El Silencio Esta Habitado

Luis Enrique Aguilar Pereda

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Mexico has had the misfortune of being geographically situated along drug transportation routes to the United States. Because of that happenstance, Mexico has been largely destroyed by the politicians and military leaders of its neighbor to the north. Mexicans never did drugs any more than anyone else did. Mexicans have little history of the formation of gangs that developed into violent drug cartels. Mexican had no history of gun violence that could possibly compare to that of the U.S. Now Mexico has become the staging area for drug use in the U.S. and, as such, the site of the uncontrollable drug wars that have turned the north of the country and many other cities into (in the words of the photographer Luis Aguilar Pereda) areas “covered in silence,” areas where the people have “no voice, no words.” How could we do this to a country so rich in history, so diverse in its people, so colorful in its customs and fiestas, so breathtakingly beautiful? Why must our plagues of drugs and guns be inflicted on Mexico?

The politicians of Mexico have always been corrupt. As corrupt as anywhere. But, now, with the increasingly militarized drug wars, politicians – from highest to lowest – have been given an ultimatum by the drug cartels: play ball with us or you and your family die. There’s no choice there. It’s not the money. It’s the struggle for survival and the overwhelming reality that well-armed cartels will kill anyone who dares step in their way.

For as long as the cartels have their way, pictures like those in this volume will be more and more common and in more and more areas of Mexico and all of Central America. Paraphrasing
Luis Aguilar: wasted earth, the product of irrational violence, and human stories rendered invisible by a veil of fear.

EL SILENCIO ESTA HABITADO

BY: LUIS ENRIQUE AGUILAR PEREDA?
(MEXICO CITY, 1980)

Luis Enrique Aguilar Pereda studied at the Escuela Activa de Fotografía. He participated in the Contemporary Photography Seminar in 2010 at the Centro de la Imagen, in addition to diverse photography workshops there, he also attended the 1st National Meeting for Photographic Investigation, and at the Instituto Internacional de Periodismo José Martí. His work has been exhibited in collective exhibitions in Mexico, the United States, Argentina, and Spain. He was selected for the 14th Latin American Photography Contest in Colombia, the 7th Puebla de los Ángeles Biennial, and the 3rd Chiapas Photography Biennial. He received a special mention from the jury in the International Migrations and Boarders Contest in Spain, and A Day in the Life of the People from Chiapas Contest organized by the Universidad Intercultural in Chiapas. He is a member of the Colectivo Fotógrafos Independientes in Chiapas [Independent Photographers Collective]. Currently, he is coordinating the project Gimnasio de Arte y Cultura in Chiapas, and lives in San Cristóbal de las Casas.

TEXTO DESCRIPTIVO DE LA OBRA

El norte de México está cubierto de silencio, miles de kilómetros repletos de arena y ojos cerrados, un anecdotario de historias humanas inconmensurable que se vuelve invisible detrás
del velo del miedo. El progreso de unos cuantos opulentos se yergue por encima de lamentos y ausencias que no serán nombradas. Ese silencio del norte es más grande que su desierto, labios cosidos con hilos de sangre que callan la esperanza ciega.

En estas tierras yermas, la documentación de las consecuencias de la violencia irracional me obligó a voltear la mirada a esas personas casi sombras, que sobreviven día a día este escenario desalentador. Mudos testigos que se alejan del fragor y el oropel, sobrevivientes de una ciudad industrial que nunca se calla, entre su estridencia productiva y el grito permanente de promesas de riqueza y oportunidades. Personas que desde la orilla guardan su silencio, lo atesoran, esperando el día de volver a tener voz y palabra.

Imágenes que no rompen el silencio—quizá lo prolongan—pero lo revelan habitado, lo retratan de pie, de frente al ominoso futuro.
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