

MIGUEL ÁNGEL ROJAS

[1946, Colombia]

Miguel Ángel Rojas is a conceptual and multimedia artist whose work addresses subjective experience, identity, and politics. His projects have included indictments of international drug trafficking and violence, and much of his work focuses upon experiences of marginality. In 1964, he began studying architecture at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, where he remained for six semesters. Deciding not to pursue a career in architecture, Rojas enrolled at the School of Fine Arts at Universidad Nacional de Colombia (UNAL) in Bogotá in 1969. His earliest experiments with long-exposure photographic portraits and self-portraits began during this period in the mid-1960s and continued throughout the 1970s.

In 1973, he began one of his most important series of photographs, the *Faenza* series. Rojas took these photographs—of encounters between gay men at B-movie theaters in Bogotá—secretly, hiding his camera in a suitcase or under a jacket. The resulting images are ghostly records of the affective and physical experiences of a largely invisible community. The series also marks Rojas's first exploration of his own subjectivity as central to his work, and it was his first extended foray into photography. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Rojas also worked with engraving, drawing, video, intaglio, stitching, and photographic reductions.

In the mid-1990s, Rojas began using coca leaves in his work. Initially, the works explored histories of indigenous life in Colombia, but over time Rojas began using them to comment upon the production of cocaine for consumption in the first world. Since the 1990s, he has used coca to reconstruct pop imagery, bringing consumerism into dialogue with widespread political and social problems.

Rojas's works have been shown in numerous selected exhibitions, including *Medellín, Une Histoire Colombienne*, Les Abattoirs, Musée - Frac Occitanie Toulouse, France (2017); *Re-Aligning Vision*, Archer M. Huntington Art Gallery, The University of Texas at Austin, Texas, USA, Arkansas Art Center, Little Rock, Arkansas, USA, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey (MARCO), Mexico, Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas, Venezuela, El Museo del Barrio, New York City, New York, USA, and Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM), Florida, USA (1997); *Home-So Different, So Appealing: Art from the Americas since 1957*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), California, USA (2017); *David, La vitrina, lugar a dudas*, Cali, Colombia (2007); *Camino Corto*, Museo de Arte de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá, Colombia (2012); *Objetivo-Subjetivo*, Banco de la República, Bogotá, Colombia (2007); *El arte de la desobediencia*, Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá (MAMBO), Colombia (2018); *Return to the Maloca*, Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá (MAMBO), Colombia (2021); *El Jaguar y la Mariposa*, Museo Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá, Colombia (2020); *Contingent Beauty: Contemporary Art in Latin America*, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), Texas, USA (2015); *Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century*, Museum of Modern Art

(MoMA), New York City, New York, USA (1993); *Transmissions: Art in Eastern Europe and Latin America, 1960-1989*, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York City, New York, USA (2015); and the Shanghai Biennale, Power Station of Art, Shanghai, China (2018).

Rojas's works are represented in several major collections including Ambassade de France à Bogota, Bogotá, Colombia; Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois, USA; Biblioteca Luis Ángel Arango, Bogotá, Colombia; Casa de las Américas, Havana, Cuba; Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich, Switzerland; Elton John Art Collection, England, UK; Fundación "la Caixa," Barcelona, Spain; Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBAL), Mexico City, Mexico; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León (MUSAC), Madrid, Spain; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey (MARCO), Mexico; Museo de Arte de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá, Colombia; Museo de Arte Moderno de Barranquilla (MAMB), Colombia; Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá (MAMBO), Colombia; Museo de Arte Moderno de Bucaramanga, Colombia; Museo de Arte Moderno de Cartagena de Indias, Colombia; Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas, Venezuela; Museo La Tertulia, Cali, Colombia; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (MNCARS), Madrid, Spain; Museo Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá, Colombia; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), Texas, USA; Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York City, New York, USA; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA), California, USA; and Tate Modern, London, England, UK.