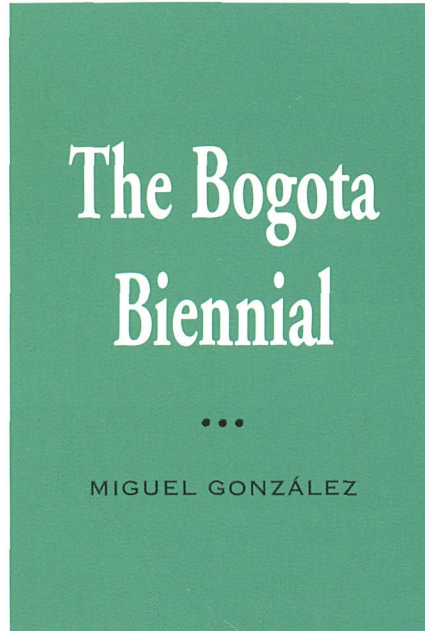


REVIEWS

In its fifth edition, the Biennial exhibition organised by the Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá brought together 24 artists (born between 1946 and 1972) who, in the opinion of the selection committee, best embodied Colombia's artistic trends at the end of the century while inevitably in keeping with international tendencies.

We approach the end of the millennium not only casting off old and exhausted ideologies, but also renewing relations with aesthetic signs and generating new understanding. This process has meant revising modernist postulates and witnessing the death of their era. Looking at exhibitions such as this one — which are designed precisely to detect, examine, confront, risk and promote the emerging languages and metalanguages within artistic debates — it is startling to note the multiplicity of problems raised, while verifying the different possible solutions.

In addition, the Biennial was born as a consortium of critical opinions and of criteria that are diverse yet unified in the common search for creative affirmations. This has been the guiding spirit throughout its decade of existence. Over the course of five Biennials, modular transformations have been produced in terms of documentation, theory, museumography and museumology, as well as different ways of understanding thoughtful work.



substantially revising the role of critics and curators as signaling and questioning activities. The Biennial has recorded and exhibited an entire series of changes and contradictions, thus fulfilling one of its primary objectives.



Bogota Biennial.

One of the goals of the Fifth Biennial is continuity, choosing artists who have previously participated in the exhibition and who, in the judgement of the selection committee, are demonstrating the efficiency of the acquired goals; at the same time, the vitality of new Colombian art is acclaimed as proof of visualisation in this apocalyptic period of our history. The Biennial also renews its expressed desire to serve as a depository for new thoughts and contemplative attitudes. The recent group of guests qualifies in the spirit of risk and controversy that the event has always aroused, provoking alertness in the consortium of innovative ideas.

The Biennial shows how one of the symptoms of artistic practice is diversified in various issues concerning man and his relationship to his environment; these are the problems of proposals in context. The existence of multiple problems to some degree becomes the heart of the arguments that are made. Thus artists and their achievements are concerned with social and geographical issues, the game, the city, globality and intimacy; as is natural, immediate reality is involved.

An event of this nature serves as a measure of a symptomology that is diverse, contradictory and stupefied by world-wide uncertainty; none of this is unfamiliar nor extraordinary to a

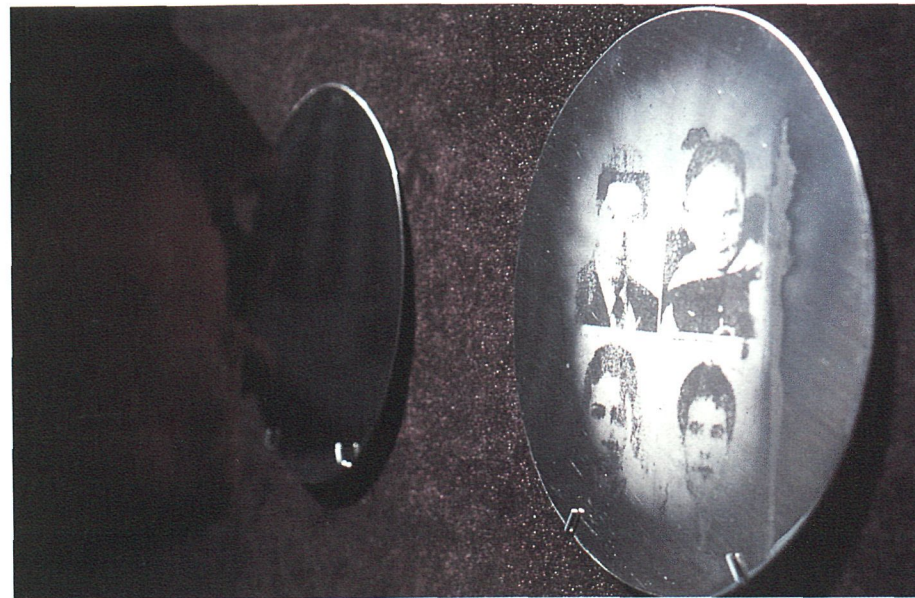
bloodied and decimated society as that of Colombia.

The single award was issued to José Alejandro Restrepo (born 1959) for his video-installation *Atrio y Nave Central*: the work, referring to both Greco-Roman mythology and to whorehouses, was presented within sacred and ironic realms. This same artist represented Colombia in the XXIII São Paulo Biennial, where he offered a video-installation entitled *Quiasma*

which dealt with vigilance and times of suspicion.

