

PRESS RELEASE

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Galerie

Paris

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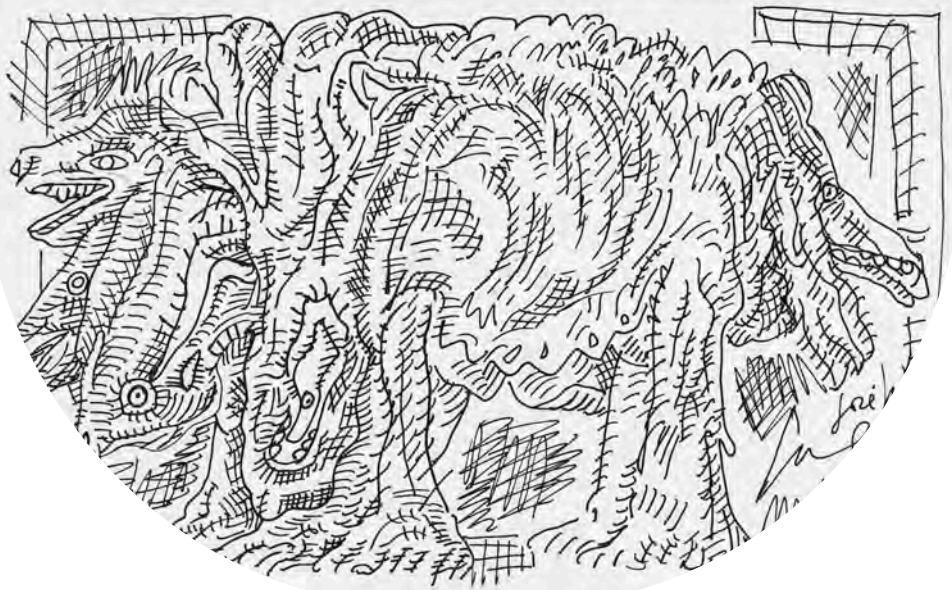
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mardi > samedi 11h > 19h

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Jesse A. Fernández and his models THE FACES OF ARTS

Exposition

6 March / 1 August. 20

Openig reception on 5 March from 6pm



© Jesse A. Fernández Estate / Collection F. Mazin Fernández

Hans Hartung, Antibes, 1980

Vintage silverprint / 32,7 x 21,8 cm

Hans Hartung

T1975-H13, 1975

Pastel acrylic ink on panel / 100 x 50 cm



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Galerie Orbis pictus is launching the new year with an exhibition of portraits: analogue photographs of 20th century artists and the art world taken by Hispanic artist Jesse A. Fernández (Havana, 1925 - Neuilly-sur-Seine, 1986). The originality of the exhibition lies in the confrontation of these photographic portraits with major artworks of Fernández's subjects, his painter friends, most of them Spanish and Spanish-American.

Painter by vocation, freethinker and a stateless humanist whose life transformed him into a photographer, Jesse A. Fernández met most of the intellectuals and artists of the second half of the 20th century. Another stateless Parisian, Emil Cioran, once described him as "a man who could see an idea like no other". Having lived through Spanish and Cuban political crises in his childhood, Jesse A. Fernández was a true humanist who was able to penetrate the depths of his models. Fernández had no formal training, refused to apply any studio rules, and never asked people to pose. For him, photography was akin to drawing.

Fernández had hoped to produce a book on painters to which each artist would have added their signature - like a sort of personal calligraphy. But death, in the form of a heart attack, entered the dark room before him.

