

ALBERTO GARCÍA-ALIX UN MUNDO TRAICIONADO

18 October - 22 November 2014

“What Is Isn't What Is”

Suns die and the night comes. The Spanish photographer Alberto García-Alix has chosen this night as his companion, to illuminate his life - in times of turbulence, and of intoxication, and of giddiness. For his third solo exhibition at Galerie Kamel Mennour, Alberto García-Alix reveals the new perspectives of false horizons. The “horizonte falso”, where points of reference shift and usher the real into poetry, is the position from which the photographer unsettles the visible and makes metaphoric extremes emerge.

Alberto García-Alix is one of the key figures of the creative avant-garde underground (1970-1986), which, in Madrid, contributed to ousting the avatars of the Franco dictatorship, with its double time music, its formidable Political-Social Brigade, and its forty years of censorship and muzzled silence. During this time, the photographer was in an especially advantageous position, in concert halls for rock music, in bars, on his Harley Davidson, in avant-garde reviews, with filmmakers, fashion designers, and comics writers. He photographed life on the crest of the wave, life that was wide-awake. And above all, he lived it. His lovers, his friends, parties, sex, heroin, porn stars, speed, the city's rumblings, the shadows falling into darkness... The prints are all in black and white: “It's the color of my fiction.” Indeed, it's thanks to the magic of black and white that Alberto García-Alix leads his tribe into eternity. From the singular to the universal the lived moment is transfigured, becoming the story of the human condition. For this exhibition, the photographer offers a return to some of these vintage photos displayed in glass cases.

Writing on photography, the semiologist and literary critic Roland Barthes spoke of *punctum*, the detail in a photo that contains an expansive force. This detail is not intentional, but signifies that the photographer was present. “The photographer's ‘second sight’ does not consist in ‘seeing’ but in being there,” Barthes writes (1). Alberto García-Alix has a gift for this second sight which is in fact a presence. It allows him to live and witness the world poetically. The motorcycle has always been his most preferred access to this second sight, this sight which is more than a dream - which is the essence of all his dreams, an extension of himself that enables the dazzling flights, the anamorphoses of speed, and the optic aberrations of his work, and which is an integral part of the photographer's unsettled vision. He affirms that “it's necessary to change the angle, to change the scale, because what we believe isn't real. And what is isn't what is.” This exhibition is an invitation to explore the interstitial moments, the transitions, the superpositions, and all the geometry of the *horizonte falso* from which García-Alix creates an original story.

The real is destabilized and the heart's geography comes to resonate with space. García-Alix's cavernous voice begins to whisper texts that he has written over his videos (some of which are presented at the Maison Européenne de la Photographie in Paris). All these images are the work of a photographer with a gift for words, who gives titles to his photos that ring of underground haikus, with flashes of emotion, humor, and darkness - words that open the passageway to the depth of the image, from which something will arise. His interior fictions trace the path from stammering to vibration. For each of us, fiction is the only entryway into the real. The strength of Alberto García-Alix's photographs is in showing us this.

Annabelle Gugnon

¹ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard, Hill and Wang, 1982.

Alberto García-Alix's exhibition is on view Tuesday through Saturday, from 11am to 7pm, at 47 rue Saint-André des arts - 75006 Paris.

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Alberto García-Alix was born in León in 1956. He lives and works in Madrid. He is one of the greatest Spanish photographers. He was awarded the PHotoEspaña Prize in 2012 and the Rencontres d'Arles dedicated a retrospective to his work in 2007.

Concurrent with his exhibition at Galerie Kamel Mennour, the Maison Européenne de la Photographie in Paris is dedicating a retrospective to his work, open from 22 October 2014 to 25 January 2015.