

Pedro Slim

Un chant d'amour:

Unseen Portraits, 1993 – 2023

June 29 – August 19, 2023

The photographic career of Pedro Slim (Lebanon, 1950, lives in Mexico City) spans more than four decades and has focused on a long-term series: *From the street to the studio*. Its beginning took place in Mexico City in the mid-1980s and, in particular, in the author's photographic studio. Attracted by a type of male beauty that did not exist in the photographic mainstream culture of Mexico at the time, Slim began a life's work dedicated to portraying the unseen: images of young men whose origin and place in Mexican society had excluded them historically from any sphere, including that of representation. Windshield cleaners, fire-eaters, and newspaper salesmen became models of a typology of desire, proper to the photographer's aesthetic quests, but also to a social drive that found a certain seduction in the disallowed.

This show—the title of which alludes to Jean Genet's homonymous film from 1950—is composed of a selection of the author's most representative series and portraits taken during his travels to other geographies—photographs which to a great extent had remained unseen by the public until today. The pieces included here respond to the author's commitment to analog photography and the developing and printing processes that give the image a unique material quality, dated to a specific time.

In the broad group that integrates this exhibition, we can see models such as Durango, José Antonio, Mono, Ernesto, Patachín and others, who represent a lost generation due to the inequality of this megalopolis. What survives is the trace of their daily life and their eros, in images that make up a portrait salon that reformulates the academic and classical ideals of modern art, and contrasts with the aspirational imagery of the mass media. What remains is the visual representation of a mestizo youth, evocative and provocative for its nudity and eroticism.

As part of *From the Street to the Studio*, the exhibition also presents the transition from the author's contemplative interests to a formalist experimentation with the male body and its relationship with light, which manifest Slim's commitment to observing that which has remained unseen.

Exhibition dates: June 29 - August 19, 2023

Visiting hours: Tuesday – Thursday, 11am – 6pm, Friday – Saturday, 11 am – 4 pm

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Finally, the exhibition brings together a group of portraits taken with color film during the photographer's trips to the Dutch island of Curaçao in the Caribbean, the Cedro River in Colombia, and Philadelphia in the United States. Being an exception in his creative output, they constitute an interest in the recent reading of his work. Thus, the present exhibition covers a period of forty years of uninterrupted photographic production, and presents a temporality of desire that questions the limits of representation, and the ways of unveiling what had previously been dismissed.

César González-Aguirre

Pedro Slim was born in Beirut, 1950, he currently lives and works in Mexico City. After studying architecture with Felix Candela, he developed a special interest in photography and studied with Allen Frame. Solo exhibitions include *Street Boys* at Galería Carmen de la Calle, Madrid (2004) and *De la calle al estudio* at the Museo Universitario del Chopo, Mexico City (1997). Slim participated in the group exhibitions in institutions such as Museo Universitario del Chopo, Mexico City (2002); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2000); the Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil (2000); Foto Fest, Houston (1998) and Galería Juan Martín, México (1994). Pedro Slim also has an important collection of contemporary black & white analogue photography. Exhibitions of his private collection include *Clandestine* at the Cobra Museum, Amsterdam (2021) and *The Most Beautiful Part*, curated by James Oles at the Museo de Arte Modeno, Mexico City (2017). He was awarded the prize of the Eighth Biennial of Photography in Mexico in 1997.

César González-Aguirre is a Mexican photography curator, and was Chief Curator at the Centro de la Imagen. He organized *Enrique Metinides*, Centro Cultural los Pinos, Mexico City, (2023); *Positivo negativo, 1978-2022*, Centro de la Imagen, Mexico City (2023), among many others. He is co-founder of the Archivo Memoria Trans México.