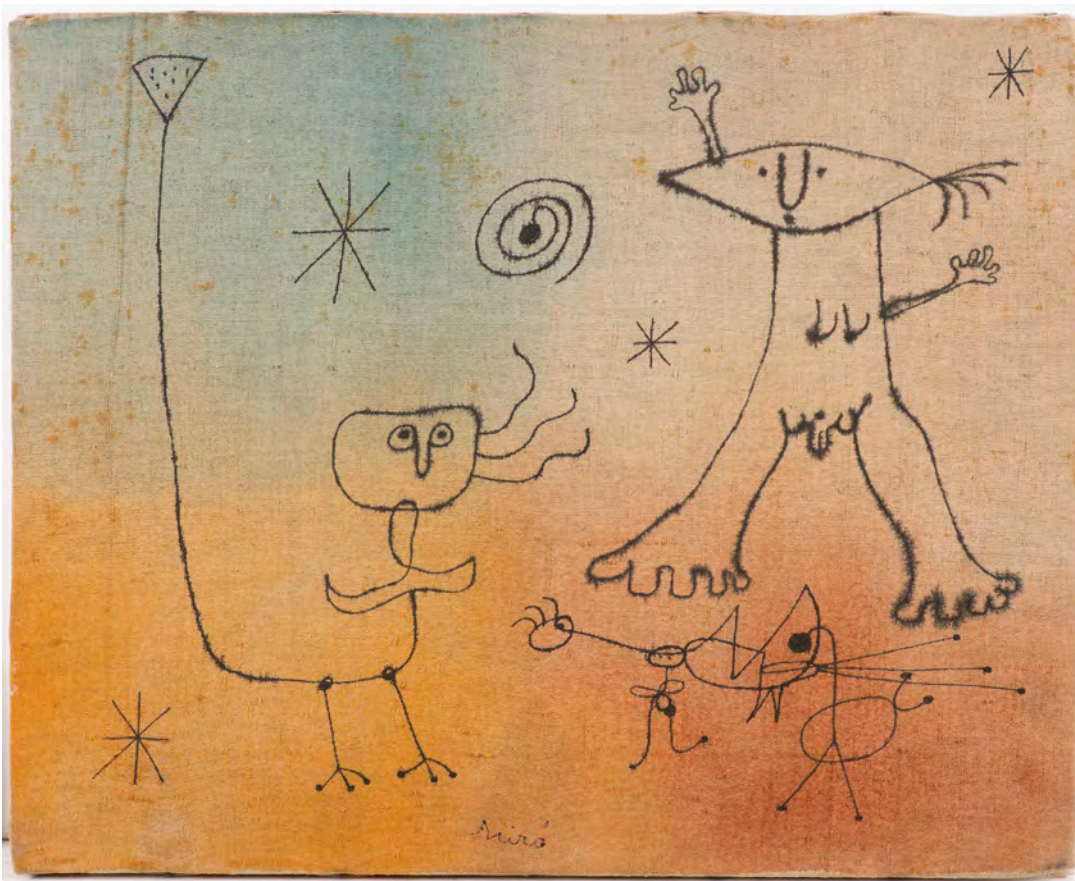
Galerie Orbis pictus will unveil part of this unfinished project through an exclusive showcase of these original calligraphies (Cárdenas, Cuevas, Lam, Miró, Saura, Tàpies...) along with portraits taken on the spot thanks to the Fernández' friendships with the artists. In order to complete and expand on Jesse A. Fernández's project, the gallery seeks to recreate the art world of his time by presenting works by some of the great artists that he knew so well.

A catalogue with texts by Serge Fauchereau and Juan Manuel Bonet will be available at the gallery.

Galerie Orbis Pictus will prolong this exhibition to the next edition of Art Paris Art Fair, from 2 - 5 April 2020.

Sitor Senghor
director





Joan Miró, Figures, birds, stars, 1944
Watercolour and China ink on canvas / 33 x 41 cm



© Jesse A. Fernández Estate / Collection F. Mazin Fernández
Joan Miró, Galerie Pierre Matisse, New York, 1962
Vintage silverprint, 1977 / 20 x 24,8 cm



