

Y.E.S

COLLECT CONTEMPORARY EL SALVADOR



ROGER ATWOOD MAYRA BARRAZA CELIA BIRBRAGHER MARIA BONTA DE LA PEZUELA
AMY CAPPELLAZZO BONNIE CLEARWATER KENCY CORNEJO ROBERTO GALICIA PATRICIA GARDINER AMARE
ZELIKA GARCIA ELLA FONTANALS-CISNEROS ELVIS FUENTES TOM HEALY ALANNA HEISS
MAURO HERLITZKA ERNST HILGER WALTERIO IRAHETA SAM KELLER ALANNA LOCKWARD
DR. HARPER MONTGOMERY RONALD MORAN IRVIN MORAZAN RETNA BRANDI REDDICK
JOSÉ RUIZ MARC SPIEGLER CHRISTY TURLINGTON BURNS SIMÓN VEGA

1ST CENTRAL
AMERICAN
BIENNIAL
(MANAGUA)

2001

ADOBE
COLLECTIVE

1ST CENTRAL AMERICAN
BIENNIAL
(GUATEMALA)

HETERO
COLLECTIVE

BAJO TIERRA
COLLECTIVE

- IX HA
(S)
- "LAND
(JOS)

ARCHBISHOP
ROMERO
MURDERED

123 GALLERY

LABERINTO
GALLERY

- TRAN
NEW YO

CIVIL WAR BEGINS

1980

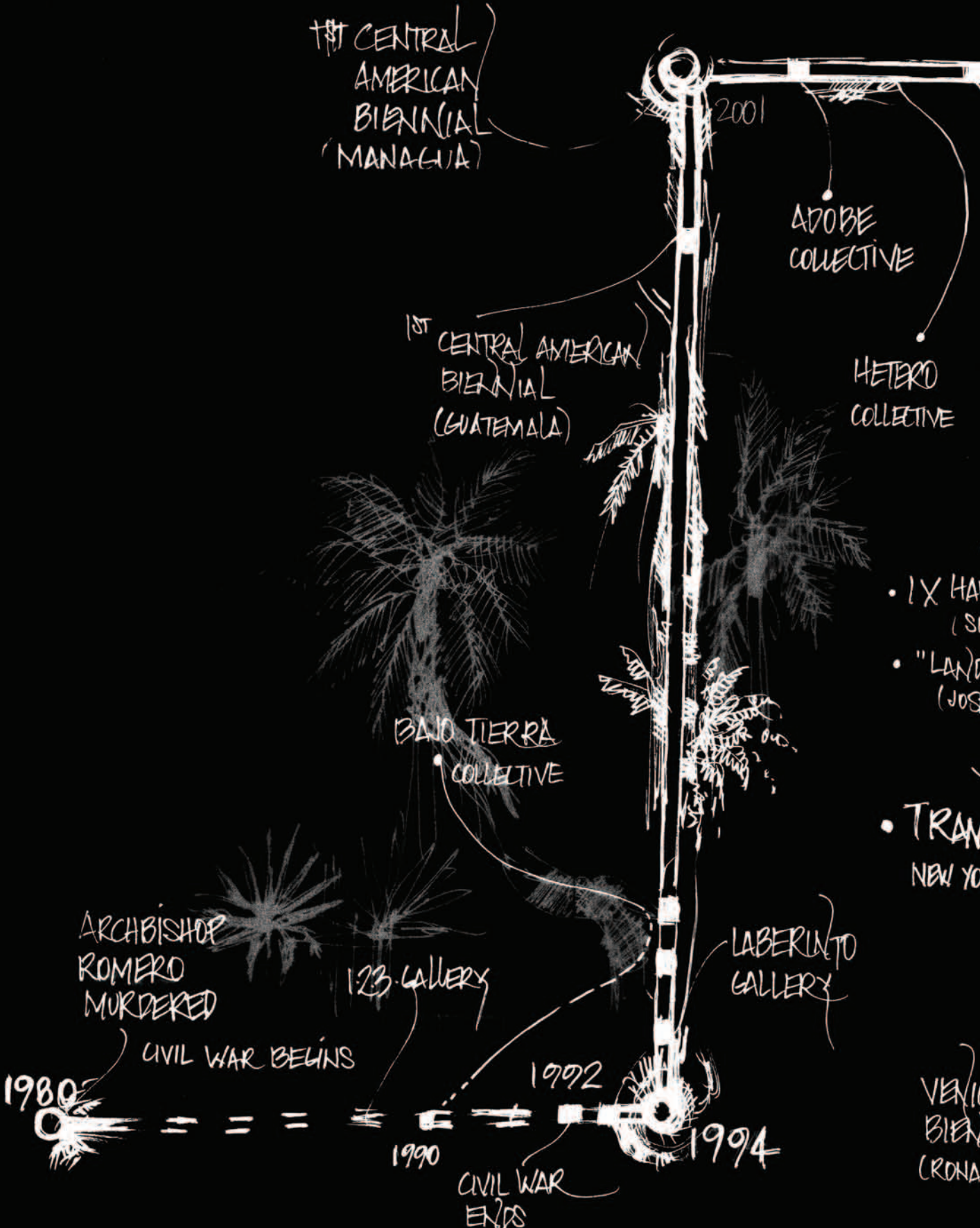
1992

1990

1994

CIVIL WAR
ENDS

VENI
BIEN
(RONA)





2003

TODO INCLUIDO
CENTRAL AMERICAN
URBAN IMAGES
MADRID + COSTA RICA

MARTE
MUSEUM
OPENS

2004

MARTE CONTEMPORANEO
PROGRAM

HABITART
INSTALLATION
EXHIBITION IN
CENTRAL AMERICA

PAIZ BIENNIAL

ARTIFICIO COLLECTIVE

CENTRAL AMERICAN
BIENNIAL IN SAN SALVADOR

MARTE
CONTEMPORANEO
(10 YEARS)

CUBA
HAVANA BIENNIAL
(MORÁN VELA)
"RINGS"
BY DAVID HERRERA

BALTIMORE,
MATERIAL MATTERS

PONTEVEDRA
BIENNIAL

2009

2011

HYBRID ART
RESIDENCY

2013

CULTURA
NEW-YORK - SAN SALVADOR

ZONA DE TRUQUE

VENICE
BIENNIAL
(WALTERIO IRAHETA)

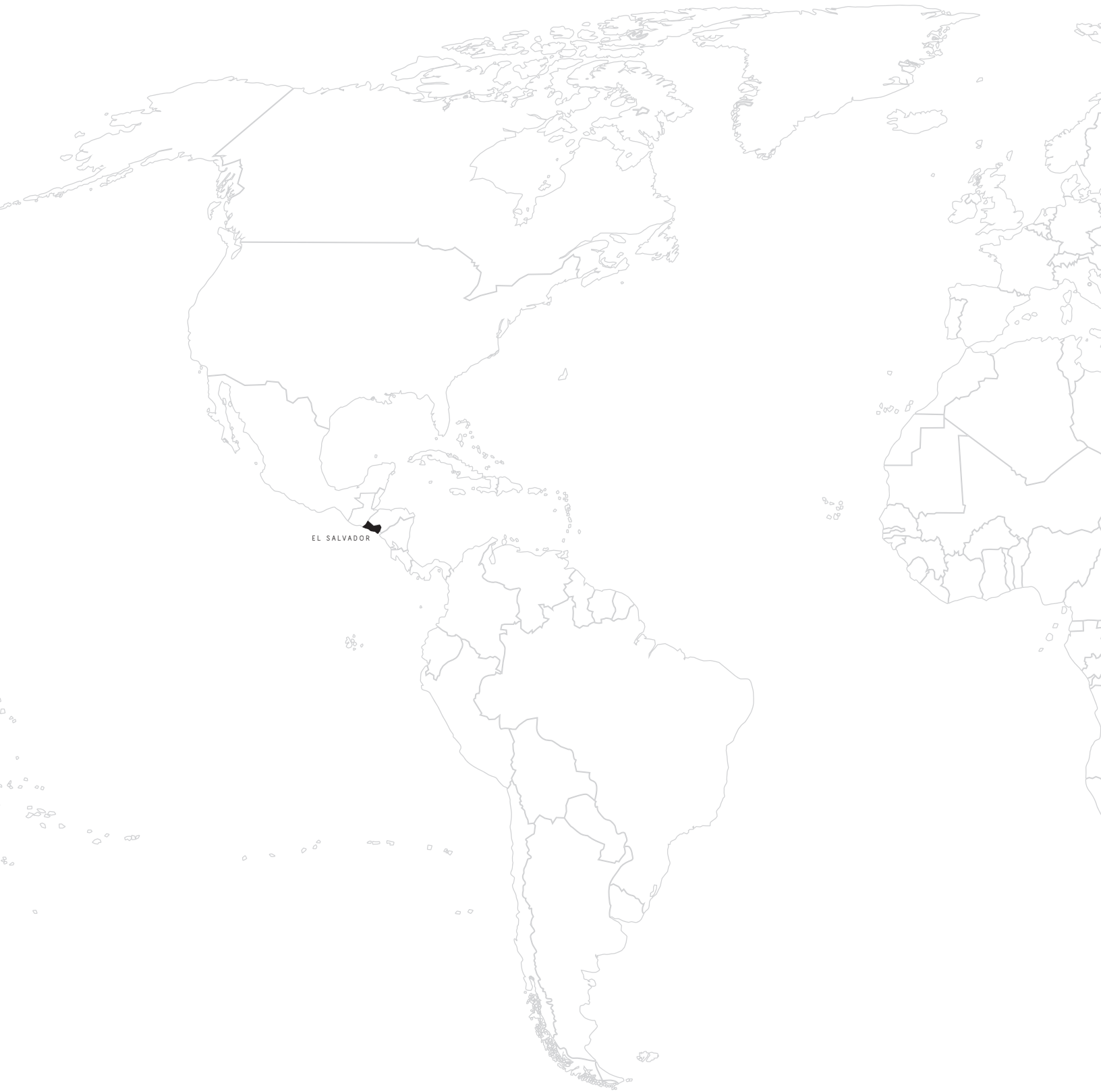
2014

BARTERED STATES
NEW-YORK • SAN SALVADOR

THE S-FILES
EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO
NEW-YORK
(S.V)

VENICE
BIENNIAL
(SIMON VEGA)

BIENNIAL
(MORÁN)



EL SALVADOR



Y.ES

COLLECT CONTEMPORARY EL SALVADOR

ON THE COVER

Ronald Moran's "Knife" is especially apt for the cover of Y.ES. Its gripping aesthetic and simultaneous position as an object of violence and an object for domestic use is emblematic of the double-edged sword that underlies much of El Salvador's sociopolitical situation. Moran's gesture of wrapping the knife in soft white fabric, perhaps inferring the protection of innocence, disarms the knife of its ability to sever. Instead, the knife is a sculpture and an object to appreciate, offering an opportunity to rethink and reinvent its function.



