

6 del Sur

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2015



FRANCISCO MOLINA REYES II

"*Seis del Sur: BARRIOS*" is a photographic group exhibition featuring both the vintage and contemporary photojournalistic and social documentary work of the six members of the *Seis del Sur* photo collective: Joe Conzo, Ángel Franco, Ricky Flores, David González, Edwin Pagán, and Francisco Molina Reyes II. It builds on their documentary photography in the Bronx to create a wider imaginary for the barrios and communities of Latino America. 'BARRIOS' represents *Seis del Sur's* most comprehensive showcase to date.



53 Washington Square South
Sullivan / Thompson Streets

In partnership with:

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The following images and their accompanying text were submitted by Francisco Molina Reyes II as part of the Seis Del Sur Collective exhibition titled "BARRIOS" which was presented by the King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center at New York University (2015).



La Perla Graffiti - (Unknown)

INVISIBLE MAN SERIES BY FRANCISCO MOLINA REYES II, (2013-PRESENT)

"I AM AN INVISIBLE MAN. NO, I AM NOT A SPOOK LIKE THOSE WHO HAUNTED EDGAR ALLAN POE; NOR AM I ONE OF YOUR HOLLYWOOD-MOVIE ECTOPLASMS. I AM A MAN OF SUBSTANCE, OF FLESH AND BONE, FIBER AND LIQUIDS — AND I MIGHT EVEN BE SAID TO POSSESS A MIND. I AM INVISIBLE, UNDERSTAND, SIMPLY BECAUSE PEOPLE REFUSE TO SEE ME" - (RALPH ELLISON, 1952)

I AM one of the last **Nuyoricans**. First generation born in The Bronx, raised in El Barrio, New York. I've walked the walk and I've talked the talk. The rhythm of the streets instilled me with a boldness that kept many of my fears in check. The strength of Barrio was a guardian through all my excursions into hostile territories, and endowed me with a sense of unbridled mobility through unknown urban landscapes.

In my twenties, I came to the realization that much of that owning was just an illusion. My perceived seamless access to America was actually unrelated to any self-notion of Barrio, youthful arrogance would have me believe. What became evidently clear was that in the eyes of covert racism, I was simply insignificant... invisible.

The revisiting of Ellison's "**Invisible Man**" persona began in what is often regarded as the most notorious ghetto on the Puerto Rico island - La Perla. This small impoverished community astride the city wall of Old San Juan was where my parents lived and worked, met and, eventually, married.

In 2008, I returned to the Barrio of my parents with the hope of connecting with the rhythm of its streets. What I encountered in this so-called ghetto, 650 yards in length, was both beautiful and ugly, and plainly devoid of any social history beyond the here and now.

My selection of "**Invisible Man**" images was greatly influenced by the rhythm of the streets -- both experiential and exploratory. They are driven by the notion that "you can never return home again," as long as people are rendered invisible because of color, age, gender, and class.

— **FMRII**

"American Meat Hook"

(2013)

" I can get a damn fine job here and am tempted to take it. It would be ideal except for the Porto Ricans. They are beyond doubt the dirtiest, laziest, most degenerate and thievish race of men ever inhabiting this sphere. It makes you sick to inhabit the same island with them. They are even lower than Italians. What the island needs is not public health work but a tidal wave or something to totally exterminate the population. It might then be livable. I have done my best to further the process of extermination by killing off 8 and transplanting cancer into several more. The latter has not resulted in any fatalities so far... The matter of consideration for the patients' welfare plays no role here — in fact all physicians take delight in the abuse and torture of the unfortunate subjects."

— Excerpt from a letter written by **Cornelius Packard "Dusty" Rhoads** (June 9, 1898 – August 13, 1959), The American pathologist and oncologist who killed and intentionally injected cancer cells into his Puerto Rican patients while working in Cidra.





"Big Stick"

(2013)

"It is manifest destiny for a nation to own the islands which border its shores..."

- Quote attributed to US President **Theodore Roosevelt**, hero of the Battle of San Juan Hill of 1898

Edge of the Sky

(2013)

At the edge of the sky,
by my own two feet,
wearing tenable boots
given to me by a survivor
of the fallen peaks

While waiting for the light,
the blurred images
of street life eluded me
My ghetto shroud intact
kept me invisible

Somewhere between
red and green,
a familiar voice captured
my attention

I CAN SEE YOU!
Get the FUCK off my cloud,
Nuyorican.





