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## ***No te creo***

Regina José Galindo

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Curated by Fernando Gómez de la Cuesta

18.06.2022 – 20.08.2022

**Opening June 18th, 2022, from 12.00 pm.**

ADN Galeria presents a solo show of artist Regina José Galindo curated by Fernando Gómez de la Cuesta. With a selection of pieces from the period between 1999 to 2022 and a new performance by the artist, the exhibition *No te creo* directly appeals to the feminist struggle, women empowerment and gender equality.

Regina José Galindo is an extraordinary artist for many different reasons. It is with her remarkable capacity, enormous intelligence, sensitivity, and intuition that she manages to expose in a single, strong, and eloquent gesture all those power structures that submit and violate us until ending our freedom, pressuring us to exhaustion up to the extinction of our very lives. Frequently these structures operate from the impunity that power without measure grants them, from the bluntness of that obscene position of strength and wealth that allows them to do (almost) anything. However, these ancient coactive organizations have developed through the sibylline subtlety of latent slogans that, since time immemorial, have seeped into our brains, into our way of being and proceeding. They have modified our culture and society while generating patterns and stereotypes, customs and norms that serve to control the course of a story dictated by the pace and the direction they set. Looking back only confirms that this situation has been going on for too long.

From the certainty of this suffocating context, Regina José Galindo's efforts for visibility, action, and detonation manifest themselves through her work's strength and her own. It doesn't come from now. Galindo has been activating her creation for years with the aim to demolish the established and corrupt, of preventing manipulation and submission, censorship, and denunciation, and eradicate all possible violence, with a language as frontal, direct, and vehement as what it intends to combat. Gender, exclusion, minorities, colonialism, militarism, capitalism, despotism, xenophobia, racism, immigration, and exploitation appear recurrently in a body of work without concessions that does not practice the current topics of art as a transforming agent or as a space for freedom or vindication. Instead, her work tries to section the jugular that feeds ideologies and behaviors to the hetero-patriarchal, imperialist, hegemonic, class-oriented, ethnocentric, political, financial, and economic powers, hampering self-determination, amputating differences, and destroying our forces.

Regina José Galindo's pieces never leave anyone indifferent because she always sticks her finger in one of those purulent sores that humanity has yet to heal. That finger points directly to power and to those who, whether we are aware of it or not, lead us along paths far from freedom. One of the most significant qualities of Galindo's critical projects is that she does not insist on putting her focus on the executor, much less on the victim, but rather on those individuals and organizations that possess the domain code and hierarchy to govern the content and direction of the diabolical, anachronistic, interested, perverse and absolutely premeditated superstructures that control the world. Regina José Galindo is a brave artist who defies the real culprits regardless of their power. She also alludes to their collaborators who, because of ignorance, malice, alienation, or submission, do not question their acts or the system that protects, manipulates, and encourages them.

From this critical standpoint, we began to develop an exhibition project for ADN Galeria Barcelona, that shows an extensive array of works by Regina José Galindo. Years of action and research take the form of a proposal entitled *No te creo* (I don't believe you) to address issues that directly appeal to the feminist struggle, empowerment of women, and gender equality. A selection of (combat) pieces from the period between 1999 to 2022 serve as evidence that, although power disguises it in a thousand ways, very little progress has been made on issues that should be transcendental. Proof of this is *El dolor en un pañuelo* (Pain in a Handkerchief, 1999), an old video where Galindo appears tied to a vertical bed, and news of rapes and abuses committed against women in Guatemala are projected on her naked body. Apart from the iconic and historical power of this work, which includes the artist's first performance, it also manifests a claim that has been recurrent in these 24 years of experience: the denunciation of structural, manifest, and permanent violence against women.

*Esperando al príncipe azul* (Waiting for Prince Charming) is another piece from 1999 in which the artist remains lying on a bed while her naked body appears hidden behind a bridal sheet. A sort of veil meant to cover the female body except for a small hole in the fabric that leaves her vagina visible as a strange ritual element that aims to ensure that the sexual act is carried out solely and exclusively for



Regina José Galindo,  
*El dolor en un pañuelo*, 1999.

reproductive purposes. Appealing to similar topics is one of her most recognized and recognizable videos: *Hymenoplastia* (2004). A piece that forms a crude allegation about strong ideological constraints often of religious origin that remain rooted in our society and harm the possibilities of women: a video showing how Galindo undergoes surgery to reconstruct her hymen and thus return to being a virgin. Both works refer directly to the burdens coming from religions that, for centuries, have produced repressive, demeaning, and abusive norms, slogans, ideologies, images, and symbols that limit the social and vital position of women in a castrating and violent way.

From these initial pieces, Regina José Galindo uses one of the most common and effective resources in her discourse: the use of her own body as the protagonist of the critical action. Her body is a woman's body of fragile appearance, small, racialized, colonized, possessed, violated, and permanently threatened, but it is also a living, active, resistant, powerful, magnetic, and positioned body. A political and social body, a medium and a subject that combats the classic, stereotyped, deliberately reducing and conditioning representations of women. A body that bleeds and collects the violence inflicted on it by the patriarchal structure turning it into visibility, denunciation, vindication, and struggle, transforming her work into a space where her own body and performance appear as an effective aesthetic-political strategy.

