

... juxtaposed against the terror...

Silvia Malagrino's photographs have always amazed me with the emotional power they hold. Some express the fear and terror of a fascist world order, and others the healing power of womanhood. You may see these photographs as warnings, as a form of exorcism, or as the promise of a salve for open wounds. From a statement by the artist we learn:

"I was studying literature at Buenos Aires University when the school was shut down following the Argentinian Coup d'Etat of 1976. I turned to photography to resist and elude censorship, and as an anarchistic move into a spectacle of pathos—the preservation of a reality full of pain, humiliation, fear, and helplessness."

For ten years now a resident of the United States, she has continued to produce a large amount of photographic work, and work in related media. The images are separately about men and women, and about the worlds they separately create. The extreme conditions at the genesis of her photography still clearly haunt her work.

Most of us let the past grow over, and do not worry that such terror continues today, that an evil continues to creep across the face of the earth like a tenacious growth of poisonous weeds. But artists don't close their wounds, they worry at them, make them bleed again. Their psyche insists on recollection, insists on work toward a resolution of the irresolvable. I have seen Silvia work; it is as if she is possessed by a voice that demands expression, that will not let her rest until images form. She works—she herself admits—from memories, from dreams, and from today's experiences—and also—obvious to the viewer—from a deep need for reconciliation between the past and the present, between thoughts and feelings. What makes these images so significant is our recognition that they speak boldly of truths we timidly keep hidden from ourselves.

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