8. INTRODUCTION

Mario Cader-Frech,
“Y.ES Collect Contemporary Art El Salvador”
Claire Breukel,
“Y.ES! Generation Y In El Salvador ”

13. ARTISTS

Ronald Moran
Mayra Barraza
Irvin Morazan
Walterio Iraheta
Simón Vega
RETNA

47. ARTIST COLLECTIVES

55. MUSEUM DIRECTORS

Sam Keller
Bonnie Clearwater
Roberto Galicia

73. CURATORS

José Ruiz
Elvis Fuentes
Alanna Lockward
Alanna Heiss

99. ART HISTORIANS

Dr. Harper Montgomery
Kency Cornejo

111. COLLECTORS

Ella Fontanals-Cisneros
Christy Turlington Burns
Tom Healy

127. ART FAIRS

Marc Spiegler
Zelika Garcia
Mauro Herlitzka

141. MARKETS

Amy Cappellazzo
Maria Bonta de la Pezuela
Patricia Gardiner Amare
Ernst Hilger

161. PUBLIC ART PROGRAMS

Brandi Reddick

169. CRITICS

Celia Birbragher
Roger Atwood

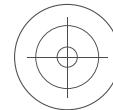
180. ARTIST DIRECTORY

KEY THEMES

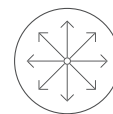
Throughout the twenty-eight Y.ES interviews four significant themes recur, the history of war in El Salvador, the (lack of) art market, the presence of the diaspora and importance of cultural exchange, and the impact of the Internet on the art community. To make research and referencing easier, we have marked each interview with a thematic icon so our readers know which texts address their particular theme of interest.



ART MARKET
The Art Market



HISTORY OF WAR
The History Of War in El Salvador



DIASPORA
The Diaspora and Cultural Exchange



INTERNET
The Impact of the Internet

MARIO CADER-FRECH



Image credit: Carlos Cader

Y.E.S
COLLECT
CONTEMPORARY
ART
EL SALVADOR

From my earliest introduction to the world of art and collecting, I knew I wanted my own art collection to include artists from my home country El Salvador. However, with the help of friends Tom Healy (*see page 122*) and Amy Cappellazzo (*see page 142*), who were also my initial guides through the contemporary art world, I was able to begin a much deeper and more rewarding journey that would culminate with the completion of this book. The journey began when Tom and Amy encouraged me to think not only about collecting Salvadoran art, but supporting art programs that focused on conceptual and avant-garde movements from El Salvador.

In the mid 1990s I began to proactively focus my attention on supporting the arts in El Salvador. At the time art movements in Costa Rica and Guatemala were beginning to gain some momentum, but Central America as a whole was still alarmingly underrepresented in major international art exhibitions. I soon realized that the reason for this was that most countries in Central America lacked a cohesive and organized cultural structure. This was especially true of El Salvador, and even though there were several great artists working both locally and internationally as part of the diaspora, there was no structured connective tissue in the form of institutions or written material that brought them together within an identifiable cultural framework. The country had after all endured a twelve year-long civil war, the aftermath of postwar reconstruction, and the outbreak of gang-related violence, which meant that the exportation of artistic and social movements to the rest of the world had been stunted. As a result, many people were not aware of what was happening in El Salvador, and for me this made what the artists had to say even more important. I endeavored to find ways in which to make these voices heard.

When I began supporting the Salvadoran contemporary art scene, my goal was to gather a comprehensive art collection of Salvadoran art, and enough documentary materials to illustrate at least a decade of critical exhibitions and activities within the country's art scene. I focused not only on making the art produced by Salvadoran contemporary artists known, but also on providing a space for an international presence within the country itself in order to foster critical international exchange.

In 2000, with the support of friends in Washington D.C., we opened one of the first exhibiting art spaces dedicated to showing conceptual art by Salvadoran artists in the Salvadoran Consulate. The exhibition program included artists from El Salvador, and Salvadoran artists living in the United States, who were making work that importantly dealt with

themes of identity, the consequences of the civil war and their emigration. This program remained open for ten years and eventually expanded to the consulates in Boston, New York and Miami, where my own art collection based on these artists, and artists working in El Salvador, is still on permanent view. Three years later I turned my attention to El Salvador and began working with the Museum of Art of El Salvador [MARTE], which was the first institution of its kind in the Mesoamerican region when it was inaugurated in 2003. With the help of New York-based curator Janet Phelps, and many friends and supporters, the MARTE Contemporary program (MARTE-C) was launched a year later in 2004. Ten years later, the program continues to showcase prominent contemporary art from abroad and supports the development of the artistic community in El Salvador. Artist exchanges, workshops, talks, performances, portfolio reviews, and seminars by invited artists, curators and museum directors have influenced dozens of aspiring Salvadoran artists to produce increasingly daring works. Through the hard work and support of visiting artists, curators and MARTE staff, many of whom are featured in this book, we have invited the international art world to El Salvador, and provided Salvadoran artists access to the outside world.

After the successes of each of these projects, and with ten years of MARTE-C programming documentation accrued, I realized the time had come to bring together the story of contemporary art in El Salvador. So in 2013, and as we celebrated the representation of El Salvador in the Venice Biennale with work by Simón Vega in the Arsenale pavilion, it became clear to me we needed to make a book that spoke not only of El Salvador's contemporary art scene in the country, but the impact of its creative community internationally. With the help of two dear friends and long time supporters of the development of Salvadoran art, Claire Breukel a New York-based curator and chief curator of MARTE Contemporary and the acclaimed artist Simón Vega, we embarked on the making of Y.ES. This book, I hope, will tell what has now become the global story of Salvadoran art to an international audience, and encourage continued research and artistic inquiry in the region.

CLAIRE BREUKEL



Image credit: Brian Burkhardt

Y.E.S! GENERATION Y IN EL SALVADOR

El Salvador is the smallest and most densely populated country in Central America, with an economy that relies on remittances from Salvadorans living and working abroad. Although it has been just over twenty years since the end of its civil war, the country continues to struggle with poverty and gang violence. But in the midst of these complexities that are not atypical of many other Latin American countries, a dynamic culture and tight-knit contemporary art community persists.

Y.ES is a window on this contemporary art community, which is one of the most under-recognized “scenes” in Latin America. As such, to speak about the last ten years of contemporary art in El Salvador, much less to document it, is to attempt to put a stake in a conversation about artistic practice that is both disparate and in flux. This is exactly the aim of Y.ES.

To do this, we interviewed twenty-eight diverse art professionals from all over the world. Although individually unique, their views and ideas collectively give context to Salvadoran art within Central America, Latin America and the world, and together paint a charismatic portrait of Salvadoran contemporary practice.

HERE ARE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF WHAT TO EXPECT: Curator José Ruiz reminds us that the country’s civil war has had a direct and lasting impact on the art community in El Salvador, and that many of the artists living and working in El Salvador today—Ronald Moran, Walterio Iraheta, Simón Vega and Mayra Barraza—have indelibly felt its impact. However, in their interviews, these four artists speak about opportunities they have had to exhibit their work abroad, a sign that the art community is increasingly expanding its reach.

Conversely, United States-based diaspora artists, RETNA and Irvin Morazan, discuss the intricacies of their experiences coming back to their native country. Similarly, collector Christy Turlington Burns shares her childhood stories traveling between Miami and San Salvador, her mother’s place of birth.

Curators Alanna Heiss, Elvis Fuentes and Alanna Lockward as well as art historian Kency Cornejo, museum director Bonnie Clearwater and public art program specialist Brandi Reddick have all visited El Salvador, and here recount their experiences participating in art programs initiated by the Cultural Center of Spain in El Salvador and the Museum of Art

of El Salvador [MARTE]. Over the past decade the role of the museum has been significant, and director Roberto Galicia uses its evolution as a departure point to contextualize the role of the art institution in El Salvador.

A selection of interviews discuss El Salvador's art presence in relation to that of the rest of Latin America, and by extension the presence of Latin America within the wider art realm. Collector Ella Fontanals-Cisneros discusses her foundation's widespread commitment to supporting Latin American art, while PINTA Art Show founder Mauro Herlitzka describes a shift in the focus of institutional collecting, and the role of the art fair in making the region's art better known. This is complemented by Zelika Garcia's explanation of the role of the Zona MACO art fair, as well as Marc Spiegler's explanation of the programming the Art Basel art fairs have in place to facilitate the participation of lesser known galleries. Sam Keller, Fondation Beyeler director and Art Basel chairman, shares his personal experiences developing relationships within Latin America, as well as the authentic integration of Latin American artists within the foundation's program. Sotheby's expert Maria Bonta de la Pezuela offers an invaluable bird's eye view of the region's art market, and contributes ideas as to the role of biennials in Latin America. Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Professor of Latin American Art, Dr. Harper Montgomery, describes her role curating the 2004 San Juan Triennial that was initiated in the 1970s to bring artists together within Latin America's dispersed market.

This discussion of the art market is expanded upon by Austrian gallery owner Ernst Hilger and Salvadoran Gallery 123 director Patricia Gardiner Amare who offer crucial insights on the global market for Salvadoran art. Contemporary art expert Amy Cappellazzo is positive the market is growing and offers a message that art from niche areas within Central America will only gain increasing exposure.

ArtNexus founder Celia Birbragher and arts writer Roger Atwood agree that an important contributor to providing "good" exposure for contemporary art is critical writing that situates artistic production conceptually rather than geographically. To this end, collector and writer Tom Healy describes the

unfortunate defensive posture that many "local" cultures take on when being compared to larger cities—confirming that contemporary art communities are bonded not by borders, but by ideas.

Y.ES is a journey—one that is conceptual rather than geographic, though it reaches from the experimental collectives in San Salvador to the Venice Biennale to the booths of Art Basel Miami Beach, and beyond. The artists, curators, directors, gallerists, historians, collectors and critics whose participation, creation, cultivation and collecting continues to shape the journey are vital. We sincerely thank each and every one of them, and we hope you, our readers, will be inspired to more deeply connect with El Salvador, it's contemporary art, and take this book as a call to action:

Y.ES! I support Salvadoran contemporary art!

