

PAZ ERRÁZURIZ

FROM DECEMBER 16, 2015 TO FEBRUARY 28, 2016

OPENING	December 14 from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
PRESS CONFERENCE :	December 14, 2015 at 12:00 p.m.
LOCATION:	Exhibition Hall Bárbara de Braganza, 13
DATES:	From December 16, 2015 to February 28, 2016
CURATOR:	Juan Vicente Aliaga
PRODUCTION:	The exhibit was produced by Fundación MAPFRE

Website: <http://exposiciones.fundacionmapfre.org/pazerrazuriz>

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Fundación MAPFRE presents the first major retrospective on Paz Errázuriz (Santiago, Chile, 1944), one of the most internationally recognized Chilean photographers.

Paz Errázuriz, self-taught, started her work in the nineteen seventies. Her photography projects often involve a transgression of the rules imposed by the military regime of that period, daring to work in environments where women were not well received. Her images show us spaces and environments in which exclusion and isolation prevail, and her figures adopt behaviors that are unconventional and break the status quo.

The bold sight of this artist is recognized for showing us the hidden aspects of daily life in Chile, all done with a work ethic based on living among the individuals portrayed with confidence and mutual respect.

Cofounder of the Independent Photographer's Association (Asociación de Fotógrafos Independientes - AFI) in Chile, she has received several grants and numerous awards, among them the Ansel Adams Award, granted by the North American Chilean Cultural Institute in 1995, the Art Critic's Circle Artistic Career Award, and the Altazor Award in 2005. She received the PHotoEspaña Award this year and represented Chile, along with Lotty Rosenfeld, at the 56th Venice Biennale.

The exhibit brings together more than 170 works (photographs and videos) and documents that retrospectively cover the different sections of her work, chronologically and thematically ordered.

SUMMARY OF THE EXHIBIT

This exhibit was organized into thematic groups in which the different series created by the Chilean artist were categorized.

Agents and spaces of social change

The photographic work of Paz Errázuriz bursts into her country, Chile, in a political context - in the first half of the seventies - under the Pinochet dictatorship. Her first steps were marked by an uncertain and risky situation for the lives of those who did not support the coup d'état. Going out with a camera would, without a doubt, pose a risk for anyone wanting to capture reality, as well as a threat for those upholding the martial law. Moreover, the unlikelihood of a woman going out and taking these photographs at this time is even more remarkable.

In 1980 Paz Errázuriz held her first individual exhibit entitled *Personas (People)*, in the North American Chilean Institute of Santiago, and a year later she founded the Independent Photographer's Association (AFI) with her professional colleagues.



Dormidos X (Asleep X), of the Los Dormidos (Asleep) series, 1979

At that time, Paz Errázuriz fixed her gaze on those individuals that spent their days outside, sleeping on the street, living in poor conditions, subjected to poverty: the images included show a perspective of the country that is far from heroic, and immersed in poverty (*Los dormidos* series). During these years and throughout the eighties, Errázuriz also examined the *modus vivendi* of the affluent classes, who displayed their fortune in the districts of Las Condes and La Dehesa in Santiago.

The ages of life (and death)

This section includes works that incorporate a broad period of Paz Errázuriz's career, the oldest from the early eighties and the most recent from the first decade of this century. The common thread is the time and treatment in the image.

Paz Errázuriz decided to photograph her son Tomás every month for four years in the mid-eighties (July 1986 - December 1990): his serious expression is shown to the viewer while the signs of change and small accidents of life emerge. Years later she made a video –*Un cierto tiempo (A Certain Time)*, 2004– with prized photographic material, highlighting the idea of continuity and visual rhythm.

The extreme ages of life (childhood and old age) are the most represented by the artist in her work, which includes a critical view toward the social infantilization that affects the elderly, as well as other themes, such as the presence of work in elderly people. Conscious of the cult of the youth and the beauty of our period, the bold attitude of the photographer led her to stand out on a taboo issue, such as the uninhibited nudity of several elderly people (*Cuerpos (Bodies)* series), and on the enjoyment of leisure time (*Tango* series).



Memento II, of the *Memento Mori* series, 2004



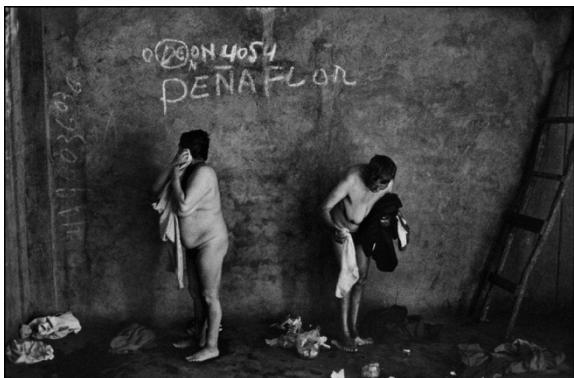
Centro de acogida, Santiago
(*The Shelter, Santiago*), from
the *Niños (Children)* series, 1994

A group of images closes this *Memento Mori* series, focusing on a cemetery in Santiago where the author focuses on photographs and other decorative items placed by family members in order to resurrect the deceased.

