December 1, 2017 – February 17, 2018

DREAM OF SOLENTINAME

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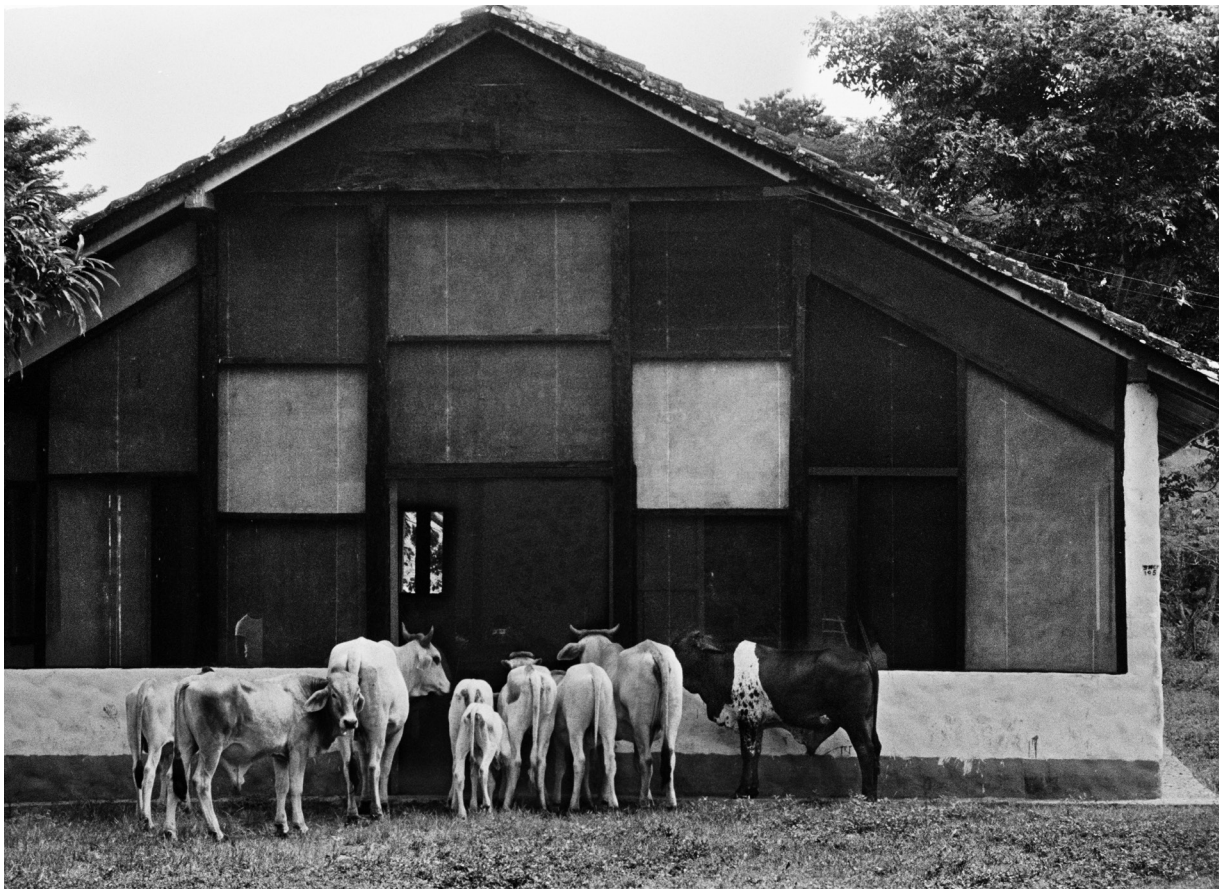

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1524
Spanish conquistadors fight and defeat the indigenous population, naming the newly conquered land "Nicaragua" after the Indian chief Nicarao.

1821
Nicaragua becomes independent.

1855
North American adventurer William Walker invades Nicaragua, imposing slavery and declaring himself president. He was overthrown two years later.

1893
The Liberal party government led by Jose Santos Zelaya begins a process of modernization and national development.

APOCALYPSE AT SOLENTINAME

Julio Cortázar

1909
President Zelaya refuses to grant canal rights to the United States. The U.S. State Department supports a revolt by the Conservative party, which in return agrees to permanent U.S. military presence. U.S. banks take control of Nicaragua finances, railroads, and communications.

1912–1926
U.S. Marines remain in the country to support the Conservative government, which is faced with continuous armed Liberal rebellions. The Bryan-Chamorro Treaty is signed, giving the United States perpetual rights for the construction of an interoceanic canal through Nicaragua.

1927
The Liberal leaders surrender and sign a U.S.-supervised peace treaty. Only General Augusto Cesar Sandino refuses to comply. He assembles an army of peasants and launches a guerrilla war against the U.S. occupational forces, which is to last seven years, during which the United States experimented with its first aerial bombardment techniques.

1933
Unable to crush Sandino's army and faced by growing domestic criticism of U.S. involvement in Nicaragua, the marines are withdrawn. They are replaced by a new army and police force, the National Guard, trained and equipped by the U.S., to be headed by U.S.-appointed Anastasio "Tacho" Somoza Garcia.

1934
Sandino signs for peace with the new president, Sacasa, and returns to the northern mountains to continue organizing peasant cooperatives begun during the war. On February 21 Sandino is assassinated on the orders of Tacho Somoza.

1936
Somoza ousts Sacasa and takes the presidency.

1947
Following U.S. pressure to hold elections, a new president, Leonard Arguello, is elected. After twenty-eight days in office, he is overthrown by Somoza, who then installs his uncle as the next president.

1951
A pact is signed between Somoza's Liberal party and the Conservatives, allowing Somoza's election as president.

1956
After over twenty years of rule, Anastasio Somoza Garcia is executed by a poet, Rigoberto Lopez Perez. His son, Luis, replaces his father as president, and his second son, Anastasio, or "Tachito", takes over as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. A period of brutal repression begins.

1958–1960
A number of armed movements develop, with differing political origins and no single direction. Some are led by the veterans of Sandino, some by members of the middle class, such as newspaper editor Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, who at this time stages an armed invasion, which fails to take power.

1961
The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) is founded by Carlos Fonseca, Tomas Borge, and Silvio Mayorga, and combines several of the existing armed movements. Somoza offers Nicaragua as a base for the CIA-backed invasion of Cuba's Bay of Pigs.

1963
The first guerilla actions of the FSLN are taken in the zone of Rio Bocay. The United States, with a new strategy for social and economic development in Latin America known as the Alliance for Progress, pressures Somoza to form a civilian government. Rene Schick is picked to be the next "elected" president.

1964
Somoza, in response to continuing resistance, collaborates in the creation of the Central American Defense Council (CONDECA).

1965
National Guard troops are sent to support U.S. Marines in the invasion of the Dominican Republic.

1967
During Anastasio "Tachito" Somoza Debayle's presidential campaign, hundreds of people demonstrating support for a Conservative opposition candidate, Fernando Aguero, are killed by the National Guard. Somoza is accused of electoral fraud. He becomes president and continues command of the Armed Forces. Aguero negotiates with Somoza to gain seats in the National Congress. The FSLN sets up a rural base in Pancasan, where guerilla actions intensify.

1972
An earthquake destroys the capital, Managua, killing 15,000 people and leaving 170,000 homeless. Incoming relief supplies are found on the black market. International aid is used to expand the business empire of the Somoza family, which takes advantage of reconstruction needs by making land and construction deals and eliminating the private sector from investment opportunities.

1974
Somoza becomes president for another seven-year term, in an election boycotted by the major opposition parties. The FSLN stages an assault on a Somocista Christmas party, taking twelve Nicaraguan diplomats and government members hostage. Somoza accedes to FSLN demands for $1 million ransom, release of political prisoners, and the press and radio publication of an FSLN statement. UDEL (Democratic Union for Liberation), a broad alliance of political parties, businessmen, and unions, is organized and headed by Pedro Joaquin Chamorro.

Always the same, the Ticos, a bit on the quiet side but full of surprises, you get off in San Juan de Costa Rica and there waiting for you were Carmen Naranjo and Samuel Rovinski and Sergio Ramirez (who's from Nicaragua and not a Tico but where's the difference when you get down to it, it's all the same, what's the difference between me being Argentinian, though to be polite I suppose I should say Tinan, and the other Nicas or Ticos). It was blinding hot and to make matters worse everything began right away, a press conference with all the usual, why don't you live in your own country, why was the film of *Blow-Up* so different from your story, do you think a writer ought to be politically committed? The way things are going I reckon the very last interview I give will be in the gates of Hell and I bet they'll be the very same question, and if by some chance or other it's chez St Peter it'll be no different, don't you think that down below you write too obscurely for the masses?

Afterwards the Europe Hotel and that special show which crowns a journey with a long soliloquy of soap and silence. Except that at 7 o'clock when it was time to take a walk around San Jose to see if it was a straightforward and neat as I'd heard, a hand grasped my jacked and at the other end of it Ernesto Cardenal and then what a welcome, poet, how good that you're here after our meeting in Rome, after so many meetings on paper over the years. I'm always surprised, I'm always moved to think that someone like Ernesto should come to see me and to seek me out, you'll say I'm dripping with false modesty but to go right ahead and say it friend, the jackal may howl but the bus moves on, I'll always be an amateur, someone who admires certain people an incredible amount from below, and then one day discovers they feel the same about him, things like that are beyond me, we'd better go on to the next line.

