

Oscar Muñoz: *Sedimentaciones*

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USF Contemporary Art Museum, West Gallery

Colombian artist Oscar Muñoz works across a wide spectrum of media, including drawing, sculpture, photography, video and installation. His ongoing interest in the nature of the photographic image is coupled with his concern for the human condition and the social situations that affect it.

In *Sedimentaciones*, the process of birth, life and death of the image becomes an allegory for the cycle of life shared by all humans. Three videos show darkroom tables on which we see arrangements of small photographic portraits in various stages of development as the artist manipulates them; he picks them up and moves them; he dissolves them into dregs, and creates them anew from those same sediments. The very instability of the portraits as they appear, reappear and are destroyed, speaks to the power of the photographic image to fix identity, and to alter and erase it. The artist's hand acts in a seemingly random and indifferent manner, underlining the role of time and fate to fix the ultimate disappearance of both image and subject.



Sedimentaciones refers to the many manifestations of portraiture in the history of photography, from the personal and private, such as remembrance and *memento mori*, to the official and public, including identification for legal and political use. Colliding with the tender, almost corporeal presence of the images is the knowledge that their shuffling and disappearance is also a political act, wherein persons and lives are lost in the larger machinations and movements of war and cultural and societal shifts and disruptions. Muñoz refers specifically to the armed conflicts in Colombia since the 1980s, and their tremendous effects on the lives of Colombians, although he could be equally referring to any area of the world and any historical era.

Oscar Muñoz was born in Popayán, Colombia, in 1951. He studied art at the Escuela de Bellas Artes in Cali in the 1970s, where he still lives and works. Recent solo exhibitions include *Oscar Muñoz*, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey, Mexico (2014); *Oscar Muñoz: Protografías*, Jeu de Paume, Paris, and numerous venues in South America (2012-2014); High Line Art, New York (2012); and *Documentos de la amnesia*, Museo Extremeño e iberoamericano de Arte Contemporáneo, Badajoz, Spain (2008). His work has been exhibited in numerous group shows including the Venice Biennale (2007), Prague Biennale (2005), and Cuenca Bienal (2004). Muñoz's work is included in numerous public and private collections, including the Ella Cisneros Fontanals Collection, Miami; Perez Art Museum, Miami; Museo del Barrio, Museum of Modern Art, New York; Art Museum of the Americas and Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Tate Modern, London; Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango, Bogotá; Daros Collection, Zurich; and numerous others. In 2006, Muñoz founded *lugar a dudas*, a cultural center and residency program for artists. Located in Cali, *lugar a dudas* (space for doubts) has become a center for young artists to work through ideas and participate in a dialogue and public debate about art and politics.

Muñoz is represented by the Sicardi Gallery, Houston, Texas.
<http://www.sicardi.com/artists/oscar-muoz/artists-artist-works/>

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