

Mario Cravo Neto**Laroye****January 11 - February 10**

The Yancey Richardson Gallery is pleased to present *Laroye*, an exhibition of color photographs by Brazilian photographer Mario Cravo Neto, on view from January 11 through February 10. Comprised of 16 large scale color photographs, the exhibition portrays the religious, sexual and symbolic aspects of Brazilian culture. Dating from 1977 through 1997, the photographs are being presented for the first time to the public. A selection of Cravo Neto's most important earlier black and white portraits is on view in the gallery's project room. The show coincides with the release of Cravo Neto's book, also entitled *Laroye*. A reception and book signing will be held on Saturday, January 13, 6 to 8 p.m. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 to 6 p.m.

Both ripely sensual and darkly threatening, Cravo Neto's photographs capture the intense light, deep shadow, ripe flesh, ripe fruit, gleaming knife blades, fighting cocks, heat, water and night of the city of Salvador, Bahia. The Laroye series springs from Cravo Neto's interest in Afro Brazilian religious beliefs and the influence of the Yuruba deity Esu - god of erotic dreams, easy relationships and gatherings - on the residents of Bahia. Cinematic and colorful, the Laroye images contrast strikingly with Mario Cravo Neto's elegantly composed black and white totemic figurative studies but continues to explore the erotic, spiritual and violent aspects of the culture of Bahia.

Born in 1947, Cravo Neto has been a longtime resident of Bahia, home to one of South America's largest black communities. The son of Mario Cravo Jr., a Brazilian sculptor well known during the 1950s and 60s, Cravo Neto originally worked in sculpture himself. In the late sixties, he began working as a street photographer. After a car accident in 1974 left him unable to walk for a year, Cravo Neto began working in the studio, creating psychological and symbolic portraits of the multicultural populace of Bahia.

Since 1965 Cravo Neto has exhibited regularly in the United States, Europe and Latin America including solo exhibitions at The Museum of Photographic Art, San Diego, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt, and the Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro. In addition, he has exhibited in several Sao Paulo Biennials. His work is part of numerous private and public collections including the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam and the Museu de Arte de Sao Paulo, Brazil. Several monographs have been published on Cravo Neto including **Mario Cravo Neto** (Edition Stemmler, 1994) and **Laroye** (Aries Editora).