Other outstanding works in the exhibition included the following: the memory machine of Elías Heim (born in 1966), a large apparatus entitled *Consolador de espacios solitarios* that alludes to and invades museum spaces, while at the same time creating an allegory of mythology, eroticism and sensuality: *Aliento*, by Oscar Muñoz (born in 1952), which consisted of 15

stainless steel records, activated by the spectator, for the apparition of images via breathing: the isolating crystal cube of Fernando Arias (born in 1963), which was made of his own blood and cocaine (the two archetypal elements of current Colombian society) – his work refers to the cultural crisis and to death and AIDS, subjects that the artist has dealt with throughout his career: the installation *Salón Colombia*, by Nadin Ospina (born 1960), consisting of fake



Oscar Muñoz. *Aliento*, 1996. Photoserigraph, grease on metal, 12 plates, 20 cm in diameter.





Nadin Ospina. *Salón Colombia*. 1996. Cerámica. *Installation (Detail)*. 60 x 40 x 25 cm.

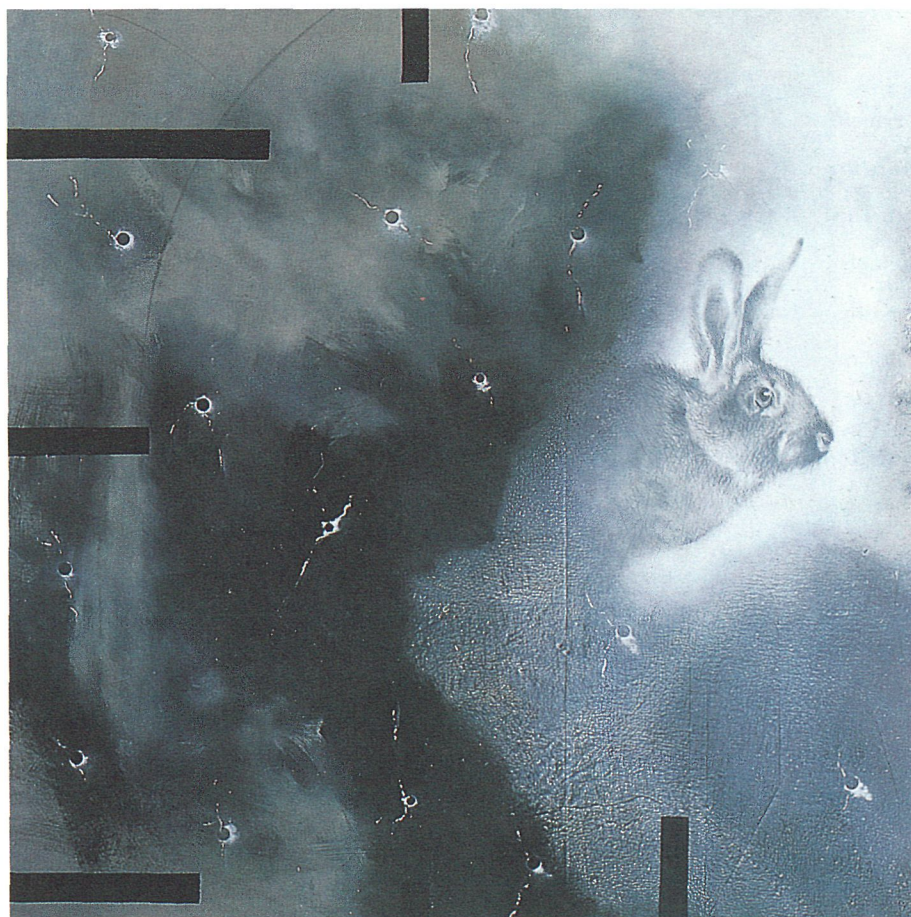
pre-Colombian art works that parodied and intruded into the consumer society, arbitrariness of tourism and the ideology of the masses.

Mounted throughout the four floors of the Museo de Arte Moderno, the Biennial included a series of video-installations (Natalia Restrepo, Leonel Galeano, Mario Opazo); multidirectional works dealing with the materialisation and dematerialisation of painting (Luis Fernando Roldán, Carlos Salas Silva, Danilo Dueñas, Lucas Ospina); and recent developments in photography and projection (Gloria Posada, Ana Claudia Múnera).

MIRARTE

The Latin American International Art Fair was held October 23 - 28, 1996 with the participation of seven nations and 20 galleries. With good attendance and an important level of sales, this Bogotá-based event met its objectives in terms of promotion, film and video programmes, conferences, round-table discussions and meetings among art fair directors (ARCO, FIAC, *Guadalajara* and *Mirarte*).

The goal for future editions of the fair is an improved selection of participants and an increased exhibition of contemporary art. With the continued lack of clear criteria, visitors were able to find a varied offering, full of contrasts and where it was difficult to ascertain the truth about Latin American art, the



Catalina Mejía. *El desafío*. 1996. Acrylic on cloth. 150 x 140 cm.

strength of the work exhibited. It was possible to visit galleries from Argentina (2), Colombia (14), Cuba (1), Spain (1), U.S.A. (2), Mexico (1), Dominican Republic (1) and Venezuela (4). Special mention should be made of the individual exhibit of the Venezuelan artist Ernesto Zales (Centro Euroamericana de Arte, Caracas); paintings by Utruria (Galería Praxis, Buenos Aires); the physichromes of Carlos Cruz-Diez (Graphic, CB2, Caracas). Colombian galleries features work by: Fernando Botero (Tovar y

Tovar, El Museo); Edgar Negret (Luis Pérez, Casa Negret); Olga de Amaral; Eduardo Ramírez Villamizar; Carlos Rojas; Santiago Cárdenas (Diners, Garcés Velásquez, El Museo). Included among the youngest generation of artists were: Nadin Ospina (Tovar y Tovar, Carlos Alberto González); Victor Laignelet (Jenni Vilá); Hugo Zapata (El Museo); José Antonio Suárez (Sextante).

Mirarte is preparing a review of its achievements and criteria and expects to offer another edition this year.