

CHRISTOPHE GUYE GALERIE

Press Release – for immediate release

Noritoshi HIRAKAWA (*1960, Japan)
unión de... Interaccional Casa Barragán

07. June – 04. August 2012

Opening reception in presence of the artist, and book-signing of his first monograph:
Wednesday, 06. June, from 6 – 8 p.m.
with introduction by Tobia Bezzola, contributing author of the monograph *unión de... Interaccional Casa Barragán*

Christophe Guye Galerie is proud to announce its upcoming exhibition *unión de... Interaccional Casa Barragán*, introducing the latest work of the internationally acclaimed Japanese artist Noritoshi Hirakawa. For the very first time on view in Europe, following the museum exhibition *Noritoshi Hirakawa x Luis Barragán*, in Mexico City, this solo exhibition presents the suggestive while sensual series *unión de...*. In a way distinctly his own, the photography, video, and performance artist Hirakawa manages with intriguing visuals and story-telling attributes to visualise the synergy between man and architecture, while similarly a critique directed against representations of space. Offering an unfamiliar take on architectural photography Hirakawa focuses on conceptions that inhabitants give space life. Inspired by the creations of architect Luis Barragán, the artist manages to capture the essence, rather than the structure, of the famed Casa Barragán, as well as Barragán's notorious emotional approach to architecture. Furthermore, the gallery is pleased to present the corresponding monograph *unión de... Interaccional Casa Barragán* published by *Hatje Cantz*, one of the leading international publishers for art publications.

Christophe Guye Galerie is proud to announce Noritoshi Hirakawa's (*1960, Japan) upcoming solo exhibition, presenting the artist's latest and much anticipated series *unión de...*. Exhibiting a selection of 40 black & white silver gelatin prints, Hirakawa's latest work is a poetic nod at the renowned Mexican architect Luis Barragán, as well as an intellectual take on the harmony of humans and the world that surrounds them. Orchestrating games of power, desire, and communication, Hirakawa's delicately both visualises and captures human physicality and the bodily, as well as emotional response to space.

Barragán – one of Mexico's most prominent architects and a major figure in international 20th century architecture – was famed for his mastery of space and light. Having discovered poetry in architecture, Barragán fused his personal experiences, dreams, and memories into a physical experience, while brilliantly blending the tenets of traditional Mexican architecture with modernism. As a result, Barragán's thoughtful work was at once personal yet universal, as is Hirakawa's poetic essay *unión de...*, beautifully evoking the architect's flowing designs as well as what Barragán declared as "emotional architecture".

Practices, narratives, and interactions unfold before us, visualising the idea that not only does space mould us, be we in turn give space shape. Inspired by the idea of human ability to play with space and seeing architecture as an arena for understandings and misunderstandings, the essence of *unión de...* is to capture the changing of emotions when moving within a given space and how planes, rooms, nooks, and corners house these constant shifts of response and attitude. As a result the architectonic construction no longer is the essence of Hirakawa's photography, but instead the artists focuses on the interrelationship between individuals and a façade. The idea is to reveal the union between crafted space and human behaviour, thus completing the architect's original hypothesis opposed to functionalism.

Accustomed to the refinement, soberness, and perfection of the studied forms of Barragánesque architecture, and thus deprived of their original function, the circumstance and concepts of that which had made these architectural works possible are often forgotten. Adhering to Barragán's original beliefs, while

CHRISTOPHE GUYE GALERIE

similarly interested in broadening the limits of aesthetic awareness, Hirakawa assumes that culture and human activity are two binding conditions of our way of being in the world. With *unión de...* the artist is the first ever to portray Barragán's work with people, and thus the first to fully reflect his idea that space as a habitable territory in the sensorial and spiritual domains. Additionally, this photographic essay, in total 72 prints, is solely in black & white: by eliminating colour from his photography the artist feels he best reflects Barragán's original psychological and emotional driven vision, since predominantly his architecture is depicted with a focus on his use of colour and minimal design. What has come into existence is an intriguing narrative of mystifying happenings and encounters definitive of Hirakawa's distinguishing photographic style.

Whether visualising sexual tension, or similarly emotional restraint, *unión de...* combines the disciplines dance and photography, both central elements to Hirakawa's oeuvre. With the use of dancers – perhaps more aware of bodily movements being shaped by surroundings – the artist stages the union between space, narrative, architecture, sentiment, mannerism. As a result Hirakawa's latest series of cinematic quality presents us with a psychological, photographical ballet.

A fully illustrated, 144 page catalogue *unión de... Interaccional Casa Barragán* of the complete works, including all 40 on view, is being published by *Hatje Cantz* to coincide with the exhibition, and will be Noritoshi Hirakawa's first monograph. The book contains two essays, one by Tobia Bezzola, curator and Head of Exhibition Department at the *Kunsthaus Zürich*, Zurich (Switzerland), as well as one by the Mexican poet and critic Baudelio Lara.

*Having studied Applied Sociology in his native Japan, Noritoshi Hirakawa (*1960) is an internationally known contemporary artist. He has created numerous works in photography, film, dance, installation and performance, with the core belief that human activity forms the culture in which we live. His work deals with gender, media, religion and contemporary art itself. Even if seemingly provocative, at first glance, his suggestions are sincere questions about the existence and free within social system. His creation questions the future relationship between art and society as well as suggests a reconsidering of traditional role-play. His work has been exhibited over 300 times at museums, art centres, and galleries all over the world, including Venice Biennale Aperto, Istanbul Biennale, Santa Fe Biennale, and the Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt, Center Pompidou in Paris, or PS 1 Museum in New York. He has worked on several collaborations with visual artists, such as Lawrence Weiner, or artists from other fields, such as poets, musicians, choreographers, and architects on projects furthermore presented at Das TAT, Frankfurt, Danse Montpellier, or the Fondation Cartier, Paris.*

Luis Barragán (1902-1988) was born in Guadalajara, Mexico, with a professional training was in engineering. His architectural skills were self-taught. In the 1920s, he travelled extensively in France and Spain and, in 1931, lived in Paris for a time, attending Le Corbusier's lectures. His time in Europe, and subsequently in Morocco, stimulated an interest in the native architecture of North Africa and the Mediterranean, which he related to construction in his own country. In the late 1920s, he was associated with a movement known as the Escuela Tapatía or Guadalajara School, which espoused a theory of architecture dedicated to the vigorous adherence to regional traditions. His architectural practice was based in Guadalajara from 1927 until 1936 when he moved to Mexico City and remained until his death. His work has been called minimalist, but it is nonetheless sumptuous in colour and texture. Pure planes, be they walls of stucco, adobe, timber, or even water, are his compositional elements, all interacting with nature.

Casa Barragán, located in the suburbs of Mexico City, was Barragán's former private residence and studio, and now a museum celebrating the architect's work. Built in 1947, the 1162 square meter three-story concrete house and garden reflect Barragán's celebrated design-style, has since become one of the most influential and representative works of contemporary architecture and in 2004 was recognised by UNESCO as a masterpiece of the new developments in the Modern Movement, adding it to its World Heritage List.

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For further press inquiries, please contact Christophe Guye at guye@christopheguye.com, or Georgina Casparis at casparis@christopheguye.com, or at +41 44 252 01 11.

Monograph:

Noritoshi Hirakawa

unión de...Interaccional Casa Barragán

with texts by Tobia Bezzola and Baudelio Lara

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