



RUVEN AFANADOR **TORERO**

20th ANNIVERSARY

October 28th, 2021 – February 26th, 2022

Book Available Soon
Ruven Afanador, TORERO 2nd Edition

Image: Fabián Barba Rivas, Mexico City, Mexico.

Throckmorton Fine Art is pleased to present its fifth exhibition of the photography of Colombian-born Ruven Afanador. This exhibit commemorates the second edition of the artist's celebrated book, *Torero*. (*Torero* is the Spanish word for bullfighter.) While Afanador is an internationally acclaimed portrait and fashion photographer, he is also a fine artist. He has selected forty photographs from his work as an artist for this exhibit. These images masterfully reveal the mystical world of bullfighters, which is rich with rituals. In all of the intricacies—including of dress—and drama, Afanador finds art.

"To fight well a bull, you have to forget that you have a body," said renowned Spanish *torero* Juan Belmonte. In his book *Torero*, Afanador does not capture the bloody struggle between the *torero* and the bull (which in Spanish is *toro*). Instead of the dance between beauty and horror in the bullfight, Afanador's photographs are dedicated to the physical and emotional transcendence of men who defy death, driven by a passion for bullfighting. At first sight, Afanador appears to only focus on the *torero's* figure, his sensual masculinity and the handmade, elaborate *haute-couture*-like outfits traditionally worn by bullfighters. However, Afanador does more: he reveals the struggle the *torero* experiences before facing the bull. With the threat of death, the *torero* needs to feel and show that he is strong, proud, and the central performer in the dramatic pageantry of the bullfight. Life and death are at play in the plaza. Afanador wants us to have empathy, as he surely did while spending time with the *toreros*. The *torero* must display virility in the plaza, and Afanador captures well all the strength that is mustered before the spectacle.

Afanador ceaselessly pushes the limits of aesthetic cultural conventions. *Torero*, his first book of personal work, reflects his own artistic expression, links history and Hispanic culture, explores his passion for dance and poetry, and indulges in his delight for unconventional beauty. These pursuits are also evident in his other personal projects: *Sombra* (2004), *Mil Besos* (2009), *Ángel Gitano* (2014), *Yo Seré Tu Espejo* (2016), and *Las Hijas del Agua* (2020). This latest book, done in collaboration with the artist Ana González, presents remarkable portraits of indigenous Colombian communities and their ancestral traditions.

Afanador is a well-recognized fashion photographer. He began working in New York in in the early 1990s. His work has appeared in *Vogue*, *Elle*, *Vanity Fair*, *Rolling Stone*, and the *New York Times*. Afanador is also a sought-after portrait photographer. Those who have been captured by his lens include: President Barack Obama, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the Dalai Lama, Margaret Atwood, and Marina Abramovic.

Afanador's photographs are in many private and public collections, including in his native Colombia. Museums in Colombia holding his work include El Museo Nacional de Colombia and El Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá. His work has been exhibited internationally, including, in addition to the United States, in Switzerland, Italy, Spain, and Argentina.

Throckmorton Fine Art is proud to represent Afanador in New York. This exhibit will also mark the twentieth anniversary of the photographer's first show with the gallery.

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