

B E N R U B I G A L L E R Y

STATEMENT

“I am the camera. My hands the mechanical levers, my eyes the prism and lens, my energy processes “negative capability” through painting, scratching, and drawing while using light to deconstruct and re-construct the mysteries of the visual image as I create self-portraits on this celluloid material of emulsions.”

The origin of my Scratch-Graph imagery was born out of sculpting time and space on a series of hand-painted films I made in the early 90s: *Sporadic Germination* (1994), *The Revolution of Super 8 Universe: A Self-Portrait* (1995), and *Rumba Abstracta* (1996-97). Using motion picture stocks, sometimes with photographed subjects, I used this flat dual transparent surface as my canvas in untraditional ways. Scratching and collaging the emulsion-based celluloid I produced Visual Music animations, building the kinetic image up frame by frame with acrylic paints and an experimental concoction of other liquids to give the work a history, layering it and destroying film strips of various lengths until the composition spoke to me and revealed light, new histories, and my visual offspring. This became a process of recording or documenting what I was thinking. After years of experimentation and thought, I began to work with the same process on photographic negatives with the idea of capturing the same “the light in the dark” and to recreate that screen or monitor reality as a freeze frame of my animations.

In starting to create an abstract picture, I have no compositional goals. My initial drive is choice by chance, which strengthens a random attitude formed by a process of constant unpredictable desires in an ocean of mental tranquility and to let the image or patterns come to me. The goal is to create something meaningful in the studio in the hope that it inspires others, and also becomes useful to them, and myself, so that it creates a dialogue between us. My work with concrete abstract photography follows in the tradition of avant-garde artists and filmmakers like Man Ray, Tony Conrad, Stan Brakhage, László Moholy-Nagy, and many others who often time radically contradicted the view of photography as only a product of cameras.

“When there is love, there is always an endless conversation, a consciousness that is ever evolving, and it’s accompanied by a universal growth.” ~Rey Parlá, Brooklyn, New York. 2015

After Rey’s film professor entered his abstract film in the Miami International Film Festival, he went on to create three more short films, one which he co-wrote and co-produced with a friend in Miami that landed him scholarships with the Independent Feature Project: Involve New York program and the National Association of Latino Independent Producers Writers’ Lab. While working as an Associate Producer for an indie production company in Manhattan in 2001, Rey returned home after the 9/11 attacks. In Miami, he turned to the Underground scene with friends there producing an interactive play dealing with their own interpretation of these latter issues and event whilst working on other photographic and time based media experiments.

Rey Parlá works like a painter and is inspired by the foundations of photography, but is not limited to the use of one specific tool or resource. He replaces the canvas for expired large format photographic negatives to create what he calls, “Scratch-Graphs.” Guided by intuition, Rey makes

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small paintings, concrete abstractions that he processes into unique photographic prints where the medium itself is the subject.

Parlá's dynamic works using photographic materials and one-of-a-kind Chromogenic prints originate from hand-made kinetic "motion paintings" or "scratch-films" the rigorous results of his early experimental filmmaking investigations to re-evaluate cinematic and photographic conventions of non-narrative forms.

Rey's actions contribute and push forward in the tradition of artists he is reflecting on to expand the canon of avant-garde experimentation. Influenced by photography and film histories, Rey references artists such as Georges Méliès, Man Ray, Len Lye, Stan Brakhage, Tony Conrad, and László Moholy-Nagy and many others who often time radically contradicted the current view that photography or filmmaking must only depict the natural world.

Parlá is interested in re-mixing technologies and unconventional materials in the creative process to explore and analyze his production of visual images using the art historical canon of photography and film as mediums up to today through improvisation in order to learn how his experimental constructions work compositionally and have an effect on the viewer.

Rey's lines reference his interest in how artists throughout history have used many kinds of different tools to draw lines on earth, caves, film, ceramics, and computer screens to explore the points and paths of the human body and mind in motion. Parlá identifies his visual "freeze frame" imagery as concrete abstractions where he plays with and investigates the absence of perspective and depth of field in a visibly tangible form with pictures previously not in existence.

Rey figuratively and literally uses these borderless creative options and transcends his visions into photographs or "scratch-films" on par with concrete painting. Scratch-Graphs are Scanography related photographs. Celluloid acts as his medium and a raging metaphor presenting the core qualities of photography and film: light, space, movement and time.

