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**Regina José Galindo**

Exit Art

New York

Although the work of the prolific Guatemalan poet and performance-based artist Regina José Galindo has garnered attention internationally in recent years, most notably her participation in the 2005 Venice Biennial for which she received the Golden Lion Award for Best Young Artist, her oft challenging and politically charged works are less known to US audiences. And thus, the recent comprehensive 10-year survey of her video and installation production (including the New York debut and live performance on opening night of *Crisis: Cloth* (2009) in which the artist sold each article of clothing she was wearing for \$5 to any member of the audience willing to pay and remove it from her body) organized by the venerable alternative space Exit Art is indeed a welcome opportunity to engage with an artist whose work recalls the legacy of performance, feminist and body based art of the 1960s and 70s—the poetic gestures of Ana Mendieta, the acts of endurance of Yoko Ono and Marina Abramovic, and the extreme actions of Chris Burden. Yet, the impetus for Galindo's performances in which she often endures extreme acts, such as torture, imprisonment, surgical mutilation, and other forms of bodily and psychological degradation, is not so much rooted in a desire to establish a dialogue with these historical antecedents, but rather represents an unyielding commitment to make the invisible visible—to challenge normalized atrocities, institutional corruption and widespread amnesia by positing her body as a site of contestation, power and memory and thereby activating collective and national histories.

In *¿Quién Puede Borrar las Huellas? (Who can erase the traces?)* (2003), perhaps one of Galindo's most iconic and politically overt performances, the artist addresses Guatemala's violent past and the government's ongoing corruption. Dressed in black, Galindo walks barefoot several blocks from the Constitutional Court to the National Palace in Guatemala City while carrying a white basin full of human blood. Stopping only to dip her feet in the basin and leaving a trail of bloody footprints behind her, Galindo's gesture is restrained and dignified, yet uncompromising in its resolve and militancy. Like much of her work, Galindo avoids mere political pamphleteering and creates works of astonishing lyricism and urgency that transcend victimization and assert the resilience and indomitability of the human spirit.

—*Marysol Nieves*

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