

## P R E S S R E L E A S E

### Joseph Rodriguez – **Flesh Life: Sex in Mexico City**

**Opening:** Thursday, 27th April 2023, 6 – 9 PM

**Duration:** 27th April – 10th June 2023

**Location:** Galerie Bene Taschen, Moltkestrasse 81, 50674 Cologne



Joseph Rodriguez, Sexoservidora getting dressed for work, La Merced, Mexico City 1997 (left) | Joseph Rodriguez, Vicky in his hallway, Mexico City 1997 (right), both: © Joseph Rodriguez, Courtesy Galerie Bene Taschen

**Bene Taschen Gallery** is pleased to present the new solo exhibition ***Flesh Life: Sex in Mexico City*** by Joseph Rodriguez. In *Flesh Life*, Rodriguez documents life in Mexico City in 1997, including the district of La Merced, which has one of the highest crime rates in the city.

These black and white works depict residents who, on the one hand, have deep roots in the Catholic faith and, on the other hand, often go in search of sexual adventures. Families, sex workers and trans\* sex workers are portrayed in contrasting scenes in the exhibited silver gelatin prints. A sex worker getting ready for her next job by strikingly altering her appearance while a crucifix hangs on the wall in the background. The fusion of living out erotic desires and devotion to spirituality is omnipresent in Mexico City. Rodriguez delves into the hidden corners of this metropolis and captures intimate moments that, despite the often difficult circumstances of life, retain their dignity and beauty.

Rodriguez describes himself as a humanist. His attentive and respectful attitude towards the people and places he photographs enables him to look behind their facades. The subjects trust him, and allow a glimpse into their lives, far removed from events taking place in public. ***Flesh Life*** makes visible the deep basic human needs for love, solidarity and closeness that lie behind the snapshots.



Joseph Rodriguez, This couple say that sex with one another is more fulfilling than sex with men, La Merced, Mexico City 1997 (left) | Joseph Rodriguez, Vicky (background) tries to seduce a lover on his roof, Mexico City, 1997 (right) / both: © Joseph Rodriguez, Courtesy Galerie Bene Taschen

Born in New York City, Joseph Rodriguez graduated in 1985 from the International Center of Photography in New York with a degree in photography. He has worked as a documentary photographer for four decades and has contributed to various publications such as the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. Rodriguez's work has been published in ten monographs and is represented in collections such as LACMA, Los Angeles, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C., ALBERTINA, Vienna and Museum Ludwig, Cologne.

The exhibition ***Flesh Life*** presents a selection of photographs from the book published in 2006 under the same title.

**About Bene Taschen Gallery:** founded in 2011 in Cologne, Bene Taschen Gallery represents some of the world's leading artists in contemporary photography and painting. The gallery is committed to promoting its international artists through regular participation in major art fairs such as Paris Photo and Art Cologne, as well as a comprehensive exhibition programme. In 2011, Bene Taschen Gallery made its debut with LA photographer Gregory Bojorquez; in 2013, it began working with Joseph Rodriguez from New York. In 2014, the acclaimed Berlin-based photographer Miron Zownir joined the gallery's programme. American photographers Jamel Shabazz and Arlene Gottfried from New York also joined in 2015. Since autumn 2017, the gallery has been pleased to represent the New York-based photographer Jeff Mermelstein and the German painter Charlotte Trossbach, and since the autumn/winter of 2019, it has been working with the renowned photographers Sebastião Salgado and Larry Fink.

**For information about the gallery and the artworks, contact:**

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 Web: [www.benetaschen.com](http://www.benetaschen.com) | Opening times: Wednesday – Friday, 1 – 6 PM,  
 Saturday, 11 AM – 4 PM or by appointment

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