Imprisonment

The deprivation of free movement in a sinking country between 1973 and 1990 under the dictatorship caused the photographer to search for the reasons that led to the confinement of certain people. These circumstances brought Paz Errázuriz to repeatedly visit the psychiatric hospital Philippe Pinel de Putaendo, two hundred kilometers from Santiago, where she met people who were neglected by their families. There she created two groups of photographs, *El infarto del alma* (*The Heart Attack of the Soul*) (1992-1994) and *Antesala de un desnudo* (*Entrance Hall of a Naked Person*) (1999).

Escaping from a miserabilist view, the sight of Errázuriz focused on the human bonds based on love and affection in the couples relationships that arose in the psychiatric hospital. The photographs are full of hugging, hand holding and joined bodies. The main contribution of *El infarto del alma* (1992-1994) lies in the evaluation, above all, of the complete individuality of the subjects pictured and the emotional ties woven in internment.



Baño X (Bathroom X), of the Antesala de un desnudo series, 1999

Some years after finishing this series, Errázuriz returned to the same world of imprisonment and completed *Antesala de un desnudo*. For this series she chose a commonly used place, but with sinister evocations: showers. The bodies crammed into an area with dirty walls and stained floors, and above of all the sight of naked elderly people, together with the barred doors, speaks to us about the

brutality of the prison system.

Fight and resistance

As mentioned above, Errázuriz started her career in a period of history in Chile borne down with political events: the government of the Unidad Popular (Popular Unity) (1970-1973) and the fascist dictatorship (1973-1990). Added to this is her dedicated commitment to the fight for human rights, which is what made her want to record all those social movements. Since 1981, as an active member of the Independent



Mujeres por la vida (Women for Life), of the Protestas (Protests) series, 1988

Photographer's Association (AFI), she sometimes went out in a group to document the events taking place. In that decade, many images were taken of broad sectors of the Chilean population participating in strikes, manifestations and protests contrary to the regime.

Errázuriz followed the activities of Mujeres por la Vida closely, which played a leading role in raising awareness about female subordination. In 1985, she photographed *Día de la mujer* (Women's day), capturing (from the top of a building in downtown Santiago) the traffic disruption caused by a group of protesters and the dissuasive practices -launching jets of water- and openly repressive tactics of control forces.

Another one of the series shown in this section is *Mujeres de Chile* (Women of Chile), 1992. In it, the artist, as if she had begun a search within herself, photographed a group of women who work in different professions; women whose lives are not shown in the media or history books (a rural teacher, a coal collector, a female diver, etc.).

Sex, a tool for survival

From early on, Paz Errázuriz had contact with the world of female prostitution. However, between 1982 and 1987, she dedicated the greater part of her time to hanging around a group of men who cross-dressed and prostituted themselves in different brothels in Santiago and Talca.

In 1990, a photo book was published that contained the black and white photographs of *La manzana de Adán* (*Adam's Apple*), as well as texts and interviews conducted with the members of a family that did not fit at all into the current bourgeois model. It was a large heterodox family that broke the mold and was decimated by AIDS, economic uncertainty and police persecution.



Evelyn I, Santiago, from the *La manzana de Adán* series, 1987

In *La manzana de Adán*, Errázuriz offers a broad visual landscape that shows the daily life of its protagonists: images from the street, of getting ready for bed, and of different rooms where they pose in bed like concubines.

Nevertheless, before beginning this project, she had already met some sex workers. Her interest continued in

the shots in different brothels in Curanilahue and Valparaíso (*Prostíbulos (Brothels)* series, 1999-2002) where the degree of complicity between the women and the customers is emphasized. There is no glamour in these poor brothels and female nudity is conspicuously absent.

A recent incursion in northern Chile led her to a forgotten brothel where she was able to develop a series in color, titled *Muñecas, Frontera Chile-Perú* (*Dolls, Chile-Peru Border*), 2014. Her keen eye reflects the level of trust achieved with the prostitutes, who allow themselves to be captured by the camera without any concern.

Visual impairments

In 2003, Paz Errázuriz began her series *Ceguera* (*Blindness*), yet unfinished, in which her models were aware at all times that they would be photographed. Those pictured appear alone at time or in pairs, banishing the idea of the isolation of the blind.

Another later series, titled *La luz que me ciega* (*The Light that Blinds Me*), 2010, led her to the small village of El Calvario, near the town of Paredones, in Chile's VI region. There she met a family afflicted by achromatopsia, a congenital disease through which reality is perceived in black and white. That lack of color perception is also accompanied by seriously altered vision. The images capture a modern-day drama of a town in whose cemetery the same last names are repeated, revealing a long history of incest.



