



PRESS RELEASE

DARÍO VILLALBA

FRIEZE LONDON
9TH October, 2024
13TH October, 2024

Galerie Poggi is excited to present at Frieze London an important solo show of **Darío Villalba (Spain, 1939-2018)**, whose estate announced joining the gallery last year. Ahead of a new **major retrospective** curated by a prominent European museum in 2027, there is no better place than Frieze to premiere the English comeback for this artist, whose work has not been shown in the UK for far too long. Yet London played a major role in his life and work, being a haven for Villalba amid Franco's regime and his homosexuality.

It is precisely this link that will be highlighted at Frieze with an exceptional group of **historical works inspired by his experience in New York City in the early 60s, and most importantly, by his deeply-rooted connection to London** spanning from 1964 to 2007. Many images from Notting Hill Carnival and Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park circulate in his work, embodying the open desire and extravagance that he sought since.

Darío Villalba is a giant in the history of art, whose long-standing work has intersected with numerous artistic and cultural movements: from Pop Art—whose emergence he intimately witnessed while living in New York—to Informal or Conceptual Art, Fluxus, and the Queer Art of the 1990s-2000s responding to the AIDS crisis. He is a decisive figure of artistic photography, alongside the artists of the Picture Generation. Villalba has engaged closely with various artists, including Andy Warhol, Richard Hamilton, Arnulf Rainer, Sigmar Polke, Dennis Hopper, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Luchino Visconti, and others. He played a major and pioneering role in how he used, distorted, and pushed the photographic medium to its extremes, bringing it squarely into the realm of contemporary art as early as the 1960s. Most importantly, his socially-engaged work retains a powerful contemporaneity, its deep humanity continuing to be a disquieting reflection of our human condition within the mass society we still inhabit.



© Dario Villalba, *El Místico*, 1974. Courtesy of the Dario Villalba Archives and Galerie Poggi, Paris

GALERIE POGGI

135 rue Saint-Martin, 75004 Paris — Tuesday - Saturday — 11 am - 7 pm — galeriepoggi.com

About Darío Villalba

Awarded a scholarship at Harvard University, he left his native Spain for New York in the early 1960s, where he discovered with a sense of shock and dismay the rise of consumer society and with it, Pop Art, whose emergence he witnessed firsthand at Leo Castillo in 1963. He quickly expressed the desire to create an “anti-Pop”, revealing the dark side of a societal model that excludes the poor, the weak, and the marginalised. From then on, Villalba’s work would be an unwavering artistic, political, and social endeavour aimed at revealing the profoundly human face of a materialistic and exclusionary society. Andy Warhol, with whom he would remain in contact through their Madrid gallery, Vandrés, would later define him not as an anti-Pop artist but as a “Pop Soul”.

His attachment to the profound humanity and uniqueness that each individual retains in mass society is formally expressed through the deconstruction of the media mechanisms of production and dissemination of photographic images. Throughout his life, Darío Villalba defined himself as a painter, although he would primarily employ photography as the main medium for his paintings and sculptures. It was in London that he took most of his own photographs in the years 1965-1968, collecting images extracted from magazines, books, or personal archives found in flea markets, which he then appropriated.

The transformation occurred in his studio, where he turned the recuperated photographs into paintings by cropping the images to strip them of their documentary or conceptual dimensions. At times, he would enlarge them to the fullest extent to reveal their weave, before painting or sketching on them—often in a nearly imperceptible manner—thereby bestowing upon them a singular identity.



© Darío Villalba, *Documento Básico B/N*, 1976 (detail)



© Darío Villalba, *Beso Lontres II - Color Pajizo*, 1995

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