

On Photography: Shades of Reality  
William Meyers

**Observed: Milagros de la Torre Americas Society**  
680 Park Ave., (212) 249-8950 Through April 14

Each of the projects hung on the walls of the three rooms of the Americas Society's gallery is stylistically different from the others, as if this were a group show. But all works are by Peruvian photographer Milagros de la Torre (born Lima, 1965), and a common theme connects them – danger. She grew up when terrorism and crime were constant threats and, as a daughter of the chief's of Lima's antidrug military police force, she was especially aware of them.

Threat is implied in the two black and white pictures in 'Bulletproof' (2008): "Corduroy" and 'Dinner Jacket' are life-size images of what seem to be ordinary jackets, but are really designed for protection against firearms. Criminal evidence from the Palace of Justice in Lima was photographed with 19<sup>th</sup>-century techniques to give the pictures in 'The Lost Steps' (1996) an antique look. The 4-by-5 1/2-inch pictures in 'Armored' (2000) are formal three-quarter views of the armored trucks that were common in Mexico City when Ms. De la Torre lived there.

Ms. De la Torre's conceptual projects benefit from her extensive knowledge of photographic technology- historic and contemporary, high-tech and low. This is especially true of the striking images in 'Under the Black Sun' (1991-93), based on the technique of the street photographers of Cuzco, Peru: Red Mercurochrome on the negatives renders these portraits spectral.

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