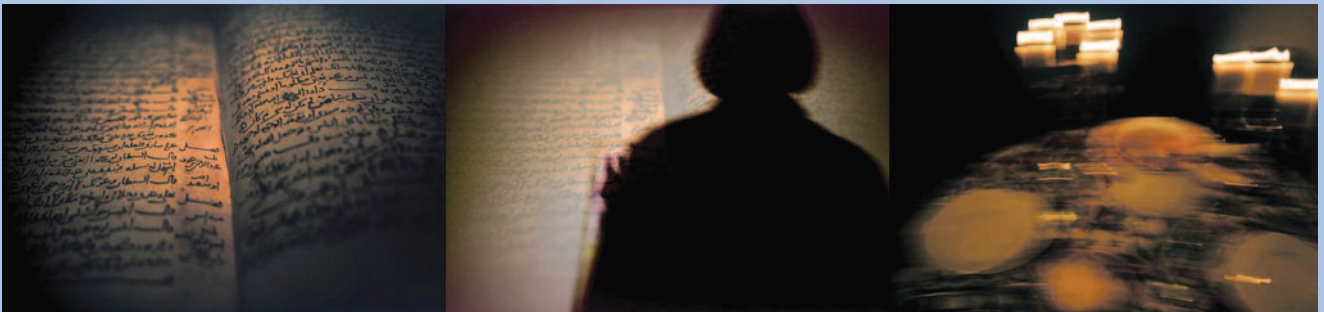




▲ *Travel Journal Rome.*



▲ *Travel Journal Switzerland.*



▲ *Travel Journal Berlin.*

# Lightening of Movements The Photography of Ernesto Ríos

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Writing about the work of Ernesto Ríos is like throwing a stone into the water and watching how the ripples wash over each other in movements that his camera freezes. Through the counterpoint of images and times, the young artist dissolves the borders between his external reality and his internal universe.

A place —just like a person— is a multiplicity without outlines. It is inhabited both by the red

tones of his blood and the blues and purples that his eyes perceive at nightfall. Ernesto Ríos made his camera an extension of himself; with this new arm, he can manipulate and integrate the dance of time outside and inside himself.

He had a privileged childhood. His parents, both photographers, instilled in him a love of art; he grew up amidst artists and intellectuals who incubated metaphors in his mind that would later be translated into images. At the age of three, his father gave him his first camera; at that moment,

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\* Mexican writer.

Ríos made his start in the world of photography. He spent long hours sketching, trapping images and making them speak through his hands. At 12, his eyes had already beheld every state in the country.

His work includes sketches, paintings, objects, photographs, digital art and multimedia audiovisuals. He works just as comfortably in traditional media as with new technologies; he has found the point of equilibrium between the two. Ríos understands that time moves with him; technology, the new tools, are part of his artistic style. His work possesses the bases of the sketching and drawing tradition, but is also committed to his time, developing along the lines of electronic media. His photography breaks through schema and offers innovative paths toward interpretations and artistic focuses. He offers non-conventional ways of conceiving space and time; in his images, both can be deformed, move, overlap. He counterposes a situation that his cam-

era trapped at one point in time with another that it built in another place and at a different moment.

He himself says, "I use my camera as a tool of construction and creation, not as a means to faithfully record reality. I try to catch what cannot be pinned down, the passing of time itself, the fleeting, evanescent moments, the soul of beings and objects." The artist sinks his arm into the intimacy of the inanimate; underground currents come alive in his photography. The artist proposes readings hidden under the skin of objects, the voice that remains silent until his camera shoots.

Ríos does not have a fixed place of work. He is flexible enough to create in a hotel room, in the street, in his workshop, in front of a computer; his studio is inside himself and does not depend on four walls. This opening prevents his work from petrifying and repeating itself. He is constantly traveling abroad for his work; one of the main sources of his produc-



▲ Travel Journal London.

tion is based precisely on these trips to himself, in which he collects part of his interior that is found in the clarity of the exterior distance.

