

ARTEFACTUS GALLERY

trincheras

a vertigo where reality and memory coincide



by Juan C. Mirabal

Opening Reception **August 2 | 8:30 PM**
On view **August 2 - 25, 2024**

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**Trincheras:
A Vertigo Where Reality
and Memory Coincide.**

Faced with a collection of photos like "Trincheras," I refuse any manifestation of intellectualism. I reject any hermeneutical imperative or exegetical obligation only to confess my devotion to this delirious catalog of images as if it were a declaration of love, a crush, or a spell. Although the iconography of "Trincheras" invites without an excuse to a socio-political exegesis, a revision of memory, and the interpretation of a reality's visual narrative that is nothing more than the symbolic description of a dystopia, the scene of a failed nation, I prefer to avoid this approach and applaud, from catharsis and fascination, the SUCCESS of a gaze where poetics manifests itself as a disturbing journey through disaster, a provocative and melancholic testimony for the decadent beauty of a city destined to live between ruin and a future more uncertain than its own restoration. Juan Carlos Mirabal's photographic narrative is not just moving, it is transformative. It reminds us of that anthological verse in Neruda's Poem Number XX, "We, the ones from that time, are no longer the same."

From the devastating silence of ruin to the desolate vestiges of abandonment, Juan Carlos does nothing more than peer into the vertigo of his own memory, into the abyss of a past with the perspective of someone who captures ideological mirages, historical phantasmagorias, fragments of a forgotten daily life and an urbanism more prone to archaeology than only one symbol of republican surviving architecture: the Capitol. This irony is perhaps the most powerful and devastating metaphor in the catalog. That is why it dazzles, captivates, and overwhelms just as "The Parthenon" or the Basilica of Gaudi's "La Sagrada Familia," the art of Dürer, Goya or Dalí, the cinema of Chaplin, Fellini, or Clint Eastwood, the music of Bach, Pat Matheny, Jobim or Ennio Morricone. How many of us would stop before these same landscapes without noticing the scatology of their architecture, the paradoxes of their deterioration, the irreverence of their contrasts, such as the juxtaposition of grandeur and decay, the beauty in destruction, and the metaphysics of a dystopia whose beauty is based on abandonment, destruction, and loss? In that evocative and, at the same time, overwhelming narrative to which Juan Carlos invites us, I have been haunted by the recurring sensation of what could have been and was not, the presence of a temporality that coagulates and flagellates itself, cornering me in an endless loop of nostalgia.

It is impossible to view this collection of images without being trapped by the profound sorrow of failure, loss, and imminent absence. This is the collection's merit, its grandeur, and the enigma of its beauty that resonates with the viewer on an emotional level.

Julio Fowler Madrid / 2024.

*Trincheras: Trenches

Juan C. Mirabal

Poet and photographer born in Cuba. At the age of twenty-two, he published his first poems in his home country. Shortly after, he emigrated to the United States on a raft. His poems have appeared in cultural magazines and digital media in the USA, Spain, and Mexico, as well as in various anthologies.

He has published poetry books, including "Rehén de las olas" with Cambridge BrickHouse, which he presented at the 37th Miami Book Fair in 2020, "Conjuro de Diamante" with Primigenios, and "Mapa de las certezas" with Lunetra. As a photographer, he has participated in various group and solo exhibitions and collaborated with magazines in South Florida. He resides in Miami.