SPECIAL THANKS :

When Mario Cader-Frech first came to Simón Vega and I with the idea of creating a book about contemporary art of El Salvador, he made it clear that he wanted us to approach this as an independent research project. Despite this humility, Mario's patronage and efforts to promote Salvadoran contemporary art over the past decade have been significant and inevitably his name is mentioned throughout many parts of this publication. My sincerest thanks go to Mario for his vision and generosity. Thank you also to my co-editor Simón Vega for his invaluable insight and helping Y.ES seek out the best interviews; Melissa Diaz for her patience as assistant editor and proofreader; Ronald Moran and Walterio Iraheta for their cherished advice; Jacober and Associates for lending us their incredible design talents; and all Y.ES interviewees whose contributions have created a more comprehensive portrait of art in, and about, El Salvador.



ARTISTS

RONALD MORAN

MAYRA BARRAZA

IRVIN MORAZAN

WALTERIO IRAHETA

SIMÓN VEGA

RETNA

RONALD MORAN

ARTIST



Image courtesy the artist

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
FEBRUARY 6, 2013
IN SAN SALVADOR



RONALD MORAN
INSTALLATION VIEW OF
HOME SWEET HOME

2004
PROMETHEUS FOUNDATION, LUCCA, ITALY
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST



SIMÓN VEGA: *You began working as a graphic designer, how did you transition to becoming a visual artist?*

RONALD MORAN: For a long time I supported my artistic career through graphic design. I worked in the media, for advertising agencies and even at the Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y el Arte (The Ministry of Arts and Culture, now called Secultura). I did this so that I would have a financial foundation and wouldn't have to depend directly on selling my artwork. During this time, I also worked as a fine artist. This was really hard because it was about combining two very different visual languages. Even though they appear to come from the same source, media, advertising and graphic design obey specific rules, while fine art comes from a more personal investigation. I would switch back and forth, and was always in a state of continuous process. I specialized in visual arts at the Centro Nacional de Artes in San Salvador (The National Center for the Arts), and spent a few years studying art at the Applied Arts School of Dr. José Matías Delgado University—and graphic design helped to maintain my art practice until 2004.

SV: *What characterizes your early work?*

RM: I was always more interested in the alternative. After all, that's why I decided to study visual arts and not graphic design. It seemed like design would be a more time-consuming career, and it wasn't the visual language I was interested in exploring. However, I was interested in exploring other media outside of what was considered "traditional." I experimented with painting and combined it with installation, and also incorporated elements of photography with painting. Then I felt the need to explore experimental two-dimensional work and sculptural media, which gave me yet another language of expression. From 1996 on I made more three-dimensional work, and then from 2003 on I focused much more on alternative and non-traditional media.

SV: *I remember you created an installation for the Central American Biennial in Managua. How did this exploration with installation inform the work you did as part of the collective ADOBE (see page 50)?*

RM: It was crucial. In fact, the third biennial in Managua coincided with the beginning of ADOBE's formation. This moment greatly influenced me. It was inspiring to work on the same creative frequency, and to have such a strong affinity with the other artists, as a group. We learned through practical

experience and began working in a more group-conscious way. With ADOBE, I was able to experiment with new approaches to art making.

SV: *“Home Sweet Home” has been a significant series of work in your career. The series marks a pivotal moment for the evolution of your practice as well as a professional benchmark when one of the works (also called Home Sweet Home) sold to the Martin Z. Margulies Collection in Miami. How did this series develop, and what doors did this acquisition open for you?*

RM: I knew it was important from the start. It felt like a huge bomb went off when I started working on that series. From the moment the idea was conceived, and as I was writing and researching for it, I felt something like a heartbeat telling me I might have a great work on my hands. I think the work really broke ground for my practice.

I first exhibited an installation from this series in 2004 as part of an international initiative started by the British American Tobacco brand Kent. Kent was conducting research on contemporary art in several regions including El Salvador, and they sponsored an exhibition. They gave the artists guidelines to follow, and it was clear they wanted interventions with specific features. Based on these guidelines a real kitchen emerged, and *Home Sweet Home* was made.

The creation of this artwork catapulted my career, and resulted in my work becoming known internationally. *Home Sweet Home* traveled to Madrid for the exhibition “Todo Incluido” that featured work from Central America and the Caribbean. This was a huge exhibition, and it placed the region on the map. After that, many opportunities came about including an exhibition in Lucca, Italy, curated by Marco Scotini and Ida Pisani from the Prometheus Foundation, who were interested in finding artwork from other regions. Although Lucca is a small city compared to other European cities, this exhibition was important, as it was practically like a Latin American biennial. As a result of this exhibition I was contacted by a lot of galleries. At the same time I began developing a new piece, *The Children’s Room*. I showed this piece as part of MARTE Contemporary’s Interventions program in El Salvador. The work was very well received, almost in a compulsive fashion. Since then, *Home Sweet Home* and *The Children’s Room* have been assembled seven different times in different places—and there is no doubt they will continue

to be assembled in new sites. They are like good books that over time demand more editions. I have always considered this series a work in progress, and I always have in mind that a work of art is not limited so to speak.

SV: Has the international reception of your work influenced your practice?

RM: Yes, I have experienced a lot of multiculturalism—different modes of expression by different artists from different latitudes—and this has influenced me to make work that needs little literal translation to be understood by different audiences. Artistically, I am interested in connecting with people by using methods common to the everyday, and by using symbols that are understood by a variety of cultures—without losing sight of their meaning in my own culture.

SV: Would you agree that even though your work is accessible to audiences generally, the themes are inspired by the sociopolitical surroundings of El Salvador?

RM: A common thread in all my series of work is the need for social reflection or human reflection. These are not exclusively nihilistic ideas of pain, suffering, abuse and violence, and I try to go beyond this while still referring to these issues. The social factor will always be there as the conditions in which we live in in El Salvador are always present, and I think it will always be present in the artwork produced in this country. In a way, being involved and engaged is also about assimilating ones surroundings, and maybe it sounds a little old fashioned, but it's about being committed.

El Salvador has had many years of total evasion—we had a whole generation of artists evading important subjects by contemplating an idyllic reality that did, and does, not exist. Our generation is consistently reflecting on who we are through what we do. It is not only in our art making, but also in our sense of social responsibility to teach and educate others. We cannot remain inert in a convulsing reality that is unfortunately always changing for the worse. El Salvador is a place where good things are rare and generally annulled by an avalanche of problems coming toward you. So yes, I consider myself working within this, and my work is consistently connected to it.

"EL SALVADOR HAS HAD MANY YEARS OF TOTAL EVASION—WE HAD A WHOLE GENERATION OF ARTISTS EVADING IMPORTANT SUBJECTS BY CONTEMPLATING AN IDYLIC REALITY THAT DID, AND DOES, NOT EXIST. OUR GENERATION IS CONSISTENTLY REFLECTING ON WHO WE ARE THROUGH WHAT WE DO. IT IS NOT ONLY IN OUR ART MAKING, BUT ALSO IN OUR SENSE OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO TEACH AND EDUCATE OTHERS."

RONALD MORAN
DETAIL FROM
THE CHILDREN'S ROOM

2007
ON VIEW AT THE 52ND VENICE BIENNALE, ITALY
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST



MAYRA BARRAZA

ARTIST



Image credit: Sandro Stivella

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
APRIL 10, 2013



MAYRA BARRAZA
DEER DANCE

2009
FROM THE SERIES "INVISIBLE MAN"
OIL ON CANVAS
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST



CLAIRE BREUKEL: *You are one of the founders of La Fábri-K, a studio and exhibition space that functions between an artist collective and an association. What motivated you to start La Fábri-K?*

MAYRA BARRAZA: We were a group of friends with a space we could use as we wished. We had many discussions as to how each person saw the space, ourselves as individual artists and as a group. On the one hand we felt it was our responsibility to give something back to the community, and on the other we needed time to do our own explorations. I greatly value the feeling of friendship and solidarity we had among the group then, and it was amazing to see how ideas evolved unconsciously between us. Even though it has been several years since I have been a part of it, I am very happy with the experience I had at La Fábri-K (see page 50).

CB: *What, in your opinion, is the role of the collective today?*

MB: I dare to say that collectives are the future and the present of the art community. When we work on our own it is harder to work for the collective good, but I believe it can be done by forming creative partnerships and from within institutions that work for the common good. For me, this is a worthy and necessary challenge.

CB: *How has contemporary artistic practice in El Salvador evolved since the 1990s?*

"I DARE TO SAY THAT COLLECTIVES ARE THE FUTURE AND THE PRESENT OF THE ART COMMUNITY. WHEN WE WORK ON OUR OWN, IT IS HARDER TO WORK FOR THE COLLECTIVE GOOD, BUT I BELIEVE IT CAN BE DONE BY WORKING COOPERATIVELY, FORMING CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS AND FROM WITHIN INSTITUTIONS THAT WORK FOR THE COMMON GOOD."

MB: In the 1990s El Salvador was quite a desolate place to be. A whole generation of artists and intellectuals were gone—either dead or in exile—and those that survived had an inhibiting culture instinct. In the past twenty years or so many things have changed, and in some respects many things have remained the same. I don't think this is the platform to unravel the full story, but I can say there are more artists working in new ways and speaking through their artwork than ever before. There are more voices of both anger and of joy, working in unconventional media, and reinventing possibilities. There is more space for experimentation and purposeless action, yet there is also more consciousness of the role of art as a powerful vehicle to explore ideas. Of course money and ambition are also at stake, but that's nothing new in El Salvador...or in Timbuktu for that matter.

CB: *Do you believe that your experience as a female artist living and working in El Salvador has been different to that of your male counterparts?*

MB: I can only suppose the experience has been different, but just as much as I can suppose the experience has been different for my female counterparts as well. Art is a personal experience after all. It is true that there are points of intersection along the way that make it a collective endeavor, and I like to think that these are vital points of reference for any society. In my case, making art has been mostly a lonesome road to travel in El Salvador. I have worked with other women, and I would say there are improved conditions for artists in general that are not specific to these women artists. What does worry me from time to time is that there are malignant stereotypes of women artists out there, and I wonder how these stereotypes affect the work of young women artists today—particularly the stereotypes that advocate self-victimization as a means of denouncing women’s victimization at large.

