

ENGLISH

GALLERIA CONTINUA

SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING LES MOULINS HABANA ROMA SAO PAULO PARIS

87 rue du Temple, 75003 Paris, France. Tuesday - Saturday 11am-7pm and by appointment
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CARLOS MARTIEL

TIERRA DE NADIE

curated by Laura SALAS REDONDO

Saturday 19 February 2022

Performance 5pm - 6:30pm

"The only option I have had has been to use my body as a means and vehicle to report problems that not only belong to me."

Carlos Martiel

(Jérôme Sans and Laura Salas Redondo, *Cuba Talks*, Rizzoli, 2019, p. 233)

For Carlos Martiel, context is everything, and so he arrives with his performance "Tierra de nadie" ("No man's land") at Galleria Continua, Paris. Specifically, this performance reflects on the impact that African populations and their diaspora have suffered. They were involuntarily enslaved and subjugated through systematic violence, as well as their lands occupied and plundered by world powers. The same powers that continue to profit economically from the misery, territorial division, and rapacious policies created in the colony.

Carlos Martiel's work surges from his own history, womb, skin, and most intimate identity. His work is coherent and solid, as are each of his muscles that become accomplices in his presentations—showing with singular modesty that otherness that seeks to vindicate the oppressed bodies of minorities, doing so from his own blackness and his homosexuality.

The language of *queer* is enhanced, amplified and shown from diverse angles, his polysemic work, full of the ins and outs and a solid political and universal charge. His native Cuba appears and disappears, and global concerns make him even richer and more impressive. Intensifying the perception of these problems through his work is one of his "struggles", where the ritual of the body is in solidarity in most cases with the

less privileged. He denounces inequalities and deconstructs the world of "the winners." The use of blood, both his own and that of others, is another of his plural characteristics.

To remember now the first time I was confronted with a performance by Carlos Martiel, during the 10th Havana Biennial in 2009, acquires a very special meaning. This makes me mimic the shudder of each of his gestures in me. In a space where I expected, still with the naivety of a first-year Art History student, "comfortable", beautiful and accommodating works that would fit my family and racial presuppositions, so great was my surprise when I did not find them. Why did that tall young man show himself naked before us, lacerating his perfect skin with a blade? Why there? Why self-flagellate? Carlos Martiel opened my Pandora's box, he made thousands of questions come and go.

Today Carlos Martiel is a universal artist, an empowered man who moves freely around the world; an intense period took him through several cities in South America in extreme conditions. He is currently based in New York, although he continues to circulate intensely around the world.

Many of his works analyze the significant problems of modern transhumance, the problems of voluntary and involuntary immigration, criticising the extreme xenophobia of

the great stories that he has suffered many times. Ritualizing pain has given him a new body, reconciled it with his innermost voice and with the exercise of bodily sincerity (Jérôme Sans and Laura Salas Redondo, *Cuba Talks*, Rizzoli, 2019, p. 233). Another intense problem in his work is seeking to break with patriarchal schemes, a kind of contemporary catharsis where censorship has often accompanied him. Carlos Martiel's reflections on a broad spectrum of social problems, on the human condition itself, confer his work with a solid poetic and philosophical charge.

In Carlos Martiel the nude loses part of its sensuality to become a cry and a claim. Like a tattoo on the skin, many of the documentations of Carlos Martiel's performances remain a memory of the intense minutes he lives and makes us live each time he presents himself to us in one and each of his stagings. A breath of sincere reflection and hope that makes us put our feet on the ground and forget the glamour that is so often experienced in the world of contemporary art.

"Tierra de nadie" expresses Carlos Martiel's desire to appropriate the space and propose a new reading of it and the circumstances that have brought him to where he is today. Physical and mental preparation, study, and the team's complicity are key. His body is his temple, and with it, he moves endlessly, full of pride and dedication.

Laura SALAS REDONDO, Havana, December 2021

Carlos Martiel is an artist born in 1989 in Havana, Cuba. His artistic studies were strongly marked by the Behavior Art Department, directed by Tania Bruguera, at Cuba's Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA). Profound knowledge of his body and absolute devotion to his work has led him to shape a solid career as an international performer. His works have been included in the 4th Biennial of Vancouver (Canada), in the 14th Biennial of Sharjah (UAE); 14th Cuenca Biennial (Ecuador), at the 57th Venice Biennale (Italy); at the 4th Casablanca Biennial (Morocco), at "La Otra" Biennial (Colombia); in the 6th Liverpool Biennial (United Kingdom), in various editions of the Havana Biennial (Cuba), to name a few. He was awarded various prizes such as the Arte Laguna Award (Italy) and has participated in renowned residencies such as the CIFO (Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation) within its Grants & Commissions Award Program. The year 2021 has been a very active period despite the persistence of the pandemic comprising various performances such as "Transfiguración (Monument III)" at the Museum of the Arts at the University of Guadalajara (MUSA) in Mexico, "Pink Death" at The Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art, "Monument I" at the Museo del Barrio and the most recent "Monument II" made in the Guggenheim Museum, the latter in New York.