

*Ever Astudillo: Latin Fire*

with a contribution by Virgilio Villoresi

14.04.26 - 16.05.26

Velo Project, Piazza Bonomelli 5, Milan

Velo Project is pleased to announce *Ever Astudillo: Latin Fire*, the first presentation in Italy by the Colombian artist Ever Astudillo. Through a selection of photographs and drawings, the exhibition traces the nostalgic and suspended urban imaginary of Cali, the artist's hometown, in the 1970s. The project also offers/ suggests/ proposes a new reading of his practice thanks a special contribution by director and visual artist Virgilio Villoresi.

Born and raised in the streets of the working class neighbourhood of Saavedra Galindo, Astudillo was fascinated from childhood by the aesthetics of the night, frequenting the local dance halls, cinemas, and theatres of the area. It was cinema - understood both as a school of looking observation and as a redemptive dimension - that shaped his visual language, particularly Mexican film, with its melodrama, music, wrestlers, and rumba dancers. His works often appear like frames from a black and white film: rigorous compositions in which the existential urban landscape is both an objective record of its time and the inexhaustible setting of his graphic inquiry. In Astudillo's photographs and drawings, various silhouettes emerge like anonymous spectators against the backdrop of the city of Cali, silent shadows that often allude to the artist's role as a witness to his own contemporaneity. It is especially in the *Interior Exterior* series of drawings that his concern with the relationship between human being and environment becomes most apparent: the individual enclosed and oppressed within everyday life, and the city as an open space, at times dark, yet free and without boundless.

His sharp documentary-style visual language, merges with ethereal and mysterious atmospheres, in which the real, as much like in Villoresi's cinema, becomes only the point of departure for the exploration of a magical and complex universe. Drawn to shadows and metaphysical landscapes, Virgilio, through his animated intervention, enhances the dreamlike and psychological dimension of Astudillo's figures. The two sculptures in the exhibition, created through the assemblage of vintage furniture and kinetic machines, restore a new depth to Astudillo's subjects, which, like souls in search of themselves, dissolve into a dance of forms.

Ever Astudillo (1948–2015, Cali) was a Colombian artist and photographer. After his first steps in the independent space Ciudad Solar, in the early 1970s he took part in the National Salon of Artists in Bogotá, an event he would go on to win in 1973. It is from these years that Astudillo, through photography and drawing, defined a visual language grounded in urban landscapes and popular neighbourhoods. During this period he was part of the “Cali group”, an influential community of artists, filmmakers, and writers active in the Colombian city, attentive to social realities, cinema, and popular culture. In 1979 the Museo La Tertulia in Cali dedicated a collective exhibition to the artistic and documentary work of Ever Astudillo, Fernell Franco, and Óscar Muñoz. From the 1980s onward Astudillo expanded his practice by introducing painting and colour: the subjects of this period include billboards, theatre interiors, wrestlers, male bodies, fashion imagery, and scenes of urban violence drawn from contemporary news media. Alongside his artistic practice, his sustained commitment to teaching also deserves mention, as it made him a point of reference for subsequent generations of Colombian artists.

Astudillo’s work has been presented in numerous solo and group exhibitions, including *Vampires Fear No Looking Glass*, winner of the curatorial research grant at the Rencontres d’Arles, Arles (2024); *Teddy Sandoval and the Butch Gardens School of Art*, Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown (2024), and Vincent Price Art Museum, Los Angeles (2023); *América Latina 1960–2013*, Fondation Cartier, Paris (2013–2014); *FOREVER*, Lugar a Dudas, Cali (2013); *Pasajeros*, Lugar a Dudas, Cali (2013); *Ever Astudillo*, Proartes, Cali (2012); *La poética de lo urbano*, Universidad Autónoma, Cali (2010); *El cuadro entra a cuadro*, Museo de Arte, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá (2004); *Serie Anónimos*, Museo del Carmen, Mexico City (1992); *En Blanco y Negro*, Museo de Arte Moderno La Tertulia, Cali (1989); *Tradition and Innovation in Latin American Art*, Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, New York (1987); *II Bial de La Habana*, Havana (1986); and *Five Colombian Artists*, Galería Época, Santiago de Chile; Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires; Centro Cultural São Paulo, São Paulo; and École des Beaux Arts, Paris (1983). Astudillo’s works are held in major public collections including the Fondation Cartier, Paris; Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá; Museum of Contemporary Art, University of Dallas; Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas; Museo de Arte de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá; Casa de las Américas, Havana; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Panamá; Colección Colcultura, Bogotá; Museo de Arte Moderno La Tertulia, Cali; and Colección Cartón de Colombia S.A., Cali.

Virgilio Villoresi (1979, Fiesole) is a director and visual artist who brings together cinema and animation in a singular and deeply personal language. His work emerges from a sustained dialogue with the historical avant gardes, experimental cinema, and auteur animation, with references ranging from Maya Deren to Kenneth Anger, from Patrick Bokanowski to Jan Lenica, from Jean Cocteau to Paolo Gioli. In 2005 he made his first short film, *Frigidaire*, a work built entirely through stop motion and animated collage, which marked the beginning of a poetics grounded in the artisanal gesture and the direct manipulation of the image. Since then, he has developed a visual research that privileges handcrafted processes, optical illusions, and in camera effects, rejecting digital visual effects in favour of a tangible, concrete, almost theatrical aesthetic. Alongside his filmmaking practice, Villoresi has always directed his attention towards the perceptual mechanisms of the human eye, developing an artistic research grounded in the use of kinetic machines, optical distortions, flipbooks, zoetropes, and magic lanterns.

He has directed short films, commercials, and music videos for international artists and brands, including Vinicio Capossela, John Mayer, Blonde Redhead, Riva Starr, Bulgari, Fendi, Valentino, Etro, Cucinelli, Mini, 7UP, Acqua di Parma, Dolce & Gabbana, Ginori, Max Mara, Fornasetti, and Roger Vivier. His works have been selected and awarded at national and international festivals, including Cannes Lions, Cartoons on the Bay, Future Film Festival, NY Film Festival, Amsterdam Film Festival, and MUMIA Belo Horizonte. In 2016, the Annecy International Animation Film Festival dedicated a full retrospective to his work. He has exhibited in numerous solo and group exhibitions, including *Le avventure della visione*, IULM, Milan (2024); *Animagia. Dispositivi, visioni, film*, Fondazione Dino Zoli, Forlì (2023); *Trompe l’œil e altre visioni*, Pinacoteca Civica, Ancona (2020); *Stanze animate*, Palazzo Tupputi, Bisceglie (2018); *Lo sguardo espanso*, Complesso Monumentale del San Giovanni, Catanzaro (2012); and *Prospettiva Mobile*, Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica, Rome (2009).

In 2021 he founded Fantasmagoria in Milan, a production company and studio workshop dedicated to the development of cinematic and advertising projects. In 2025, his first feature film, *Orfeo*, loosely inspired by Dino Buzzati’s *Poema a fumetti*, was presented in competition at the Venice Film Festival: a work shot entirely on 16 mm film that brings together live action and stop motion animation, combining handcrafted effects, miniatures, forced perspectives, and hand built sets constructed within the studio itself.