Transgeneration

Christian Fuchs

Francesca Belgiojoso

November 14 – January 7

*“I believe we are a product of all those people who came before us, as if many beings dwell within us and would like us to hear their voices.”*

Christian Fuchs

*“Collage can be a metaphor for dreams as the process is the same: we take from reality the pieces that we want and recombine them in stories with a new, personal meaning.”*

Francesca Belgiojoso

The transcendental power of the imagemaker to channel the past and inform the present is on display in the harts gallery’s new exhibition **TRANSGENERATION**, featuring the performance-based photographs of Peruvian artist Christian Fuchs and the vintage photocollages of Italian psychotherapist and artist Francesca Belgiojoso. The show opens on November 14th from 5-8pm at 20 Bank Street, New Milford with both artists in attendance, and runs through December 7th. Bourbon whiskeys and gin & tonics will be served at the opening reception courtesy of Litchfield Distillery.

Christian Fuchs’ interest in photography revolves around rethinking and reinvention of personal memory. He grew up surrounded by portraits, objects and stories that tell the path taken by his family, but throughout history, has found holes that he fills with his own images and research. In his self-portrait series *Transgeneration* (the inspiration for the exhibition title), photography is the product of a performance in which Fuchs becomes different men and women of his family: “I recreate a moment lived by an ancestor using my body as a vehicle; in order to accomplish this, I use costumes and characterization, I let my hair or beard grow, I shave; I perform all the necessary acts in order to appear as close as possible to the character I am going to play.” For Fuchs, the history and context of the image is crucial: he studies his subjects, becomes them, absorbing them through his body and expressing them anew.

Francesca Belgiojoso collects antique photographs of forgotten people, and intertwines them with fragments of pictures taken from contemporary magazines. For her, the original context of the image is itinerant: she severs the faces and bodies of her subjects from the past and creates a new identity for them in the present. Her background as a psychotherapist emerges in her artistic practice: through her collages she retrieves the memories of society, connecting the archetypes of ancient figures with our contemporary mind.

“I am visually intrigued by the past,” Belgiojoso writes. “I look for forgotten images and I take them back to the present…[my collages] tell the stories of inner worlds, thoughts and fantasies. They are my projections and interpretations of the other person, a metaphor for the work of the psychologist, where the unconscious minds meet to find a new form of expression.” Framed on a white background, her compositions appear to fly alone, the shadows they cast isolating them from the rest of the world.

Fuchs believes that “Genealogy and family history can be transmitted consciously and voluntarily to descendants, but there is still ‘something’ that is unconsciously transmitted through the generations. That ‘something’ could be defined as a cluster of memories, stories and tendencies that supersede time and space and remain in all the memory levels of being.”

According to new research, traumatic experiences in our lives and in those of our ancestors leave molecular scars on our genes: our experiences, as well as those of our forebears, are never gone, even if they have been forgotten.

Perhaps that ‘something’ is not only the product of our ancestors’ experiences, but of our society’s as a whole. Transgeneration, or across generations, our story unfolds.