II. THE SUBALTERN PORTRAITS GALLERY

This gallery was born from the idea of inverting the original dynamic of the portrait gallery of monarchs or heroes of hegemonic and imperial history. Taking into account the ways in which non-hegemonic people were represented for their analysis, classification and exoticization, how they were negated and rendered invisible, this gallery displays large-scale oil paintings of archival images, assuming the standardization of bodies and representations, in the same proud way in which insults and racist, sexist terms have been used to catalogue, ridicule and subjugate individuals. These images of subjects have a subaltern appearance, but at the same time they are preparing for a choral chant as a way of confronting contemporary discourse.

Proudly, individual examples of each of the archetypes that were oppressed—extracted from the documents, images and archives of the six case studies— are now honored individually but adopting the way subalterns are represented. From the broken bodies of the de Witt brothers, to the pornographic cartoons of the women of Vienna, the anthropological photography of the indigenous and aboriginal people of the human zoos, to the voyeurism of the photographs of Charcot and his scientific audience, and the press images of Juan Jacobo Árbenz as well as the inhabitants of the banana republics, or the victims of false-flag attacks during the Cold War in Europe.

These individuals accept their subaltern reality while staring back at us with an epic look of resistance, questioning our present between the ancient document and the subversion of the large format oil painting. That is why they challenge us in our reality about what we have previously seen: How do we build new ways of looking? How can we understand the formation of other bodies and other realities? How can we overcome the past? How can we transcend subalternity without forgetting, in order to build new forms of relationship? How can we face what is subaltern in oneself?