen.

Therefore, far from undertaking an analysis or a technical description of the website <<http://www.pedromeyer.com>>, the curator puts herself in the place of a traveler and she records her expedition. Despite initial difficulties in handling the navigation tools, she knows how to go—and she takes us—on an itinerary in a different form of transport in the digital age.

Several Meyerian dimensions elapse, including that "of the master who, in the plenitude of his creation, provides the opportunity to explore, discover, and experiment"; that of reflection making it possible to see technological changes, and that of those "images like infinite *matrushkas*," mirroring the spectacular stretch of "an infinitely expanding horizon, that at the same time is as accessible as air for everyone." His is the "journey within the [virtual] journey" . . .

Bangladesh, China, Finland, India, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and South Africa are only some of the geographic coordinates of those 22,600 images that Pedro Meyer has chosen as a starting point, set in the millennium 2000 (2002–2007). And it gives a notion that this group commences a new age just as Pedro Meyer another era, after having been—in the 1990s—the one who promoted the transition from analog to digital photography, with projects like *Truths and Fictions*, *I Photograph to Remember*, and *ZoneZero*.



Original text:

<http://www.pedromeyer.com/galleries/digital/indexsp.html>

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The Eyes of the Cyclopes, 2004.

Dhaka, Bangladesh.
Original digital file.

Original text:

<http://www.pedromeyer.com/galleries/explorations/indexsp.html>

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ZoneZero: From Analog to Digital

Mark Haworth-Booth



On January 23, 1996, Pedro Meyer published the first issue of *ZoneZero* on the Internet. "He thought that directing an online magazine, on the one hand, would offer a bridge between analog and digital photography, and on the other, that it would keep him up-to-date due to the constant flow of technical innovations in the digital era."

Eleven years later, Mark Haworth-Booth brings to mind what *ZoneZero* has been since then: Meyer's desire to fuel the field of photography and his mission to question our notion of "truth" as a representation of reality, which he has achieved worldwide with his thousands of pages in English and Spanish. In 2006 alone, this online publication received 156,575,334 hits. What museum or book could reach such a huge audience? And so, it is no surprise that *ZoneZero* won an internet award from Encyclopædia Britannica, for example.

"*ZoneZero* is an immensely rich site," declares the curator, "it offers a way of looking at the world, which is also a way of communicating with it." Formally, each one of his sections serves this purpose. But in conceptual terms, it rises as a heresy: it provokes other reflections (at times ironic ones, as in his Editorial), it encourages exchange between the photographers and visitors by including the artists' e-mail address (when the custom has been to "protect the artist" from direct contact with the viewer), it makes room for photos taken from a cellphone ("art?" some will ask), and it offers exhibitions of other photographers to break with the simple act of "showing" ("sacrilege!" others will cry). *ZoneZero* opens these intelligent worlds, because it is "coming and going," technique, poetry, and humor; it is the etcetera yet to come.



Original text:

<http://www.pedromeyer.com/galleries/zonezero/indexp.html>

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Homepage ZoneZero.com, June 2008.

