

Lestido's women fend for themselves at MACBA

Well-known Argentine photographer offers unique glimpse into female lives in new show

BY MARJAN GROOTHUIS
FOR THE HERALD

Several of the light-grey concrete walls of BA's Museum of Contemporary Art (MACBA) now feature 32 photographs by Adriana Lestido. These are presented under the title *Algunas chicas* (*Some Girls*), "chicas" being a light-hearted word used for girls (and women) of any age. The exhibition combines neatly with the museum's mission for this year, namely highlighting work by female artists. Therefore, Lestido decided to present only images depicting women, but she didn't want to mount them as a series: "I wanted to achieve a more carefree atmosphere and this is also reflected in the title of the show."

All the images on display were made between 1988 and 1998, a period in which Lestido focused her attention almost exclusively on girls and women. This resulted in several well-known series like *Mothers and Daughters*, *Teenage Mothers* and *Imprisoned Women*. "These photographs answered to my needs as a woman: I wanted to see and to understand," the famous photographer told the *Herald*, before adding thoughtfully: "But more important here is the absence of men, virtually all these women have to make it on their own."

Lestido says that she loves all the pictures now being shown, but that she feels closest to the photographs making up the *Mothers and Daughters* series. "After all, I am a daughter myself and every woman has a different, and at times difficult, relationship with her mother. Furthermore, this was also a turning point in my career." She explains that this series was made between 1995 and 1998, "it was my last feature on women and I took a lot of artistic liberties, like including less defined and less detailed images. Before that, I used to work in a more documentary style, especially the *Imprisoned Women* series is a case in point."



Teenage mother playing hide and seek with her young child.

Lestido also included some unknown works from the latter series in the show: "These have never been published before,

but do emphasize the focus on women and girls in all walks and stages of life."

One of her most striking images, also used

to announce the exhibition, is the photo of a mother and daughter on the beach in Mar del Plata. Both turn their head around at the same time. "I didn't say anything to them the moment I took the picture," Lestido says. "They were just like identical twins. They did the same things and made the same movements without even realizing it."

Other mother and daughter photographs underline how different every relationship is, some more harmonious than others. The symbiosis and unconditional love between a young girl and her mother is very recognizable, but so is the mother struggling with her apparently rather rebellious teenage daughter, who is sporting a tattoo and a very boyish haircut.

Some are having a hard time, for example the woman whose hair and clothes are caked with mud; she is so ashamed and miserable that she covers her face with her hands. The image of a mother and her small son with a guard in the background is striking as well. Their eyes do not and will never meet; only the little boy is looking straight ahead.

Through this exhibition, Lestido allows us several glimpses into the lives of other people and some moments are definitely happier than others. Just look at the teenage mother playing hide and seek with her young child; an instant of playful childish happiness. Maybe, these small things keep these girls going although their surroundings are often rather bleak, just like for the women in prison. At first sight, the image of a row of small blinded windows might not seem like a lot here, but one of them is missing and offers a partial view of a tree and of the sky. Lestido noticed it and realized its significance. She makes us aware how important small things and observations can be and what a difference they can make.

WHEN AND WHERE

Algunas chicas by Adriana Lestido is on show until May 1 at the MACBA (Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Buenos Aires), Avenida San Juan 328.

Shakespeare more popular abroad than in UK, survey says

LONDON — On the 400th anniversary of his death, Shakespeare is more popular abroad than in Britain and makes a significant contribution to the UK's prosperity and influence, according to a survey published yesterday. The British Council, which commissioned the YouGov survey of 18,000 people from 15 countries, said the results showed that internationally Shakespeare is widely known, liked and understood.

"Four hundred years after his death, Shakespeare's work continues to play a vital role in educating and entertaining people around the world," said the Council's Rosemary Hilhorst in a statement.

The Council, which fosters cultural relations between Britain and other countries, said Shakespeare's influence internationally helps generate a positive attitude towards the UK.

Over a third of people questioned said Shakespeare made them feel more positive about Britain in general, with the greatest number of respondents holding this view in Brazil (57 percent) and India

(62 percent). The survey also found Shakespeare was more popular (65 percent) in terms of being liked, understood and still regarded as relevant today overseas than in his home country (59 percent).

But his popularity in other English-speaking countries such as Australia and the United States was significantly lower than in the non-English speaking countries polled including China, Turkey and Mexico.

The British Council said his popularity had a direct influence on Britain's economy, not just in terms of attracting visitors to Shakespeare's theatres but also contributing to the country's standing in the world which had the knock-on effect of attracting tourists.

William Shakespeare's work, which includes 38 plays and 154 sonnets has been translated into over 80 languages and is performed throughout the world. The precise date of his death is not known but his funeral was held on April 25, 1616.

Herald with Reuters

Google Books wins decade-long copyright fight in the US

BY ANDREA PETERSON
THE WASHINGTON POST
@kansasalps

WASHINGTON — The legal fight over Google's effort to create a digital library of millions of books is finally over. The Supreme Court yesterday declined to hear a challenge from authors who had argued that the tech giant's project was "brazen violation of copyright law" — effectively ending the decade-long legal battle in Google's favour.

Without the Supreme Court taking up the case, a federal appeals court ruling from October, which found the book scanning programme fell under the umbrella of fair use, will stand.

Back in 2004, Google started scanning millions of books from major research libraries — creating a vast database from the digitized copies known as Google Books. Users can search Google Books for quotes or keywords, and it will display paragraphs or pages of context for the results from within the books.

The Authors Guild started complaining about the project in 2005, arguing

that Google Books had undermined writers by putting their work online for free.

Google and the Guild worked out a settlement at one point, but it was rejected by a district court judge in 2011. After the ruling in Google's favour last fall, the Guild asked the Supreme Court to review the decision — a request that was denied yesterday.

"Today authors suffered a colossal loss," Authors Guild president Roxana Robinson said in a statement about the high court's decision.

Google, which had filed a brief opposing the guild's appeal, praised the court's decision to pass on the case. "We are grateful that the court has agreed to uphold the decision of the Second Circuit, which concluded that Google Books is transformative and consistent with copyright law," the company said in a statement.

"The product acts like a card catalogue for the digital age by giving people a new way to find and buy books while at the same time advancing the interests of authors."