

MARIO

FONSECA

b. 1948

CALLE SUECIA

SANTO DOMINGO

ENTRE RIOS

1972-1987

CALLE SUECIA + SANTO DOMINGO 1972 • ENTRE RÍOS 1987

A hostile political climate permeated everything. One felt haunted, socially and personally. In 1972 Salvador Allende's regime, the Unidad Popular, was in political turmoil. I started taking photographs against a background of social distress and a desperate political landscape. I had been trying to paint but was unable to find a language that I could actually say was my own and I also felt that painting couldn't encompass all that was happening around me. I sensed an ominous future looming over us. I wouldn't take documentary pictures – I think I've never done it – as those images were already around us every day, so I didn't feel the need to, nor want to go out and take them.

Mario Fonseca

BIOGRAPHY

Mario Fonseca is a visual artist, art critic, curator, academic, writer, designer and Chilean publisher. Born in Lima, Peru in 1948, he has lived in Chile since 1966. Fonseca enrolled in the School of Fine Art of the Universidad Católica in 1966 but dropped out of the programme to embark on his professional career in graphic design and publishing. Simultaneously, he began to take personal photographs that would express his feelings about the political turmoil around Salvador Allende's presidency which ended with the brutal military coup of 1973.

Fonseca's 1972 series **Calle Suecia** and **Santo Domingo**, which he made in his early 20's, stem from that haunting period. **Entre Ríos** came about 15 years later in 1987, as Fonseca looks back on the constant pressure of surveillance he experienced during the early years of the dictatorship. Later in his practice, he began to experiment with conceptual art which he would continue to develop for many years, becoming one of the forefront conceptual artists in Chile during the 80s.

In the 80s and 90s, Fonseca had a determining role in the publication of books and catalogues of works by highly influential Chilean theorists, poets and artists such as, Ronald Kay, Eugenio Dittborn, Raúl Zurita, Lotty Rosenfeld, Justo Mellado, Gonzalo Díaz, Arturo Duclos, Juan Dávila, Alfredo Jaar, Paz Errázuriz, Roser Bru and Eugenio Téllez, amongst others. At the time, these publications were considered important and influential platforms for the diffusion of the different manifestations of art in Chile.

ANALOG WORK

Calle Suecia 1972 - "We were living in Santiago in an apartment of a three-story building in Calle Suecia (Sweden street). Some days, I would go up to the roof terrace where we used to hang the wash and take pictures of ordinary things: a forgotten ball, a discarded bone, a useless hose, a couple of old tricycles, the twisted hanging wire wrapped around a concrete column, another to a pole, and so on."

Santo Domingo 1972 - "In winter we used to go to the coast, as guests of a lovely couple, old friends of my grandfather whom I had never met. She was a goldsmith, he was a poet, and they rented a small seaside house in Santo Domingo, on the central coast of Chile. The town was known for the beautiful gardens that adorned its private houses. I took several pictures of my friends' garden as I was particularly attracted to the thickness and fragrance of a cypress hedge. I also used to go for a stroll on Santo Domingo's long and usually empty beach."

Entre Ríos 1987 - "is named after a country estate situated about 900km away from Santiago, in the European colonized south of Chile. The house was by then more than 60 years old when I started to photograph it. After seeing the pictures of this peaceful and evocative refuge, almost all of them indoors, I was reminded of those years under the military dictatorship, when I had felt the constant pressure of surveillance. We were free but somehow we were equally confined to those four-walled spaces."

EXHIBITIONS & COLLECTIONS

Fonseca's first solo exhibition, **Habeas Corpus**, was held at the now legendary Galería Sur in 1982, one of the few contemporary art spaces in Santiago at that time; later, in 2011, it was shown at the Centro Cultural Estación Mapocho; more recently, a group exhibition at Austin Desmond Fine Art, London: **Fragmented Dialogues: Art and Identity in 1980s Chile** (2018); MAVI (Museo de Artes Visuales) Santiago, held a retrospective of Fonseca's work titled: **Reflejo Involuntario (Involuntary Reflex)** in 2017. Recent group exhibitions include: **Urban Impulses, Latin American Photography, 1960-2016**, held at Les Rencontres de la Photographie, Arles, France (2017), and **MAC Collection: Post '90** at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Santiago, Chile (2017).

