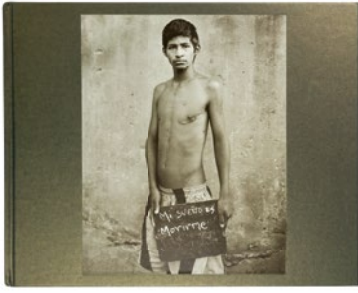


# Map of Latin American Dreams

Andrea Jösch on Martín Weber



**Martín Weber**  
*Mapa de Sueños Latinoamericanos/Map of Latin American Dreams*  
Editorial RM and Ediciones Larivière · Mexico City and Buenos Aires, 2018 · Designed by Roberto Forte and Martín Weber · 9 3/8 x 11 5/8 in. (23.6 x 29.5 cm) · 284 pages · 110 black-and-white photographs · Bilingual Spanish/English · editorialrm.com edicioneslariviere.com



*Map of Latin American Dreams* by Argentinean photographer Martín Weber (Editorial RM and Ediciones Larivière, 2018) is the result of a long journey (1992–2013) through fifty-three towns and cities in Argentina, Cuba, Mexico, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Peru, Brazil, and Colombia. In the book are 110 monochrome portraits and several personal stories, like diary entries, that are interwoven in the narrative, which includes an essay by artist and educator Robert Blake. The gold color of the cover and silver in the negatives printed in the preface lead us to think about the symbolic space around material/mineral resources and the tragic history of their domination.

**The book is a sort of map between two times: the one of the archive and the one of the journey, of reality and dreams, photographs and texts, forgetfulness and memory.**

At the beginning of the book, Weber points out in the travel notes: “Someone once told me that for someone born in exile, every trip is an exile.” And in the postscript: “Perhaps because my parents weren’t part of any armed resistance group against the dictatorships they suffered under, but were instead part of a conscientious opposition, it took me four decades to understand why I was born in Chile, and forty years to accept that I was born in exile.” These phrases, which resonate in the memory of our troubled Latin America, give sense to the images we observe, because the work is not only a question of giving a voice to those who have been denied this possibility, and visualizing the physical and spiritual marks and vestiges that conflicts and struggles have left in people, but also a question of why there are so many abuses, so many silences.

Exile and forced displacement have been, for different reasons, a constant in the reality of our continent for decades, but it is also true that many, most, live or survive in their territories,

dreaming that one day something can be transformed. The cyclical worldview of life, on which the belief systems of many indigenous peoples are based, fixes the possibility of the future only if one is aware of the present while looking toward the past. This can be an analogy of the tension between dreaming and living without forgetting—with memory.

Weber stages his photographs with patience and care. Individuals or groups are invited to pose holding a wooden board on which they have written their dreams in chalk—longings, fears, and promises, though almost always colored by violence, poverty, and daily life. This work invites us to build, from the unavoidable relationship between images and texts, a human cartography of common stories and collective struggles.

This publication reiterates for us, both in the personal notes of the photographer and in his portraits, the failed policies and the fierce social inequality that invade us, while at the same time accounting for resistance and persistence. It proposes a reflection on time, both photographic time and history’s repetition of events, which seems more like a tragic song, as if dreams have been turned into supplications that are transmitted from generation to generation. The book is a sort of map between two times: the one of the archive and the one of the journey, of reality and dreams, photographs and texts, forgetfulness and memory.

In 2007, Weber photographed Cristián, the Colombian teenager whose portrait is printed on the cover of this book: “My dream is to die.” He poses with his scars, staring fixedly at the camera; his shot body was found six months later. It’s a tribute, perhaps; a second title, also. It seems that the dreams—of having health, work, land, education, the return of loved ones and the missing, having a decent life, affection—written by the women, men, children, and elderly portrayed by Weber, make us wake up and understand that, for all the differences that exist between cultures and countries, the dream of the majority of Latin Americans is to be able to live with dignity.