Participating Museums at the *Heresies* Project

<p>AUSTRALIA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian Centre for Photography Sydney http://www.acp.au.com The Perth Centre for Photography Perth http://www.pcp.org.au <p>BANGLADESH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drik Gallery II Dacca http://www.drik.net <p>BRAZIL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Espaço Cultural Contemporaneo Brasília http://www.eccobrasilia.com.br Museu de Arte Contemporanea da Universidade de Sao Paulo Sao Paulo http://www.macvirtual.usp.br/mac/ <p>CHILE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centro Cultural Palacio La Moneda Santiago http://www.ccpml.cl Museo Arqueológico de La Serena La Serena http://www.museoarqueologicolaserena.cl Museo de Historia Natural de Concepción Concepción http://www.museodehistorianaturaldeconcepcion.cl Museo Regional de La Araucanía Temuco http://www.museoregionalaraucania.cl Museo Regional de Magallanes, Palacio Braun Menéndez Punta Arenas http://www.museodemagallanes.cl Museo Regional de Rancagua Rancagua http://www.museorancagua.cl <p>CHINA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guangdong Museum of Art Guangdong http://www.gdmoa.org National Art Museum of China Beijing http://www.namoc.org <p>COLOMBIA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Museo de Arte Moderno de Medellín Medellín http://www.mammedellin.org <p>CROATIA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Museum of Modern & Contemporary Art Rijeka http://www.mmsu.hr <p>CUBA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Casa de las Américas La Habana http://www.casadelasamericas.com <p>ECUADOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centro Cultural Metropolitano Quito http://www.centrocultural-quito.com 	<p>INDIA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tasveer Galleries Calcuta, Bombay, Bangalore, Delhi http://www.tasveerarts.com <p>ITALY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centro Italiano della Fotografia d'Autore Bibbiena http://www.centrofotografia.org Foto & Photo Cesano Maderno (Milán) Complesso Museale di San Francesco Montefalco <p>MEXICO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ayuntamiento de Cuernavaca Cuernavaca www.cuernavaca.gob.mx Casa Escorza, Espacio para la Imagen Guadalajara http://www.escorza.culturaudg.com Centro Cultural Jardín Borda Instituto de Cultura de Morelos Cuernavaca http://www.institutodeculturademorelos.gob.mx Centro Cultural Muros Cuernavaca http://www.muros.org.mx Centro de la Imagen Ciudad de México http://www.conaculta.gob.mx/cimagen Centro Educativo y Cultural del Estado de Querétaro Manuel Gómez Morín Querétaro http://www.central.queretaro.gob.mx Centro Fotográfico Manuel Álvarez Bravo Oaxaca http://www.cfmblogspot.com Centro Integral de Fotografía Puebla http://www.cif-foto.com Dirección de Difusión Cultural de la Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Morelos Cuernavaca http://www.uaem.mx/ccu Escuela Activa de Fotografía Ciudad de México http://www.eaf.edu.mx Escuela Activa de Fotografía Cuernavaca http://www.eaf.edu.mx Fábrica de Imágenes Morelia http://www.fabricadeimagenes.com Fototeca de Nuevo León, Centro de las Artes, Conarte Monterrey http://www.conarte.gob.mx Fototeca de Veracruz Juan Malpica Mimendi* Veracruz http://www.fototecaveracruz.org.mx 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> La Caja, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil Ciudad de México www.lacajamuseo.com Museo Archivo de la Fotografía Ciudad de México http://www.maf.df.gob.mx Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Alfredo Zalce Morelia http://www.cultura.michoacan.gob.mx Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Tamaulipas Matamoros http://www.macttamaulipas.com Museo de Arte de Mazatlán Mazatlán Museo de Arte de Tlaxcala Tlaxcala http://www.mat.org.mx Museo de Arte de Zapopan Zapopan http://www.mazmuseum.com Museo de la Ciudad de Querétaro Querétaro http://www.culturaqueretaro.gob.mx Sistema Nacional de Fototecas - Fototeca Nacional del INAH Pachuca http://www.sinafo.inah.gob.mx <p>PAKISTAN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PeaceNiche at T2F Karachi http://www.t2f.biz <p>SINGAPORE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Museum of Singapore Singapur http://www.nationalmuseum.sg <p>SLOVAKIA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central European House of Photography. FOTOFO Bratislava http://www.sef.sk <p>SPAIN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centro de Arte y Naturaleza Huesca http://www.cdan.es Centro de Documentación de la Imagen de Santander Santander http://portal.ayto-santander.es/portal/page/portal/inet_santander/ciudad/cdis Museu d'Art Contemporani d'Elx Elche <p>UNITED STATES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Akron Art Museum Akron http://www.akronartmuseum.org Art Museum of the Americas Washington, D. C. http://www.museum.oas.org California Museum of Photography Riverside http://www.cmp.ucr.edu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> El Museo del Barrio Nueva York http://www.elmuseo.org George Eastman House Rochester http://www.eastmanhouse.org Lehigh University Art Galleries Bethlehem http://www.luag.org National Museum of Mexican Art Chicago http://www.nationalmuseumofmexicanart.org Queens Museum of Art Nueva York http://www.queensmuseum.org Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art Scottsdale http://www.smoca.org Southeast Museum of Photography Daytona Beach http://www.smponline.org <p>URUGUAY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centro Municipal de Fotografía, CMF Montevideo http://www.montevideo.gub.uy/fotografia
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“Pedro Meyer’s digital work inverts the notion of cinema as a series of ‘frames in movement’ by redefining photography as ‘static cinema’ a process similar to that of memory distilling multitudes of visual impressions in a single paradigmatic image.”

Paul Wombell