Rey experiments and plays to create a co-existence between analogue and digital photographic processes, materials and tools, a "new re-mixed media art," not limited to the use of the camera, and not discarding it altogether, using the photographic enlarger and dark room, light sensitive papers as well the scanner as a camera to register the form, materiality and haptic quality of large format photographic negatives, or motion picture stocks in Super 8, 16mm and 35mm films, which the artist shoots, paints, deconstructs, collages, scratches and draws on, and/or the 8 x 10" contact prints from these negatives the artist produces in the dark room or film negatives he paints with his hands as flat objects documented into the computer, which Parlá then slightly morphs and subtly manipulates to create photographic artifacts that are fluid, indefinite, and open. Rey embraces continuous change, intuition, and adaptation as part of his transition from one medium to another by mixing emulsion with pixels to make visual poetry.

BIOGRAPHY

Rey Parlá is a Cuban American visual artist working in photography, painting and filmmaking. Parlá first received recognition for his "motion-paintings" at the 12th Annual Miami International Film Festival: *The Avant-Garde Returns*, presented by Harvard Film Archive Curator, Bruce Posner. Parlá's time based media works are short Super 8 film documentaries he then hand-painted, edited, and collaged after shooting his brother José Parlá and friends during their creation of many mural

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projects in Miami. Born in Miami and partly raised in Puerto Rico in his early childhood, Rey was informed by the various cosmic events of the early 1980s when he kept a visual scrap-book of newspaper clippings on the then current space flights from the John F. Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida in a suitcase his father discarded. Touring the small Caribbean island's rich landscapes with his family and gazing up at the stars with his brother are very vivid memory for the artist.

Parlá has received Honorable and Special Event Presentations for his films: *Rumba Abstracta*, *Sporadic Germination*, and *The Revolution of Super 8 Universe: A Self-Portrait* at several film festivals such as: The Anti Film Festival, The Alliance Cinema, Milan International Film Festival, Flower Film Festival, The Central Florida Film & Video Festival, The Independent Feature Project, El Museo Universitario de Ciencias y Arte Roma (MUCA Roma), The Lynn and Louis Wolfson II Florida Moving Image Archives, and The Cuban Alternative Film Festival in Little Habana.

From 2007 to 2010, Rey co-produced and was co-director for the travelogue; *The New Grand Tour*, a project exhibited in Hong Kong (2007), Beijing (2008), and at Bryce Wolkowitz's Gallery in New York City (2010), which produced two exhibition monographs where Rey presented his poetry, photography, and manifesto in collaboration with a group of artist friends. Also with Bryce Wolkowitz Gallery, Rey's work has previously shown at Paris Photo.

Early in 2011 curator Helen Homan Wu of Opalnest Independent Projects presented SONIC ARCHITEXTURES, an experiential art event with a new film by Rey, entitled: *Emulsions, Glitches, and Scratches* in a live sound and image performance with MERCE (Maria Chavez and Shelley Burgon).

In May of 2012, Rey travelled to Habana, Cuba with French artist JR and his brother José Parlá for their collaboration during the 11th Havana Biennial with *The Wrinkles of the City: Habana, Cuba* project as co-director of photography for their documentary and book with Damiani and Standard Press covering the mixed media murals they completed during a one month stay.

Parlá has collaborated with performance artist Natasha Tsakos in Miami Beach, Vanessa Gocksch of Intermundos, and Ralph Falcón of Murk Records. Critical theorist, filmmaker, and collaborator; Michael Betancourt, has written specially about Rey's film work. Parlá has also lectured at Savannah College of Art & Design on experimental time based media and photography. Parlá's work is in various international private collections and the Nancy A. Nasher and David J. Haemisegger Collection.

Rey Parlá's other photography documenting his brother has been published in Forbes, Brooklyn Rail, NY Daily News, Atlanta Journal Constitution, Champ Magazine, Cultured Magazine, and other foreign periodicals as well as his brother's artist monographs. Rey's short films and documentaries have screened at several film festivals with honorable mention.

His first solo exhibition *Borderless* was exhibited at happy Lucky No.1 Gallery in 2016; a monograph of the same title was self-published in the same year.