

Third Floor Gallery

Press Release

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## ***Joseph Rodriguez – Mi Vida Loca***

**26 March – 1 May 2011**

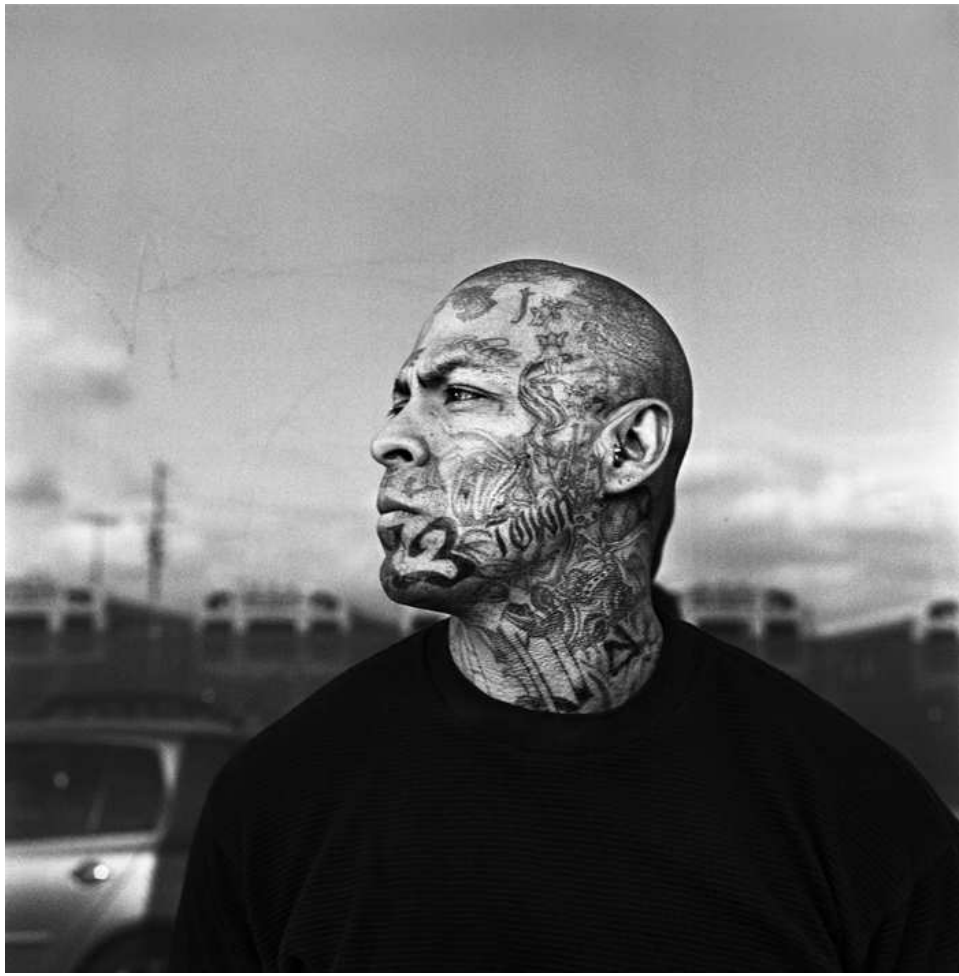
**Opening Night Preview: Friday 25<sup>th</sup> of March from 7pm**

After the Mexican Revolution, East L.A. became a popular place for immigrant Mexicans to settle and make a new beginning in California. Ties with Mexican traditions and values remained strong. The first barrios were formed and grew to become a Mexican-American community. For its people, who lived in socio-economic isolation, the family and the neighborhood became vital. The first Mexican-American gangs became the target of the police and the media. To this day, little seems to have changed. Seen as outsiders, and with the strong need to belong somewhere, the gang becomes their extended family.

Joseph Rodriguez has been working with youth cultures in America for over two decades. Driven by his own experiences and struggles, he spent several years in L.A. developing intimate relationships with several families, giving a voice to his subjects through his photographs, and challenging media stereotypes. This resulted in his seminal photobook *East Side Stories* which is both homage and a witness to families and communities, life and death, and the fatalism and possibility of transformation found in every segment of American society.

Joseph returned to L.A. for his recent project, *Reentry in Los Angeles*, to conduct a series of portraits and interviews of prison inmates in California state penitentiaries as they prepare to be released. Through these stories of ex-offenders, one may begin to see the generations of families, children, parents, and grandparents caught in this web of violence, gang life, addiction and crime. *Mi Vida Loca* brings together both these series.

Joseph Rodriguez is an internationally recognized documentary photographer, born and raised in New York. He is the author of [several books](#), including *Spanish Harlem*, *East Side Stories: Gang Life in East L.A.*, *Respekt*, and *Flesh Life: Sex in Mexico City*, among others. His work has appeared in many publications and he has received numerous grants and awards. Joseph teaches at New York University, the International Center of Photography, New York and has also taught at universities in Scandinavia, Europe and Mexico.



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