

MARTIN PARR PLAYAS

30 June - 29 July 2009

In parallel with Martin Parr's exhibition "*Planète Parr*" organised at the Jeu de Paume in Paris from 30 June to 27 September 2009, kamel mennour is pleased to present "Playas", the artist's third solo exhibition at the gallery.

For the last thirty years, with his tender and secluded gaze, tinged with a hint of irony and cynicism, Martin Parr has given us his oblique approach to social documentation and his fascination with the fantastic elements of daily life and the grotesqueness of the banal. From beneath the glossy surface of his photographs, the astuteness of his work shows through, subtly denouncing the absurdity and vacuity of our consumerist society, the phenomena of globalisation, mass tourism, consumer behaviour, or so-called free time.

After "Think of England", "Cocktail" and "Mexico", Martin Parr has chosen to display, alongside vintage black and white shots, photographs he took between 2006 and 2007 on the beaches of 5 Latin American countries: Brazil, Uruguay, Mexico, Argentina and Chile.

A veritable celebration of ways of life in coastal resorts, this brightly coloured series humorously unmasks the cultural codes, the habits and posturing of beach and seaside aficionados.

Thus we notice that while Mexicans prefer to drink beer and sodas, at Mar del Plata in Argentina or at Punta del este, a coastal town in Uruguay, families continue the ritual of maté - the plant infusion with stimulating effects customarily drunk in the street - bringing with them their Thermos flasks and "calabashes". Likewise, whilst it is customary, on the beaches of Acapulco (in Mexico) or Valparaiso (in Chile), to bathe in a t-shirt, on the beaches of Ipanema or Copacaban in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) the young ladies are happy to flaunt their retouched beauty.

If beach life in each of these countries is marked by its own peculiarities, we cannot fail to notice the how many features these images share: the indispensable accessories (sunglasses, hats, towels, parasols, iceboxes and sunloungers) spread out on the fine sand, and the incessant parade of pedlars haranguing the crowds, offering them a wide variety of snacks, doughnuts, ice-creams, drinks, sodas and every kind of souvenir.

"Playas" has been turned into a book published by Chris Boot, its graphic illustrations mimicking the small South American printing-houses that specialise in cheap novels.

Born in 1952 in Epsom in Surrey, England, Martin Parr is one of the most active and dynamic of contemporary photographers.

Since the 1980s, he has published around fifty books and had his work exhibited all over the world: at Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art; at Vancouver's House Gallery; in Paris at the Maison Européenne de la Photographie, the Jeu de Paume and the Centre Pompidou; at Mannheim's Kunsthalle, as well as the Kunsthalle in Rotterdam; in London's Barbican Art Gallery and Tate Modern; at the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid; at the Seoul Arts Centre; at Tokyo's Metropolitan Museum of Photography; at Stockholm's Kulturhuset; at Munich's Haus der Kunst and at Zurich's Museum für Gestaltung.

Martin Parr "Playas" is on show at galerie kamel mennour
Tuesday to Saturday, 11am to 7pm.

For additional information, please contact Marie-Sophie Eiché, Jessy Mansuy-Leydier and Emma-Charlotte Gobry-Laurencin on +33 1 56 24 03 63 or by email galerie@kamelmennour.fr