The next line turned out to be that Ernesto had heard I was coming to Costa Rica and had flown in from his island because the little bird who'd brought him the news had also told him that the Ricans were planning to take me to Solentiname, and the idea of coming to fetch me himself proved irresistible, so two days later Sergio and Oscar and Ernesto and myself crammed into an all too easily crammable Piper Aztec biplane, a name like that will forever be a mystery to me, but which flew anyway amidst hiccups and ominous gurglings while the blond pilot kept the thing going with a selection of calypsos and seemed utterly unconcerned at my idea that the Aztec was in fact taking us straight to his sacrificial pyramid. Which, as you can see, wasn't the case, we got out in Los Chiles and from there an equally rickety jeep took us to the home of the poet Jose Coronel Urteche (whose work more people could do with reading), where we rested and talked of a variety of mutual poet friends, of Roque Dalton and Gertrude Stein and Carlos Martinez Rivas until Luis Coronel arrived and we set off for Nicaragua first in his jeep and then in his launch at nerve-racking speed. Beforehand though, we look some souvenir snapshots with one of those cameras that on the spot produce a piece of sky-blue paper which gradually and miraculously and polaroid begins slowly to fill with images, first of all disturbing ghost-shapes and then little by little a nose, a curly head of hair, Ernesto's smile and Nazarene head-band, Dona Maria and Don Jose standing out clearly against the veranda. There was nothing at all odd about this for them because of course they were used to the camera, but I wasn't, for me to see emerging from nothing, from that little square of blue nothingness those faces and smiles of farewell filled me with amazement and I told them so. I remember asking Oscar what would happen if once after some family photo the blue scrap of paper suddenly began to fill with Napoleon on horseback, and Don Jose's roar of laughter: He'd been listening to everything as usual; the jeep, off we head for the lake.

Night had already fallen by the time we reached Solentiname, Teresa and William and an American poet were there waiting for us, along with the other members of the community; we went to bed almost immediately, but not before I'd seen the painting in a corner, Ernesto was talking with his friends and handing out the food and presents he'd brought in a bag from San Jose, somebody was sleeping in a hammock and I saw the paintings in a corner, began to look at them. I can't remember who it was explained they'd been done by the local people, this one was by Vincente, this one's by Ramona, some signed, others not, yet all of them incredibly beautiful, once again the primeval vision of the world, the pure gaze of someone describing his surrounding in a song of praise: dwarf cows in meadows of poppies, a sugar cabin that people were pouring out of like ants, a green-eyed horse against a backdrop of swamps, a baptism in a church with no faith in perspective that climbs and falls all over itself, a lake full of little boats like shoes, and in the background a huge laughing fish with turquoise lips. Then Ernesto came over to explain that selling the paintings helped them to get by, in the morning he'd show me some things in wood and stone the peasants has made, as well as his own sculptures; we were all gradually dropping off to sleep, but I kept on staring at the paintings stacked in the corner, pulling out the great canvas playing-cards with their cows and their flowers and a mother with her two children, one white and the other red, nestling in her lap, beneath a sky so bursting with stars that the only remaining cloud had been shoved into a corner, pressed right up against the frame, on the point of creeping off the canvas out of sheer fright.

The next day was Sunday and 11 o'clock Mass, the Solentiname Mass where the country labourers with Ernesto and any visiting friends join in commenting on a chapter from the Gospels, which that particular day was Jesus' arrest in the garden, a theme the people of Solentiname treated as if it dealt with them personally, with the threat hanging over them at night or in broad daylight, their life of constant uncertainty not just on the islands or on the mainland and in all of Nicaragua but also in nearly the whole of Latin America, life surrounded by fear and death, life in Guatemala and life in El Salvador, life in Argentina and Bolivia, life in Chile and Santo Domingo, life in Paraguay, life in Brazil and in Colombia.

After that the time came to think of going back, and it was then that the paintings crossed my mind again, I went to the community room and started to look at them in the delirious brilliance of mid-day, their colours even brighter, the acrylics or oils vying with each other from horses and sunflowers and picnics in meadows and symmetrical palm trees. I remembered I had a colour film in my camera and went out on to the veranda with as many paintings as I could carry; Sergio came and helped me to hold them up in a good light, and I went through photographing them one by one, positioning myself so that each canvas completely filled the viewer. As luck would have it, there were exactly the same number of paintings as I had shots left, so I could take them all without leaving any out, when Ernesto came to announce the launch was waiting. I told him what I'd done and he laughed, painting-snatcher, image-smuggler. Yes, I said, I'm carting them all off, and back home I'll show them on my screen and they'll be far bigger and brighter than yours, tough shit to you.

I returned to San Jose, passed through Havana where I had a few things to see to, then back to Paris full of tired nostalgia, Claudine waiting for me silently at Orly, back to a life of wrist-watches and merci monsieur bonjour madame, committees, cinemas, red wine and Claudine, Mozart quartets and Claudine. In the heap of things the toady suitcase spewed out over bed and carpet, magazines, newspaper cuttings, handkerchiefs and books by Centro-American poets, the tubes of grey plastic with the rolls of film, so many things in the space of two months, the sequence in the Lenin school of Havana, the streets of Trinidad, the outlines of the volcano Irazu and its tiny dish of steaming green water in which Samuel, myself and Sarita had imagine ducks already roasted floating around wreathed in sulphurous fumes. Claudine took the films to be developed, one afternoon when I was in the Latin Quarter I remembered them and since I had the receipt in my pocket went to pick them up: eight of them altogether, I immediately thought of the Solentiname paintings and when I got home I opened all the boxes and glimpsed at the first slide in each. I seemed to remember that before taking the paintings I'd been photographing Ernesto's Mass, some kids playing among palm trees just like the ones in the paintings, kids and trees and cows against a background of harsh blue sky and the lake only a shade greener, or perhaps it was the other way round, I couldn't say exactly. I put the box with the kids and the Mass into the carrier, I knew that after them all the rest of the roll showed the paintings.

It was getting dark and I was on my own, Claudine would be coming after work to listen to some music and to stay with me; I set up the screen and a rum with a lot of ice, the carrier ready and the long-distance control; there was no need to draw the curtains, the compliant night was at hand to light the lamps and the aroma of the rum; it was good to think it was all going to be offered to me again, bit by bit, after the Solentiname paintings I'd go through the boxes with the photos from Cuba, but just why the paintings first, why that professional vice, art before life, and why not then said the other one to him in their eternal unrelenting bitter fraternal dialogue, why not look at the Solentiname paintings first, they're just as much life, it's all one and the same.

First the photos of the Mass—which weren't much good because I'd got the exposure wrong, the kids on the other hand were playing in perfect light with gleaming white teeth. I pressed the button reluctantly, I'd have liked to spend a long moment gazing at each photo sticky with memories, that tiny fragile world of Solentiname hemmed round by water and officialdom, just like the youth I stared at blankly was hemmed in, I'd pressed the button and there he was, perfectly clear in the middle distance with a wide, smooth face that seemed filled with incredulous surprise as his body crumpled forward, a neat hole in his forehead, the officer's revolver still tracing the path of the bullet, the others standing by with their machine-guns, a jumbled background of houses and trees.

Whatever we like to think, these things always seem to arrive so far ahead of us and to leave us so far behind; I said to myself dumbfoundedly that the shop must have made a mistake, that they'd given me someone else's photos, but then what about the Mass, the children playing in the fields, then how? Without my wanting it to, my hand pressed the button and it was noon in the vast nitrate mine with a couple of rusty corrugated-iron shacks, a bunch of people to the left staring at the bodies lying face upwards, arms flung open against a bare grey sky; looking hard you could just make out in the distance the backs of a uniformed group moving off, their jeep waiting at the top of a hill.

I know I went on; the only possibility in the face of all the craziness was to go on pressing the button, seeing the corner of Corrientes and San Martin and the black car from which four men were aiming guns at the pavement where someone in a white shirt and tennis shoes was running, two women trying to shelter behind a parked lorry, somebody across the street looking on in horrified disbelief, lifting a hand to his chin as though to touch himself and feel he was still alive, then all at once an almost completely darkened room, a bleary light from a barred window high up, a tabled with a naked girl lying on her back, her hair reaching down to the floor, the shadow of a back pushing a wire between her open legs, the faces of two men talking to each other, a blue tie and a green pullover. I never understood whether I went on pressing the button or not, I saw a clearing in the jungle, a thatched cabin with some trees in the foreground, up against the nearest trunk a skinny youth, his face turned to the left where a confused group of five or six men close together pointed their rifles and pistols at him; he had a long face, with a lock of hair falling across the dark skin of his forehead, and was staring at them, one of his hands half-raised, the other probably in his trouser pocket, as if he were taking his time to tell them something, almost disdainfully, and even though the photo was blurred I felt and knew and saw that it was Roque Dalton, so then yes I did press the button, as if that could save him from the infamy of such a death, and I managed to catch sight of a car exploding in the centre of a city which might have been Buenos Aires of Sao Paulo, I carried on pressing and pressing between flashes of bloody faces and bits of bodies and women and children racing down hill-sides in Bolivia or Guatemala, suddenly the screen flooded with mercury and with nothing and with Claudine too, coming in silently and throwing her shadow across the screen before bending over to kiss me on the top of my head and ask me if they were nice, if I was happy with the photos, if I wanted to show her them.

I took the slide carrier out and set it back at the beginning, we never know how or why we do certain things when we've crossed a boundary we were equally unaware of. Without looking at her, because she would not have understood or simply been terrified by whatever my face was in that moment, without explaining anything to her because from my throat down to my toe-nails was just one huge knot, I got up and gently settled her in the armchair and I suppose I said something about going to get a drink and for her to look, for her to see for herself while I went to get a drink. In the bathroom I think I threw up, or just cried and then threw up or did nothing but stayed sitting on the edge of the bath letting time go by until I was capable of going to the kitchen to fix Claudine her favourite drink, fill it with ice and then take in the silence, realise that Claudine wasn't screaming, hadn't come running with questions, only silence and occasionally sugary bolero drifting through the wall from the next-door flat. I don't know how long it took me to get from the kitchen to the lounge, to see the back of the screen just as she reached the end of the instant mercury, then fell back into semi-darkness, Claudine switching off the projector and flopping back into the armchair to take her glass and smile slowly at me, happy, cat-like, contented.

1975
A country-wide counterinsurgency campaign is launched against the FSLN.

1976
Carlos Fonseca, founder of the FSLN, is killed in combat with the National Guard, and Tomas Borge, co-founder, is jailed and put in solitary confinement. Nicaraguan Catholic Church Bishops and U.S. missionaries denounce National Guard repression against peasants, documenting the "disappearance" of several village communities in the north.