Biography



© Jesse A. Fernández Estate / Collection F. Mazin Fernández

Jesse Antonio Fernández was born in Havana in 1925. When he was seven years old, he moved with his mother and brother to Asturias (Spain), his parents' original homeland, to escape the dictatorship of Gerardo Machado. In 1936, with the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, the family returned to Cuba on the last boat leaving Santander. "I arrived in Cuba and suffered from culture shock... then, as I am very 'habanero', I spent my youth to the rhythm of 'danzón'." At fifteen, Jesse A. Fernández entered the Academia de Bellas Artes de San Alejandro de La Habana. A gifted painter, he studied there for a few years, before going to Philadelphia to study as an electrical engineer, a path he quickly abandoned to devote himself to art. Once in New York, he would study painting under the guidance of George Grosz and Preston Dickinson at the Art Students League. In 1948, he met Wifredo Lam who introduced him to the European painters living in New York at the time: Marcel Duchamp, Esteban Frances, and Frederic Kiesler. It was at the gatherings of the Painters' Club on 8th street, that he met Willem de Kooning, Jackson Pollock, Robert Motherwell, and Milton Resnick.

Between 1952 and 1954, in Medellín (Colombia) he worked for an advertising agency where he met Fernando Botero and Gabriel García Márquez. He began to take photographs: "Photography became a form of contact with reality. This is where I developed my own technique. I didn't know anything about photography, not even what a diaphragm was. However, I locked myself up with tons of books and I studied. I am a purist, and I was influenced by Henri Cartier-Bresson and Walker Evans."

Back in New York, he worked as a photojournalist. Distributed by Gamma, his photographs were published in well-known magazines and in 1958, he was

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hired as Art Director at the magazine *Visión*. He travelled throughout Central America before photographing, in 1959, at the request of his friend Guillermo Cabrera Infante, Fidel Castro and the early months of the Cuban revolution for the newspapers *Revolución* and *Lunes de Revolución*.

At the end of 1959, he returned to New York and dedicated himself to painting. “When I returned to New York, I had changed, and I decided to start over. It was then that the first skulls appeared. Many of these skulls are landscapes. And I would begin over and over again. The day arrived when, in my view, I had done away with the symbolism. It had become a simple question of space.” Living in the Village, he kept company with the likes of Jorge Luis Borges, Joan Miro, Antoni Tapiès, Antonio Saura, and taught at the New York School of Visual Arts.

At the end of the 60s, still teaching in New York, he alternated his work with stays in Puerto Rico, where he sought a setting more conducive for creativity. He also began to write as an art critic for the *San Juan Star*.

From 1974 to 1976, he lived between Toledo, which he considered “the most beautiful city in the world”, and Madrid where his work was regularly exhibited, especially his “boxes” – symbolic synthesis of association between his personal reading of history and universal culture. In 1977, he settled in France where he took photographs of architecture and portraits of artists such as Joan Mitchell, Francis Bacon, Henry Moore... while participating in numerous solo or group exhibitions.

At the beginning of the 80s he published *Retratos*, bringing together his many portraits of artists and writers, and *Les Momies de Palerme*, a “reportage hallucinant”, wrote Dominique Fernandez, the result of two months spent photographing the catacombs of the Capuchin in Palermo.

Jesse A. Fernández died in Neuilly-sur-Seine on 13 March 1986 and is buried in Père-Lachaise cemetery.



© Rafael S. Lobato, Madrid, 1985
 Courtesy: Jesse A. Fernández Estate /
 Collection F. Mazin Fernández
 Jesse A. Fernández Madrid 1985
 Vintage silverprint



© Jesse A. Fernández Estate / Collection F. Mazin Fernández
 Self-portrait, Reg Butler studio, London, 1978
 Modern silverprint (Chambre noire, Paris) / 40 x 50 cm

Selection of solo exhibitions

2019

Institute Cervantes in Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and Brasilia (Brazil) | *Errancia y fotografía, el mundo ispanico de Jesse A. Fernández*

Jesse A. Fernández, Galerie Nota Bene, Paris | *Vis à vis*
Museo Emilio Caraffa, Cordoba (Argentina) | *Errancia y fotografía, el mundo ispanico de Jesse A. Fernández*

INVESTEC Cape Town Art Fair, Cape Town (South Africa); (S)ITOR

London Art Fair, London (UK); (S)ITOR

2018

Institut culturel du Mexique, Paris | *De Mexico à Paris. Jesse A. Fernández*

Institute Cervantes in Palermo, Naples and Rome (Italy) | *Vagabondaggio e fotografia, il mondo ispanico di Jesse A. Fernández*