CB: *Since the 1990s, you have exhibited internationally, in South America, Europe and the United States. Have these audiences received your work differently to local audiences?*

MB: What little feedback there has been has usually been through direct contact with people at the openings, or maybe through email when they write to me about the work. However, a couple of years ago, I began to do interventions in public spaces. It was right after I had finished hanging a small ten-year retrospective at a successful gallery. I remember that moment pretty well as I walked out of the silence and indifference of the people in the gallery, and went out to the street where people yelled things at me—sometimes cheering, sometimes insulting—reacting nevertheless in a very vital way. The immediacy of it all was really powerful. I guess I needed that at that point in my life, because I was feeling somewhat invisible. Nowadays I work and don’t think about what other people think. That is not to say that I don’t care or listen to how other people see my work, but it’s just that I feel the work can stand on its own.

CB: *You are currently exhibiting work as part of the Mixtape exhibition at the Museum of Latin American Art in Los Angeles. The exhibition is focused on*

drawing and sound, specifically songs. How has the marrying of song and art in this exhibition connected with your experience of being an artist working in El Salvador?

MB: The drawing of mine in the exhibition is part of the Museum of Latin American Art’s collection, but I feel that the exhibition’s themes connect with the whole series of works that this drawing belongs to. The series is titled “Republic of Death,” and it comprises thirty watercolors using texts from newspaper reports of daily murders. These texts reminded me of tombstone inscriptions, and I would make one drawing each day after reading the newspaper. This series was very difficult for me to do, as I was partly wary and partly devastated by the information. I would usually work with music playing, so sound and songs were in the background all the time, mostly because I had to hold on to something to keep myself together. So while listening to the radio, I would intercalate the songs’ lyrics. This series certainly makes evident how context can alienate and contribute to the meaning of a work of art.

CB: *Can you describe the support of contemporary art by local institutions in El Salvador?*

MB: Locally, there is little support for contemporary art. It is difficult for art in general in El Salvador, and for contemporary art more so. There are very few spaces to exhibit, no financial support for investigative and creative research and hardly any feedback, academic or otherwise. Young artists can get picked up by the commercial market pretty quickly, but are often dropped just as quickly and have to look for further opportunities elsewhere. The Spanish Cultural Center has fueled much of what has been going on artistically during the last ten to fifteen years, but after the financial crisis it has had to reinvent itself.

I have always believed that if there are no spaces available then you invent your own, and if there is no funding then you make your way with what is available, and if there is no feedback then you have to make up for it with different voices in your head, or none at all...silence is also a good working companion.

IRVIN MORAZAN

ARTIST



Image courtesy the artist

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
DECEMBER 4, 2013
IN MIAMI



IRVIN MORAZAN
HIS RETURN (DETAIL)

2012
TWILIGHT PERFORMANCE AT UNTITLED ART FAIR
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST



CLAIRE BREUKEL: *You were born in San Salvador?*

IRVIN MORAZAN: Yes, I was born in San Salvador in 1976.

CB: *Tell me about your trajectory, specifically how you began to make art to becoming a full-time artist based in New York City?*

IM: I was always an artist and would draw all the time when I was a kid at school in El Salvador. We left El Salvador when I was eight, and then drawing somehow translated to photography when I was fourteen. I went to the School of Visual Arts and got my Bachelors in Fine Art, majoring in photography, and I was set on photography and photographing sculptures. However, after I graduated, I started making sculptures and performing with them. Now I perform wearing my sculptures and I also photograph and video these performances.

CB: *Your work carries a strong thread of reference to Salvadoran culture, including deities and symbols. How did you come to incorporate these references?*

IM: I grew up playing on the steps of the old ruins in El Salvador. They are not like the preserved pyramids of Mexico or the beautiful temples you find in Peru, where there is a lot of visible history behind them. The pyramids in El Salvador have been looted and there is no history written about

them. It's a very poor country with little money to preserve them. My current work is connected with these early experiences in the ruins of El Salvador.

"THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME I WENT BACK TO EL SALVADOR AFTER SIXTEEN YEARS. IT WAS A REALLY INTENSE TIME. I COULDN'T GO BACK TO MY HOME BECAUSE THE AREA WAS REALLY INFESTED WITH GANGS SO INSTEAD I LIVED LIKE A TOURIST AND IT FELT VERY STRANGE."

CB: *How did this exploration of personal history in your artwork meet the contemporary moments that you are experiencing living in New York City?*

IM: As a child I always knew I'd be going back to Salvadoran ancient culture, and that is where my project started. From this it has taken major shifts and turns, and is influenced by contemporary culture in New York City: the speed of the city, the colors and different textures and the velocity of places like Times Square where my studio is located. El Salvador is very small so most of my professors didn't know much about the country. This left me open to explore, work and play with my past in my present environment.

CB: *In his work, Simón Vega integrates found objects as a purposeful reference to the stereotypes of fundamentalism affiliated with “developing” nations. Has your Salvadoran background impacted your practical approach to making your work, for example, your headdresses?*

IM: Before I started making the headdress sculptures, I used to make abstract sculptures using similar textures that I put on the wall or the floor. I invented my own adhesive that formed the skin of these structures by mixing Coton glue and salt, and heating it in the microwave. Once it’s at the right consistency it becomes malleable. Then it hardens to become as strong as tree bark and that’s what the skin of the sculptures is made from. This material is also lightweight so that I could wear them. These early abstract sculptures evolved to become the headdresses, and both series were always made to be functional.

CB: *You do have an inventive approach to materials. Would your work be different if you had not grown up in the United States?*

IM: My work would not be the same at all. I’m influenced by El Salvador, but right now I would say my work is more influenced by New York City’s street culture and subcultures. The only element connected to El Salvador is the ritual element and the headdress itself. Subcultures themselves are very ritualistic, and I’m really influenced by the parallels between subcultures, shamanism and indigenous cultures—I see a lot of parallels between these two worlds and I combine them in my work.

CB: *Have you exhibited your work in Central America?*

IM: I have a show of photographs in Guatemala right now, and I was in El Salvador in 2009 to do a performance at the Museum of Art of El Salvador [MARTE]. This was the first time I went back to El Salvador after sixteen years. It was a really intense time. I couldn’t go back to my home because the area was really infested with gangs so instead I lived like a tourist and it felt very strange.

CB: *What was it like to show your work in the context of other artists from El Salvador?*

IM: I became friends with Simón Vega and some other artists, and we devel-

oped a really tight bond over the years. I felt at home with the artists there. I worked with two break-dancers that were part of a group of kids that had started break-dancing schools in order to stay off the streets and out of gangs. These two kids worked with me on my performance. Originally, we were supposed to perform inside of the museum, but they wouldn’t let us—because the museum won’t allow street performers in the museum—so we did it outside. El Salvador is very formal in that way, everyone dresses up for the openings and the museum is a completely different social space. I guess the museum had heard this guy from New York, who was born in El Salvador, is bringing these street kids into the museum. They thought it was not right so we engaged in different conversations that I am not really used to. In New York City, any museum would have loved to have break-dancers inside their space and would see them as part of the work. In this way, El Salvador is the complete opposite of New York.

CB: *It’s really interesting that your work was not facilitated inside the museum, because to a large degree your work purposefully operates outside the boundaries of formal spaces...*

IM: Actually I thought it was really fascinating that we did it outside. It made it more exciting because we had this dramatic sculpture behind us and outdoor lighting that was just so odd. The people really liked it and were really interested in what was happening.

CB: *In addition to this conservatism, what hurdles do contemporary artists working in El Salvador need to overcome, that you would not have in New York?*

IM: The Internet has changed things. When I went to El Salvador a lot of the younger artists that were in the audience became Facebook friends with me and they email me asking me questions all the time. Simón Vega is really involved as a mentor, and with me I think they felt, “he’s from our country and he’s in New York doing things there.” The issues that come up have a lot to do with not having the contemporary art world around you, like one would have in New York City, and which has been my number one education. The Chelsea Lower East Side and Brooklyn education is priceless. El Salvador has limitations, and even if a contemporary institution invites you to show

there are limitations, which is a problem. In New York City, I have the liberty to do whatever I want as an artist and I think that has been a major opportunity.

CB: *Your work blurs references to Salvadoran culture with contemporary American culture, which makes it accessible. Can you comment?*

IM: I try to make work that communicates to my audience in “universal” and abstract ways. For example, the performances I did at the “Untitled” Art Fair during Art Basel Miami Beach were inspired by rituals performed by Tibetan Buddhist monks. I closed my performance by putting a mirror in front of the audience’s faces and poured energy drinks onto their reflections. Traditionally, Tibetan monks would spiritually cleanse paintings by pouring water on their surfaces to get rid of evil spirits. Over decades the paintings would start to fade and eventually become damaged. So now what they do is to place a mirror in front of the painting and pour water over its surface so that the reflection of the cleansing creates the same effect as the physical cleansing. For my performance I used energy drinks as a metaphor for overindulgence. I took the opposite approach in preparing for it by fasting for a hundred hours in order to achieve clarity before the performance. Even if it is abstract, if the audience can come to some understanding, then I have succeeded.

CB: *Do you make money from your work?*

IM: I am a photographer and I sell photographs in small editions, but I am still trying to figure out how to sell a sculpture or a performance. Even my performance professors in the United States, who have been professional artists for many years, are trying to figure out how to make a living out of their work. If I didn’t have sculpture or photography it would be hard.

CB: *It seems like we are in a moment—evident at the art fairs this year—when attention is shifting to contemporary art from Central America. Do you have concerns about this attention or do you find it exciting?*

IM: It’s interesting. I do see a focus on Latino artists who are generally seen as a hot thing right now, regardless of where they are from in Latin America. I think that as long as I stay true to my work I will be okay. Two years ago, I did a performance in Times Square and it was about the spectacle. I featured a lowrider with hydraulics, and had permission to use the same amount of

decibels as Alicia Keys used during her performance at Times Square. It was a grand spectacle. However, for the performance at Untitled art fair I did something more spiritual and personal. The crowd was really posh and polished, and I wanted to make the performance more personal for that audience.

