



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Of all the photographers that invent surrealist images, LaChapelle is the one who has the potential to become the Magritte of his genre.
Richard Avedon. The New York Times

DAVID LACHAPELLE DELIRIOS DE RAZÓN/DELIRIUM OF REASON

- For the first time in Mexico, David LaChapelle, the so-called "Fellini of photography," is being exhibited in the Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso.
- A selection of 64 works shot between 1995 and 2008 that bring together the highlights of his productions.
- The private pre-opening will be held on Thursday, January 29th, at 8:00 pm, with DAVID LACHAPELLE's appearance and as the exhibit the event is also sponsored by: 212 PRODUCTIONS, *FLAUNT* MAGAZINE, PERRIER, GIBSON, UNIVERSIDAD DE LA COMUNICACIÓN, DONDE IR, amongst other collaborating sponsors.
- The inauguration will be carried out on Tuesday, February 3 at 8:00 pm, and the exhibition will remain open until June 14, 2009.

Assuming the risk of stating uncomfortable truths using disturbing images is very common among artists; however, though their expressive mediums may be qualified as irreverent, they are always invitations to reconsider, revise, or redefine the mode in which current society faces the contradictions, injustices, abuses, and excesses that weaken it, as is shown in the work of David LaChapelle, which will be exhibited in Mexico for the first time.

Organized and produced by *212 Productions*, Ingrid Barajas and Abel González – Directors of 212 – will be presenting on this occasion with the collaboration of the Mandate of the Antiguo Colegio de

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San Ildefonso the international exhibit *David LaChapelle. Delirios de razón / Delirium of reason*. The photographer--a director of documentaries, short films, and music videos--recently recognized by American Photo as one today's 10 most important photographers, will offer the Mexican public a selection of his work beginning Wednesday, February 4th until Sunday, June 14th, 2009.

LaChapelle's images, daring and splendid, have forged a unique, original, and unmistakable personal style. He is one of the most influential contemporary photographers emerging from the field of showbusiness. With his incredibly personal style, his images explore worlds that are extreme, madding, erotic, often baroque, at times sublime, and at other times strange levels of flaunting visuals.

With the curatorship of Fred Torres, *Delirios de razón / Delirium of reason* reflects the artist's posture toward a world thrown into confusion by fanaticisms, obsessions, vices, arbitrariness, and atrocities frequently attributed to the use of reason, when in reality they are the results of distortions that change it. At the same time, it is an invitation not to rely on appearances in order to discover the background that deserves our reflection.

The exposition, arranged in a 1070 m² space, offers a chronological tour of six themes completed between 1995 and 2008, made up of 64 pieces, freely created by the artist: *Heaven to Hell; Awakened*, *Destruction and disaster*, *Jesus is my homeboy*, *Decadence*, and *Star system*; as well as two galleries dedicated, one to the showing of 12 music videos, including one of Christina Aguilera's, and another of Elton John, directed by LaChapelle. And the other room dedicated to the making of the pieces: *Deluge* and the *Pieta*.

THE WORKS

Pieta with Courtney Love. This work, inspired by the religious art of the Italian Renaissance and by other past stylistic tendencies, alludes to *La piedad* evoked in biblical texts; only that in the interpretation of LaChapelle, new models substitute the historic characters. The place of the Virgin can be occupied by a widow, a mother, or whichever individual facing a similar situation, and in the same manner, the position of Jesus can be represented by a child, a spouse, or by an overdose victim or any other lost soul. The technique of introducing the innocence of a child within the work envisions testimony and hope. References to the religious devotions and recognizable symbols of the *vanitas* demonstrate the artist's conscious use of art history in order to emphasize and sublimate the value and manifestation of pity in the face of any circumstance.

Heaven to Hell. In this diptych, in which devastating fire destroys everything in its path, the presence of a firefighter is disconcerted as he deflects his gaze towards the observer, and the stream of water from his hose points towards emptiness. Will his attitude be one of neglect, or should we see the

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warning therein? Imprinted on his back is the sentence *Heaven to hell*. The fragile framework that underlies the vulnerability or fleetingness of fame.