1977
Somoza lifts martial law and censorship following U.S. threats to cut off military assistance if human rights are not respected. The Sandinistas simultaneously attack three National Guard garrisons: San Carlos in the south, Ocotal in the north, and Masaya near the capital. "Los Doce" (The Twelve), a newly formed group of prominent businessmen, churchmen, and intellectuals, calls for unified opposition to Somoza, including participation of the FSLN. The Archbishop attempts to organize a "national dialogue" with Somoza.

1/78
Pedro Joaquin Chamorro is assassinated. 100,000 people demonstrate and follow his coffin in a funeral procession through Managua. A national general strike is organized by the businessmen and UDEL, demanding the resignation of Somoza. It lasts ten days. The business sector organizes a new opposition party, the MDN (Nicaraguan Democratic Movement).

2/78
The FSLN attacks the cities of Granada and Rivas. National Guard tear gas a mass honoring Pedro Joaquin Chamorro in Monimbo. The Indian community builds barricades and trenches overnight, and rises up in the first popular rebellion against Somoza.

3/78
Demonstrations are held by neighborhood committees for better transportation and living conditions.

5/78
A hunger strike for Tomas Borge and Marcio Jean is supported by the women's movement AMPRONAC, demanding improved prison conditions and an end to their solitary confinement. The Broad Opposition Front (FAO) is formed, uniting "Los Doce", UDEL, and other opposition parties.

6/78
Secondary schools and universities are boycotted in a national strike by 30,000 students and teachers.

7/78
Members of "Los Doce" returning to Nicaragua from self-exile are met by an estimated crowd of 100,000 supporters. The United People's Movement (MPU) is formed as a coalition of unions and grassroots organizations linked to the FSLN.

'They came out really well, that one with the laughing fish and the mother with the two children and the cows in the field; wait, and there was that other one with the baptism in the church, tell me who painted them, the signatures aren't clear.'

Sitting on the floor without looking at her, I reach for my drink and gulped it down. I wasn't going to say anything to her, what was there to say now, but I remember vaguely thinking of asking her something really crazy, asking if at some point she hadn't seen a photo of Napoleon on horseback. I didn't of course.

from *Nicaragua, Tan Violentamente Dulce* (*Nicaragua, So Violently Sweet*), Julio Cortázar, Muchnik Editores (Buenos Aires), 1984.

Translated by Nick Caistor.

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SOLENTINAME—THE END

Ernesto Cardenal

I arrived at Solentiname twelve years ago with two companions to set up a small community for meditation. Meditation means union with god. We soon realised that this union with God led us first of all to union with the country people, all of them poor and uncared for, who lived scattered along the banks of the archipelago. Meditation further led us to a political commitment; meditation led us to revolution; that was how it had to be, otherwise everything would have been false. My former novice master Thomas Merton, who inspired and was the spiritual director of our foundation, had said to me that in Latin America no contemplative could remain apart from political struggles. At first, we preferred a revolution using non-violent means (although we were not unaware of the Church's traditional principle of a just war, and the right of self-defence on an individual and collective level). But afterwards we came to realise that in present-day Nicaragua non-violent struggle is impracticable. And Gandhi himself would have agreed with us. In fact, any true revolutionary prefers non-violence to violence; but one does not always have the freedom to choose.

It was the Gospel which had the most radical political effect on us. During Mass every Sunday (talking together with the country people) we used to comment on the Gospel; and they, with admirable simplicity and theological insight, began to understand the essence of its message: the announce of the kingdom of God. Which is: the establishment of earth of a just society, without exploited or exploiters, with all possessions shared, like the society in which the first Christians lived. These commentaries have been widely diffused throughout the world thanks to the book *The Gospel in Solentiname,* translated into various languages.

But the Gospel taught us above all else that the word of God was not merely to be heard but also to be put into practice. And the people of Solentiname who analysed this Gospel could not help identifying with their fellow-men who, in other parts of the country, were suffering persecution and terror: were being put in prison, tortured, murdered, their wives raped, their homes burnt, some even being thrown from helicopters. They also necessarily identified themselves with all those who, out of compassion for their neighbours, were offering up their lives. And this feeling of solidarity, in order to be real, implies that one also has to put one's security and one's life at risk. In Solentiname, we knew we could not enjoy peace and tranquillity for ever, if we really intended to put God's word into practice. We knew the hour of sacrifice would arrive, and it did.

Everything is over in our community now. We had created there a school of primitive painting which became famous in many parts of the world. The paintings, wooden sculptures, and other handicrafts of Solentiname were sold not only in Managua, but also in New York, Washington, Paris, Venezuela, Puerto Rico, Switzerland and Germany. A few days before the destruction of our community, we had sent some large wooden sculptures to a church in Canada. Recently the people of Solentiname (adults and children) had begun to write very fine poetry, and their poems have appeared both in Nicaragua and abroad. Several films were made about Solentiname, including one by the BBC. A great deal has been written about us, in a variety of languages, in books, magazines, and pamphlets, and records have been made. In that remote lakeside corner, we had a large library of books, collected during a whole lifetime. We had a collection of pre-Columbian art, all found in Solentiname, that we had built up over the years. We had a big guest house, with many beds for visitors. We had pottery and enamelling kilns, and a spacious workshop for all kinds of handicraft, where we could work in wood, leather, copper, bronze, and silver. We were also developing a communal work-scheme for the young with the help of a co-operative. We were about to start a dairy and a factory producing European-type cheeses, run by the co-operative and assisted by a German institution. In Germany they said: Solentiname is everywhere, it's the beginning of a more humane world, it's a Christian way of life, not just waiting for a better world, but caring for the peace of one's neighbour, for peace within nature, for peace in the community. And in Venezuela it was said that Solentiname is something so much of God and this earth that it is where poetry and sowing and harvesting the land do not divide men into poets and sowers but represent activities of the same unified life.

8/78
Led by commander Eden Pastora, the Sandinistas storm the National Palace and take sixty-seven Congressmen and 1,000 government officials hostage, forcing Somoza to release fifty-nine political prisoners, publish the FSLN program, and pay ransom. The FAO calls for a second general strike, with no definite duration. The entire country is paralyzed. A popular uprising begins in the town of Matagalpa.

9/78
The Sandinistas simultaneously attack the towns of Leon, Masaya, Chinandega, and Esteli, and the neighborhoods of Las Americas and Open 3 in Managua. They are supported by a popular insurrection. A state of siege is decreed throughout the country. After several days of fighting, the rebel cities are finally retaken, one by one, by the National Guard after extensive aerial bombardment. According to the Red Cross, the September fighting left 5,000 dead. Approximately 100,000 people seek refuge in the neighboring countries of Honduras and Costa Rica.

10/78
The Organization of American States (OAS) sends in an international team, headed by William Bowdler of the United States, to mediate between Somoza and the FAO, and define conditions for a post-Somoza NIcaragua.

11/78
Somoza refuses to leave, and the mediators attempt to involve Somoza's Liberal party in the talks. "Los Doce" reject the mediation, stating they cannot endorse "Somocismo without Somoza", a plan that would leave structures like the National Guard or the Liberal party intact. A plebiscite is suggested by the U.S. to determine if Somoza should continue or leave the country. Somoza rejects the proposal.

The Inter-American Commission for Human Rights of the OAS visits Nicaragua and publishes a report that condemns the Somoza regime for having committed "genocide".

Civil Defense Committees, sponsored by the MPU, organize in the city neighborhoods, preparing people for wartime defense. They stockpile food and medicine, give training in first aid.

2/79
A National Patriotic Front (FPN) is formed, combining the MPU with members of FAO who reject mediation efforts.

3/79
The FSLN announced internal unification.

4/79-5/79
The FSLN launches the "final offensive", taking Estelo and Jinotega in the north, initiating guerrilla activities in the Atlantic coast area, and waging frontal attacks along the Costa Rican border with the south, including the towns of Rivas and El Naranjo.

All that is over now.

Twelve years ago, when the Apostolic Nuncio of that time approved my project for the foundation in the name of the Holy See, he told me that he would have preferred the community to be established in a less remote and inaccessible place than Solentiname, because we would never get any visitors there. Yet the truth is we were always full of visitors from Nicaragua, and even more from aboard, from a host of different countries throughout the world. Many of them came to Nicaragua just to see Solentiname; sometimes they came straight to us, via Los Chiles and San Carlos, without even bothering to visit Managua. A lot of correspondence from all over the world reached us, as well as books, pamphlets, and magazines—although lately hardly any publications got through, due to the intervention of Felipe Rodriguez Serrano, the head of Customs. Numerous letters from other countries will still continue to arrive at the Nicaraguan post office for our community, and it will be a wilderness just as it was when we first arrived. Where there had been a Mass for the country people, paintings, sculptures, books, records, classes, beautiful smiling children, poems, songs, now only a wild natural beauty remains.

My life there was a happy one, in the near-Paradise which was Solentiname, but I was always ready to sacrifice it all. And now we have sacrificed it.

One day it happened that a group of young people, men and women from Solentiname (some of them from my community), out of their deeply held convictions, and after having weighed the matter a long time, decided to take up arms. Why did they do it? They did it for one reason alone: out of their love for the kingdom of God. Out of their ardent desire to establish a just society, a true and concrete kingdom of God here on this earth.

When the time came, these young men and women fought with great bravery, but also as christians. In that early morning at San Carlos they repeatedly tried to reason with the troops over a loudspeaker, wanting if possible to avoid having to shoot. But the troops replied to their arguments with machine-guns, and so reluctantly they were forced to use their weapons. Alejandro Guevara, one of those from our community, went into the barracks when only dead and wounded soldiers were left inside. He was going to set fire to the building to prove beyond doubt that their attack had been successful, but pity for the wounded soldiers stopped him. Because it was not burnt down, government sources afterwards claimed that it had never been taken.