CB: *You were also the recipient of the Cisneros Foundation grant?*

IM: Yes, I got the Cisneros grant to go to Mexico City to do a residency. That was really amazing. I spent the whole summer in Mexico. Most of my education has been in New York City, so I haven’t really studied with other artists from other places, and that was a really great experience. The residency itself was very conceptual. There weren’t a lot of object makers or performers. I didn’t make anything and I focused on learning about the city. I was strongly influenced by it and went to these Santería markets that have been there for hundreds of years, and they sell everything! I even went to a market where they sold human bones for eighty pesos. You can buy a whole skeleton just like you can buy anything else.

CB: *Would you say that your work is motivated by an interest in social practice?*

IM: I’m really influenced by life itself, whether it be by markets, New York City streets, graffiti culture or how Manhattan is turning into a mall. Actually, I received a grant to go to Japan and I’m really interested to study Japanese subcultures. I’m trying to travel and learn about rituals, practices and cultures in other places as well.

CB: *How do you feel about being classified as an artist who’s from El Salvador?*

IM: I’m really proud to always be representing my country. Even if I start making landscape paintings tomorrow, I’ll always be an artist from El Salvador. It’s a poor little country, and we have few museums, and our pyramids have lost their meaning because of looting—looting by time, poverty, the war and gangs. The conversation around El Salvador is always about gangs, and it’s never about culture or what we are trying to do here. What Simón [Vega] is trying to do and what I’m trying to do is help to change that.



IRVIN MORAZAN
PERFORMANCE IN THE CENTER OF THE WORLD

2011
COLOR PHOTOGRAPH
PERFORMANCE IN TIMES SQUARE, NEW YORK,
MADE POSSIBLE WITH THE SUPPORT OF
THE TIMES SQUARE ALLIANCE AND EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO.
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST

WALTERIO IRAHETA

ARTIST



Image courtesy the artist

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
JULY 29, 2013
IN SAN SALVADOR



WALTERIO IRAHETA
SÚPER CHICA EN ATITLAN (DETAIL)

2003
COLOR PHOTOGRAPH
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST



SIMÓN VEGA: *Share some of your experiences representing El Salvador at the 2011 Venice Biennale.*

WALTERIO IRAHETA: The Venice Biennale was exciting both because of the impressive level of the event and because of its long history and tradition. Participating means bringing your work into a universal context, with “universal” in quotation marks of course. By placing yourself in that context you see the discourse of your own work in comparison with other international discourses. I participated in the Latin American Pavilion, ILLA. The curator, Alfons Hug, was interested in the marginal characteristics of Latin America, and in the disordered development that has been prevalent on the continent in recent years. Problems of marginality include poverty, population explosion, unplanned architecture and urbanity. I showed my series “Far Away Brothers Style” that spoke to the theme of unplanned architecture and urbanity. The work is a typological taxonomic study of the natural architectonic changes of El Salvador.

SV: *How has exhibiting your work internationally impacted your career?*

WI: I feel that the creative process is a very personal process. The interests that I have rise from the context in which I live, and these become modified as my context changes depending on where I move, where I live and where I am day-to-day. My participation in international events in Pontevedra, Havana, Valencia, São Paulo and Venice contribute to the work. By putting the work into circulation what interests me is subjects and topics shift with the context of my encounters, however the work also has autonomy and its own life if you will.

What has resulted from showing in international collective spaces is that more people see the work and more curators have become interested in what is happening in El Salvador, and with other artists working in the region. What has been most rewarding for me is the experience of traveling to places where things are happening, and to engage on another level of dialogue when talking with other artists and curators. I’m interested in understanding the matches and mismatches of what happens in this country compared to what happens in other countries, and seeing if other artists and curators share the same (and different) concerns.

SV: *How does performance factor within your work?*

WI: I understand that my potential and ability as an artist comes from my formation, which is a point of inflection between the academy and the understanding of art through contemporary means, for example, technology. However, I also use education as a resource. In the first stages of my studies, I did painting, sculpting, modeling, ceramics and carving. In college I studied graphic design and then I did two internships, one in Mexico for a year studying engraving and the other one in Chicago studying carving. I am also the son of a generation that consumes its time with technology, using photography, video, projections and the Internet. I am privileged by being at the edge of both of these eras (or moments), and that allows me to move comfortably among resources associated as academic as well as other means defined by technology.

Performance is a resource I barely use unless it is cooperatively with other artists. So, perhaps I don’t understand my work as performance but aspects of the work are performative. When I go to the Indian zones of Guatemala with a Superman costume and try to convince the locals to wear a superhero cape, or when I improvise a soccer match in their neighborhood so that I can later take pictures with them in Spanish League Barcelona and Real Madrid team uniforms, that is performative. I am interested in exploring the expressive possibilities of these people by having them participate in the creative process and the execution of the work. It is performative when you create the basis to involve entire communities to work on a piece, but not as performance itself. It interests me when work goes beyond presentation or documentation to become a living work.

SV: *It is interesting that you are an artist who has experienced the local, regional and international art scene, and that you work with resources that are classic or academic, as well as contemporary. How do you situate yourself within these worlds today?*

WI: It is complicated. I have been an artist for twenty-three years, and still see my currency as within the Salvadoran and regional art world. If I had to situate myself, it is between the trail that other artists are leaving and the younger generation. I believe that older generations of artists should open

possibilities for younger generations, and in that way be a joint or bridge. I like being able to discuss art with someone that was working in the 1970s, and being able to identify with people that are producing work now. I think that's how I measure my role: to be identified with a younger generation of artists.

"I'M INTERESTED IN UNDERSTANDING THE MATCHES AND MISMATCHES OF WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS COUNTRY COMPARED TO WHAT HAPPENS IN OTHER COUNTRIES, AND SEEING IF OTHER ARTISTS AND CURATORS SHARE THE SAME (AND DIFFERENT) CONCERNS."

SV: *How do you position your work, which is didactic and pedagogical, within the parameters of international biennales and art fairs?*

WI: The international art circuit keeps shifting what is taken and consumed as art, and generates spaces to accommodate this. I am interested in the fact that I live on making art only. For example, I love that galleries consider me part of their group of represented artists and that each year I have around three to four exhibitions in galleries in Panama, Guatemala and the United States. It delights me that it's still happening and I want to keep doing it. However, lately I have become very passionate about introducing the work in the context where it is produced to see how people respond to it. The ADOBE collective (see page 50) that I was part of made interventions in public spaces for the mere necessity of taking art out of protected exhibition spaces. Now the graffiti and street art movements give me a sense of fascination. I am starting to feel the need to introduce parts of my work into that street context.

SV: *Do you see this happening in El Salvador?*

WI: I like the streets and the public spaces in El Salvador and Guatemala. I know these countries best and it is where I've lived and performed. However, when it is time to travel, I always find places where I feel that I can introduce my work or where I can leave something personal behind.

WALTERIO IRAHETA
SÚPER CHICA EN ATITLAN

2003
DRAWING, GRAPHITE ON PAPER
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST



SIMÓN VEGA

ARTIST



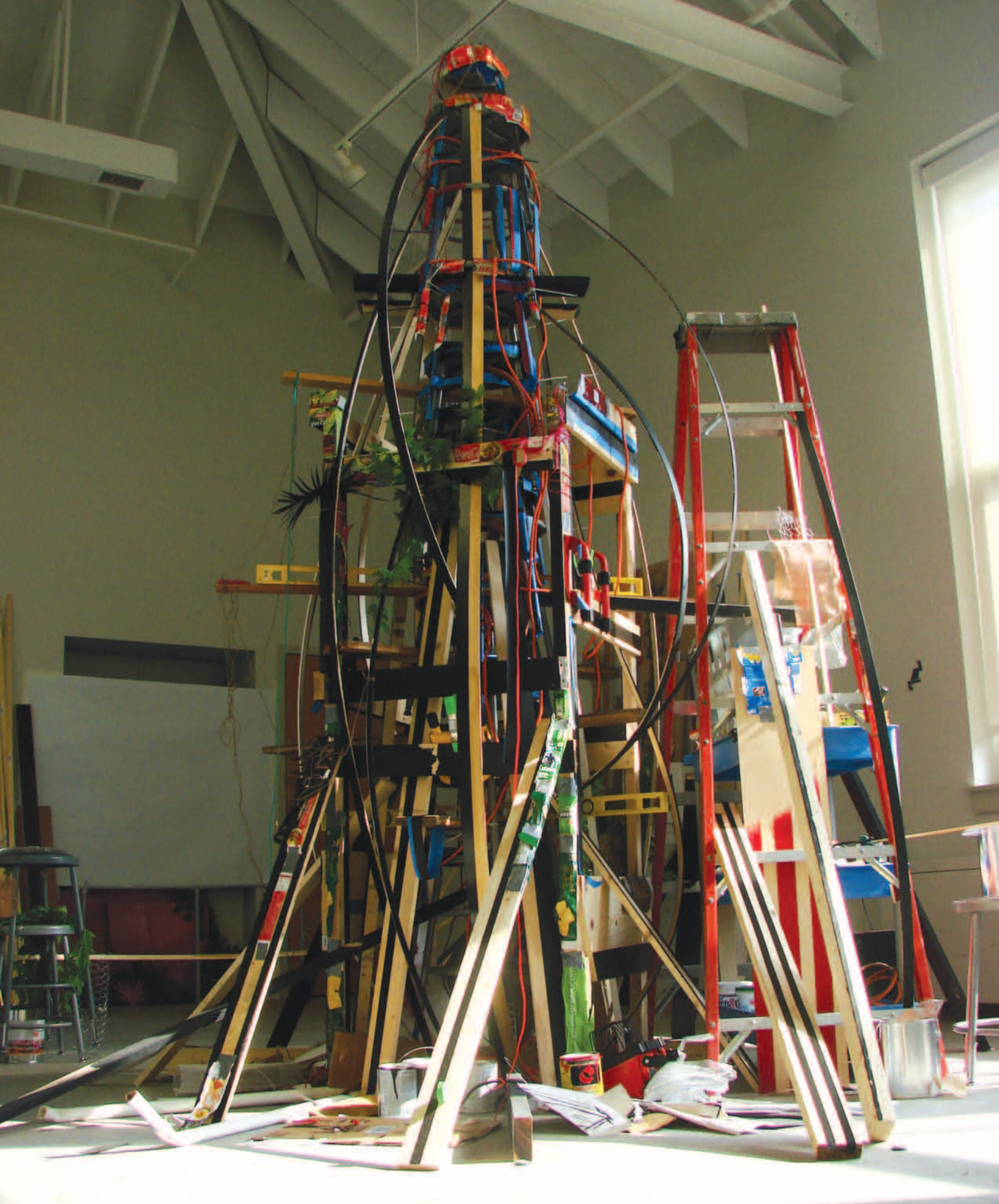
Image courtesy the artist

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
SEPTEMBER 18, 2013
IN VIENNA



SIMÓN VEGA
*ANTI MONUMENT TO THE THIRD
WORLD INTERNATIONAL*

2011
EPHEMERAL INSTALLATION AT
ARLINGTON ARTS CENTER, ARLINGTON
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST



CLAIRE BREUKEL: *How did you become interested in art?*

SIMÓN VEGA: We had a lot of books and encyclopedias at home, and I also took a trip to Europe when I was twelve that made a big impression and instilled in me great respect for works of art. I started drawing very early. I always wanted to do something related to drawing, but when I finished high school in the 1990s there were no art schools to choose from in El Salvador, only architecture and graphic design schools. I studied graphic design for two years, which is where I met all of the other artists from ADOBE (see page 50). After graduating I worked for two years as a graphic designer doing illustrations and logos, but I hated the office life and its routine. Eventually I had the opportunity to study in Mexico where my dad lived. I studied in Xalapa in Veracruz for six years. Here I was never taught art history beyond the early 20th century and there was almost no mention of contemporary art. But when I made the short trip to Mexico City I saw artists like Francis Alÿs and Julio González. Whenever I traveled back to El Salvador I wanted to make art, but now I wanted to make installations, actions and happenings, so I started consciously experimenting in other formats.