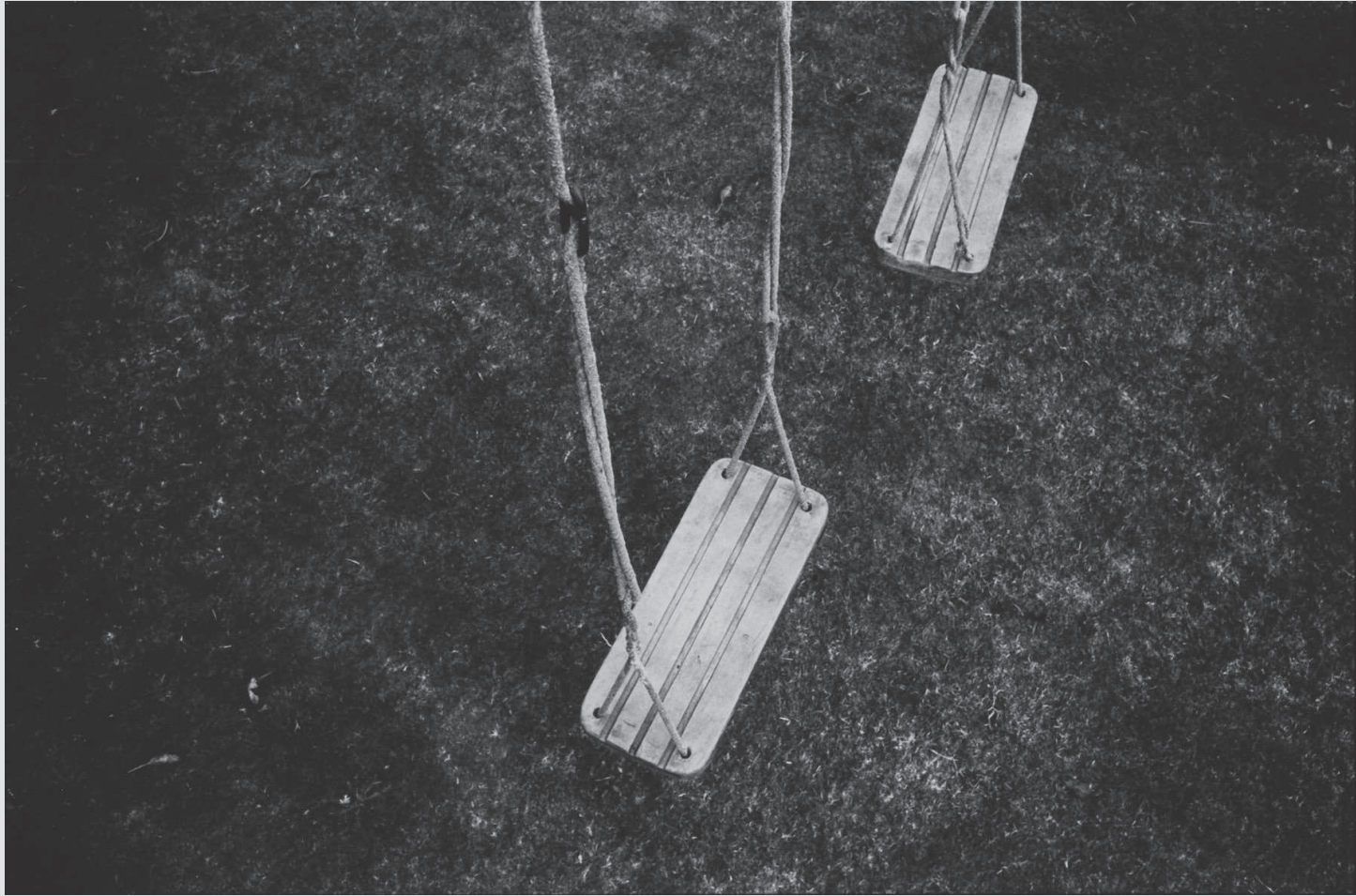
Fonseca's work is included in important collections with a focus on Latin American Art in the USA and Europe, including: the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia), USA. The George Eastman Kodak Museum, New York. Leticia and Stanislas Poniatowski Collection, Switzerland.

In Chile his work is included the permanent collections of the most important museums: National Museum of Fine Arts. Museum of Contemporary Art (MACA). Museum of Visual Arts (MAVI). The Salvador Allende Museum of Solidarity. National Center of Contemporary Art.



Calle Suecia Tricycle
Triptych 1972

later prints 2018
ed 9 + 2AP
gelatin silver prints
30 x 39 cm / each



Santo Domingo 1972
Children Swing

later prints 2018
ed 9 + 2AP
gelatin silver prints
20 x 30 cm / each



Entre Rios, Door 1987

Triptych

later prints 2017

ed 9 + 2AP

gelatin silver prints

30 x 39 cm / each

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