ABOUT THE ARTIST

Bolivar Arellano was born in Alausí, Ecuador on September 3, 1954. He began his photography career in Bucaramanga, Colombia in 1963 freelancing for nine different newspapers. Three years later, Arellano moved to Guayaquil, Ecuador and worked for El Telégrafo and Vocales magazine. In both 1969 and 1970, he was the recipient of Best Annual News Picture awards. After arriving in New York City in 1971, Arellano continued to work as a photographer for The Associated Press and El Tiempo. In 1974, he started contributing photographs to El Diario La Prensa and El Tiempo. A year later, Arellano became a freelancer for The New York Post and in 1992 he joined the staff retiring in 2004.

As a photographer for the Associated Press, Arellano covered El Salvador’s Civil War and the Sandinista Revolution. In 1980, he was kidnapped by the Contras in Nicaragua and held captive for several days. On September 11, 2001, while on assignment, Arellano survived the fall of the first tower and was wounded after the fall of the second. After recovering from his injuries, Arellano continued to work, shooting over 100 of these photographs for his collection.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The show, of course, belongs to Bolivar Arellano. I am more than thankful that he had faith in our efforts and trusted us with his phenomenal work. Mr. gracias.

CATALOGUE

Bolivar Arellano in Greenpoint, Brooklyn: 1971-2014
Bolivar Arellano: Revenge of a Young Lord 1971-1976
Juan Mario Reyes and Andrea Davis at “National Day of the Dead” in 1974-1975
The Puerto in El Barrio 1974
Bolivar Arellano: Reading a Pica in the Lower East Side 1975
The Center, 1975
Robert Doisneau in Studio 54 1975
Jose Peralta Gomez, Duran Visits New York 1976
Pelican, 2417-2434
Rita Moreno in Her Dressing Room 1976
Children on Immigration March 1977
Myriam Garfunkel 1977
Myriam Garfunkel and Sandra Atslees in Potsdam, 1977
Arrests after Watergate 1977
Miguel Ferrer in the Lower East Side 1978
Cupids, 18-1224
The Center, Times Square 1977
Cupids, 2419-2434
Dorothy Roman at Madison Square Garden 1970
Cupids, 18-1224
Celia Cruz at Madison Square Garden 1980
Cupids, 18-1224
Miriam Colon at the Puerto Rican Day Parade
Cupids, 18-344x4
Heisman Badillo and Ted Kennedy Campaigning
Cupids, 1977
Andal Sanchez and Daughter Edna 1981
Cupids, 2024
Miguel Enriquez and Luis Mendez at Los Maker Main Event 1982

GALLERY HOURS

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Rainier Courter

Columbia University
October 3, 2013 - May 15, 2014

LATINO NEW YORK

AS SEEN BY EL DIARIO’S BOLIVAR ARELLANO

THE RAGING 70s
clearly accentuate that Latino New York produced one of the most compelling sounds of the century—salsa. Arellano’s selection of stars—immigrants from Panama, especially Cuba, and colonizers from Puerto Rico—further underscores that while salsa was spoken as mostly a localized barrio phenomenon, this sound was the product of a transatlantic mix slowly cooked to perfection in New York and consequently spread abroad.

Not surprisingly, Arellano also zooms in on the political impact of Latinos during the 1970s. While in the decades following World War II, the city’s establishment perceived Latinos as politically passive and many among the Latino middle classes tried their best to pass, the 1970s marked a major historical shift. The era produced new political actors, most notably Puerto Rican New Yorkers, who won the war through the right combination: “key battles against discrimination in hiring, and for economic parity, that core expanded the democratic rights of all Americans.”

Moreover, the 70s produced new multicultural alliances, bringing together African Americans and Latinos to contest colonialism, racism, and gender subordination. Likewise, as the unusual photograph featuring Dominican politician José Pefé Gómez Durán’s 1973 visit to New York evokes, Latino politics in the city became constitutively transnational, offering a different way of thinking about immigration, citizenship and belonging across the Americas. If before the 1970s many dreamt of their return home as the only solution to the hardships of immigrant life, afterwards immigrants built multistoried homes everywhere they went.

Ultimately, Arellano’s photographs continue to compel because they are radically prophetic. It is hard not to see the image of many children demanding immigration reform an anticipation of today’s Dreamers. Still, it is impossible not to connect the Nuyorican Renaissance and the salsa explosion with the waves of immigrants and contemporaries of contemporary Latina creativity, caught between the diaspora and the demand of the cultural marketplace. At the end, the razing 70s remains because we are still standing on its foundations and not by its boundless imagination.