Many of his photographs are memories of his travels, playful recollections, atmospheres, day-to-day things. With them, he produces new images that encompass his way of understanding the world. In his mind, forms and meanings are transmuted; an illusion is created through which things are given expression. Meaning and object exist simultaneously. That is why travel fascinates him; he knows that only when he finds something does he recognize it as what he was searching for.

Usually, his work is two-dimensional, although many photographs allude to the three-dimensional. Ríos has worked on projects of traditional sculpture; now he is experimenting with computer 3-D modeling. His artistic training can be seen in the structure of his photographic proposals. Despite the fact that he has developed sketching as an autonomous form of expression, it is the basis of his photography. For him, photography is a canvas on which he can pour, trace, delineate, dissolve, counterpose himself.

In his series “Dissolvings,” the superimposed images are more abstract; now the artist says he is

more conceptual. Basing himself on the simple and day-to-day, he expresses a microcosm analogous to the macrocosm that envelops him; he is conscious that each person contains the whole history of humanity within him- or herself. And now he tries to trace broader relations between the human condition and the rediscovery of the world through himself. This can be better understood when the viewer can read the eyes of the artist and the journey they have made in his photographs.

More than portraying beings and objects, his work portrays bridges to them. It imprisons the heartbeats that emanate from them and counterposes them to those of a new image to create a canon of silent voices that make his photographs come to life. The rhythm may sometimes be nostalgic, using cold, slow blues, with other tones that reverberate and raise their voice: reds, yellows, oranges. His photographs transmit an atmosphere that evokes and vivifies a story: cities superimposed, people who fade in and out and are mistaken for one another; people who were never in the place where they appear; the look —penetrating and religious— of an owl merged with the dark Saint Peters church, all the way to the boiling red tones of an Asian city.

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▲ *Window.*

▲ *Orus.*



▲ *Unidentified Object.*



▲ *Dogs Suckling.*

Ernesto is one and many men  
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to seek himself out and has no end.

Then, onto the scene comes his work “Bestiary,” eight digital photographs whose epicenter are the most defined outlines of animals. In this series, despite its including more concrete objects, he introduces a playful element that floats between the limits of wakefulness and sleep. Ernesto plays at giving them a new identity, situating them in contexts that define their semantic function. The title is reminiscent of Julio Cortázar’s work, where certain animals, like the tiger, play a specific role in the piece and may, at the same time, open up new roads for reading and interpretation. Thus, in his photograph “Dogs Suckling,” the female stray dog plays the role of the marginalized class in a wounded city. The image is superimposed with another of a lower-middle-class 1980s built-in stove from far away lands. Despite the grey, blue, slow, nostalgic tones, there are hints of black humor and a shriek against the society that drags itself through time without ever finally dying. The organic matter is characterized by the fact that the totality is embraced in each minimum detail (a bacteria, a fallen leaf). In a single cardiac cell is the whole heart; in a dry leaf, the entire tree; in the tree, its whole ecosystem. In many of Ernesto Ríos’ pho-

tographs, there are only day-to-day, apparently unimportant fragments, but in these details is the grandeur of the place and the moment. When he goes to Europe, he does not shoot the Eiffel Tower, but a train station; he does not take pictures of monuments to the history of a particular city, but of the details that pervade it. More than the object, what has meaning is the step that must be taken to discover it. The universe is made up of correspondences and the roads between them reveal their common roots, roots that Ernesto Ríos connects and reveals in each of the details that his camera captures.

Seemingly, the images that the artist experiences daily grow increasingly inside him and trap his will. The artist is committed to his work, and his daily communion with it can be seen in its quality. Ernesto is one and many men at the same time, an ocean that continues to seek himself out and has no end. Despite his youth, his work has grown considerably; he has participated in more than 30 national and international collective exhibits and has had more than 10 one-man shows. The ground is fertile and I am sure it will lead him to penetrate ever more deeply the inexhaustible alleyways of himself. **MM**