



## LANGUAGE & MUSIC SERVICES

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Client: **Shirley Miranda-Rodríguez**  
Due Date: **August 20, 2011**  
Job Type: **Artist Bio**

## ARTIST BIO

### SHIRLEY MIRANDA-RODRÍGUEZ

*“A native New Yorker from the Puerto Rican west coast,”* photographer Shirley Miranda-Rodríguez draws from the innate dichotomy that defines her very existence. Duality molds her perspective and characterizes her work, across all branches of her expression: an ever-present juxtaposition of seemingly disparate elements, whose cohabitation in one piece emphasizes their individuality, reevaluating their essence by exposing them within an unexpected context.

Born in New York to a Puerto Rican couple that was always about to move back to [Mayagüez] the following year, Miranda-Rodríguez grew up experiencing her hometown both as home and as a long stay away from home, preparing to fit in and be part of what would be her real community near the *cafetales* and the beach. This constant shift of perspective shaped her reality, and made her acutely perceptive to the constant visual oxymorons readily found but often unnoticed in the world—and particularly in New York City. Thus her art transcends her roots, communicating a duality and discrepancy that is universal.

“At first, I started drawing what I saw,” she narrates, “but then there came a time when my drawing skills were not enough to clearly represent what my vision was.” This is when photography became her medium. Photography allows her to stage a scene or a world in which she can then prompt situations to capture. Setting up may seem like a contrived or artificial method to some. But to Miranda-Rodríguez, it is a way to establish certain parameters within an atmosphere in which actions and feelings can be set into motion to bring out the purest and most sincere side and reaction of the subject before the lens, controlling contamination. The set-ups serve as catalyst, and the worlds created, together with their final outcomes, are always characterized by three elements: contrast, sincerity and intimacy.

Through the wide range of genres in which she’s worked (portraiture, commercial editorials, advertising, landscape photography, socioeconomic photo-documentation and photo-essays, among others) her constant signature is contrast in juxtaposition, whether it is elegance against gritty; countryside against urban; happiness against sadness; the portrayal of beauty in non-conventional places, such as in deformed faces or bodies, or expressions of pain; a play between what’s in focus and what’s blurred; and, always, light against shadow. “I think a lot can be said by what you can’t see, as opposed to what you can,” says Miranda-Rodríguez, for whom photography is not only a way to freeze time, but a means of communication.

To this latter point, Miranda-Rodríguez has spent the greater part of the last five years experimenting with photography as a means of communication with her autistic child, whom she has successfully introduced into the communicated world. She is adamant about the use of art to teach others how to communicate and how to express their vision. In this sense, she states that the experience of the shoot itself, which can be considered the performance part of her work, contains her signature as well: the communication skill of making the subject feel comfortable and establishing a real connection with this other human being. This comfort and connection, which do not depend on words or conversation, are what is ultimately captured in her photography, and are the key to the intimate and sincere aspects of her work.

Miranda-Rodríguez holds degrees from the New School University, and has completed additional studies at Fordham University, the International Center for Photography, and LaGuardia Community College. She was a founding partner and creative director for eight years of **Somos Arte**, featured in *The New York Times* in 2010 in an article titled "Helping Do Good by Looking Good." At age 22 she started her collection *LatiNatural*, a work comprising over 150 portraits and nudes exploring the diverse experiences and body images of Latina women, which was later exhibited in New York City (at **The Bolivar Arellano Gallery** and **The Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute**, among others) and featured on **Univision** and the magazines *Latina* and *Mija*. *LatiNatural* also earned her a **Mujeres Destacadas Award** (Distinguished Women Award) from *El Diario/La Prensa* in 2005.

Her commercial photography has been featured in *Vibe*, *Crain's*, *Siempre Mujer*, *Latina* and *Hispanic*, among others, and in 2009, she shot the **cover story on Ramon Rodríguez** for *Urban Latino* magazine. Notable clients have included **Olay**, **Fruit of the Loom**, **Girls Scouts of the USA**, **Simon & Schuster** (book covers), **Pantene**, **Isaac Mizrahi**, and the **HBO New York International Latino Film Festival**, for whom she collaborated in the [YYYY] campaign that won the **PromaxBDA Bronze Award**.

Being partial to portraiture, she has shot a wide array of diverse personalities, ranging from the famous to the unknown, including hip hop heavyweights **RedMan** and **Asher Roth**, and award-winning actor/playwright/director **Danny Hoch**. Miranda-Rodríguez states that she's drawn to capturing the beauty and pain of passionate people, and aims to show her subjects a mirror of her perspective.

Currently, she is planning a new project titled "The Invisible Hands: Portraits of America's Laborers in a New Century of Industrialization," which would take her around the country to document the effects of manual labor on the bodies of workers. Her goal continues to be establishing herself as a universal and worldly artist, achieving the greatest level of communication with the widest range of people. Deeply influenced by Salvador Dalí, Richard Avedon, Robert Watson and Imogen Cunningham, among others, there is enough contradiction in her surreal perspective of reality to achieve a balance that can resonate with all.