

Anhel (longing) [Sehnsucht]

Una mirada sobre la col·lecció de Michael Horbach (In contemplation of Michael Horbach's collection).

January 19th to March 17th 2019

Casal Solleric. Passeig del Born, 27. 07012 Palma

Juan Carlos Alom, Sà Bauer, Pep Bonet, Raúl Cañibano, Miquel Frontera Serra, Cristina García Rodero, Flor Garduño, Frank Gaudlitz, Catalina Ginard, Jan Grarup, Hans Peter Jost, Alberto Korda, Lucana, Pierrot Men, Beat Presser, Sebastiao Salgado, Alfredo Sarabia, Alfredo Sarabia (Junior) and Marcos Zimmermann

Collecting photographs is a form of visual contemplation. In turn, contemplating a collection offers an insight into the collector's private and personal relationship with the world and their understanding of it. **Anhel [Sehnsucht]** is simply a selection of photographs—albeit a meaningful selection—from Michael Horbach's collection, made up of contemporary black and white documentary photographs with a social message. They are some of the photographs that he has added to his collection over a period of thirty years, with various focuses of interest, in addition to the interest appeal of the photographers who took them, ranging from major international names to other commercially less well-known but equally well-considered ones.

The photographs that make up **Anhel [Sehnsucht]** speak of desire, nostalgia, beauty and what is all important, while also confronting us with an abyss-like or hugely contradictory reality. There is nothing paternalistic about this collector's vision. It is more neo-humanist, in Horbach's own words. He raises issues like the utopia of a dignified life, social justice, the belief that *Another world is possible*, and the need to change the world, like the title and spirit of Jean Ziegler's latest book, *Change le monde. Il en a besoin!*

Collecting photographs implicitly involves grouping and organizing images, in this case in a specific way, and this can also be applied to looking at a collection. Casal Solleric's physical space and its five rooms determined the division of the photographs into different themes, associated with traditional classic photographic genres. They demonstrate Michael Horbach's affinity with social notions of art and with several Latin-American countries, even though other areas of the globe are also represented.

1. **Between light and shade.** This is a selection of portraits made up of images that reflect social and regional traditions and customs, ranging from the chiaroscuro *Basket of light* emerging from the darkness by Mexican photographer Flor Garduño and the disturbing *Conversation between the girl and beast* by the same artist to the protagonist traced by soap suds at Kissy Mental Hospital in Sierra Leona in one of the photographs from the *City of Rest* series by Pep Bonet, the sleeping girl in a scene evocative of a realist painting in *On the threshing floor* by Cristina García Rodero or the almost surreal face of *Missael* by Cuban photographer Juan Carlos Alom.

2. **Life despite everything.** These big scenes show how man has managed to tame the landscape at great cost. In many of them, water is a fundamental factor in life although it also acts as a social link. This is the case of *Senegal* (the Africa series) by Sebastiao Salgado or the queue to fill water bottles in the *Somalia* series by Jan Grarup. In others, like *Bar Río Grande* (a bar in the middle of nowhere in Tierra del Fuego, Argentina, by Marcos Zimmermann) or *Stade*

Betongolo in Madagascar by Pierrot Men, such is the magnitude of the scene that life has an almost token presence.

3. **Immensity and solitude.** Once again this is a series of landscapes, this time where atmospheric phenomena, geographical features and certain local peculiarities on a macro and minor scale bear witness to nature's force and beauty. Nature is captivating, irrespective of the latitude on which it lies—through the sky in *Clouds between rivers* by Lucana, the water and salt in *Ses Salines* by Miquel Frontera Serra, or the orography of the *Salt-pan* by Marcos Zimmermann.

4. **Social documents and records.** Although we have moved on from debate on photography as proof, evidence or the basis of fact, as expounded by German photographer Gisèle Freund, this section of the collection is indebted to her. The photographs tell a story rooted in a certain place and time, offering a political or sociological insight into history, closely akin to photojournalism, like the virtual apparition of a figure in *Musician in the middle of nowhere* by Flor Garduño or *Table selling chipaco* by Zimmermann.

5. **A tribute to Cuba.** In these snapshots, the protagonists are Cuba's people and their everyday lives, as in *Power cut* or *Boardwalk* by Raúl Cañibano. They are depicted with humour and a touch of surrealism in the photographs from the *José Martí* series by Alfredo Sarabia Junior and also in commonplace settings in Cuba: an island that has inspired so many Western myths about the revolution's prospects and the utopias of socialism.

To collect photos is to collect the world, said Susan Sontag, raising the issue of photographs as building blocks, as the generators of stories, even able to replace memory in a bid to reorganize (in this case) the planet where we live in order to get to know and improve it: the ultimate desire of all collectors.

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