2017

Casa de Colon, Salon Iberoamericano, Huelva (Spain) | *Errancia y fotografía, el mundo ispanico de Jesse A. Fernández*

Galerie David Guiraud, Paris | *Jesse A. Fernández – Une œuvre 1952-1986*

2016

American Jazz Museum, Kansas Public Library and The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City (USA) | *Cuba Bound, Photographs by Jesse A. Fernández*

Gallery Throckmorton, New York (USA) | *Under the Cuban sun*

Centre International du Photojournalisme, Perpignan | *Jesse A. Fernández*

2012

Maison de l'Amérique latine, Paris | *Tours et détours, de La Havane à Paris*

Galerie Nota Bene, Paris | *Jesse A. Fernández, l'œuvre graphique*

2011

ALM Gallery, Ramatuelle | *Jesse A. Fernández, Portraits*

2010

Galerie 127, Marrakech (Marocco) | *El ojo que no cejas*

2004

Banco Herrero, Oviedo (Spain) | *Jesse A. Fernández*

2003

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid (Spain) | *Jesse A. Fernández*

Selection of group exhibitions

2020

Galerie Orbis pictus, Paris | *The faces of art. Jesse A. Fernández and his models*

2019

Théâtre La Passerelle, Gap; Galerie Le Réverbère | *Mexique Aller-Retour*

2018

Galerie Le Réverbère, Lyon | *Mexique Aller-Retour*

2017

Florida Museum of Photography, Tampa (USA) | *Under the Cuban sun*

Galerie Marguerite Milin & (S)ITOR | *Le pied à terre au Médicis*

2016

Musée du Petit Palais, Paris | *Dans l'atelier. L'artiste photographié, d'Ingres à Jeff Koons*

2013

Paris Photo; Galerie Dominique Fiat

2008

Circulo de Bellas Artes y Sala de la Comunidad, Madrid (Spain) | *Lenguages de papel (drawings from the Pilar Citoler collection)*

Main exhibitions during the artist's lifetime

1984

Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Madrid (Spain) | *Jesse A. Fernández, Retratos*

1981

Instituto Cultural Dominicano Americano of Saint Domingue (Dominican Republic) | *Jesse A. Fernández, Fotografías*

Musée d'art du Collège Saint Pierre, Port au Prince (Haïti) | *Jesse A. Fernández, Photographies*



1980

Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Madrid (Spain) | *Jesse A. Fernández, Retratos*

Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Caracas (Venezuela) | *Jesse A. Fernández*

Opéra de Paris, Paris | *Les momies de Palerme*

American Center in Brussels (Belgium) and in Madrid (Spain) | *Jesse A. Fernández*

Banque Internationale à Luxembourg (Luxembourg) | *Jesse A. Fernández, Boîtes, dessins, photographies, trois aspects d'une oeuvre*

Institut franco-américain, Rennes | *Jesse A. Fernández, Photographies*

Maison de la culture, Rennes | *Jesse Fernández, boîtes et dessins*

1979

Chamber of Commerce in Cali and Cultural Centre of Venezuela in Bogota (Colombia) | *Jesse A. Fernández, Fotografías 1955-1979*

Galeria Theo, Madrid (Spain) | *Siete años e Otra dimensión*

American Center, Paris | *On Jackson Pollock*

1978

Maison de la culture, Orléans | *Jesse Fernández*

1976

Galeria Ynguanzo, Madrid (Spain) | *Cajas*

FIAC, Paris; Galeria Ynguanzo

Art Basel, Basel (Switzerland)

1975

Vienna (Austria) | *Realismo fantástico en España*

1974

Galeria Ynguanzo, Madrid (Spain)

1973

Alliance Française et Gallery Botello, San Juan (Puerto Rico)

1972

Museum of San Juan (Puerto Rico)

1971

Gallery El Moro, San Juan (Puerto Rico)

1961

Gallery D'Arcy, New York (USA)

