

# Ehrenwald Reveals Life's Last Memory

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Special to The News

Why is it that we close our eyes so frequently just to remember? Why is it that we cry or laugh when an experience has ended? Are we afraid we'll forget? Or are we afraid we'll live? Currently on display at The Gallery Art & Design in Polanco until Sept. 22, photographer Elena Ehrenwald presents an exclusive and thought-provoking exhibit that examines the role of memory in accordance with the healing of the spirit.

Titled, "Nuestras Caras, Nuestros Muertos y Nuestros Recuerdos," Ehrenwald challenges us to not only feel the effects of personal trauma, but to surrender to them in hopes of understanding more about ourselves.

Faced with a mother who recently died from lung cancer, Ehrenwald tries to find her place in life by recalling her mother's failing condition. Ehrenwald's photographic images call to mind the question, "Where is one's place in a dramatic crisis?" Perhaps nowhere. In her illustration titled "Como Marioneta," she places emphasis on a theme of powerlessness — she has no control over the forces of life. She can't control life, can't prevent her mother's smoking, and ultimately, can't prevent her death. Yet, what Ehrenwald does realize is that she can conquer the pain of losing her mother by making use of surrealistic and dramatic photography.

In her image titled "Xuchilquitongo," Ehrenwald expresses the obvious difficulty of life without her mother. She is nearly obsessed with her mother's passing, and the recurrence of graveyards and tombs in her illustration supports her feelings regarding death as a mystery and also a final descent from life.

The exhibit also includes scenes of "Media Vida," commonly referred to as "mid-life crisis." In this sequence, images of a chair are displaced in a large body of gloomy water. Failure of the chair to remain afloat allows the viewer to truly experience being emotionally submerged in the effort to survive a traumatic experience — in this case, the loss of a loved one.

The exhibit concludes with "Mujeres Fragmentadas." Capturing



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'Xuchilquitongo' by Elena Ehrenwald

only the breasts and arms of woman holding a bouquet of flowers, the subject's body seems almost submerged under water, implying the experience of feeling torn and lost in the fight to live.

It can be classified as an examination of the interior of the woman as she fights to regain her sanity and psyche in order to live a more sustaining and complete existence.

Overall, Ehrenwald's photography is highly creative and astounding, yet painful at the same time. Because she uses a variety of lighting and obtrusive angles to capture the complexity of her feelings, her work reveals exceptional truth in trying to understand the mystery of life and one's placement in it. Ultimately, Ehrenwald demonstrates that living life is a memory.

"Nuestras Caras, Nuestros Muertos y Nuestros Recuerdos" runs through Sept. 22 at The Gallery Art & Design, Galileo 37, Polanco.