

SANTIAGO, CHILE

Lotty Rosenfeld

MUSEO NACIONAL DE BELLAS ARTES

Imagine a line—political, economic, social, or even conceptual—that traces progress, direction, and sense. Lotty Rosenfeld (1943–2020) contradicted that line with a simple gesture: crossing it with another one. She performed *Una milla de cruces en el pavimento* (A Mile of Crosses on the Pavement) for the first time in her native Santiago in 1979, using strips of fabric to repeatedly cross out the dividing line in a road through the city. Her crosses disturbed the traffic line that divides the street in both directions near the national military academy. In a country as authoritarian as Pinochet's Chile, this was a subversive act.

Fifty years later, “*Entrecruces de la memoria 1979–2020*” (Crossroads of Memory 1979–2020), the first retrospective of Rosenfeld's career, placed before us the unhealed wound of the dictatorship. Curated by the artist's longtime partner, Nelly Richard, with research work by Mariairis Flores, the show was an apt reminder of the power of Rosenfeld's work, and of its widespread legacy. She was a cofounder of the influential collective CADA (Colectivo Acciones de Arte, 1979–85), and a close collaborator of the *Mujeres por la Vida* (Women for Life) movement that, starting in 1983, carried out feminist street actions throughout Chile.

Rosenfeld never completely rejected the institutional system for legitimizing art—the museum, the academy—but often stepped outside it. Some of her pivotal works were created in collaboration with writer Diamela Eltit. “*Zona de dolor*” (Zone of Pain), 1980–81, was a project that fused performance and literature at society's margins. In one of the videos Rosenfeld filmed for this series, *El beso* (The Kiss), 1981, Eltit exchanges a passionate kiss with a homeless man. For the man, it was an unexpected pleasure; for the artists, a statement—though from today's perspective, it might seem exploitative. Many works reflect Rosenfeld's discomfort with the market and the neoliberal system. In *Una herida americana* (An American Wound), 1982, she managed to infiltrate the monitors at Santiago's stock exchange, making them

Lotty Rosenfeld, *El empeño latinoamericano* (The Latin American Purpose), 1998, digital video, black-and-white, sound, 7 minutes.



display videos with her already well-known piece *Una milla de cruces en el pavimento*. By fate or chance, she executed this action during the early days of one of the country's biggest economic crises, which reduced the nation's GDP by almost 15 percent. In 1998, Rosenfeld revisited the consequences of neoliberalism in *El empeño latinoamericano* (The Latin American Purpose), a video installation in which images of citizens pawning their jewelry are accompanied by the sound of heavy breathing.

Overlap and juxtaposition are the keys to Rosenfeld's art. Whether in the form of a line superimposed on another, a sound played over an image, or a projection thrown across a building's facade, the crossing of elements gives rise to a crossing of meanings. For *Moción de orden* (Motion of Order), 2002, she projected lines of ants onto the main door of Palacio de la Moneda, the seat of Chile's presidency. Fifty years after the coup d'état of 1973, Rosenfeld's critique of obedience retains its value. But her intention always extended beyond opposition to the military regime. Rosenfeld's works are polysemic and metaphorical, insisting on a perpetual obligation: to examine who and what we obey, and why.

—Juan José Santos

LONDON

Daido Moriyama

THE PHOTOGRAPHERS' GALLERY

To encounter the work of Japanese photographer Daido Moriyama is to see the world not through his eyes but through his whole being. His angles are dizzyingly extreme, as if shot from the perspective of his knees, his toes, the back of his head. His subjects are blurred and warped, conjuring a sense of frenetic movement through space. His images—mostly black-and-white—are intensely high contrast, evocative of the sun's unforgiving glare or the heightened realm of dreams. Rather than proposing an artfully constructed vision of the world, his photographs (whether of television screens or thronging beaches or fishnet-sheathed legs or discarded dolls) attempt to embody the fragmented experience of existence: its chaos, its precariousness, its fundamental inscrutability.

Moriyama's signature style—known as *are, bure, boke*, which translates as “grainy, blurry, out of focus”—stems from a lifelong suspicion of photography's capacity to capture reality, evident in the eighty-five-year-old artist's potent retrospective at the Photographers' Gallery. Born in Osaka in 1938, Moriyama came of age as a street photographer amid the turbulent transformation of postwar Japan. While photographing urban protests in the 1960s, he became disillusioned with the notion of documentary and sought a new visual language for a society in flux. In a direct rebuke to pristine photojournalistic conventions, he began to embrace movement, distortion, artifice, and chance, producing hallucinatory scenes of nightlife, industrialization, and capitalist imports. His “Accident” series, 1969—which includes rephotographed news reports following the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy (Richard Nixon's haunting smile, a grainy close-up of Kennedy's corpse), as well as enlarged and cropped tabloid shots of celebrities—presciently calls attention to the proliferation of imagery in society and the media's uncanny incursions into private life. In 1972 he published the now-influential book *Farewell Photography*, composed of photographic “mistakes,” such as rejected negatives and scratched and solarized images that intrinsically demonstrate his doubts about photographic meaning. These “anti-photography” investigations reveal an ongoing antagonism or dysphoria that keeps propelling his work.