Bibliography

2020

L'art a un visage. Jesse A. Fernández et ses modèles. Texts Serge Fauchereau and Juan Manuel Bonet. Galerie Orbis pictus, Paris

2017

Errancia y fotografía, El mundo hispanico de Jesse A. Fernández. Instituto Cervantes

2012

Tours et détours, de La Havane à Paris. Filigranes / Maison de l'Amérique latine

2003

Jesse A. Fernández, texts Juan Manuel Bonet, Guillermo Cabrera Infante, Osbel Suárez. Aldeasa / Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia

1984

Retratos. Ediciones Cultura Hispanica, Instituto de Cooperacion iberoamericana

1980

Les Momies de Palerme. Foreword Dominique Fernandez. Editions du Chêne

1976

Cajas. Galeria Ynguanzo, Madrid

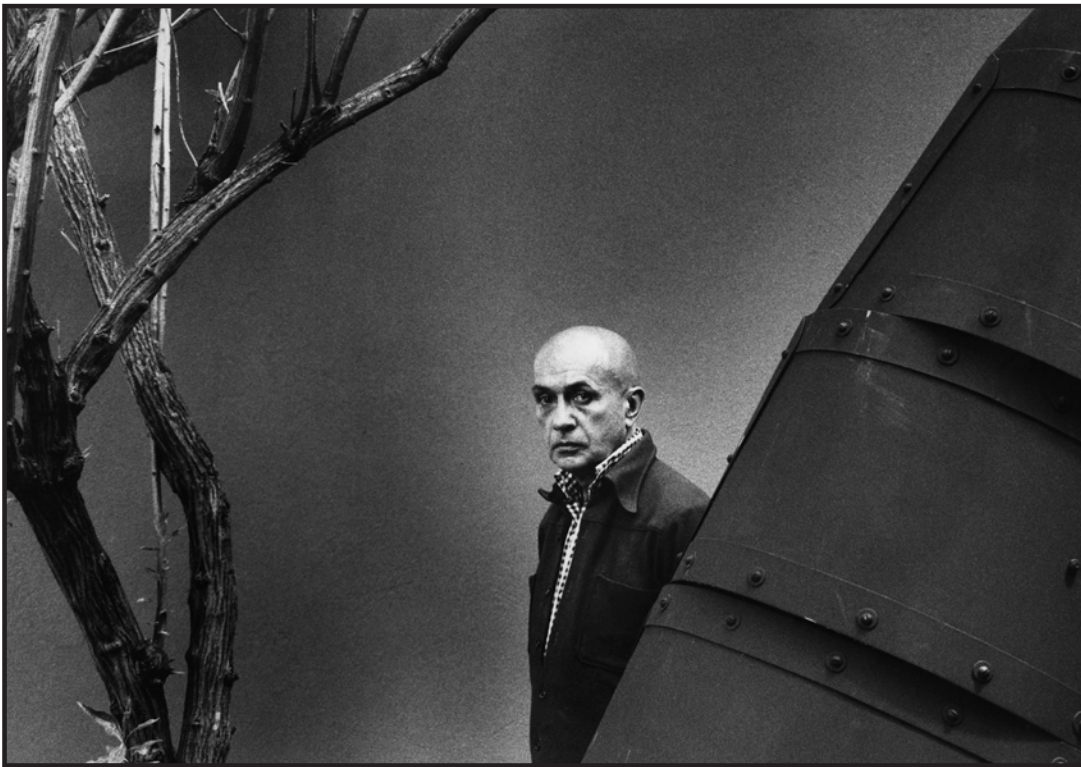


© Jesse A. Fernández Estate / Collection F. Mazin Fernández
Self-portrait behind Marcel Duchamp's *The large glass*,
Philadelphia Museum of Art
Modern silverprint (Chambre noire, Paris) / 50 x 40 cm





Edgar Negret, Mask, 1979
Painted aluminium / 51 x 91 x 18 cm



© Jesse A. Fernández Estate / Collection F. Mazin Fernández
Edgar Negret, Bogota, 1979
Vintage silverprint / 19,1 x 28,2 cm