Santa Claus

(2014)

One of the most
notorious dealers
known throughout the Barrio
wears a bright red suit,
has a face all aglow,
rides around in
a pimped-out sleigh
powered by eight flying reindeers
led by a lush red-nosed

He heads up the biggest
cartel on Planet Earth
and resides just down
the block from me
and my recovery.







Elevator

(2014)

There are times
I can be discerned
inside an elevator
Lurking in the corner
Ominous and disfigured
Holding a weapon
of mass destruction
Or is it mass truth?

A double-edged sword.

África

(2014)

Egunguns hide
in the wood
Even when detached
from the tree

Exiled across vast
oceans and seas,
they do not forget

África vive en mi.







Barrio

(2013)

Vivid montages
flank the tall tenements
running with barefoot children
through torrid barrio streets

Grinning in sixteenths,
the pavement stretches skins,
rumbeando with the incarnates
of a walking forest

And the unwritten dialogue
opens the bound pages,
stacked on bodega shelves,
next to the sacks of rice
and dried beans

La Verdad hangs loose
over neighborhoods
of fertile metaphors,
feasting long and hard
on presumed acumen

Vision comes strong
A time inspiring summits
in awakened hearts.

"Gracias"

(2013)

My thanks goes out to *Cafe Bustelo*
whose special blend of beans
has been a ritual of addiction
in our Puerto Rican household,
at the start of each new day,
and the reason for venturing out
before 9AM to cop my morning fix

My thanks goes out to the trucker
who drove an 18-wheeler
for many perilous hours on an
American highway to deliver a
shipment of fresh Indian River
ruby red grapefruits from Florida
to the local supermarket

My thanks goes out to the individual
who found his/her way out the door,
earlier than I did, clutching in hand
one of those ruby reds, sliced with
its juicy flesh ready to consume,
and for curiously placing the emptied
halves in the gutter, before
zooming away

Last, but not least

My thanks goes out to the Sun
for making an appearance
in grand style, and for providing
ample lighting from the right
position in the sky to inspire
this tribute

I salute you all!







Bent Knees

(2015)

Ain't nobody wanna stand up here
Legs shredded down to knees
Bent for America
Bent for Christ
Bent for Fear

¿Adonde vamos?
Knees bent
Legs shredded
Unable to stand like iroko
Filling our hands with
the scattered bones
of our forsaken children

Nadie quiere levantarse aquí
Keeps on dragging our butts
down that same old road
Silenced prisoners of the margins
Stillness in painted glasses
filled with November rainfall

We are meat for the mechanized beast
Can't leave the illusion alone
Trying to heal them
shredded legs,
bent knees,
so we can stand-up,
refusing to crawl
anymore.

Nuyorican in Paradox

(2015)

