



Canon

Photographs by Juan Jose Barboza-Gubo & Andrew Mroczek
March 19 - May 14, 2016

Artist Reception March 18th, 6 - 8PM
Artist Talk at 7PM

McClain Gallery is proud to present the US debut of *Canon*, an exhibition comprised of two series of photographs by collaborative artists Juan Jose Barboza-Gubo & Andrew Mroczek. The work hopes to increase dialog and promote awareness and positive change for LGBTQ communities. *Canon* is being shown in conjunction with the FotoFest 2016 Biennial.

The work is both a celebration of the Peruvian LGBTQ community and a reaction to the ongoing violence they face. As a child, Lima native Barboza-Gubo once witnessed the public beating of a transwoman on the city streets. The indifference of the witnesses haunted him. In 2013, Mroczek was invited to curate an exhibition by Barboza-Gubo at Gallery Cecilia Gonzalez in Lima. During that trip Mroczek first learned of the Peruvian trans community's struggle for survival. Targets for violence, rape, and murder, transwomen have been forced to lead lives on the fringe of Peru's society with minimal opportunities, limited access to education and healthcare, and no laws to protect them.

In 2013 Barboza-Gubo and Mroczek began to work with transgender women in Lima to create *Virgenes de la Puerta*, a series of portraits and tableau that honor the strength and resilience of the women. Each subject in the series becomes a new icon - a revision of historical and religious figures inspired by Spanish Colonial painting and 19th-century vernacular photographs and is infused with Peru's iconography. Barboza-Gubo and Mroczek draw from such iconic figures as Santa Rosa de Lima (Saint Rose of Lima), and la Virgen de la Leche (the Nursing Madonna), or Our Lady of the Milk. To ensure authenticity, the artists worked with local artisans in the design and production of objects used in the images, including silver and gold crowns, a 25-foot hand-crocheted veil, and the Tapada's gown, which is comprised of hundreds of embroidered flowers made by women in Ayacucho, a city

known for its exquisite needlework. "We wanted the women to be surrounded by everything that makes this country so unique and beautiful," said Barboza-Gubo.

Many of the images in the series were captured with an 8x10 view-camera. The results are immersive, visually rich portraits. "Some of the images in the series feel confrontational, and that was certainly intentional. Printing the images so that the women are close to their natural size, helps to underscore that objective... It creates an equal playing field between the viewer and the work," Mroczek states. "Our image of Gaby, with her elongated crown of thorns, is positioned in such a way to force viewers to stand beneath the crown with her - navigating a line between confrontation and persecution."

The exhibition includes selected images from the series *Fatherland*, photographs of haunting spaces and landscapes throughout Peru, both rural and urban, where murders or violence against LGBTQ people have occurred. "There is a difficulty in seeing images of my country in this way. We have all become so accustomed to seeing the lushness of Peru. But, in many cases, that beauty is a clear deception. And that deception exists because of our corrupt leaders and an overall lack of acceptance for those whose lives don't fit within the structures they've developed." Barboza-Gubo continued, "We need to begin to examine just how the 'fatherland' has been destroying our 'motherland.' The patriarchy needs to be held accountable for the often brutal reality that LGBTQ people live and die in, here in Peru and around the world." Each image's title indicates the name of the victim, their sexual orientation or gender identity, followed by the location and nature of the assault. In this way the viewer initially takes in often figureless landscapes, but upon reading the title is immediately reminded of the gravity of the depicted site. The locations photographed transcend socio-economic status as both Lima's most affluent and poorest areas are represented, as well as sites within Peru's desert and jungle. *Fatherland* is a stark reminder of the violent realities experienced by many LGBTQ people in Peru and worldwide.

Juan Jose Barboza-Gubo (Peru, 1976) received his Bachelor's Degree at Pontificia Universidad Catolica del Peru. He has received two MFA degrees, one in Painting and one in Sculpture, both from Massachusetts College of Art and Design. He has had numerous exhibitions in US, including shows at the Nielsen Gallery; The Art Institute of Boston at Lesley University; Chazan Gallery, Providence; The Fitchburg Museum; the Attleboro Museum; and the Brattleboro Museum and Art Center. His work has been featured internationally in galleries and museums in Tokyo, Athens, and Italy, as well as the Cecilia Gonzales Gallery of Lima, Peru. Recent awards of note include first prizes in the 2008 Ceramic Biennial of the New Hampshire Institute of Art, and in 2014, the 78th Regional Exhibition at the Fitchburg Museum. Barboza-Gubo was also named the 2014 Breakout Artist of the Year from [Artscope Magazine](#). He was awarded the 2015 Rhode Island State Council on the Arts Fellowship in Painting, and the 2016 Rhode Island State Council on the Arts Fellowship in Sculpture. Barboza-Gubo currently teaches at Rhode Island College.

Andrew Mroczek (USA, 1977) received his BFA in photography from The Art Institute of Boston. He is currently the Associate Director of Exhibitions at The Lesley University College of Art and Design. He has curated solo exhibitions of many artists of note, including; Shen Wei, Dan Estabrook, Luba Lukova, Karen Moss, Robert Stivers, Maud Morgan, Marilene Phipps-Kettlewell, and Juan Jose Barboza-Gubo. Recent curated exhibitions include: *Visible Soul* (2014) an exhibition featuring works by Louise Bourgeois, Carolee Schneemann, Kiki Smith, Arne Svenson, Louis Wain, Andy Warhol, Edward Weston, and many others; and *Of Cuban Invention* (2012), highlighting works by Carlos Cárdenas, Carlos Estévez, Manuel Mendive, José Garcia Montebravo, Luis "El Estudiante" Rodríguez, and Zaida del Río. Mroczek is a member of the Advisory Boards of the Camera Eye Workshops, Somerville, MA; and The Cambridge Arts Council, Cambridge, MA.

Above image: *Leyla*, from the *Virgenes de la Puerta* series, 2015, Edition of 6, archival inkjet print, 42 x 52 inches

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