
PRESS RELEASE

Carlos Leal
Fearless

Exhibition	08.06 – 29.07.2023
Public preview	Thursday, June 8 2023, 6 p.m. - 9 p.m., in the presence of the artist
Press preview	Friday, June 9 2023, 11 a.m. - 12 p.m., in the presence of the artist

Text :**Elisa Bernard**

From June onwards, the gallery will be exhibiting the work of Spanish-Swiss photographer Carlos Leal, who has made the street his favourite subject. The photographs of this artist question the status of poor people in the city of Los Angeles. They show the places of obscurity where live the marginalized, the homeless, all those excluded from the market to prosperity, who are both inside and outside of society. Those who are forgotten, or rather ignored, but who are nevertheless very visible.

The title of the exhibition, *Fearless*, is itself representative of this decay of a country that prides itself on being the world's leading power but is, in reality, terribly afraid of itself. The story behind the image that gave the exhibition its name is symptomatic of this. The smoke in the sky is that created by a homeless man burning all his belongings in the middle of the highway. The black smoke has reached a strange building with the word 'FEARLESS' on it, which turns out to be a church.

Carlos Leal's photographs show a disturbing reality that is sometimes difficult to identify. The photograph of the hand on a dark wall is not a harmless one either, as it actually shows the violent arrest of an African-American. Actually, Carlos Leal's photographic approach is close to rap, of which he was one of the representatives in Switzerland.

Alongside these images, other installations are more radical. In the exhibition, a group of photographs captures, hour by hour, a typical day of wandering for a homeless person in Los Angeles. Another series of images pushes us to take a closer look at another homeless person sitting on a wheelchair, whose face is hidden under a blanket.

If Carlos Leal has photographed the contrasts between the daily life of the poor and the life of the inhabitants of the American city, the discrepancy is also that of an America on the decline which finds itself confronted with the vestiges of its past glory.

The gas station shines like a temple. The convenience stores, as they are sometimes called - open at all hours of the day and night to satisfy the consumerism of city-dwellers - stand next to the tents of homeless people. Under the lens of Carlos Leal, these American symbols appear as obsolete relics whose faded neon lights draw a spatial poetry.

With *Fearless*, Carlos Leal signs his first exhibition in our gallery, to be discovered all summer long.

Images available
for the press



Carlos Leal, *Fearless*, 2022
Pigment print



Carlos Leal, *Ghost in the city*, 2022
Pigment print

The use of images is exclusively reserved for the promotion of the exhibition and valid up to its end.

Obligatory mention : ©Carlos Leal courtesy Galerie Esther Woerdehoff

Images available
for the press



Carlos Leal, *Oil Temple*, 2022
Pigment print



Carlos Leal, *Sweet Dreams*, 2022
Pigment print

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Obligatory mention : ©Carlos Leal courtesy Galerie Esther Woerdehoff

BIOGRAPHY

Artist

Carlos Leal

After having been the singer of the rap group Sens Unik, Carlos Leal began an acting career in Paris. Since then, he has received 4 acting awards including the Shooting Star at the Berlinale.

In 2010, driven by the desire to propel his acting career to an international level, Carlos Leal left Europe to settle in Los Angeles, but socially, Carlos did not find his feet, too upset by the codes of an environment where the majority is only interested in one goal: success.

Carlos Leal has always had a passion for photography and during his travels he started to take pictures to help him build the logbook of his fictional characters. Storytelling and minimalism are essential in his approach. For him, the importance of a photograph is where aesthetics and purpose meet and push us to question our social system.

As an ex-rapper, he can't help but have the eye of an urban journalist and the instinctive need to depict the Los Angeles he comes into contact with on a daily basis and which he sees with a completely different eye than postcards with silhouettes of palm trees cutting through the sky of a California sunset.

The critical view he takes of his environment is not meant to be anti-American, that would be too easy coming from a child of old Europe. But how can we ignore the fact that the nation that constantly invents superheroes to deliver us from the forces of evil does not know how to look back on itself and realise that it is totally unaccountable for its failings and its losers ?

In the megalopolis of exacerbated fantasies, Carlos scans the streets of the city for hours on end, looking for a visual poetry that will bring him closer to this American society from which he feels so distant.

After showing his work in Switzerland and Los Angeles, he is exhibiting for the first time in Paris at the Galerie Esther Woerdehoff. Carlos lives between Europe and Los Angeles.

Exhibitions**2023**

Théâtre Raymond Kabbaz, Los Angeles, United-States

2022

The Cube, Zurich, Switzerland

Through Space and Time, Galerie Trittligasse, Zurich, Switzerland

I Need a Dollar a Dollar is What I Need, Abstract Centre d'art contemporain, Lausanne, Switzerland

2021

PhotoSchweiz, Zurich, Switzerland