CB: *During this time you also made work as part of the ADOBE collective. How did the group come together, and what projects did you do?*

SV: While I lived in Mexico I came back to El Salvador every year and did a solo exhibition of painting and drawings each time. I finished my studies and returned to El Salvador for good in 2000, which is when I was selected for the Central American Biennial along with fellow artists Walterio Iraheta (see page 32), Ronald Moran (see page 16), Verónica Vides and José David Herrera. While we were being interviewed for the biennial we talked about doing more installations and more work in public, and we thought this would really work as a collective! So we formed ADOBE. We started by playing around and eventually we did an exhibition in the Centro, known as downtown San Salvador, which consciously comprised installations and interventions. The exhibition theme was “Boxed City.” I was doing a lot of drawings of architecture inspired by middle-class housing in El Salvador, which is very boxy. I translated my drawings into an installation of cardboard boxes that were representational of these houses. I then wrote gang-graffiti on the outside of the boxes to relate them to the increased presence of gangs impacting El Salvador. I attempted to show enclosed homes, because after five o’clock, people couldn’t leave their homes. This boxed housing unit became the theme of the project. Everyone in the group handled it differ-

ently, but we shared in common the use of cardboard, which seemed like the perfect medium. We continued to work as ADOBE for six years before we went our own way.

CB: *Was forming a collective artistically significant for you at this time?*

SV: Yes. We were interested in creating collective pieces which involved discussion from very different points of view, applying different methodologies, sharing ideas and spaces to make art. I felt working in this way made us take risks, and a lot of projects ended up being created in the street. In this way ADOBE was responding to a social phenomenon happening in El Salvador.

CB: *Can you describe the landscape of contemporary art and the opportunities available to you at that time?*

SV: The first Central American Biennial that I participated in took place in 2002 in Nicaragua, and we were exposed to art from Guatemala, Costa Rica and Panama that felt more advanced than the rest of the region. We also wanted to be more experimental and move away from traditional media, such as painting, that dominated in El Salvador. We wanted to learn more. There was no Internet at that time so we would pick up bits and pieces and share information. It was around that time that Mario Cader-Frech got in contact with us. We connected right away and he invited me to go to Art Basel Miami Beach. He also operated an exhibition space in Washington D.C. and he invited the collective to exhibit there.

CB: *You have exhibited all over the world since then. Can you mention a few key opportunities?*

SV: Virginia Pérez-Ratton ran TEOR/éTica in Costa Rica. She organized a major exhibition with Spanish curator Santiago del Olmo called “Todo Incluido Imágenes Urbanas de Centro América [All Included, Urban images from Central America]”, which showed a seldom seen, introverted and introspective artistic landscape of the region. The exhibition included, among others, Ronald Moran from El Salvador, Federico Herrero from Costa Rica and Jonathan Harker from Panama who are now well known. The show traveled to the Centro Cultural Conde Duque in Madrid, and then to the Museum of Art and Design and TEOR/éTica, both in San Jose, Costa Rica. This was great exposure for us. I also had two exhibitions at the Spanish Cultural Center in El Salvador, which were great steppingstones. In 2006, I was invited to exhibit in Baltimore as part of “Material Matters” curated by Jason Hughes,



SIMÓN VEGA
IMPERIUM SLUM SHIP

2013
WOOD, CARDBOARD, LIGHT, FOUND MATERIALS
INSTALLATION AT HILGER NEXT FOR
THE EXHIBITION GRUESSE AUS VENEDIG.
IMAGE COURTESY KATHARINA STÖGMÜLLER AND HILGER GALLERY

and also by José Manuel Noceda to show “Boxed City” at the 9th Havana Biennial. Participating in “Coca-Colonized” at the HilgerBROTKunsthalle in Vienna in 2010, which you curated, was significant as it eventually resulted in me being represented by Hilger Gallery.

CB: *Despite many international opportunities you still actively exhibit in El Salvador. Why has this been important for you to maintain?*

SV: My work deals with what is happening in El Salvador. My subject matter exists there and my work mixes themes from the third world and the first world to highlight the contrast of these two worlds. So I couldn’t leave out the third world. I exhibit in El Salvador to connect—I want to connect to the experiences of exhibiting there and with younger generations. Because I am so connected with it I draw a lot of ideas from El Salvador.

CB: *Generally, is contemporary art practice in Central America characterized by sociopolitical issues?*

SV: Absolutely. You can get a good diagnosis of this from the Central American Biennial. When I participated in the 2004 biennial in Panama I noticed that artists from Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Honduras were all interested in very social and political subject matter. This is partly a result of the wars that our countries endured during the eighties. Costa Rica did not suffer from these wars and it abolished its army, so the Costa Rican artists’ work was somehow lighter and more sophisticated. Similarly, the Panamanian work was humorous. When I saw the Salvadoran artwork that was focused on violence and war, I thought how depressing and dark in contrast to the Panamanians funny works of art. For me, that was a turning point, and I decided I wanted to make work that also had humor. So I began mixing that dark social element with a more humorous side, and this is when I started experimenting with informal architecture and shantytown aesthetics.

CB: *Your work has been installation-based for some years. Has the gallery scene in El Salvador factored in your career?*

SV: The Salvadoran art market is very traditional, preferring oil paintings of landscapes and beautiful objects. However, there was one gallery that began in 2001 called Vilanova Art Gallery that was interested in contemporary art, but they closed after two years, mainly due to the lack of market for this art. The two main galleries in San Salvador that survived the war are

“HONESTLY, THE CONTEMPORARY ART MARKET IN EL SALVADOR IS ALMOST NONEXISTENT. THIS IS A NEGATIVE FOR ARTISTS TRYING TO MAKE A LIVING. EARLY ON I UNDERSTOOD I COULDN’T MAKE A LIVING AS AN ARTIST, SO INSTEAD OF DOING WHAT THE TRADITIONAL MARKET WAS WILLING TO CONSUME, I LIBERATED MYSELF TO DO BIGGER AND MORE EPHEMERAL INSTALLATIONS BY STARTING TO TEACH TO PAY THE BILLS.”

Espacio Gallery and Gallery 123 (see page 148), the latter has been more open to contemporary art. The Museum of Art of El Salvador [MARTE] is also helping by bringing artists and curators to interact with us through the MARTE Contemporary program. This is how I met you, José Ruiz and Elvis Fuentes, and how I got to exhibit in Washington D.C., Vienna and as part of El Museo del Barrio’s “S-Files” Biennial. Honestly, the contemporary art market in El Salvador is almost nonexistent. This is a negative for artists trying to make a living. Early on I understood I couldn’t make a living as an artist, so instead of doing what the traditional market was willing to consume, I liberated myself to do bigger and more ephemeral installations by starting to teach to pay the bills.

CB: *In your opinion, is it crucial for collectors to travel to El Salvador to learn about the contemporary art scene?*

SV: It is true for all of Central America that there are social elements and phenomena that are part of the art being produced there. For this reason, I think that El Salvador’s contemporary art is very charged, and there are some strong artists that are not getting any exposure or opportunities, which is a shame. You have to understand what is happening in the area and see more than what the city wants to show you—go beyond the places that are nice and clean. Artists are exposed to a lot so if you don’t see other parts of El Salvador or Central America, you might not really get the art. I would advise collectors to not only visit the galleries and the museums, but to get to know a bit about the context, the recent history and urban environment of El Salvador, and also to do many studio visits. A lot of art is hard to understand and fully appreciate if you only go to the art itself.



"PRODUCED WITH RECYCLED MATERIAL FOUND IN THE STREETS AND ON THE BEACHES OF EL SALVADOR, THE SCULPTURE THIRD WORLD SPUTNIK BY SIMÓN VEGA IS A COLOURFUL PARODY OF SPUTNIK 10, A SOVIET SPACE PROGRAMME SATELLITE LAUNCHED IN THE SIXTIES. VEGA'S PRECARIOUS VESSEL CONTRASTS WITH THE SOPHISTICATED TECHNOLOGY OF THE SPACE RACE THAT TOOK PLACE DURING THE COLD WAR, WHEN THE USSR AND THE USA COMPETED TO CONQUER SPACE. THIRD WORLD SPUTNIK ASPIRES TO MODERNITY AND DREAMS OF PROGRESS; HOWEVER, IT COMES UP AGAINST THE BARRIERS OF THE THIRD WORLD. IN THE FACE OF A FUTURISTIC ESCAPE PROVIDED BY A SHIP THAT MIGHT REACH OTHER WORLDS, VEGA'S HOMEMADE SPUTNIK IS BOUND TO ITS CONTEXT AND THE HISTORY, STRUGGLES AND CONFLICTS."

- PAZ GUEVARA, CO-CURATOR OF THE LATIN AMERICAN PAVILION (ILLA)
AT THE 55TH VENICE BIENNALE 2013, ON SIMÓN VEGA'S THIRD WORLD SPUTNIK.