In this series of photographs, the artist illustrates the destruction that can be brought about by the elements of nature, in this case, fire, which can also represent the principle purifier.

Awakened. Light is a symbol of hope in the work of David LaChapelle: it is the path toward rebirth and it courts the state of grace that is shown by the beings submerged in tanks full of water that envelop them like a fount of renewal. With minimal resources, the artist focuses our attention on these floating beings. In the works *Cathedral* as well as in *Museum*, which are part of the exposition, the collapse and inundation provoked by the water permit them to perceive certain allusions to the downfall of society.

In this series of works, LaChapelle invites the viewer to reflect over the deviations provoked by addiction or submission to the immediate and glorifying publicity of the market. The fundamentalisms, banality, and manipulations that distort beauty. The descent toward the depths or the ascent towards light is a process that must be meditated upon. It is in this search where the author finds himself.

Destruction and Disaster. In this theme reality and imagination are interwoven in an unusual and unexpected manner in compositions that show urban landscapes devastated by natural disasters, accidents, and catastrophes derived from technological abuses and disturbing human attitudes that project coldness, imprudence, and isolation. With a strong pop emphasis alongside his characteristic baroque tendencies, LaChapelle evokes, in apocalyptic terms, a paradox between the characters that breathe life into the works and the disaster that surrounds them. The models dressed in *haute couture* project attitudes and reflections of a symptomatic degradation that, while not including the children, exposes them to the same degradation.

The series *Crash* is made up of images of sumptuous wrecked cars reduced to scraps, symbolizing status and luxury, which occasion excess. The photographs depict these ruined automobiles in unconventional materials such as cardboard, which contrasts with the sophisticated materials that are used in contemporary art. In this series, LaChapelle uses artistic processes in the construction of the three-dimensional works.

The consumption of fast food, the pollution of the environment, and fatal imprudence's evidence incredible absurdities that David LaChapelle re-elaborates with sharp irony.

Jesus is My Homeboy. The transfer of the figure of Jesus to the environment of popular neighborhoods of the great city (referring to passages of the New Testament) is the author's

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meditation on the validity of the guide and his connection with human diversity. It portrays youth of different backgrounds, very different from super-stars, but dressed by stylists who mind the pose. In these photos the artist provokes audacious or glamorous associations that illustrate their spiritual search. At the same time, in a rap or hip-hop setting the idolatry that admirers show celebrities is observed.

LaChapelle's images reflect the ambiguity of the culture of simulation, that is to say when photography is not done in order to analyze speculation, but when it is commissioned for the publication of a magazine or to promote a brand; without exposing the artist's critical message.

Decadence. Fundamentalism and fanaticisms in the same manner in which the strength with which the atrocities and arbitrariness are edited and manipulated with a certain glamour, as well as the special effects that the sensationalist press, Hollywood fiction, fashion, and reality shows that television promotes have carried individuals and entire nations into war, discriminatory practices, the death of innocents, and continual repression justified in the name of God, liberty and religious belief.

Making use of his experience with the industry of the image of his aesthetic convictions, LaChapelle explores, using unconventional materials, projected mural qualities in his latest works. The polarized scenes that animate some of them contrast with the recovery of artistic processes in the freshness of his execution.

David LaChapelle focuses on the alert state we should have toward these manipulations of the image as well as of information, to provide us with a moment of reflection on speculation and the culture of simulation that can diminish our perception of what is really happening.

Star System. Worldwide celebrities from different cultures have posed for the artist's camera. In these shots, figures generally deified by mass media are revealed in an unconventional way, and participate in the photographer's interpretation of them. Conscious of the narcissistic nature and exhibitionist attitude that characterizes them, LaChapelle returns once again to classical painting and the pre-raphaelite movement in order to structure fine compositions in which, in addition to the beauty of the execution, brings out the conversion of the object of desire to which these celebrities are subjugated.