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# To U.\*

A posthumous letter to an extraordinarily ordinary collector, copyist, and categorist of images and words

Caroline von Courten



**Anne Geene and Arjan de Nooy**  
*The Universal Photographer*  
De Hef · Rotterdam, the Netherlands, 2018 · Designed by Jeremy Jansen · 8 3/8 x 11 in. (21 x 28 cm) · 420 pages · ca. 300 color and black-and-white images · Softcover · dehefpublishers.nl



Dear U. (if I may),

Even though I was not able to meet you in person during your lifetime, I have encountered so much that is familiar in your diverse and extensive body of work that it is as if I have known you already for years. So please allow me to take this MOMENT to express my sincere appreciation of your pure and sober approach in photography AS ART, which is so refreshing in its lacking CHARACTER and which comes with such EASE. Your responses to your surroundings in so many GENRES (snapshots, collages, typologies, visual notes, scans, and the like) exemplify your flexibility in TECHNIQUE and STYLE and your thorough engagement with any SUBJECT matter that caught your fascination (both in black & white and COLOR!).

As a fetishist of theory (in particular of photography’s ONTOLOGY), I was all the more intrigued by your vast collection of quotes and aphorisms on the nature of (art) photography spanning the last seventy pages of your 420-pages-thick catalogue raisonné. Your categorization and CONTEXTualization of all the MISCELLANEOUS topics can be of value to anyone who is interested in the MEANING of photographs, photography, art, and even CULTURE in general. Since the INVENTION of theoretical TRUISMS that accompany any photograph that appears in the realm of art, our OBJECTIVITY (or is it subjectivity?) in perceiving the image as it is has become an endangered and DIFFICULT endeavor. NEOLOGISMS now populate our mindsets, which we use in order to discern and to diagnose the nature of a photograph’s subject, like vernacular, post-DIGITAL, punctum, studium, etc., and which distract from the real message. OPINIONS diverge when it comes to allocating AUTHORSHIP. Is it the person who handles the CAMERA, or the one who creates the image’s CONTEXT through curating, editing, COPYING, writing, reading, or simply seeing it? Some even argue for the DEATH of the author.

You took the CHANCE to escape the predicted in typing your own theories directly on photographs, as assembled in the book’s fourth chapter. As if you are physically impregnating the photo-

graphed SUBJECT with your reflections and MEMORY: brilliant! Herewith, you express your PHOTOGRAPHIC SEEING equally in words and visuals that open up a world of (INFINITE) CORRELATIONS to discover for us viewers. Your courage to COPY as much as to create is so inspiring at a time when quasi-conceptual pretensions freeze intuitive criticism. I want to thank you for this effort by concluding with one of your favorite authors, Gustave FLAUBERT: “Pas de réflexion! Copions!” (No reflection! Let’s copy!)

Sincerely,  
Caroline v. Courten  
(One of many WOMEN working in the field of photography with words.)

PS: I borrowed the complete list of expressions (in capitals) from your notes section as a gesture of admiration.

\*For biographical and contextual information on the photographer, please consider the extensive introduction in the monograph *The Universal Photographer* (De Hef Publishers, 2018), in which U.’s indebted relation to the key figures and facts in (art) photography is meticulously outlined by the Dutch authors and editors, Anne Geene and Arjan de Nooy. They express their sincere gratitude to all of the photographers on the book’s last page, as “without them U. would not have existed.”

**Caroline von Courten** is an essayist at heart and a curator/editor by profession. She has curated exhibitions on paper (Foam) and in space (Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam). She is currently undertaking her PhD in photography theory at Leiden University, the Netherlands.

**U.** (1955–2016) is a fictitious alter ego of Dutch artists Anne Geene and Arjan de Nooy, whom they have invented in order to play cleverly with absurdities that accompany photographs in the artistic field. They subdivide U.’s catalogue raisonné into two parts: “works” and “on photography.” Citing from or referring to visual and/or textual works of well-known figures in the world of photography, it is both an intelligent homage as well as an ironic playing with presumptions and expectations that result from the interplay between words and images.