SIMÓN VEGA
THE THIRD WORLD SPUTNIK

2013

IMAGE COURTESY FABIO BERTOLINI AND HILGER GALLERY

RETNA

(AKA MARQUIS LEWIS)
ARTIST



Image courtesy the artist

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
DECEMBER 5, 2012
IN MIAMI



RETNA

EL SALVADOR (DETAIL)

2014
ENAMEL AND ACRYLIC ON CANVAS
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST



CLAIRE BREUKEL: *Your mom is Salvadoran and your dad is American. Will you share some of your family story?*

RETNA: My mother worked in a thread factory in El Salvador during the 1970s. She later decided to go abroad for the purpose of self-searching and exploration, which she found in Los Angeles, and this is where she also met my father.

CB: *Have you traveled to El Salvador before?*

R: I have been there several times, including during the war and many times as a child. The last time I was there I was thirteen years old. I still have a pretty big family there who used to own farmland so I remember riding horses and taking adventurous trips in the back of *camiones* (farming trucks). I never noticed any art so it was really surprising to learn in the last couple of years that the art scene is rapidly growing there.

"I DEAL A LOT WITH TEXT, AND I WRITE IN BOTH ENGLISH AND SPANISH. THERE ARE ALSO A LOT OF SALVADORAN TERMS I USE THAT MY MOTHER WOULD SAY WHEN I WAS GROWING UP, AND THESE FIND THEIR WAY INTO MY WORK."

CB: *Have you ever been classified as an artist from El Salvador?*

R: No, but I've always mentioned it as my background and I know it's influenced my work. I deal a lot with text, and I write in both English and Spanish. There are also a lot of Salvadoran terms I use that my mother would say when I was growing up, and these find their way into my work. In fact, I hadn't thought about it until now, but my mom collected a lot of blue and white pottery, and in the last few years I have started to paint my bigger and more elaborate murals in blue and white colors. Ironically, these are the colors of the Salvadoran flag.

CB: *Aside from language, how has your eclectic cultural background impacted your practice?*

R: Being a multicultural artist has come with advantages and disadvantages. In Los Angeles there is a huge Latin community so I am able to speak Spanish with a lot of people and express my ideas in a way that identifies with them.

For example, I can go into different neighborhoods and explain what I want to paint and explain my cultural influences, and this invariably allows me to paint more walls. So it has given me access to certain areas of the city.

CB: *Do you feel the diverse cultural influences you incorporate in your work are inherently interconnected?*

R: I see myself as a collection of identities because I am biracial—half African American and half Salvadoran. Living in Los Angeles this would sometimes be a problem as there is a big divide between cultures, so I've always felt I had a divided identity. Not only this, I have Native American on my father's side and my mom comes from indigenous people called the Pipil from El Salvador, a subdivision of the Mayans. As a result, I've been influenced by the colonial structures that govern the Americas, and I find a lot of similarities between the cultures that are a byproduct of these colonial structures. My work is also inspired by cultures from India and Africa, including monuments, temples and hieroglyphics from a variety of time periods that I admire. I started melding all of these influences to create a global language in my work.

CB: *In an interview you reference being a "citizen of the world," which is a positive view on globalization. Is that aspirational or how you view yourself now?*

R: It's aspirational. I was talking with a guy once and I asked him where he was from and he said, "from the world." Normally in Los Angeles people ask you where you are from to see which neighborhood you are from, and if you are from the wrong one you could get into trouble—so I like the idea of being above this. I think it will be a long life journey to aspire to be a citizen of the world, but I will also never forget where I come from.

CB: *You have made work in a variety of places from the backstreets of Los Angeles to Careyes in Mexico to the façade of the LVMH store in Miami. Melding graffiti with an exclusive fashion brand must have posed an interesting challenge. What was that experience like?*

R: The LVMH project was a great experience. They have worked with incredible artists in the past and I was only thirty-three years old when they invited me. I had worked with a lot of small street brands, including clothing companies, surf companies and skate companies, but to work with a huge brand like LVMH was a huge honor. Not only this, I'm the only artist in the history of Louis Vuitton to paint the front of a store. This experience was amazing and I know it meant a lot to other graffiti artists with similar backgrounds to me. Most people only know about my success, but it took me twenty years and many trials and the tribulations to get there.

Now I'm working on an amazing youth program with the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles and Louis Vuitton. We invited kids from the Overtown Youth Center to a paint party and I painted with them. The kids kept the work, and signed each work "in agreement, honor and respect." These youth have family settings that are at times a little rough. Sometimes all we need is a little guidance to see where we want to take our lives—even now I still feel like a big kid.

CB: *As you know resources in countries like El Salvador have been historically scarce. What advice would you give to aspiring artists who have few resources readily available?*

R: Don't limit yourself to materials or space. Sometimes restrictions can be a plus, and you learn a lot of great things from them. I started painting in unconventional spaces—walls, bridges and whatever I could find—using house paint and spraying. In 2005, I opened my own do-it-yourself space, which I used both as a studio and gallery to show my own work as well as other artists' work. Once you achieve the right gallery (and I know one can) you bring this community with you, and create spaces that engage an expanded public.

Dedication is essential, and I have found that the scenarios that are most challenging are sometimes where the biggest gems come from.



RETNA
MURAL MIAMI

IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST



ARTIST
COLLECTIVES

ARTIST COLLECTIVES

Artist collectives are often not easily defined, however there have been a handful of autonomous artist groups that have been predominant in the contemporary art landscape of El Salvador—most of which formed in the country's capital, San Salvador.

Before we examine these Salvadoran collectives it is valuable to make mention of the exhibition “Timeline: A Chronicle of US Intervention in Central and Latin America, 1984” at MoMA PS1 initiated by New York-based artist collective Group Material. In 1984, the exhibition presented a timeline of artifacts, artist contributions and products across a red horizontal line that numerated the years of the United States’ intervention in the region.¹ This exhibition was inspired by the actions of political groups, including that of The Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (Cispes), among others. In 2014, curators Shoair Mavlian and Inti Guerrero recognized the timeline’s contribution to an understanding of Central and Latin American history, and so recreated the exhibition for the Tate Modern in London. This exhibition, both then and now, underscores that the themes of politics and art are unavoidably intermingled when addressing the history of these regions, and that the paradigm of the artist collective is never too far away from an activist position.²

It is not unexpected then that the necessity to share resources, largely resulting from the devastating impact of the Salvadoran civil war, is a significant driving force for artists to band together. In fact, it was two years before the end of the civil war that San Salvadoran artist collective, Bajo Tierra, formed. This is followed a decade later by ADOBE, Hétero and Artificio. Although confined within somewhat isolated instances, these collectives were all founded by art and design students who wanted to share ideas and resources during, and directly following, their studies. It is important to note here that the educational creative programs available in El Salvador have been described in this book as being primarily design-orientated and conservative.³ This prompted the need for artists to work together to share resources and ideas specific to contemporary art. Members of ADOBE, Hétero and Artificio confirm that the collective structure allowed for much needed

creative dialogue and for artists to test out their work as part of group exhibitions. In addition, the collective structure lent critical mass—within an otherwise sparsely supported and under-recognized contemporary art landscape—giving artists the confidence to push concepts and express ideas that were topical as well as socially and politically reflexive.⁴

¹Grace, Claire; “Counter-Time: Group Material’s Chronicle of US Intervention in Central and South America” in *Afterall Journal*, Volume 26, 2011. Interview with MoMA PS1 founder Alanna Heiss. See page 92.

²Tate Modern online; www.tate.org.uk; Accessed August 12 2014.

³See interview with Ronald Moran on page 14, Simón Vega on page 34 and Roberto Galicia on page 66.

⁴Information on artist collective sourced through an interview with Simón Vega.



INSTALLATION VIEW OF
INESPERADAMENTE DOMESTICABLE
AT AN APARTMENT SAN SALVADOR

2005
ADOBE COLLECTIVE
(CENTER PIECE BY RONALD MORAN)

THE COLLECTIVES

Bajo Tierra was established in 1990 by three creatives, Milton Doño, Carlos Párraga and Javier Alas, against the backdrop of the Salvadoran civil war. As an underground alternative collective, Bajo Tierra conducted public performances, actions and created installations that focused on conveying what artist Simón Vega describes as a 'leftist' political perspective. Operating for approximately two years, Bajo Tierra lost one of its three members and dissipated.

In 2001, ADOBE artists Walterio Iraheta, Ronald Moran, Simón Vega, Verónica Vides and José David Herrera came together with the aim of making ambitious works that interacted directly with the public and in outdoor urban environments. Most of their projects addressed issues relevant to living in El Salvador; from urbanization and security to migration and class difference. Their first exhibition *Boxed City* was held in the plaza Gerardo Barrios in the city's historical center in 2002, and included installations and interventions. That same year, the group exhibited at El Salvador's Cultural Center in Washington D.C. Among other exhibitions in 2005, *Inesperadamente Domesticable (Unexpectedly Made Domestic)* was convened in an apartment in San Salvador and featured work by both its individual members and work produced by the group collectively. Although their emphasis was not on indoor exhibitions, ADOBE did also arrange several exhibitions using conventional exhibition spaces, some of which were carried out by only two or three members, but signed as ADOBE. As the artists came to the collective with their careers already somewhat established, ADOBE disbanded in 2009 as the need to follow their own independent paths grew.⁵

In 2003, Hétero was founded by artists Eduardo Chang, Ludwig Lemus, Ricardo Torres, Antonio Romero, Antonio Cañas and Luis Cornejo. The group operated to share ideas, and to organize group exhibitions that focused on showcasing works by its individual members. The members, all in their early twenties, viewed the collective as a space to mature their work, concretize ideas, gain exposure and access opportunities both nationally and internationally. Within their three years of existence, Hétero hosted six major group exhibitions; two of which were at the Spanish Cultural Center in San Salvador, followed by single exhibitions at the Mexican Cultural Center in San Salvador,

the Presidente Theater's lobby in San Salvador, El Attico Gallery in Guatemala City, Guatemala and the Maison de la Culture in Montreal, Canada.⁶

A year before Hétero disbanded artists Dalia Chévez, Mauricio Esquivel, Jaime Izaguirre, Melissa Guevara, Natalia Dominguez, Víctor Rodríguez and Mauricio Kabistán formed Artificio. The Artificio artists came together to share ideas in order to compliment their university education. Their activities emphasized the conceptual and theoretical aspects of contemporary artistic practice, and primarily included discussions, talks and readings. The artists began to receive opportunities to travel to other Central American countries and exhibit their work, primarily as individuals. Artificio had one group exhibition at Gallery 123 in San Salvador before the group dissipated as individual opportunities took precedent.⁷

⁵Information on Adobe sourced through an interview with Simón Vega and Walterio Iraheta.