I am proud that these young christians fought without hate, above all without hate for the troops, poor, exploited country people like themselves. It is dreadful that there should be dead and wounded. We would prefer there to be no fighting in Nicaragua, but that decision is not in the hands of the oppressed people—they are simply defending themselves. Some day there will be no more war in Nicaragua, no more poor troops killing their fellow countrymen; instead, there will be plenty of schools, places for children to play, hospitals and clinics for everyone, food and adequate housing for the whole population, art and leisure for all, and, beyond everything else, love among everybody.

Now the repression which had for so long been present in the North has also reached Solentiname. A great number of the peasants have been taken to prison. Many have had to flee. Still others have gone into exile, with only their memories of their beautiful islands and their homes in ruins. They might still have been there, leading peaceful lives devoted to everyday activities. But they thought of their neighbours, and of the entire country. They are an example to all of us.

Solentiname had the beauty of a paradise, but it is obvious that no paradise is yet possible in Nicaragua.

I am not thinking about rebuilding our small community of Solentiname. I am thinking of the far more important task we will all face, that of rebuilding the whole country.

from *Love in Paradise—The Gospel of Solentiname*, Ernesto Cardenal, Search Press (London), 1982. First published in Spanish as *Lo que fue Solentiname (Carta al pueblo de Nicaragua)* revista Nueva Sociedad no. 35, Marzo–Abril, 1978, pp. 165–167.

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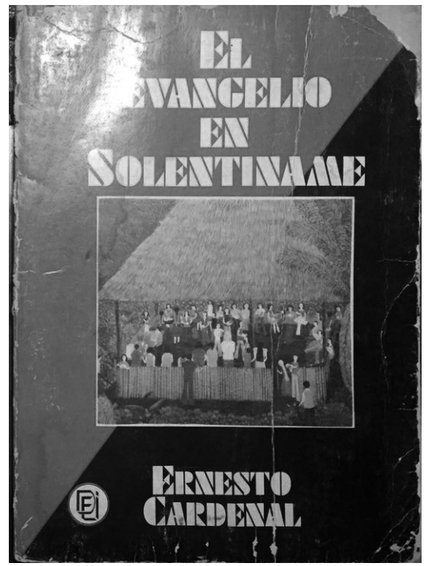


Cover of *El Evangelio en Solentiname* by Ernesto Cardenal
Departamento Ecuménico de Investigaciones (Costa Rica), 1979

INTRODUCTION: In 1965, a spiritual, political, and artistic movement emerged on an archipelago in the south of Nicaragua: Solentiname. Ernesto Cardenal, a leading poet and priest, established this community in its remote location on Lake Nicaragua. For over 50 years, Cardenal has been committed to social change, starting with Solentiname, which played a significant role in the Sandinista revolution over the U.S. backed Somoza regime. The exhibition 'Dream of Solentiname' will look at this key moment in the relationship between aesthetics and politics in Central America as well as its impact on artists working in New York City during the 1980s as the Contra War against the new Sandinista government was underway.

Correspondence between Ernesto Cardenal and fellow priest Thomas Merton document the founding ideas for Solentiname as a social and artistic utopia built around principles of art, liberation theology, and social justice. Painting became a way of political expression, economic support, and lifestyle for the inhabitants of the archipelago. Over the years the community hosted a number of writers and artists including artist Juan Downey, curator James Harithas, photographer Sandra Eleta, and novelist Julio Cortázar—whose visit culminated in his work Apocalipsis de Solentiname.

Solentiname's community was established from 1965 until 1977 when it was destroyed by the Somoza regime. The Sandinista Front for National Liberation (FSLN) overthrew the Somoza dictatorship two years later in the people's revolution. When the new government was formed, Cardenal became the minister of culture and the Solentiname experience was seen as a model for the cultural program of the revolution.

Gallery 1

Group Material, 1982–1984

Timeline: A Chronicles of U.S. Intervention in Central and Latin America

The first gallery showcases selections from Group Material's *Timeline: A Chronicle of U.S. Intervention in Central and Latin America*, first presented in 1984 at P.S 1, in addition to their 1982 exhibition *¡Luchar! An Exhibition for the People of Central America*[1]—organized in collaboration with the community center Taller Latinoamericano and other New York City-based cultural organizations. *¡Luchar!* was the first of many Group Material initiatives that dealt with the situation in Central and Latin America. On view from January 22 to March 18, 1984, as part of the activist campaign Artists Call Against U.S. Intervention in Central America, *Timeline* filled four walls at P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center in Queens, New York, with a disparate group of objects that ranged from cultural artifacts and documentary materials, to contemporary and historical works of art. Among these items was propaganda from the insurrections in Nicaragua and El Salvador, including a FSLN (Sandinista National Liberation Front) banner and a FMLN (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front) scarf, and also commodities—bananas, coffee grinds, tobacco leaves, cotton, and copper—that directly referenced longstanding US imperialist interests in the region, as well as newspaper clippings and press photographs. Interspersed alongside these cultural artifacts were works of art made by some forty contemporary artists, most from the US, including Conrad Atkinson (*For Chile*, 1973) and Barbara Kruger (*You make history when you do business*, 1982), among others, as well as by such historical figures such as Tina Modotti (*Hands Resting on Tool*, 1926) and Francisco Goya (*They Carried Her Off*, 1797-99, plate 8 of *Los Caprichos*). In addition, in the center of the room, Group Material installed a large red sculptural navigational buoy that US artists Barbara Westermann, William Allen, and Ann Messner had recently made for use in a march against US intervention in Central America that had taken place in Washington, DC.[2]

What started in 1979 as a group of young artists and writers eager to discuss and present socially engaged art, Group Material went on to produce over fifty exhibitions and public events. Group Material's *Timeline* was part of the wider initiative, Artists Call Against U.S. Intervention in Central America[2], which resulted in a network of artists and cultural workers coming together to organize a program of exhibitions and benefits in order to raise awareness and funds for the popular revolutions. The original *Timeline* featured a mix of historical and contemporary artworks, artifacts, and documentary materials to illustrate the tumultuous relationship between the U.S. and Central and Latin America. It spanned from 1823—when the Monroe Doctrine was signed, opposing European colonization of the Americas, however, reinterpretations of the Doctrine allowed the U.S. to legitimize their own expansionist practices—to contemporary interventions in 1984; the year of the P.S. 1 exhibition. Although the title of *Timeline* evokes a linear narrative, Group Material subverts this expectation, mixing images and objects from different time periods to create alternate narratives. The 1984 exhibition consisted of three competing chronologies, underscoring the exploration of narrative authority. Group Material's timeline on the wall in red vied for attention with one provided by the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), as well as New York artist Bill Allen's chronology consisting of image-text based posters. [3] Group Material's practice hinges on the critical orientation of their installations, bringing seemingly disparate narrative parts together, and allowing for the emergence of new insights and connections.

1. The timeline in this room begins with the *¡Luchar!* invitation card—referencing the original exhibition and the impact of the photos they displayed. In an effort to humanize the atrocities taking place abroad, *¡Luchar!* opened in 1982 with two images by the Ecuadorian photographer Bolivar Arellano. The photographs, which later reappeared in the *Timeline* exhibition, depict the bodies of four Dutch journalists who had been killed in El Salvador. The first image shows the bodies stacked one on top of the other; the second photograph is a close-up of two of the journalists hands clasped together. Art Historian Erina Duganne writes that while the first photo may elicit a distanced scrutiny, the second incites a more emotional response, fueling mobilization efforts. (Erina Duganne, "Building Global Solidarity Through ¡Luchar!," *In The Darkroom*, http://inthedarkroom.org/building-global-solidarity-through-luchar)

2. Taking place primarily between the months of January to March 1984, Artists Call Against U.S. Intervention in Central America was a nationwide campaign developed by an international group of artists, writers, actors, film makers, editors, curators, journalists, gallerists, musicians, and activists, etc. Consisting of exhibitions as well as performances, poetry readings, film screenings, concerts, and other cultural and educational events that took place in over twenty-seven cities across the United States and Canada, Artists Call was intended not only to oppose the US government's interventionist policies in Central America but also to raise money for and awareness about Central America as well as to build international solidarity amongst artists and other cultural workers. There was an organizing committee and sub committees that focused on aspects of the work from the exhibitions, performances, screenings and readings to the march, the auction, press relations, etc. The committee and subcommittee included Daniel Flores y Ascencio, Fatima Bercht, Jon Hendricks, Lucy Lippard, Leon Golub, Nancy Spero, Coosje van Bruggen, Tom Lawson, Thiago de Mello, Claes Oldenburg, Doug Ashford, Kimiko Hahn, Julie Ault, and Josely Carvalho.

3. Claire Grace, "Counter-Time: Group Material's Chronicle of US Intervention in Central and South America," Afterall, no. 26 (2011), https://www.afterall.org/journal/issue.26/counter-me-group-material-s-chronicle-of-us-intervention-in-central-and-south-america

6/4/79
A general strike brings the country to a standstill. The FSLN continues guerrilla actions in the north and conventional warfare in the south. The population of the major cities - Leon, Matagalpa, Chinandega, Esteli, Masaya, and the eastern part of the capital, Managua – rise up against Somoza. Fighting also begins in smaller surrounding towns.

6/13/79
San Isidro is liberated.

6/15/79
The frontier post of Penas Blancas is taken.

6/16/79
A five-member provisional government of National Reconstruction is named by the Sandinistas, including members of the FSLN, MPU, the business community, and the moderate opposition. Ecuador, México, Peru, Brazil, and Panama break diplomatic relations with Somoza's government.

6/21/79
The U.S. calls for an emergency session of the OAS. Its proposal to send an inter-American "peacekeeping force" to Nicaragua is defeated, an unprecedented decision. A resolution is drawn up calling for Somoza's immediate resignation. ABC-TV correspondent Bill Stewart is shot dead by a National Guardsman in Managua. Film footage is shown worldwide.

6/24/79
Chichigalpa becomes the second liberated town.