In this theme, passion, sensuality, and voluptuousness celebrate the cults of sex and the body, while simultaneously denouncing the mechanisms of a manipulation derived from the industry of leisure. The modulations of the contrasts and suggestive poses convert these works into mirrors in which the alter ego of current society is reflected and reproduced. In this world, from which LaChapelle is not exempt, the artist develops his capacity to reinvent himself with each work, utilizing the resources of

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the mass media industry, projecting a recycled form of pop art, and at the same time, a stunning originality.

Deluge. A great admirer of Michelangelo, David LaChapelle finds in the frescos of the Sistine Chapel the solidarity that is required by today's world in the face of its conflicts. The recurrence to the flood as the waters that will wash clean the divine work is a connotation of the necessity for reconsidering the overexploitation of resources by corporations, materialism, and consumerism that we can recognize in the logotypes and other scenic elements. *Deluge* is an allegory of the decadence of civilization. In order to highlight paradoxes in this tragedy, in the style of the mannerists, LaChapelle appeals to theatrical poses, combinations and contrasts that reinforce the artificial, fiction, and caricature in order to satirize fetishism and the symptoms of a world addicted to the search for pleasure and the superfluous.

Schedule of Activities

Parallel to the exposition *David LaChapelle, Delirios de razón / Delirium of reason*, the Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso has scheduled complementary activities for the general public, such as the workshop *En el mundo de las ilusiones (In the World of Illusions)*, where the attendants will be able to create their own personal photographic composition in the style of LaChapelle; guided tours of the exposition will be offered. The youth photography gallery *Una foto excitantemente fantástica (An Excitingly Fantastic Photo)* will be developed on the website of the museum. In addition to the *Trivia delirante (Delirius Trivia)* that the participants will be able to solve in the lobby. Also, for teachers the course *El papel de la educación artística en la vida de los niños (The Role of Art Education in the Life of Children)* will be given; likewise, we will continue with the traditional pre-tours *La práctica de ver, mirar y observar el arte (The Practice of Seeing, Watching, and Observing Art)*.

David LaChapelle. Delirios de razón / Delirium of reason will be open to the public beginning February 4th. It will close on June 14, 2009.

Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso

Justo Sierra 16, Centro Histórico – Distrito Federal (DF) Mexico

Hours

The museum opens from Tuesday to Sunday, from 10:00 to 5:30 pm.

Information by telephone + (52 55) 53 51 09 52 or by website: www.davidlachapellemexico2009.com

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General Admission

General admission to the expositions is \$45.00

Students and teachers with a valid i.d. pay \$22.50

Entry is free for children under 12, senior citizens, and participants of the San Ildefonso Membership Program.

Entry is free on Tuesdays.

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DAVID LACHAPELLE

Has taken art courses since his adolescence in New York, and obtained his first professional job in the magazine *Interview* upon invitation by Andy Warhol. Later, he studied fine arts at the North Carolina School of Arts and, after his return to New York, entered into the Art Students League and the School of Visual Arts.

LaChapelle's images, bold and splendid, have forged a resulting personal style that is unique, original, and unmistakable. He has photographed personalities of show business, music, sports, and politics. International artists such as Madonna, Leonardo DiCaprio, Angelina Jolie, Gael García, Cameron Diaz, Pamela Anderson and Elton John have posed for his lens. As well as Hillary Clinton, Mohamed Ali, David Beckham, Philip Johnson, among others.

David LaChapelle has given expression to his originality and versatility in international publications such as *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair*, *Rolling Stone* and *GQ*; he has developed important publicity campaigns, and has gained prestige in the film and music industries.

His work has been presented in galleries and museums such as the *Tony Shafrazi Gallery*, in New York; the *Galería del Barbican Centre for the Arts*, in London; the *Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires*, Argentina; as well as in the *Palazzo Reale* in Milan.

His photography has been published in the books *LaChapelle Land* (1996), *Hotel LaChapelle* (1999), *Artists & Prostitutes* (2006) y *Heaven to Hell* (2007).

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