

Perras y Putas

Yapci Ramos

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New York, September 12, 2015 – “Aruba is a small island full of stray, feral “perras” (bitches) surviving as best they can: languorous bitches, fierce bitches, vulnerable bitches, flea-ridden bitches, quiet bitches, aggressive bitches... bitches...” – Yapci Ramos

Perras y Putas is an ongoing intimate dialog between the artist and “prostitutes” from around the world and the artist’s first solo exhibition with the gallery. It is a living portrait of the women behind the word more commonly applied to them: “putas” (whores), as they are in their ordinary daily settings. At the core of her consideration is the unrelentingly grim view of the world these women occupy, that impossibility of fathoming another kind of understanding of what “putas” stands for in the larger imagination. Ramos’s inquisitive eye reveals deeply moving stories as she turns her nonjudgmental gaze on each reality she comes across, invalidating the belief that “a prostitute is a dirty woman;” that nothing good can come of her.

Ramos made her first direct contact with the world of prostitution within a social reinsertion program for women who were, or had been, sex workers in the Canary Islands, Spain. With the series *Mujer de la Vida* (Canary Islands, 2010), Ramos began her portraits of the private lives of women with public bodies.

Two years later, on a trip to Aruba, the artist was struck by the amount of stray dogs roaming around the island. In the series *Perras* (Aruba, 2012), she found a different way of entering the closed circles of prostitution, identifying parallels in what she saw, heard and experienced between the women and the stray dogs of the island.

“Charlie got me inside. He greets the owner. I pay and go up to Sandra Patricia’s room. Sandra Patricia is a beautiful dark-skinned Colombian with well-kept, long curly hair. Her voice was barely audible, quivering as she spoke. She covered my camera with a pillow. We began to chat... What shocked me the most about Aruba was the amount of stray dogs all over the island.” – Yapci Ramos

Ramos found another kind of prostitution in Central Africa and produced the third series in exhibition: *No Stress Bar* (Republic of Congo, 2014). In Brazzaville, the Republic’s capital city and financial center, Ramos witnesses women and teenage girls waiting for men who might pick them up and offer as exchange for sex a lifetime of economic stability.

The parallel universes of this three part series reveal a rare and touching insight to the shared experience of public bodies in different contexts around the world as the artist dignifies the women who lie beneath. As Ramos acts as traveler, advocate and witness the value of the work lies not only in its photographic aesthetic but its ethic. Depending on a critic’s intellectual disposition, he or she may defend or contest the sins and scandals committed and waged against these whores and bitches.