6/25/79
The FSLN withdraws from Managua after nineteen days of resistance, reestablishing its forces in Masaya. In the "liberated areas" of Nicaragua, the MPU organizes people to prepare for a long war by sowing crops and starting up production for basic needs. Local assemblies are formed by popular vote in many towns.

7/1/79
Somoza fails in an attempt to enlist military support of CONDECA, the Central American Defense Force.

7/2/79
The Voice of America announces twenty-two cities held by the Sandinistas.

7/9/79
Leon, the second largest city, is declared liberated.

7/16/79
Esteli is declared liberated. The Sandinistas, having taken a series of towns - Jinotepe, Juigalpa, Sebaco, Rivas - control major road access and begin their march to Managua.

7/17/79
Somoza resigns and flies to Miami with his family and chiefs of staff, carrying the coffins of his father and brother. The provisional government arrives in Leon and holds its first press conference. The interim president, Francisco Urcuyo, orders National Guard troops to keep fighting and refuses to hand over power. While some fighting continues on the southern front and in Matagalpa, the National Guard surrender in Somoto, Boaco, and Granada. Fleeing deserters hijack Red Cross and Nicaraguan air force planes. Urcuyo flees the country after thirty-six hours in office.

7/19/79
The Sandinista columns converge on the capital, ending a war that, according to the United Nations Economic Committee of Latin America (CEPAL) report, left: 40,000 dead (1.5 percent of the population); 40,000 children orphaned; 200,000 families homeless; 750,000 persons dependent on food assistance; 70 percent of the main export, cotton, not planted; 33 percent of all industrial property destroyed; $1.5 billion worth of physical damage; and an external debt of $1.6 billion.

7/20/79
The provisional government and the National Direction of the FSLN, along with Sandinista columns, are welcomed at Managua's central plaza by a crowd of 200,000.

* * *

Time line of events taken from *Nicaragua: June 1978–July 1979* by Susan Miesalas, First Aperture Edition, 2008.

Gallery 2

Susan Meiselas, *Nicaragua: June 1978–July 1979*

Susan Meiselas is perhaps best known for her work documenting the insurrection in Nicaragua during the 1970s. Meiselas traveled to Nicaragua not for the sole purpose of documenting the war, but to capture the lived experience of the Nicaraguan people residing in a war-torn country. This gallery exhibits selections of her photographs which are also featured in her book *Nicaragua, June 1978 – July 1979*. Since her time documenting leftist political uprisings in Central and Latin America, Meiselas has expanded her practice, adopting the role of curator, filmmaker, historian, and archivist. Meiselas' photography was heavily featured in mainstream media coverage of the insurrection—oftentimes misrepresenting the situation in order to gain support for America's interventionist strategies. The revolution's treatment in the news galvanized artists in NYC, resulting in the 1984 New Museum exhibition *The Nicaragua Media Project* —in which Meiselas took part—challenging the misunderstandings perpetuated by Reagan-era propaganda. Meiselas returned to Nicaragua ten years after the Sandinista revolution to revisit the people and places she had previously captured, resulting in her film project, *Pictures From a Revolution*, which allowed her to reconnect with the subjects of her photographs. Following *Pictures From a Revolution*, Meiselas returned to Nicaragua in July 2004, for the 25th anniversary of the overthrow of Somoza. She arrived with nineteen mural-sized images of her photographs from 1978-1979, collaborating with local communities to create sites for collective memory. The project, *Reframing History*, placed murals on public walls and in open spaces in the towns, at the sites where the photographs were originally made. Meiselas has an interest in re-contextualizing her work; she often uses other photographs and materials in conjunction with her own, creating installations that continually re-examine historical and personal narratives. This practice is exemplified in her series of exhibitions titled *Mediations*. First taking place in 1982, Meiselas' mediations confront her photography and how it is used in the mainstream media.

Gallery 3

Ernesto Cardenal Sculptures, 1956–present

Cardenal was sculpting long before the founding of Solentiname. Between 1956 and 1957 he participated in two exhibitions during his time the United States of America. Organized by the gallery of the Pan-American Union in Washington D.C., the exhibition centered around artists from Nicaragua and Latin America. Exhibiting alongside Cardenal were Fernando Botero, Alejandro Obregón, Rodolfo Abularach, Manabú Mabe, José Luis Cuevas, and fellow Nicaraguan Armando Morales. It was after this series of exhibitions that he entered the Abbey of Gethsemani in Kentucky to study with Thomas Merton. Merton played an influential role in Cardenal's life, including the cultivation of the founding principles of Solentiname. After leaving the Monastery in 1959, Cardenal continued to exchange letters with Merton. The two priest-poets were ideologically aligned with liberation theology and shared a deep commitment to social justice.

Sculpting since 1956 and still sculpting today, Cardenal's sculptures are not only inspired by modernist sculpture (Brancusi, for example.) but primordially the source of inspiration comes from the handcrafted wooden animals carved by artisans in Solentiname and elsewhere in Nicaragua. By carving animals and plants, Cardinal seeks to recreate paradise and attain a state of peace close to that created by god; where man and nature co-existed in equilibrium, and form part of Cardenal's wider quest and commitment to achieving a utopia—something he hoped to attain in Solentiname. In addition to his sculpture, Cardenal's poetry and writings have been published widely in both Spanish and English. He has received the Christopher Book Award for *The Psalms of Struggle and Liberation* (1971), a Premio de la Paz grant, the Libreros de la República Federal de Alemania, and, in 2005, was honored with the Order of Rubén Darío, for service to Nicaragua and humanity.

Selected publications by Ernesto Cardenal in English:

The Psalms of Struggle and Liberation, Herder and Herder, 1971.
Apocalypse and Other Poems, (Editor and author of introduction, Robert Pring-Mill), New Directions (New York, NY), 1974.
In Cuba, New Directions (New York, NY), 1974.
Zero Hour and Other Documentary Poems, (Editor, Donald Walsh), New Directions (New York, NY), 1980.
With Walker in Nicaragua and Other Early Poems: 1949–1954, Wesleyan (Middleton, CT), 1984.
Golden UFOs: The Indian Poems: Los ovnis de oro: Poemas indios, Indiana University Press (Bloomington, IN), 1992.
The Doubtful Strait/El estrecho dudoso, Indiana University Press (Bloomington, IN), 1995.
Flights of Victory/Vuelos de victoria, Curbstone Books (Willmantic, CT), 1995.
Cosmic Canticle, Curbstone Books (Willmantic, CT), 2002.
Love: A Glimpse of Eternity, (Translator, Dinah Livingston), Paraclete Press (MA), 2006.
Pluriverse: New and Selected Poems, (Editor, Jonathan Cohen), New Directions, 2009.
The Gospel in Solentiname, Orbis Books (Maryknoll, NY), 2010.
The Origin of Species and Other Poems, (Translator, John Lyons), Texas Tech University Press (Lubbock, TX), 2011.

Gallery 4

Solentiname Paintings, 1965–present

Painters: Eduardo Arana, Rodolfo Arellano, Julia Chavarría, Mariíta Guevara, Miriam Guevara, Esperanza Guevara, Oscar Mairena, Pablo Mayorga, Elena Pineda, Olivia Silva

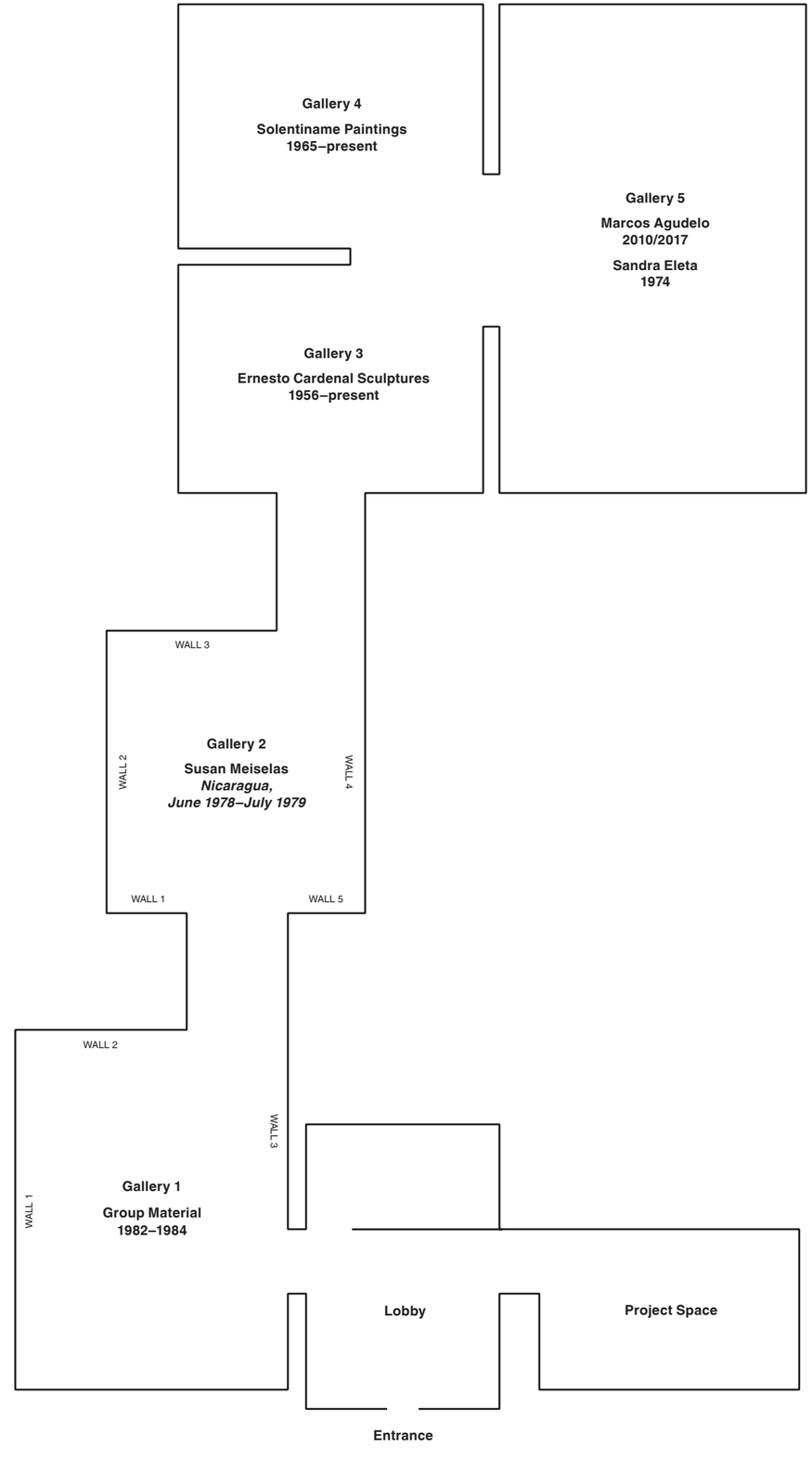
Before the arrival of Ernesto Cardenal, the community of Solentiname lived in almost complete isolation. The islands were made up of peasants and farmers with a lack of adequate food, clothing, education, and medical care. Cardenal's teachings and interpretation of the Bible empowered the community. This was the first time the people of Solentiname had the opportunity to learn about human rights and their exploitation as perpetuated by the Somoza regime. Cardenal also encouraged creativity—bringing young painter Roger Perez de la Rocha to the islands to teach technical aspects of painting to the community. The painters of Solentiname responded critically to the experience of the revolution. Many of the paintings are allegorical—combining imagery from tales in the bible with the political reality of Nicaragua, e.g. members of the Somoza army standing in for the Romans in a depiction of the kiss of Judas by Esperanza Guevara. Several members of the Guevara family took to painting, including Esperanza's sisters Miriam, Gloria, Mariita, and their mother Olivia. Many of the young men and women of Solentiname were guerilla fighters for the Sandinistas; certain paintings portraying the graves of those lost in battle. The triumph of the Sandinistas in 1979 did not last however; Solentiname paintings from the 80s portray the continuation of violence perpetrated by the Reagan administration in the contra war. Recognized as Nicaragua's national style of paintings, these works incorporate elements of community, war, and religion; all with the tropical landscape of the islands as a backdrop, evoking the blissful paradise for which the community longed.

