



## YVES SCHERER & SANTIAGO MARTÍNEZ ALBERÚ



The first time I encountered Yves Scherer's work was in Mexico City in 2016 at his solo show *Snow White and the Huntsman*, which revolved around the affair between Kristen Stewart and Rupert Sanders. It intertwined—both formally and conceptually—a fan fiction -becomes- reality narrative throughout various sets of works presented over installations at General Prim and Luis Barragán's Casa Pedregal.

Since then, I've followed Yves' work as it held a mirror to my own obsessions with some women celebrities: Emma Watson was the first girl-crush I forced upon myself to mask my real desires for her male counterparts; Kristen Stewart has appealed to my inner angst since stumbling upon *Speak* when I was twelve; Lindsay Lohan is me if my moon was in Taurus and Kate Moss is, well, Kate Moss. I won't even get started with Lana del Rey.

And as much as I was fascinated by our common fixations, I especially admired Yves' diverse and complex body of work. I found myself constantly searching and saving him on Google and Instagram as his work became, for me, what it explores: an "intimate stranger," someone I could reflect upon and idealize without ever having to confront or get to know, until this zoom call.

**Santiago Martínez Alberú:** I vividly remember seeing your show *Snow White and the Huntsman* because it was one of those times that I saw my own deep specific memories and fixations—even fetishes—that I didn't even know I had towards that affair, represented in a way that felt both familiar and voyeuristic. I wanted to ask you about your relationship to that story and how it inspired you to make these series of works.

# PERES PROJECTS

**Yves Scherer:** Well I started making some works about the actress Emma Watson and my relationship to her when I lived in London, and from then on kept this interest in the idea of the “intimate stranger,” when you feel emotionally or personally close to another person, who doesn’t know you in return, just by following the news, Instagram and all these kinds of things. It was a pretty big moment in popular culture, when Kristen Stewart cheated on Robert Pattinson, and I think that big public outrage really made it feel like she cheated on the whole world, all the Twilight fans everywhere, instead of just one person.

I was weirdly affected by it myself. I had a crush on her from Twilight and it was alright that she was together with vampire Edward, but hooking up with the film director was a very different story. So I tried to reflect on this and to complicate the matter a bit by inserting myself in different roles into the existing story, while also creating my own sort of fan fiction. In my story there’s Robert Pattinson, then the director, then me as Yves Scherer and also as the artist or author who is imminent in the work. I created a sort of stalker figure who was a mix of all these identities. To this day, I still really like these works which are collages on paper made of pictures of her and selfies of mine. Putting us together on a page with a sun drawing as if we had spent the day at the beach, for example.



**SMA:** My office used to be above the josegarcia, mx office in Juárez, and they had one of those pieces hanging outside their door, the one with Kristen and you, and every time I came downstairs I just wanted it for myself. Relating to these pieces and how you were mixing this incident with yourself to create a work of fiction, I was recently told by a friend that to truly connect with someone you need to believe in everything they say, even if it sounds fictitious to you, because their fiction is also their reality. I wanted to ask you if you think this is true.

**YS:** Yes, I do actually. I used to have a girlfriend, and my mother always said something about her, “She has her own truth.” I always liked that idea, that there’s some kind of personal truth as well. I like how someone can make their own truth.

**SMA:** I was thinking that, too. That life’s much more bearable if you just believe in everything everyone says.

# PERES PROJECTS

**YS:** Right. I agree one hundred percent. I don't know how Mexico relates to that—but I do think that to not do that is a very European thing, to really be very hard on yourself and on what you say. I feel like in America, it's much more loose. You say "Yeah!" when somebody says "See you tomorrow," while everybody knows you won't. How is it in Mexico.

**SMA:** I think it's even more loose than in America. I mean, in terms of time and space, it doesn't really matter. But in terms of truth and who people are and what they say about themselves, everything always has to be "true."

**YS:** Everything has to be accurate.



**SMA:** Exactly. Speaking about something else, you have recurrently used female celebrities as the subjects and objects of your work. I know you said you don't really see them as sexualized figures, but as something else. I wanted to ask what you see, then, and how has your perception of them changed after working so closely with their image.

