

GALLERIA RAFFAELLA CORTESE

PRESS RELEASE

MARTHA ROSLER



May 22 – August 3, 2013
Tuesday – Friday 10am - 1pm; 3 - 7:30 pm; Saturday 3 - 7:30 pm
And by appointment.

Opening Wednesday May 22 from 7 to 9pm.

Raffaella Cortese is proud to present, in her space at Via Stradella 1, the exhibition *Cuba, January 1981* by Martha Rosler. The exhibition presents color and black and white photographs, including several diptychs, that have not previously been exhibited in Europe.

In early 1981, Rosler and a group of other artists and intellectuals joined a cultural tour organized by Ana Mendieta and Lucy Lippard. Traveling around the island, Rosler photographed shops, buildings, and people as well as the posters and billboards that punctuated the roads and urban spaces. About the period during which the images were taken, Rosler has commented:

"January 1981 marked the end of the 1970s, not only for the obvious reason but because it marked the moment after Reagan's election and before his inauguration, after the discourses of détente, human rights, and egalitarianism and before the onslaught of neoliberalism, anti-terrorism and militarist adventurism and supply-side "trickle-down" rhetoric masking the huge upward redistribution of wealth. The Mariel "boatlift" from Cuba to Florida had just ended in October, just in time for Reagan's election in November. But the meaning of the 80s — for us as well as for the Cubans we met — was still located only in our nightmares and fears, not yet realized."

Bracketed chronologically by Rosler's well-known photo-text work *The Bowery in two inadequate descriptive systems* (1974/75) and her highly influential essay, "In, around and afterthoughts (on documentary photography)" (1981), this series takes its place alongside Rosler's photographs of airports, roads, shop windows, and public transportation as part of a career-long photographic practice.

The images, like Rosler's other photographic images, present a visual experience of the common spaces of society and the spaces where exterior and interior worlds intersect: cafes, schools, beauty parlors, theaters, churches. As Cuba was, at the time - and it still remains - largely off limits to U.S. citizens, these images also exist in a hazy area of widely divergent assumptions about Cuban culture and the role of Cuban Communism.

Martha Rosler was born in Brooklyn, New York, where she lives and works.

Rosler's retrospective was shown in several European cities and in New York at the New Museum and the International Center of Photography between 1998 and 2000. A solo exhibition of her war photomontages was held at the Worcester Art Museum in Massachusetts in 2007. In 2010 a retrospective exhibition of her work was shown at GAM in Turin. Her writing has been published widely in magazines and catalogues, and she has published 17 books, in several languages, with photographs, texts, and commentary. *Decoys and Disruptions: Selected Writings, 1975-2001*, a book of Rosler's essays, was published by the MIT Press in 2004 (reprinted, 2008). Other projects include the traveling exhibitions *Martha Rosler Library*, comprising 8,000 volumes from Rosler's collection, and *If You Lived Here Still*, both in collaboration with e-flux. Most recently her solo exhibition and performance, *Meta-Monumental Garage Sale*, was held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 2012.

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