

## Foreword

Configured as a territory inhabited by the descendants of enslaved Africans who were brought to what we know call Latin America and the Caribbean starting in the sixteenth century, it is here that the cultural manifestations of a community converge, one that has significantly influenced the political, social, and economic aspects of the region. With a selection of contemporary and historical images that document the origins and traditions of this culture, *Africamericanos* shows the different ways in which more than seventy artists have reflected this theme.

This project of multiple platforms and media, designed by curator Claudi Carreras as a space for research, production, and dissemination, seeks to call attention to the imaginaries constructed around the Afrodescendant communities all over the region. The first stage of the project, an exhibition of the same name at the Centro de la Imagen (from August 16<sup>th</sup> to November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018) and at the Museo Amparo (from August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019 to January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020), is made up of almost four hundred images created in Mexico, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Cuba, Haiti, Colombia, Venezuela, French Guiana, Surinam, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, and Argentina. Many of them come from public and private archives that bear witness to the most varied events: from the first photographic documentation of slavery in the late nineteenth century to the everyday cultural expressions and religious practices of Afrodescendants in the second half of the twentieth century, including the decade of the 1980s.

Integrated with this world of images is a series of visual accounts —some of them created *ex profeso* for the exhibition— that examine regions where Afrodescendant culture has taken root and developed, exploring issues of migration, identity, discrimination, and marginalization. It is thanks to this confluence of visions that a map can be charted of those countries in which the presence of the African heritage is greatest, even though it may have been denied or ignored. From the northern border of Mexico to the Southern Cone, passing through Port-au-Prince, Havana, and Portobelo in the Caribbean region, we can explore, acknowledge, associate, and identify the complexity of the different Afrodescendant

realities through the visual production gathered here, which includes photographs, video, installation, and photobooks.

With *Africamericanos*, the Centro de la Imagen and the Museo Amparo seek to contribute to the recognition and visibilization of these populations in the region, salvaging their historical memory, defending equality of rights, and rejecting stigmatization. This is an effort that coincides with the International Decade for People of African Descent that has been proclaimed by the United Nations for the years 2015-2024.

This project would not have been possible without the participation of the Afrodescendant communities that generously shared their culture and traditions, showing how they have kept alive the heritage of their ancestors and maintained their cultural richness and influence in Latin America and the Caribbean. Our thanks to them all.

We would also like to thank all those institutions and archives, both public and private, that have shared the invaluable documents and photographic images in their possession. And we wish to acknowledge the efforts of the artists who have deepened our understanding of these cultures and of the anthropologists and researchers who have made noteworthy contributions to the study of the subject.

Finally, we are grateful for the support, in helping us to carry out this project, of BBVA Bancomer and of the Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (AECID).

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