Within those visual and conceptual resources that seek to detonate the structures of power, the artist also makes her body, and that of other women, appear as residue. Such as the residue discarded by an economic, political, and social system that uses and abuses them without scruples, turning them into real dispossessions. The latter is what the photographic series *No perdemos nada con nacer* (We do not lose anything with being born, 2000) represents, in which Regina José Galindo, completely naked, is put inside a plastic bag and then abandoned in the Guatemalan Municipal Garbage Dump. Here another recurring characteristic appears in her work: a deliberate aesthetic of violence that she connects with the representation of femicide and rape.

It is also the case in the 2009 piece, *Estrías* (Stretch marks). An action where a man grabs the artist's leg and drags her along the floor while Galindo clings to the wooden floor with her nails, leaving a dramatic visual groove and an amplified trace of sound projected towards the public through microphones attached to her hands. Or in *La Manada* (The Herd, 2018), a performance where seven



Regina José Galindo, *Estrías*, 2009.



Regina José Galindo,  
*Aparición (España)*, 2022.

men masturbate in a circle around the artist, reifying her body as a mere passive container of semen. Or finally, in *Extension* (2008), where Galindo shows us the situation of all those dead women whose bodies, again as mere remains, were never recognized or claimed by anyone. For this piece, the artist obtains some strands of hair from the deceased that she herself and other volunteers have incorporated into their own bodies, into their own hair, in the form of hair extensions that function as a wake-up call, as an extension for memory and the memory of those devastated lives.

In fact, the fundamental nucleus of the works selected for this exhibition reflects about two main concepts: the necessary and permanent visibility of femicides due to gender violence and the constant structural doubt, the lack of credibility suffered by all those women who have suffered aggression by a man and dare to denounce him. In *Sirena de Guerra* (War siren, 2018), the artist's cry of warning is frontal and direct: powerful alarms that stridently sounded every 14 minutes were installed in the center of Montevideo; the same frequency a new complaint against gender violence is registered in Uruguay.

However, in her series of actions entitled *Aparición* (Manifestation, 2021-2022), the artist finds the most effective way to talk about the dialectic with which these situations are experienced. Visibility and invisibility, phantasmagoria and stark reality, concealment and guilt complex, emerge in actions that are as poetic as they are harsh, where aesthetics become a devastating ethical resource. These pieces refer, in different ways, to the painful count of women killed by gender violence, a scourge that affects all societies in the world. As if wandering souls, in these works the participants appear fully covered by a long cloth that turns them into strange and disturbing specters.

It is precisely the performance *Nuestra mayor venganza es estar vivas* (Our greatest revenge is to be alive, 2021) that follows the scheme of these appearances by Galindo. Carried out in the town of Artà (Mallorca) by 37 women from a group of *ball de bot*, a Majorcan regional dance. The number of participants coincided with the number of women murdered by gender violence in the Balearic Islands since this dismal official count exists. The performers made their castanets sound under the enormous fabrics that covered and restricted them, drowning their clatter as a metaphor for those social structures that try to hide terrible situations. On this occasion, they could not prevent the accumulated percussion of all of them from becoming a powerful and audible scream of rage. As can be seen from the description of some of the selected pieces, sound as a form of direct and emotional expression is another of those habitual resources used repeatedly by Regina José Galindo.

*La intención* (The Intention, 2016) is, however, the work that is a more direct antecedent of *No te creo* (2022), a performance carried out for the first time in the framework of this exhibition, which also gives title to this entire project. *La intención* focuses on how history and different societies and cultures have reacted (collectively and coactively) against individuals who instilled a type of unjustified fear in them. A fear caused, in many cases, by mere difference or simple ignorance. From images of a highly narrative character, Galindo builds a story that has its origin in those of the Inquisition. A witch hunt that, consolidated by successive times, came to represent a generic doubt and archaic stereotypes around women that still survives. These have to do with issues as perverse and absurd as the lubricated and diabolical capacity for pernicious seduction attributed to them by those classes, aberrant prejudices penetrating the social ideology.

*No te creo* parts from that same criminalizing prejudice that emanates from a patriarchal justice that tends to question the testimonies and the facts declared by women for the benefit of their male aggressors. This performance originates from what Galindo calls "double rape": a situation that refers to the invasive forensic examination that any victim must undergo after having suffered a sexual assault and appeals to the obligation to tell their story to strangers over and over again, reliving the trauma each time. *No te creo* will turn the exhibition hall into a clinical space equipped with an old obstetrical examination chair. In front of it, several doctors will examine the artist in shifts, for a long time, following the protocols enabled for this purpose. After the performance, the chair will remain as the ex-voto of what occurred, proving that the declared left semblance of doubt.

Fernando Gómez de la Cuesta

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Regina José Galindo (Guatemala, 1974)



Visual artist and poet who uses performance as her main medium. Galindo lives and works in Guatemala, using her own context as a starting point to explore and denounce the ethical implications of social violence and injustices related to racial and gender discrimination, as well as human rights abuses stemming from endemic inequalities within power relations of contemporary societies.

She received the Golden Lion for Best Young Artist at the 51st Venice Biennale in 2005 and the Prince Claus Award of the Netherlands in 2011. She has participated in the 49th, 53rd and 54th Venice Biennale; Documenta 14 in Athens and Kassel; 9th International Biennial of Cuenca; or the Shanghai Biennale in 2016. Her work is present in various public collections, such as TATE London; The Pompidou Foundation; Guggenheim's Collection; or the Rivoli Museum, Turin.