Trembling hands
swollen with earth
pressed against
my face

Skin feeling
the creation
of life

Both virile,
woven:
hue-man,
soil

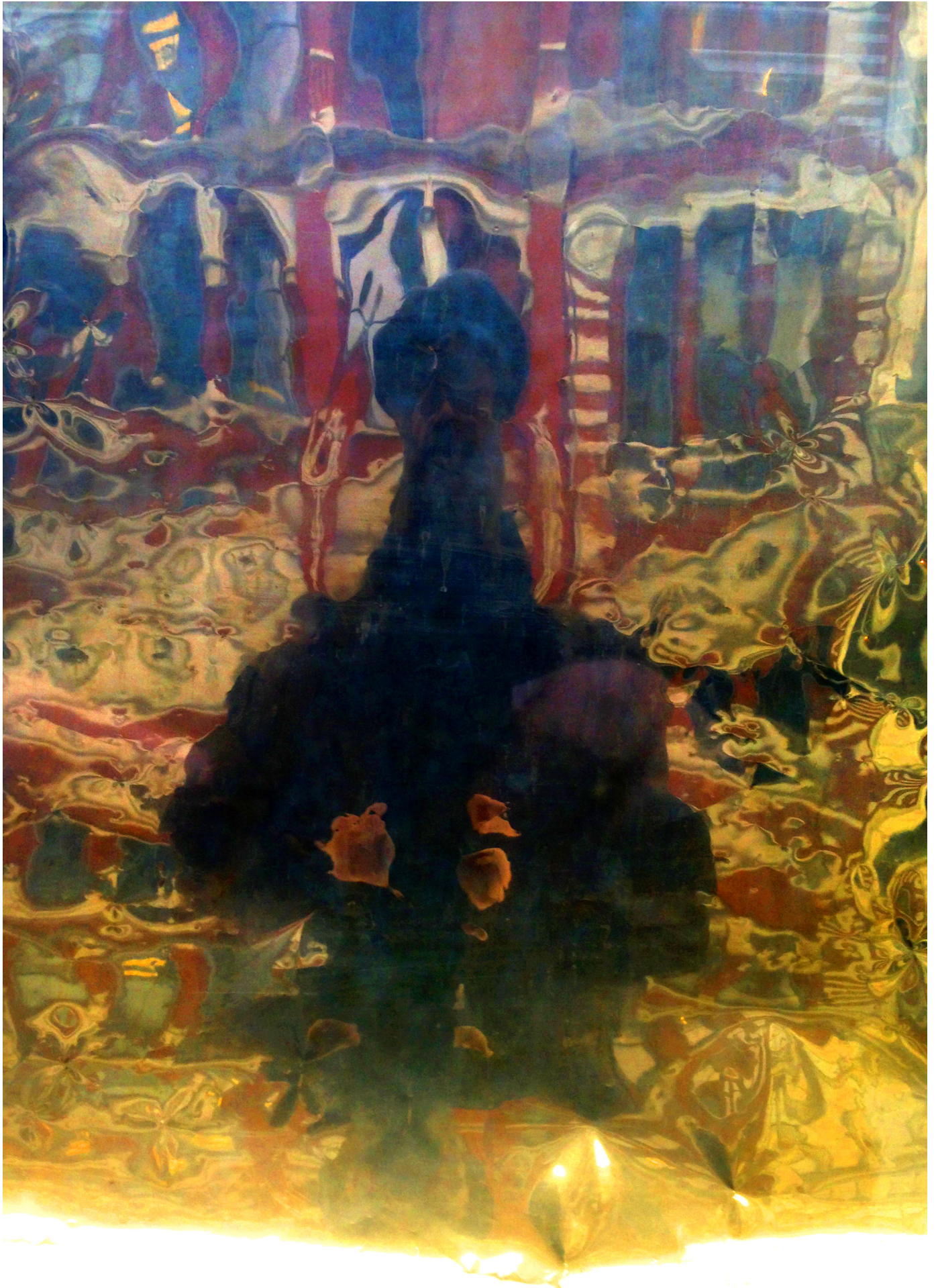
Together,
they task,
reaching through
vastness,
reveling
in paradox

What glows here,
within,
about,
remains unconfined
Refuses to crawl

The I-mage scarred by hate,
perverse names,
tears unspoken

Here, I cannot weep
Nor, sing bluest of songs

Here, in such a place,
I have become ALL.







"Until We Are Free"

(2015)

Ghetto Angel

(2015)

What bitterness brews
inside the fool who stands
at the mouth of a tunnel,
deconstructing pedagogic soliloquies
without hope of any resolution

Hard seeds relented to granite hands,
grasping the thorny bush of semantics
Violently, they slashed and burned the buds,
before a perfect blossom could be brought

Rage overcame me in a city
drowning in its own sewerage
My craving for revenge wanted to
ride the beast on a murderous blood-hunt
No hunger... Just kill

And I would claim as my prize
the cold beating hearts of those death
merchants who render the sanctity
of Family less valuable than
pumpable footwear

Forever etched in my mind,
the scene inside the car
where little Veronica slept
The slumber of her innocence
gushing liquid red

Voice of the forsaken,
ascend with fiery wings
Fly towards emerald light,
Santita Borincana
Forgive us our trespasses

May your collective voices
save us from doom's brim
Bring us face to face
with our cowardice

From mother's womb,
to the starkness of the street
The destruction of community
that sealed the fate
of little Veronica.



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