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## **galeria nara roesler // alberto baraya**

photographs, objects and installations trace a recent retrospective of the work of Colombian artist Alberto Baraya, highlighted on shows like the Venice Biennale (2009) and the São Paulo Biennial (2006)

On June 22, from 11AM to 3PM, Galeria Nara Roesler opens the solo exhibition of Colombian artist Alberto Baraya. With works resulting from his expeditions to New Zealand, China (Shanghai), Colombia (Teyuna), Australia and Peru (Machu Picchu), between 2009 and 2013, the show presents a retrospective outlook on the relationships that the artist-traveler established with different local contexts.

Works from the project *Herbario de plantas artificiales* are exhibited and, according to Baraya "the project will be in development for a long time". The artist obsessively catalogs – with scientific rigor – the artificial plants found in each of the countries visited, questioning the scientific rationality. These new taxonomies add subjective components, discuss identities and incorporate waste products from the market. The goals of ancient scientific missions gain a contemporary, deeply critical aspect.

This is the case of the series of black and white photographs from his expedition to Machu Picchu, called *Antropometrias aproximadas*. A tool for early physical anthropology, anthropometry was used to identify and understand the human and physical variations and, on several occasions invalidated by history, to correlate characteristics to ethnic and racial factors. In these works, Alberto Baraya revises not



alberto baraya  
**expedición machu picchu:  
antropometrias aproximadas  
cusco, mujeres y llamas**, 2013  
photograph on baryta fiber paper  
40 x 55 cm

### **opening**

22.06.2013 11h > 15h

### **exhibition**

24.06 > 20.07

seg > sex 10h > 19h

sáb 11h > 15h

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only the archaeological exploration of the area of Machu Picchu, which takes place since 1901, but proposes a reflection on the idea of "discovery" of a culture by the hands of another, having his measurements taken by natives and tourists from all over the world.

In *Expedición Teyuna*, project previously selected for SP-Arte's Curatorial Lab, the artist's exercise was much more familiar in geographical terms, but just as different in cultural ones. Local people were invited to pose with artificial reproductions of the native flora of Teyuna, the Lost City of Colombia. The marketing issues, often mentioned in the cataloging work of Baraya, are especially important in the history of Teyuna. Discovered by looters in 1972, the city became known to anthropologists and archaeologists only in 1976, when gold figurines and ceramic urns began to appear in the local black market.

A development of the installation *La fábula de los pájaros*, presented at the Biennial of Cuenca, in Ecuador, gathers stuffed birds, typical of Latin America, leading the viewer to different ways of contemplating controlled landscapes: the landscape of dissected and stuffed birds as a scientific instrument and their relationship to the landscape of the whole Bolivarian territory, their natural habitat.

The exhibition at Galeria Nara Roesler is on display from June 24 to July 20, 2013.

### **about the artist**

Active since the 1990s, Alberto Baraya uses photography, video, sculpture, objects, and drawing as the languages of his deeply critical work.

His early production is marked by ironic self-portraits which either use reproductions of emblematic paintings or create provocative enactments. Later on, in 2003, Baraya deals with the duality between nature and artifice in his best-known series to date, *Herbário de plantas artificiales*, first shown at the Museum of Modern Art of Bogotá. The work is highly representative of themes which make him restless: aside from its evident political tinge, the series question

scientific rationality. That is highlighted by his suggestions of new taxonomies, as he adds subjective components, discusses identities, and incorporates “residual” products of the market such as artificial plants. The collectionism of old scientific missions gets a contemporary, deeply critical reworking.

Alberto Baraya was born in 1968 in Bogotá, Colombia, where he lives and works. He featured in shows such as the 9th Shanghai Biennale, China (2012), 11th Biennial of Cuenca, Ecuador (2011); the 53rd Venice Biennale, Italy (2009); the 27th São Paulo Biennial, Brazil (2006); the 1st Biennial of Medellín, Colombia (1997); the Biennial of the Caribbean in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (2003); and the 4th Biennial of Bogotá, Colombia (1994). His works have featured in international solo shows such as *Expedition Bogotá-Indianapolis* (with Danielle Riede), at the Indianapolis Museum of Contemporary Art, USA (2011) and *Herbario de plantas artificiales*, at the Museo de Arte Moderno La Tertulia, Cali, Colombia (2004). He has participated in important group shows such as *Disrupted nature*, at the Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach, USA (2013), *Botánica: after Humboldt*, at the Centro de Arte y Naturaleza, in Huesca, Spain, and *Play with me*, at the Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach, USA (both in 2012); *Everything has a name, or the potential to be named*, Gasworks, London, UK (2009); *Paraísos indómitos*, at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo in Vigo, Spain (2008) and *Positions in context: CIFO Grants Program Exhibition*, at the Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, in Miami, USA (2007). His works can be found in the public collections of the Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach, the Tamarind Institute, Albuquerque, and the United States Information Agency, all in the USA; Banco de la República and the Museo de Arte Universidad Nacional de Colombia, both in Bogotá, Colombia; and Instituto de La Juventud, Madrid, Spain.

### **about the gallery**

For over 35 years, Nara Roesler has continuously promoted contemporary art to a local and international body of collectors, curators, and scholars. In 1989, she founded Galeria Nara Roesler in São Paulo, Brazil, as an arena to expand the boundaries of art practice, locally and abroad.

Representing some of the most interesting contemporary artists, the gallery directs much of its interest towards opposing art practices from the late 1960s and its contemporary ramifications, representing historical names alongside a selected group of artists on the rise.

In 2012, the gallery doubled its exhibition space to over 1600 square meters, and re-launched the curatorial project Roesler Hotel, started in 2006, with groundbreaking exhibitions such as *Lo bueno y lo malo*, curated by Fundación/Colección Jumex's director Patrick Charpenel, and *Buzz*, a group show on op art conceived by Vik Muniz, with artworks by Bridget Riley, Josef Albers, Marcel Duchamp and Yayoi Kusama.