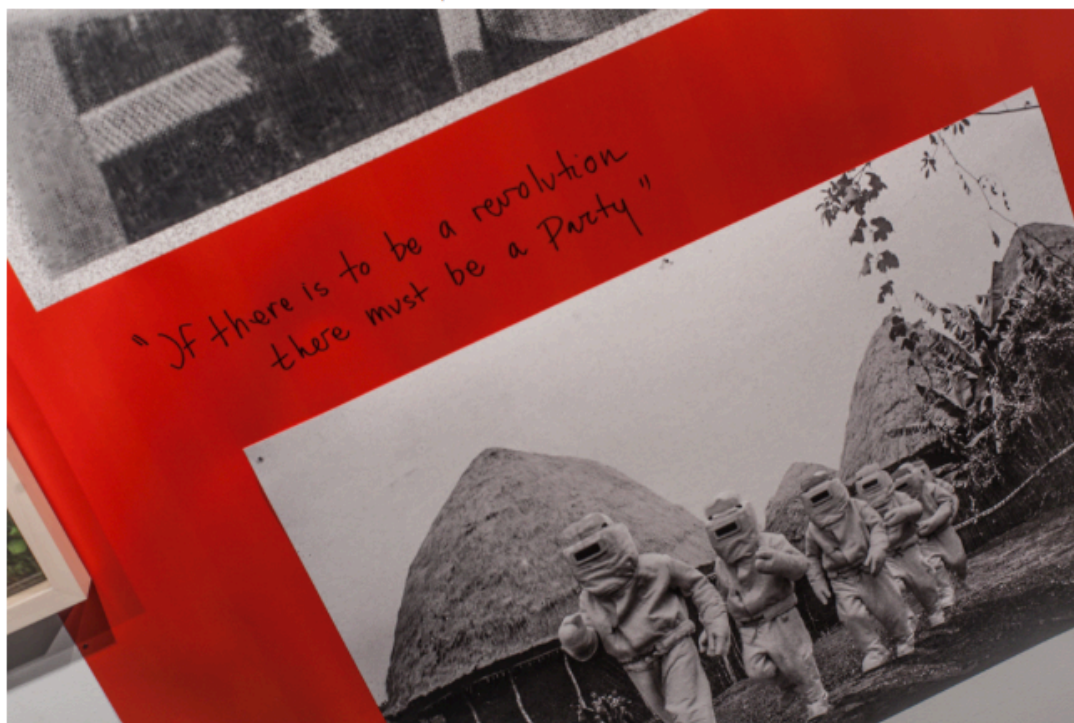


September 19, 2014



CRISTINA DE MIDDEL: 7 STORIES AT DILLON GALLERY

Dillon Gallery is pleased to announce “Seven Stories,” a survey of the last 6 years of Cristina De Middel’s conceptual approach towards visual storytelling. Though recognized as a rising figure in photography, her approach to the medium is more aligned to filmmaking than documentary or classic fine art photography.

Building on her experience as a photojournalist, De Middel has become increasingly attracted to the eccentric lines of storytelling, avoiding conventional subject matter told in conventional ways. In her art, De Middel respects the basis of truth but breaks the rules of veracity in order to push the audience into challenging the patterns of the stories we unquestioningly consume and believe. De Middel states that she has “the conviction that contemporary issues should be described in a way that includes the agent’s traditions, perspectives, fears and hopes.” Larger-than life stories and expeditions are retold through a personal narrative, often full of humor, always calling into question the deeper issues at hand.

Poly-Spam: De Middel’s first project – fictional portraits of the people who send spam emails – was shown to acclaim at the PHotoEspaña festival in 2009. From a young woman looking to marry so that she can inherit her family fortune (there’s a marriage clause), to an African attorney who’s stumbled upon an account and wants to share, the

fabricated email senders are brilliantly re-constructed by the artist, using real as well as staged environments.



“Sandrine Nzi,” from the series Poly-Spam

The Afronauts: based on the true story of the short-lived Zambian space program. Winner of the ICP award 2013 and a Deutsche Börse finalist, this series brought De Middel to international acclaim, further solidifying her reputation as one of the most innovative photographers of her generation.



(to the left) “Umeko,” from the series The Afronauts/ (to the right) “Umfundi” from the series The Afronauts

The Party: winner of the 2014 PHotoEspaña international best book award. Pairing images the artist took in China with quotations taken from the process of erasure through a white out pen, Chairman Mao's little red book is re-written by De Middel, presenting an irreverent retelling of Mao's doctrines.



Snap Fingers & Whistle: challenging the archetype of street photography, this series is the artist's re-enactment of West Side Story through the urban landscape, presenting the story through signifiers and visual clues found on the streets of New York.

Jan Mayen: in 1911 a group of wealthy German and British scientists decided to re-discover an isolated island between Greenland and Iceland. Their expedition failed, but the cinematographer of the crew convinced them to stop on an Icelandic beach and stage a landing in order to cover up their failure. The artist traveled to the Isle of Skye using the detailed journals of the original team and recreated the recreation.

Antipodes: starting with the premise of an expedition to the furthest point from the artist's birthplace in Spain, De Middel photographed the mythical scenery of New Zealand (the antipode.) Here her approach requires the viewer to complete the viewing process with a flash from a camera in order to reveal the landscape, a playful collaboration between the tangible and intangible image.



"Bilbo," from the series Antipodes

This Is What Hatred Did: inspired by Amos Tutuola's 1964 novel *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*. The protagonist, a 5-year-old Nigerian child, is forced to flee his village when soldiers attack his home. Left alone he finds solace in the Bush, a magical territory inhabited by the Yoruba spirits where no humans are allowed. The child spends thirty years lost in the Bush trying to find his way back home. "This what hatred did," the mysterious last sentence of the book, aims to provide an illustrated contemporary version of this story adapting the characters in the story to the actual situation of the country."



Cristina de Middel, "Omobinrin," from the series This Is What Hatred Did

Cristina De Middel (b. Alicante, Spain, 1975) has exhibited internationally and has received numerous awards and nominations, including PhotoFolio Arles 2012, the Deutsche Börse Prize, POPCAP '13, and the Infinity Award from the International Center of Photography in New York.



Cristina de Middel, artist



"Alesia Atolevna Markina," from the series Poly-Spam





Photographs from the opening by Tatiana Kiseleva