The work of the Solentiname painters was shown in the U.S. in the 1970s; when museum director and curator James Harithas traveled to Solentiname, along with video artist Juan Downey, upon hearing news that Sandinista rebels were making art. Harithas purchased a number of paintings on his trip and exhibited them at the Everson Museum in 1973. An exhibition of Solentiname painters also took place at the Center for Inter-American Relations (now known as the Americas Society) in December 1974.

Gallery 5

Marcos Agudelo, 2010–2017 / Sandra Eleta, 1974

When Ernesto Cardenal arrived to the islands of Solentiname in 1966, one of his first initiatives was to restore its neglected chapel, which became the center of community life in the archipelego. Located on the largest island in the archipelago, Mancarrón, The Church of Solentiname was revived by Cardenal with the help of poet and artist William Agudelo among others. By 2011, the church had suffered further deterioration exacerbated by the humidity's effect on the adobe and wood structure. As a symbol of Nicaragua's political history, as well as the progressive community his family was a part of, artist and architect Marcos Agudelo decided to organize another renovation of the church. Agudelo looked to the photographs of Sandra Eleta, who visited to the islands during the 1970s, to accurately restore the building's facade.The reconstruction of the community church of Solentiname was carried out using traditional carpentry techniques; the entire wooden structure was reconstructed. For this, trees were extracted from the humid tropical forest—characteristic of the zone—such as: Laurel, Genizaro and Nispero; species of high structural resistance to humidity. Extracting these trees allowed Agudelo and team to carve new columns and beams. Agudelo's installation *Reconstrucción de Iglesia de Solentiname* was influenced by the design of the church and the restoration process. For those living on the islands, the church has perpetually been the prime location for public gatherings—always an important reference point for their shared history. Agudelo's architectural installation is accompanied by video, painting, activist posters from the time of the revolution, and the photography of Sandra Eleta, capturing intimate moments of daily life. All of these elements come together, acting as an homage to the landscape and community of Solentiname, as a reminder that the utopia of arts and politics that existed on the island can once again be attained.



List of works

Gallery 1: Group Material, 1982–1984

WALL 1
(left to right)

Above red line:

1. **¡Luchar!**
c.1980s. Photo paper. 9.5" × 6.5"
Courtesy of: Doug Ashford

2. **¡Luchar! Invitation Postcards**
c. 1980s. 6 × 4"
Courtesy of: Doug Ashford

3. **¡Luchar! Papers** (4)
c. 1980s. 8.5" × 11"
Courtesy of: Doug Ashford

4. **Artists Call Letter** (2)
c. 1980s. 8.5" × 11"
Courtesy of: Doug Ashford

5. **Artists General Statement**
c. 1980s. 8.5" × 11"
Courtesy of: Doug Ashford

6. **Artist Letter with Signatures (2)**
c. 1980s. 8.5" × 11"
Courtesy of: Doug Ashford

7. **Artists Call Letter Dec. 1983**
c. 1980s. 8.5" × 11"
Courtesy of: Doug Ashford

8. **Artists Call, Big Downtown Opening Poster**
c. 1980s. 8.5" × 11"
Courtesy of: Doug Ashford

9. **Artists Call Listing of Exhibitions and Events** (5)
c. 1980s. 8.5" × 11"
Courtesy of: Doug Ashford

10. **Artists Call Against Action Newspaper Article**
c. 1980s. 22.5" × 14"
Courtesy of: Doug Ashford

11. **P.S. 1 Exhibition Description**
c. 1980s. 8.5" × 11"
Courtesy of: Doug Ashford

Below red line:

12. **A 50 Anos**
c. 1980s. 11" × 14"
Courtesy of: Doug Ashford

13. **US No Intervention**
c. 1980s. 16" × 21.5"
Courtesy of: Doug Ashford

14. **Mujer**
c. 1980s. 22" × 17"
Courtesy of: Doug Ashford

15. **MOA CST**
c. 1980s. 32" × 21.5"
Courtesy of: Doug Ashford

16. **Peace Poster Blue and Orange**
c. 1980s. 23.5" × 19"
Courtesy of: Doug Ashford

17. **Guatemala Poster, Red Title**
c. 1980s. 25" × 17"
Courtesy of: Doug Ashford

18. **El Salvador Poster, Red and White**
c. 1980s. 20" × 29.5"
Courtesy of: Doug Ashford

19. **El Salvador Poster**
c. 1980s. 22" × 16"
Courtesy of: Doug Ashford

20. **Artists Call Music Festival Poster**
c. 1980s. 18" × 24"
Courtesy of: Doug Ashford

WALL 2

21. **Timeline: A Chronicle of US Intervention in Central and Latin America**
1984. Slideshow. (6 images)

¡Luchar!
1982. Slideshow. (5 images)
Courtesy of: Doug Ashford

WALL 3
(left to right)

Vitrine:

22. **FMLN Flag**
c. 1980s 28.5 '' × 14"
Courtesy of: Doug Ashford

23. **Two Flags, FDR** and **El Salvador**
c. 1980s. 12.5" × 9.25"
and 12" × 8.5"
Courtesy of: Doug Ashford

24. **Group Material Badge**
c. 1980s

25. **Bolivar Arellano**
1982. Photograph. 10" × 8"
Courtesy of: Doug Ashford

26. **Artists Call**
1984. 37" × 23.5"
Courtesy of: Doug Ashford

27. **CISPES 1868–1983 Timeline: (Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador)**
1982. 36" × 37"
Exhibition copy from *P.S. 1 (Project Studios One) Winter 1984* catalogue

Gallery 2: Susan Meiselas, *Nicaragua: 1978–1979*

WALL 1
(left to right)

1. Susan Meiselas, **Pictures From a Revolution**, 1991.
(To view clips from the film, download the Look & Listen app and hold your mobile device over the photographs. Press the play button where it appears.)

1. **Youths practice throwing contact bombs in forest surrounding Monimbo**
1978. Chromogenic print.
16.5" × 24.5"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas

2a. **President Anastasio Somoza Debayle opening new session of the National Congress, June 1978.**
Chromogenic print. 24.5" × 16.5"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas

2b. **Car of a Somoza informer burning in Managua**
1978. Chromogenic print.
24.5" × 16.5"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas

3a. **A funeral procession in Jinotepe for assassinated student leaders. Demonstrators carry a photograph of Arlen Siu, a FSLN guerrilla fighter killed in the mountains three years earlier**
1978. Chromogenic print.
24.5" × 16.5"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas

3b. **Recruits pass by official state portrait of Anastasio Somoza Debayle as President and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces**
1978. Chromogenic print.
24.5" × 16.5"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas

4a. **Searching everyone traveling by car, truck, bus, or foot, Managua**
1978. Chromogenic print.
24.5" × 16.5"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas

4b. **Marketplace in Diriamba**
1978. Chromogenic print.
24.5" × 16.5"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas

5a. **Guard patrol in Masaya beginning house-to-house search for Sandinistas**
1979. Chromogenic print.
24.5" × 16.5"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas

5b. **Wall graffiti on Somoza supporter's house burned in Monimbo, asking, "Where is Norman Gonzalez? The dictatorship must answer."**
1978. Chromogenic print.
24.5" × 16.5"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas

6a. **"Cuesta del Plomo," hillside outside Managua, a well-known site of many assassinations carried out by the National Guard. People searched here daily for missing persons**
1978. Chromogenic print.
24.5" × 16.5"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas

6b. **Street fighter in Managua**
1979. Chromogenic print.
24.5" × 16.5"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas

7a. **Fleeing the bombing to seek refuge outside of Esteli**
1978. Chromogenic print.
24.5" × 16.5"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas

7b. **Sandinista barricade during last days of fighting in Matagalpa**
1979. Chromogenic print.
24.5" × 16.5"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas

8a. **Muchacho withdrawing from commercial district of Masaya after three days of bombing** 1978.
Chromogenic print. 24.5" × 16.5"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas

8b. **Monimbo woman carrying her dead husband home to be buried in their backyard, Masaya**
1979. Chromogenic print.
24.5" × 16.5"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas

9a. **Returning home, Masaya, September**
1978. Chromogenic print.
24.5" × 16.5"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas

9b. **Awaiting counterattack by the Guard in Matagalpa**
1978. Chromogenic print.
24.5" × 16.5"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas

Tear sheets:

1. **The Sunday Times**
1978. Tearsheet. 11.75" × 18.5"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas, Magnum Photography

2a. **New York Times Magazine cover**
12.25" × 10.5"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas, Magnum Photography

2b. **New York Times Magazine**
1978. Tearsheet. 12.5"× 21.25"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas, Magnum Photography
3a. **Time**
1978 Tearsheet. 10.75" × 8"
Susan Meiselas, Magnum Photography

3b. **Time**
1978. Tearsheet. 10.75" × 8"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas, Magnum Photography

3c. **Time**
1979. Tearsheet. 10.75" × 8"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas, Magnum Photography

3d. **Nicaragua —Time**
1978. Tearsheet. 10.75" × 8"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas, Magnum Photography

4a. **Manchete**
1979. Tearsheet. 13" × 20.25"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas, Magnum Photography

4b. **Manchete**
1978. Tearsheet. 12.75" × 20.5 "
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas, Magnum Photography

5a. **German Geo**
1978. Tearsheet. 10.5" × 16.5"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas, Magnum Photography

5b. **German Geo**
1978. Tearsheet. 10.5" × 16.5"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas, Magnum Photography

5c. **German Geo**
1978. Tearsheet. 10.5" × 16.5"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas, Magnum Photography

5d. **German Geo**
1978. Tearsheet. 10.5" × 16.5"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas, Magnum Photography

6a. **Geo cover**
1979. 10.5" × 8.25"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas, Magnum Photography

6b. **Geo**
1979. Tearsheet. 10.5" × 16.5"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas, Magnum Photography

6c. **Geo**
1979. Tearsheet. 10.5" × 8.25"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas, Magnum Photography

6d. **Geo**
1979. Tearsheet. 10.5" × 8.25"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas, Magnum Photography

6e. **Geo**
1979. Tearsheet. 10.5" × 16.25"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas, Magnum Photography

6f. **Geo**
1979. Tearsheet. 10.5" × 16.25"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas, Magnum Photography

7. **Boston Globe**
1981. Tearsheet. 12.25" × 21.5"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas, Magnum Photography

8. **Sandinistas at the walls of the National Guard headquarters, "Molotov Man" , Esteli, July 16,**
1979. Chromogenic print.
24.5" × 16.5"
Courtesy of: Susan Meiselas

Gallery 3: Ernesto Cardenal Sculptures 1956-present

PLINTH
(counter-clockwise)

1. **Ivis Rojo (Red Ibis)**
2010. Painted wooden sculpture.
20.5" × 25"
Courtesy of: Ernesto Cardenal

2. **Cactus Redondo (Round Cactus)**
2015. Painted wooden sculpture.
12" × 12" × 18.5"
Courtesy of: Ernesto Cardenal

4. **Tucán (Toucan)**
2009. Painted wooden sculpture.
21.25" × 23.5"
Courtesy of: Ernesto Cardenal

5. **Mariposa (Butterfly)**
2011. Aluminum sculpture.
15.75" × 17"
Courtesy of: Ernesto Cardenal

6. **Tucán (Toucan)**
2013. Wooden sculpture.
24.5" × 10"
Courtesy of: Ernesto Cardenal

7. **Agave**
2014. Steel sculpture.
56.75" × 56.75" × 53.75"
Courtesy of: Ernesto Cardenal

8. **Pequeno Tapir (Small Tapir)**
2017. Uncarved wood 18" × 10" × 6"
Courtesy of: Ernesto Cardenal

9. **Lora Verde (Green Parrot)**
2009. Painted wooden sculpture.
17.5" × 7" × 18.5"
Courtesy of: Ernesto Cardenal

10. **Ivis (Ibis)**
1994. Painted wooden sculpture.
7" × 12.5" × 25.75"
Courtesy of: Teresita and William Agudelo

11. **Tapir**
2005. Wooden sculpture.
36" × 19.75"
Courtesy of: Ernesto Cardenal

12. **Nopal (Prickly Pear)**
2011. Wooden sculpture.
36.25" × 21.5"
Courtesy of: Ernesto Cardenal

13. **Colibri (Humming Bird)**
2007. Wooden sculpture.
19.25" × 19.75"
Courtesy of: Ernesto Cardenal

14. **Garza Pico Largo (Long Peak Heron)**
2010. Wooden sculpture. 30" × 20"
Courtesy of: Ernesto Cardenal

15. **Lengua de Suegra (Snake Plant)**
2014. Painted steel sculpture.
49" × 49" × 44.5"
Courtesy of: Ernesto Cardenal

16. **Guardatinaja (Lowland Paca)**
2009. Wooden sculpture. 13" × 8"
Courtesy of: Ernesto Cardenal

(above)

17. **Cardumen (School of Fish)**
2008. Steel sculpture dimensions
Courtesy of: Ernesto Cardenal

18. **Pez (Fish)**
1974. Painted wooden sculpture.
6" × 16" × 18"
Courtesy of: Teresita and William Agudelo

Gallery 4: Solentiname Paintings 1965–present

(left to right)

1. Esperanza Guevara. **Compas Liberando Loras (Comrades liberating parrots)**
c.1980. Painting. 23.5" × 20"
Courtesy of: Ernesto Cardenal

2. Elena Pineda. **Nicaragua en Libertad (Nicaragua in freedom)**
1984. Painting. 20" × 30"
Courtesy of: Elena Pineda
3. Olivia Silva. **Jesus es Despositado en La Tumba (Jesus deposited in the tomb)**
1984. Painting. 21.5" × 15"
Courtesy of: Hermann Schulz

4. Rodolfo Arellano. **Asalto al Cuartel San Carlos (Assault to San Carlos quartel)**
1979. Painting. 20" × 30"
Courtesy of: Ernesto Cardenal

5. Julia Chavarria. **La Matanza de Los Inocentes (Murder of the innocent)**
1984. Painting. 20" × 14"
Courtesy of: Hermann Schulz

6. Julia Chavarria. **Muerte de Jesus (Death of Jesus)**
1984. Painting. 21.5" × 14"
Courtesy of: Hermann Schulz

7. Esperanza Guevara. **La Traicion (The betrayal)**
1975. Painting. 21.5" × 14"
Courtesy of: Hermann Schulz

8. Mariita Guevara. **Jesus Expulsa a Los Mercaderes del Tempolo (Jesus expels the marchants from the temple)**
1981. Painting. 22" × 14.75"
Courtesy of: Hermann Schulz

9. Esperanza Guevara.
El degollamiento de Juan el Bautista (The beheading of John the Baptist)
1981. Painting. 22" × 15"
Courtesy of: Hermann Schulz

10. Pablo Mayorga. **Jesus ante Pilato (Jesus in front of Pilatus)**
1984. Painting. 21.5" × 14.5"
Courtesy of: Hermann Schulz

11. Oscar Mairena. **Palo de mango frente a la iglesia (Mango tree in front of the church)**
1975. Painting. 15" × 22"
Courtesy of: Teresita and William Agudelo

12. Miriam Guevara. **Iglesia de Solentiname (Church of Solentiname)**
1980. Painting. 20" × 30"
Courtesy of: Silvia Marcela Villa

13. Eduardo Arana. **Islas (Island)**
1975. Painting. 12" × 15.75"
Courtesy of: Marcos Agudelo

Gallery 5: Marcos Agudelo, 2010–2017

1. Marcos Agudelo.
Reconstrucción de Iglesia de Solentiname
2017. Wood, screen mesh, slideshow, vinyl print. Dimensions variable

3. William Agudelo. **Mártires de Solentiname**
1983. Poster. 15.25" × 23"
Courtesy of: Marcos Agudelo

4. William Agudelo. **Laureano Mairena**
1984. Poster. 15.25" × 23"
Courtesy of: Marcos Agudelo

2. Gloria Guevara. **Cristo Guerrillero**
2011. Painting. 17.75" × 19.5"
Courtesy of: Marcos Agudelo

Sandra Eleta, 1974

1.Sandra Eleta. **En el San Juan de la Cruz (In San Juan de la Cruz)**
1974. Inkjet print from 35mm negative. 19" × 13"
Courtesy of: Sandra Eleta

2. Sandra Eleta. **En el San Juan de la Cruz (In San Juan de la Cruz)**
1974. Inkjet print from 35mm negative, 13" × 19"
Courtesy of: Sandra Eleta

3. Sandra Eleta. **Misa comunitaria en la Casa Grande (Communitary Mass in the Main House)**
1974. Inkjet print from 35mm negative, 13" × 19"
Courtesy of: Sandra Eleta

4. Sandra Eleta. **Misa (Mass)**
1974. Inkjet print from 35mm negative, 13" × 19"
Courtesy of: Sandra Eleta

5. Sandra Eleta. **Iglesia Nuestra Señora de Solentiname (Church of our Lady of Solentiname)**
1974. Inkjet print from 35mm negative, 13" × 19"
Courtesy of: Sandra Eleta

6. Sandra Eleta. **Sin título (Untitled)**
1974. Inkjet print from 35mm negative, 19" × 13"
Courtesy of: Sandra Eleta

7. Sandra Eleta. **Atardecer en el Gran Lago (Sunset into the Great Lake)**
1974. Inkjet print from 35mm negative, 13" × 19"

8. Sandra Eleta. **Familia Agudelo (Agudelo family)**
1974. Inkjet print from 35mm negative, 13" × 19"
Courtesy of: Sandra Eleta

9. Sandra Eleta. **Oscar (?) en el taller de artesanías (Oscar in the hand craft workshop)**
1974. Inkjet print from 35mm negative, 13" × 19"
Courtesy of: Sandra Eleta