**YS:** In a certain way, each of them is different and asks for a very different type of work. One layer of it, obviously, is the very traditional female figure in art. Another is the play between me and that person, the distance or the proximity at play. It's been a point of critique towards my work, which I've grown conscious of over time, and that's also the reason why I—in almost all my shows and body of work—try to bring myself in. I think you can expose yourself in a certain way by making yourself vulnerable. I'm not interested in exposing these people or ripping on their image; it's more personal. They stand in for people in my life, as ideals, things to aspire to (or not), something that you see in yourself.

**SMA:** There's this whole conversation around the male gaze, how "problematic" it's been throughout history regarding women and muses. You seem—to me—to put that gaze upfront with delicacy and depth. How do you feel about your own gaze and what have you learned about it through your work?



# PERES PROJECTS

**YS:** I like that you see it like that. I do see it like that as well. I think I'm very conscious of it, and have often made it a part of my work quite explicitly. Even if you look for example at these recent works which incorporate photographs of Kate Moss taken by Mario Sorrenti when they were a couple. The very beautiful thing about them is their being done by somebody who loves her. These very private images are an intimate way of portraying someone, which I connect to, and that I like to work with. It's establishing a personal connection to the other person as a viewer, and at this point it doesn't matter if it's Kate Moss or Emma Watson anymore. I just read something this year about Barragán—that there are certain things which are timeless, that can't really be out of context because they're the essence between two people. And that's more how I feel about it. I think it's a very different feeling compared to having a Playboy page on your locker door.

**SMA:** That's what I meant by "delicacy," about finding the different depths to this gaze, and that draws me to your work even though I'm not straight: I can still interact with it in a way that isn't completely imposing. You just spoke about this series, Casa Pedregal, where you combined images from Luis Barragán's Cuadra San Cristobal with Mario Sorrenti's portraits of Kate Moss through lenticular works. What drove you to pair these two characters—Kate and Barragán together—and do you find any relationship between them other than just a formal or narrative one?



**YS:** There's not really a direct or literal connection. Almost all of my lenticular works have had the architecture of Luis Barragán as one subject. His architecture has always acted as a sort of fantasy for me. When I was at this house in Pedregal, it really touched me very deeply, instilling an idealized version of a life in my heart. It's so perfect. In Mexico, you just walk down the street and the proportions are just so perfect. In America, you go anywhere and it's ugly, I'm sorry to say. Just horrible. But Mexico has this modernist idea built in such a truthful, unpretentious way. And I think Barragán represents the epitome of that.

**SMA:** I was curious about your titles; two of the pieces in this series have names that allude to Lana del Rey songs, and to see them knowing the songs brings another narrative and perspective to each work. I wanted to ask you how you go about naming your work.

# PERES PROJECTS

**YS:** Well, it's always hard. Personally, I often pick titles which reflect what the work means to me. If I close my eyes and think about it, what is the first thing that comes to my mind?

**SMA:** So you listen to Lana often enough.

**YS:** [laughs] I do! I really do! I think she's amazing, hands down. She feels so real to me.

**SMA:** To me too, and 13 Beaches is like the perfect title for a piece.

**YS:** I'm glad you think so.

**SMA:** In your last lenticular series, you managed to synthesize the narrative principles you utilize in your installation work to create a spatial experience through a single piece. Do you think that this was the result of our current moment, experiencing the outside from inside?

**YS:** In a certain way, that did influence me. But at the same time it's a feeling that we are used to for longer, through the mediated experience of the internet for example, or even spending time with a person on TV. But the lenticular works are interesting in this way, they have this virtuality within them which unfolds as you walk around them. Like a fantasy of time spent with the person who is in the image, which is traveling in your mind alongside the steps you physically take.

**SMA:** In more general terms, how do you feel about the present and where we're heading?

**YS:** I feel like the present is very exciting. And I'm happy to be a part of it, somehow.