Ceguera I (Blindness I), from the Ceguera series, 2003

The disappearance of an ethnic group

An encounter with Fresia Alessandri Baker -whose named in the Kawésqar language is Jérwar-asáwer— caused Paz Errázuriz to make a change in the *Mujeres de Chile* series in 1992, moving its very habitat to the coast of the islands of western Patagonia. Initially, Jérwar-asáwer would not allow her photograph to be taken, until a relationship



Atáp, Ester Edén Wellington, Puerto Edén, of the Las nómadas del mar (The Nomads of the Sea) series, 1995

of trust was established between the two of them after years of knowing each other. This is one of the most appreciated and valued patterns that makes Errázuriz's photographs distinct. Years later, the artist delved into the daily life of an aging community – *Los nómadas del mar*– that lives off of mollusk fishing and making baskets from jonquil flowers. It is an ethnic

group experiencing a process of extinction.

Strength and weakness



Boxeador VI, Santiago (Boxer VI, Santiago),
of the Boxeadores (Boxers) series.
El combate contra el ángel
(The Fight Against the Angel), 1987

In 1987, Paz Errázuriz wanted to explore a supposedly masculine world, like the world of boxing. First, she went to make some inquiries at Club México of Santiago, but she was rejected with the argument that women were not allowed to enter a masculine area with such characteristics. Ultimately, she was able to carry out her project by visiting the Chilean Boxing Federation. The outcome of her repeated visits is a series of images - the *El combate contra el ángel* series, 1987- of men whose vulnerable appearance

makes one doubt the victory they aspire to, since Errázuriz shows them outside the ring or ready to start training. However, more than the musculature of their physical splendor, we see fatigue, exhaustion, and also insecurity and fragility.

Years later, after traveling through northern Chile by bus with a group of fighters, she discovered some realities that are not usually associated with fighting participants: the existence of their family, their offspring, their personal lives. Neither in this case -the series named *Luchadores del ring* (*Fighters of the Ring*), 2002-2002- was she moved to pay time and attention to the battle of the bodies, but rather chose the fragility and uniqueness of these lives that are not normal, due to their nomadic nature and the profession to which they devote themselves.

The circus

This series displays moments of the daily life, dull or otherwise, of poor circuses, of those individuals who scrape by in the slums of the cities without the support of big advertisements or spectacular claims.



Mago Karman (*Magician Karman*), from the *El circo* series, 1988

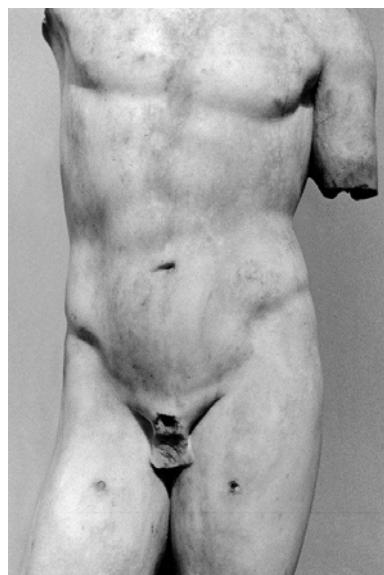
The exceptional nature of human behavior awakens the fascination of Paz Errázuriz, also feeding her respect for ways of life that are unusual to most people.

In this case, the Chilean photographer diverges from stereotypical and colorful visions of the circus, which relate it with the laughter of clowns or the use of dangerous animals. Instead, her gaze settles on the everyday life of these people whose profession is a way of life without fanfare, to the point that the acrobat or the magician can look like any one of us.

Exéresis (Exeresis)

The unique series -*Exéresis*, 2004- that forms part of this section is a rarity in its entire production. It has not been displayed in its own country, but in different European and North American museums, such as the Louvre (Paris), the Pergamon (Berlin), the Metropolitan Museum (New York) and the National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C.).

The images show photographed statues that are missing their heads since the framing cuts them off at the chest. This way, the attention is focused on the genital area, where the audience sees a cavity or the remains of a removed penis. The historic, cultural and moral reasons for the disappearance of this sculpted organ are probably due to obscurantist attitudes and/or religiously based vengeances, but the result is used by Errázuriz to reflect on disfigured masculinity, absolutely heroic, which would create an ambiguous body, without a defined gender.



Exéresis I (*Exeresis I*), of the *Exéresis* series, 2004

CATALOG

Fundación MAPFRE has published a catalog with significant contributions from the curator, Juan Vicente Aliaga; Gerardo Mosquera, independent curator; and Paulina Vargas, researcher and independent curator.

FREE GUIDED TOURS

Tuesdays at 11 a.m., noon, 1 p.m., 5 p.m., 6 p.m. and 7 p.m.*

*The groups will be formed as people arrive at the hall (max. capacity: 14 people per guided tour + guide).

AUDIO GUIDE SERVICE

Audio guide (Spanish)

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