Vitrine

Ernesto Cardenal. **El Evangelio en Solentiname, Volumen Primero.**
1979. Book. 7.75" × 10.75"
Courtesy of: Marcos Agudelo

Ernesto Cardenal. **El Evangelio en Solentiname, Volumen Segundo.**
1979. Book. 7.75" × 10.75"
Courtesy of: Marcos Agudelo

Julio Cortazar. **Nicaragua Tan Violentamente Dulce.**
1984. Book. 5" × 7.75"

Cover pages of **Boletin de Nuestra Señora de Solentiname (Bulletin of Our Lady of Solentiname)** from left to right:
Year 2, no. 4, June 1967;
Year 2, no. 5, July 1967;
Year 3, no. 7, November 1968;
Year 3, no. 8, January 1969.
8.5" × 11"
Courtesy of: The Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries

Letter to Ernesto Cardenal from Thomas Merton
May 10, 1965. 8.5" × 11"
Courtesy of: The Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries

BIOGRAPHIES

MARCOS AGUDELO (b.1978) lives and works in Managua, Nicaragua. He trained as an architect at the National Engineering University in Managua and later specialized in the field in Barcelona with an emphasis on urban planning and sustainable tropical architecture. In 2006, he won the II Exhibit of Emerging Art in Central America organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art and Design in San José, Costa Rica and in 2008 he won first place at the VI Central American Visual Art Biennial. His pieces have been exhibited in the Latin American Pavilion at the Arsenale during the 55th International Art Exhibition in Venice, Italy (2013), the García Lorca Great Theatre of Havana during the 11th Havana Biennial (2012), New York's Museo del Barrio as part of the "The Street Files" exhibit (2011), Santo Domingo's Museum of Modern Art during the I Caribbean International Triennial (2010), in two editions of the Central American Contemporary Art Biennial (Tegucigalpa 2008 and Managua 2010) as well as in several editions of the Nicaraguan Visual Art Biennial Fundación Ortíz-Gurdián (2005, 2007 and 2009), with mentions in 2007 and 2009. He has appeared in magazines Exit-Express (Spain), Código (México) and ArtNexus (Colombia) and in anthologies such as Us and Them, Young Ibero-American Artists (2010).

ERNESTO CARDENAL (b.1925) is a Nicaraguan priest, poet, and political activist. Cardenal attended the University of Mexico and Columbia University in New York. He also studied in Kentucky with the scholar, poet, and Trappist monk Thomas Merton. Cardenal has been involved in the tumultuous political scene in Nicaragua and Central America since the 1960s. After being ordained in 1965, Cardenal went on to the Solentiname Islands where he founded an artists colony based on the principles of liberation theology. Cardenal and the community of Solentiname supported the revolution that overthrew Nicaragua's President Somoza in 1979. After the liberation of Managua, Cardenal was named Minister of Culture by the new Sandinista regime; a position he held from 1979-1988.

Cardenal has published numerous volumes of poetry in both Spanish and English, including *Homage to the American Indians* (1973), *With Walker in Nicaragua and Other Early Poems* 1949-1954 (1984), *The Doubtful Strait* (1995), *Cosmic Canticle* (2002), *Pluriverse: New and Selected Poems* (2009), and *Origin of the Species and Other Poems* (2011). He has received the Christopher Book Award, for *The Psalms of Struggle and Liberation* (1971), a Premio de la Paz grant, the Libreros de la República Federal de Alemania, and, in 2005, was honored with the Order of Rubén Darío, for service to Nicaragua and humanity.

SANDRA ELETA (b.1942) lives and works in Panama City and Portobelo. She has had solo exhibitions in Paris, New York, Panama, Venezuela, Holland, Argentina, and Madrid. Since the late 70's Eleta has worked independently with the ARCHIVES Agency, New York. She has published her photographs in various magazines such as CAMARA in Switzerland and Aperture, New York. Her 1982 publication, Nostalgia del Futuro, includes texts by Ernesto Cardenal alongside her photographs. Eleta studied fine arts at Finch College and social investigation at The New School of Social Research in New York. Later, Eleta took courses at the International Center of Photography (ICP), and taught at Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica. Sandra Eleta is Panama's most renowned photographer.

JULIO CORTAZAR (1914–1984) was a prolific Argentine novelist and short-story writer whose experimental writing techniques have had a wide influence. During his lifetime, he also produced various works of poetry and drama in both fiction and nonfiction. Born in the war-torn Belgium, Cortazar and his family moved around Europe for the first few years of his life before settling in a suburb outside of Buenos Aires. By the 1950s, Cortazar had moved to France where he began to publish some of his most famous works. In 1981, he received French citizenship, although he kept his Argentine citizenship and continued to travel widely—including Nicaragua—as he was a supporter of the popular political causes in Latin America.

His short story collections include *Bestiario* (1951; *Bestiary*), *Final del Juego* (1956; *End of the Game*), *Las Armas Secretas* (1958; *The Secret Weapons*), *Historias de Cronopios y de Famas* (1962; *Cronopios and Famas*), and *Todos los Fuegos el Fuego* (1966; *All Fires the Fire*). Another story, "Las babas del diablo" (1958; "The Devil's Drivel"), served as the basis for Michelangelo Antonioni's motion picture *Blow-Up* (1966). Cortázar's masterpiece, *Rayuela* (1963; *Hopscotch*), is an open-ended novel where the reader is invited to choose between a linear and nonlinear mode of reading according to a plan prescribed by the author. It was the first of the "boom" of Latin American novels of the 1960s to gain international attention. Cortázar's other novels are *Los premios* (1960; *The Winners*), *62: modelo para armar* (1968; *62: A Model Kit*), and *Libro de Manuel* (1973; *A Manual for Manuel)*.

GROUP MATERIAL (1979–1996) was an artist collective active in New York between 1979 and 1996. The group described their formation as a "constructive response to the unsatisfactory ways in which art has been conceived, produced, distributed, and taught." Championing collaborative exhibitions instead of individual artist shows, community engagement over exclusivity, and alternative spaces in lieu of the customary white cube gallery, Group Material treated curatorial practice and the exhibition itself as an artistic medium. Group Material's exhibitions adopted activist stances towards timely issues, as exemplified by their *Timeline* exhibitions. In addition to *Timeline: A Chronicle of U.S. Intervention in Central and Latin America* (1984), there was the *AIDS Timeline* (1989–90)—exhibited at University of California at Berkeley, which sought to illustrate the complex political and cultural reception of the disease. Other projects include the *Democracy* series—held at the Dia Art Foundation between 1988 and 1989—exploring the theme of democracy through a continually changing exhibition (supplemented by town meetings and roundtable discussions) over a period of four months. In 2006, members Doug Ashford and Julie Ault began building an archive of Group Material which can be found at the Fales Library & Special Collections at NYU. The history of Group Material is compiled in the publication *Show and Tell: a Chronicle of Group Material*, edited by Julie Ault with essays by Ashford, Ault, Sabrina Locks, and Tim Rollins.

SUSAN MEISELAS (b. 1948) joined Magnum Photos in 1976 and has worked as a freelance photographer since then. She is best known for her coverage of the insurrection in Nicaragua and her documentation of human rights issues in Latin America. She published her second monograph, Nicaragua, in 1981. Meiselas served as an editor and contributor to the book El Salvador: The Work of Thirty Photographers and edited Chile from Within featuring work by photographers living under the Pinochet regime. She has co-directed two films, *Living at Risk: The Story of a Nicaraguan Family* and *Pictures from a Revolution* with Richard P. Rogers and Alfred Guzzetti. In 1997, she completed a six-year project curating a hundred-year photographic history of Kurdistan, integrating her own work into the book *Kurdistan: In the Shadow of History* and developed akaKurdistan, an online site of exchange for collective memory in 1998. Meiselas has had one-woman exhibitions in Paris, Madrid, Amsterdam, London, Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York, and her work is included in collections around the world.

She has received the Robert Capa Gold Medal for her work in Nicaragua (1979); the Leica Award for Excellence (1982); the Engelhard Award from the Institute of Contemporary Art (1985); the Hasselblad Foundation Photography prize (1994); the Cornell Capa Infinity Award (2005) and most recently was awarded the Harvard Arts Medal (2011). In 1992, she was named a MacArthur Fellow. Meiselas received her BA from Sarah Lawrence College and her MA in visual education from Harvard University.

THOMAS MERTON (1915–1968) was a Trappist monk as well as one of the most well-known Catholic writers of the 20th century. His autobiography, The Seven Storey Mountain, has sold over one million copies and has been translated into over fifteen languages. He wrote over sixty other books and hundreds of poems and articles on topics ranging from monastic spirituality to civil rights, nonviolence, and the nuclear arms race. He worked as an English teacher before converting to Roman Catholicism whilst at Columbia University, and in 1941, he entered the Abbey of Gethsemani, a community of monks belonging to the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance (Trappists), the most ascetic Roman Catholic monastic order. Referring to race and peace as the two most urgent issues of our time, Merton was a strong supporter of the nonviolent civil rights movement. His involvement in the political arena garnered criticism from the Catholic community, which prompted—in his later years—an interest in eastern religions and creating a dialogue surrounding east/west monastic cultures.

Curated by:
Pablo León de la Barbra
with Nicola Lees
and Ellesse Bartosik

Preliminary research for 'Dream of Solentiname' was supported by the Independent Curators International (ICI) 2012 Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros (CPPC) Travel Award for Central America and the Caribbean.

With special thanks to Erina Duganne, Ileana Selejan, Juanita Bermúdez, Jennifer Hwang, Hugh O'Rourke, Ben Hatcher, Hermann Schulz, Madeline Turner, The Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, Americas Society, Marilys Downey, William and Teresita Agudelo, Luz Marina Acosta, Silvia Marcela Villa, Elena Pineda, Centro Nicaragüense de Escritores, and Fundación Ortiz Gurdian

Design: Lucas Quigley

This exhibition will tour to Museo Jumex in Mexico City in March 2018.

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