

MASTERPIECES, a book and exhibition by Antonio Pérez Río



Masterpieces is a book that explores, through photographs and texts, the transformation of the human gaze on art. It takes place in the Louvre Museum and proposes a new version of the canon of Western art, through its representation on the screens of visitors, which become a symbolic playground that shows the tensions between the works, the digital devices and the people who look through them.

As the author says:

“The Louvre Museum fascinates and terrifies me in equal parts. Since 2014, I have spent thirty-seven days inside the museum, with my camera and a notebook, trying to reflect on the real experience of visitors to one of the most visited art spaces in the world, a place covered by mass tourism routes that approach some of the most important artworks in history. Paintings and sculptures that have survived several centuries face people who visit the museum for once in their lives and refuse to look directly at them. Contemplation has given way to accumulation, an accumulation conducted by means of all sorts of digital devices, veritable cyclops that pound through the museum hallways stockpiling everything they see in their bottomless memory, generating a new way of staying and being in the world, a transformation of the art experience that points towards a profound modification of human nature. The result of these four years of work and more than 500 kilometers walked on the Louvre galleries is a book entitled *Masterpieces: an essay on the remains of a world devoured by its images.*”

More info:

Masterpieces adopts a classic format: the catalog of the great works of a museum. Thus, the cover and interior design of the book are inspired by a 1951 book: *Art Treasures of the Louvre*. But the content is very different: the works are seen only through the screens of all kinds of digital devices, a mediated experience that turns what is located outside of them into mere periphery, in an unfocused setting.

Antonio Pérez Río finds in the Louvre a zone of friction where the high culture of the past and the popular culture of the present collide. During four years of work, the author has followed the visitors of the museum and has reflected in images and words a new canon, arbitrary but significant, that offers clues about the forces that shape, with an unbreakable power, the human being's gaze.

Awards:

Winner of City of Mostoles Artist Book Award 2018

Second Prize of Photography Fundacion Enaire 2019

Finalist of PHotoEspaña Photobook of the Year 2019, Felifa Photobook Award 2018 and FOLA 2018

Exhibitions:

Biennale fur Aktuelle Fotografie (Mannheim, 2020)

Photoespaña 2019 (Real Jardín Botánico, Madrid, 2019)

Conciencia2 (Ministerio de Fomento, Madrid, 2019)

Scan Photobooks (collective exhibition, Scan Festival, Tarragona, 2018)

Here I live (Collective exhibition, Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, 2018)

Annual Photobook Show (Davis Orton Gallery, Hudson, NY, 2018)

The author of the book:

Antonio Pérez Río (Madrid, 1972) has a degree in Law and a diploma in Social Education. After working for more than 10 years as an educator and improving his skills for writing and photography, he founded LENS School of Visual Arts, the school he has been directing ever since.

His work *Louvre - Art Guide for Cyborgs* was shortlisted for the Kassel Fotobookfestival Dummy Award. Selected in Discoveries PhotoEspaña 2016 and in the 1st Meeting of Artists of Castilla y León with the same project, which was exhibited for the first time at the Albert Hall Museum in Jaipur (India, 2017), within the framework of the Jaipur Photo festival.

Finalist of the 20 Fotopres La Caixa Grant for his series *Mapping Kigali* (2014). His photographic project *The Inevitable* was published in OjodePez and British Journal of Photography and was the subject of an individual exhibition in 2015 at CEART Tomás y Valiente (Fuenlabrada).

Features:

Spanish-English edition.

Hardcover. Dutch binding.

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