

Mar Sáez
Vera y Victoria

From 7th of November to the 12th of December, 2017
Opening, 7th of November at 8 pm

Mar Sáez (Murcia, 1983) is exhibiting for the first time in the gallery, having presented part of her work at the recent trade fair, Estampa. A graduate in Audiovisual Communication and in Psychology from the University of Valencia, she has followed different courses and specialised workshops in photography; she has received numerous awards, such as the First Prize in the Artistic Creation competition, Creajoven (Murcia); First Prize in the Photography Competition of the UMU (Murcia); Lux de Bronce Prize (Barcelona); Duo Prize for Emerging Photographer, Lux de Oro Prize for Documentary Photography (Barcelona), etc.

She started working professionally as an editor on different written media sources, and as a freelance photographer and cultural manager at LENS School of Visual Art. She was a teacher on an integration project, through photography, for Moroccan women in the Region of Murcia, Cienojos, Fundación La Caixa.

Her vision when developing her career as a photographer is aimed at social, anthropological questions and she usually prefers to investigate about human beings, discovering the truth through the face, "we know our own lives very well, but we know very little about other people's lives", the artist states, "we approach others only in a highly superficial way".

Her first individual exhibition was at the Museo Los Molinos del Río (Murcia) in 2008, titled *Chinguetti* –the name of one of the most poorest places in the Mauritanian Sahara, where Mar Sáez portrayed the faces of those she found in a country so different and distant to our comfortable, western society when comparing it to the reality of the so-called third world countries: sincere faces, bared of all artifice, which reveal the truth of their lives, where the artist has always been interested in the people and this has been revealed with great sensitivity and honesty in the work that followed this first series.

The series that we are now exhibiting in the gallery is called *Vera y Victoria*, a project to which she has devoted a large part of the last four years, two of them in direct contact with the protagonists of the series, who allowed her to share their lives, their intimacy and let her photograph their daily lives, their love story, similar to any true, passionate love story, between two young people, in their twenties, who live their lives freely, without any prejudice, with complete normality. One of them, Vera, is a transsexual vegetarian; she is fascinated by animals and has studied Classics. Victoria is pure energy and she moves between different jobs: during this relationship she was working as a waitress. Discovering her homosexuality at the age of 14 years caused her great concern and she was reassured to discover that she was really bisexual; the fact that Vera was transsexual meant nothing to her, she fell in love with the person and this was the only thing that mattered.

The photographs in this series, in black and white, are not purely documentary, the sensitivity with which the project was performed, the mystery and the beauty of the images, transcend any purely social or journalistic interest; they are photographs that only an artist's vision could have taken, although without any doubt, they are of great interest as a tool to make the topic of transsexuality, still a taboo for some, become more visible and normal.

At the moment, the artist is embarking on a new project, aimed at approaching unknown people, entering their lives, to the extent they let her, in her continuous car journeys between Madrid and Murcia, where she shares the journey, conversations, experiences, with people she has not met before. When she came to live in Madrid, she decided to travel in this way to approach people who, like herself, perhaps find it difficult to feel they are from a specific place, in a continuous going and coming. She shares this work with a writer, Miguel Angel Hernández, who had already written the texts for his first exhibition and has agreed to put his words to Mar's photographs. "Now I have the photos from the *A los que viajan* series (To those who travel) in front of me and I am not sure what I could write about them. I look at the photographs and I sense that all her work is condensed here. They include the strange, ghostly spaces, but also the subjects, complex, dense, recipients of stories that can be sensed in the blank looks on their faces, in their gestures, in their waiting bodies. They are images of the downtimes. The wait, the empty space, the interstice, the ellipsis, the moments when a person stops being. Or, more so, the moments when the being is really found." (Miguel Angel Hernández).

Vera y Victoria was made as a photo-book by the French publisher André Frère Editions and was presented at ParisPhoto in 2016, accompanied by a text written by the Sevillian writer, Lara Moreno.

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