⁶Information on Hetero sourced through an interview with Luis Cornejo.



FROM LEFT:

HETERO

FROM LEFT:

EDUARDO CHANG, ANTONIO ROMERO, LUIS CORNEJO
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTISTS

ADOBE COLLECTIVE (2002-2009)

FROM LEFT:

WALTERIO IRAHETA, SIMÓN VEGA, VERÓNICA VIDES, RONALD MORAN, JOSÉ DAVID HERRERA
(CARMEN ELENA TRIGUEROS WAS ADDED TO THE COLLECTIVE IN 2007)
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTISTS

TODAY

Today, these San Salvadoran artist collectives have disbanded. Many of these artists have had opportunities to show their work internationally and have chosen to follow individual pursuits, while other members have followed alternative 'steady' careers. As such, the need for the artist collective and the supportive platform it provided appears to have lessened. However one artist 'collective,' La Fábri-K, remains active today. La Fábri-K was founded by a group of artists in order to share studio space and exhibition opportunities, and now operates much like an association. One of its founders, artist Mayra Barraza comments, "collectives are the future and the present of the art community."⁸

This suggests that despite international opportunities there is still a need for collective support among artists in El Salvador. Mayra goes on to confirm that despite individual pursuits taking precedent as opportunities in the market increasingly present themselves, the artist community in El Salvador is punctuated by a sense of collectivity that has developed in response to the lack of curatorial and market support. It is evident that design and illustration-oriented collectives, such as Colectivo Arca, which have subsequently formed that, at times, bridge the art and design field, however the formal artist collective, as Mayra comments, has been replaced by a "sense of collectivity".⁹

In March 2014, Miami-based curator Tami Katz-Freiman visited San Salvador as part of the MARTE Contemporary program. After conducting a number of studio visits, Katz-Freiman offered this insight:

"Never in any other place on the globe have I encountered this kind of solidarity between artists. Never in any other place on the globe, during a one on one studio visit, have artists chosen to show me their colleagues' work instead of their own. In a place where there is ZERO government support, one (private) museum and only one professional curator, artists reinvent themselves to take on the role of the curator in order to make a change. I admire them for that!"¹⁰

"NEVER IN ANY OTHER PLACE ON THE GLOBE HAVE I ENCOUNTERED THIS KIND OF SOLIDARITY BETWEEN ARTISTS! NEVER IN ANY OTHER PLACE ON THE GLOBE, DURING A ONE ON ONE STUDIO VISIT, HAVE ARTISTS CHOSEN TO SHOW ME THEIR COLLEAGUES' WORK INSTEAD OF THEIR OWN."

- TAMI KATZ-FREIMAN

⁷Information on Artificio sourced through an interview with Simón Vega and dialogue with Mauricio Kabistan.

⁸Information on La Fábri-K sourced through an interview with Mayra Barraza.


⁹Information on Colectivo Arca sourced through dialogue with collective members.

¹⁰Quote sourced from an interview with Tami Katz-Freiman



CIUDAD ENCAJADA

PUBLIC INTERVENTION
ADOBE COLLECTIVE
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTISTS



MUSEUM DIRECTORS

SAM KELLER

BONNIE CLEARWATER

ROBERTO GALICIA

SAM KELLER

DIRECTOR OF THE FONDATION BEYELER
AND ART BASEL CHAIRMAN



Image credit: Matthias Willi

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
DECEMBER 5, 2013
IN MIAMI



CLAIRE BREUKEL: *Have you traveled to Central America?*

SAM KELLER: Yes, I have been to Guatemala, Costa Rica and Panama, but I missed Nicaragua and El Salvador. I would like to go to there in future.

CB: *I know you have also traveled extensively within Latin America. Can you describe your impressions of some of the art communities there?*

SK: I started going to Latin America in the 1990s. Now that we have the Internet we are much more connected, but back then we knew little about the region and it was difficult to access information about art. Of course I knew things from art history and visiting exhibitions with Brazilian, Argentinian, Mexican, Venezuelan and Colombian artists, but I literally didn't know artists from any smaller countries. When I visited Latin America my friend and collaborator Isabela Mora, who is Spanish-speaking and had lived in Mexico, Brazil and the Caribbean, helped me to make connections. I also loved to go to Mexico and Brazil on holiday so I met a number of people from the art community on these trips. I noticed that these individuals made a great effort to support their local artists and I have great respect for the good art scene they have developed without much governmental support.

When we planned to do Art Basel Miami Beach we started to systematically go to countries in Latin America. Our primary goal was to get an overview of what was happening in the various art scenes, and to meet artists and make relationships with galleries, collectors, curators and museums. Each year we did three fast trips to Latin America, and on each trip I would go to new countries. In 1990, the art community in Latin America was still quite small so on one trip you were already able to meet people, and on the second trip people were happy that we continued to be interested and they could see we were there to help them in their goals of making artists known abroad. I experienced incredible hospitality and openness. Artists, without knowing you, were willing to show you their studios. They were not protective of their connections with collectors, and even the collectors would introduce you to other collectors. We developed many friendships over time. I was also then able to make recommendations to people traveling to these countries and connect them with people by acting as a sort of ambassador for Latin America in the art world.



GUILLERMO KUITCA
AFGHANISTAN

1990
MIXED MEDIA ON MATTRESS
DAROS LATINAMERICA COLLECTION, ZÜRICH
IMAGE COURTESY GALLERIA CARDI & CO., MILANO
© THE ARTIST

CB: *Was there a presence of Latin American galleries at Art Basel Miami Beach in the first years of the fair?*

SK: Yes, there were excellent galleries from the beginning. We also invited galleries from the United States and Europe with a focus on Latin America in their program. What I noticed in many Latin American countries is that there were not many museums doing programming focused on young artists and contemporary artists. There were also not many art schools that

"RONALD MORAN DID A GREAT INSTALLATION IN THE BOOTH AND IT WAS ONE OF THE MOST TALKED ABOUT PIECES IN THE FAIR. IT NOW BELONGS TO A WONDERFUL COLLECTION. WE WERE THRILLED WITH THE WORK AND ALSO DELIGHTED THAT WE COULD BE OF A LITTLE HELP TO GET AN ARTIST KNOWN OUTSIDE OF HIS COUNTRY."

had grant programs for artists to travel abroad, and many galleries couldn't afford to fund international exchanges. Instead nonprofit organizations and alternative spaces fulfilled this role, and individual collectors personally supported artists to travel and

study. So when we created Art Basel Miami Beach I found it difficult to find galleries that had programs that were strong, international and had the financial means to do an international art fair. I still wanted people to know about this art community, so we partly compensated by inviting nonprofit spaces, such as TEOR/ÉTica from Costa Rica, to show in a section of the fair called Art Institutions for free. We included nonprofits from Chile, Peru, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Costa Rica and Guatemala. The result was that the more conceptual artists that had difficulty finding a gallery to represent them became more interesting to the commercial galleries.

CB: *Salvadoran artist Ronald Moran (see page 14) was relatively unknown when he showed at Art Basel Miami Beach's Art Statements in 2004. His installation ended up being bought by the Margulies collection. Can you comment?*

SK: Yes, Ronald Moran's work was suggested by a gallery for a section of the fair dedicated to one-person exhibitions by young artists. Normally, if it were North America or Europe, we would have known the artist and the gallery's program and we would already have an idea of what the proposal is. In this case we had little idea of what we were getting. The proposal looked amazing, but we had never heard of the artist and barely knew the gallery, so we said: "let's give it a try." Ronald Moran did a great installation in the booth and it was one of the most talked about pieces in the fair. It now belongs to a wonderful collection. We were thrilled with the work and also delighted that we could be of a little help to get an artist known outside of his country.



INSTALLATION VIEW OF THE EXHIBITION, "DAROS LATINAMERICA COLLECTION",
FONDATION BEYELER, RIEHEN/BASEL, 2014, WITH THE WORKS:

GUILLERMO KUITCA, *AFGHANISTAN*, 1990,
GUILLERMO KUITCA, *UNTITLED*, 1994,
DORIS SALCEDO, *UNTITLED*, 1998

DAROS LATINAMERICA COLLECTION, ZÜRICH
© THE ARTIST
IMAGE CREDIT: MARK NIEDERMANN



DORIS SALCEDO
UNTITLED

1998
WOOD, CONCRETE AND METAL,
DAROS LATINAMERICA COLLECTION, ZÜRICH
IMAGE CREDIT: SERGIO ARAUJO
© THE ARTIST

CB: *Turning to the art scene in Europe, have you noticed an increased interest to show Latin American artists generally?*

SK: Although Europe has had a long, intense and more established connection with North America, I think that only over the last two decades it has finally embraced artists from Latin America. There is now also more care being taken by curators and galleries to show artists in a way that doesn't make them appear exotic, or to show the work that people would expect from these countries—like people painting palm trees or third generation muralists—instead opting for work that is interesting and informed. The Art Basel fair has helped galleries in America and Europe get involved in the region, and now many represent at least one artist from Latin America. Likewise, there are many collectors from Latin America buying art internationally, and many Latin American galleries now include an international artist in their program. I think that a fruitful, artistic exchange has been established on many levels.

In Latin America there are a number of collectors, such as Patricia Phelps de Cisneros and Eugenio López, who tirelessly support artists through research, collecting, publishing and promoting them outside of Latin America by facilitating traveling exhibitions. Somebody like Mario Cader-Frech, who has dual role as an ambassador, is a huge support to the younger generation of artists, and helps people like myself, as well as dealers and collectors, to gather information about the art scene. Such achievements deserve recognition.

CB: *Does the Fondation Beyeler show artists from Latin America?*

SK: Absolutely, we have done monographic exhibitions of Beatriz Milhazes's and Felix Gonzalez-Torres's work. We also did a performance with Ernesto Neto, and we are just about to acquire a very important work by Felix Gonzalez-Torres. This year from February to April we showed a selection of works by twelve artists from the Daros Latinamerica collection.

Growing up in the art world I saw that many people treated art from Latin America as the auction houses did it—creating a separate section for Latin American art away from contemporary art in general. The first lesson I learned from artists is that they don't want to be separated as Latin American, rather they want to be part of the international art scene. Of course they

are proud of their country, their culture and their roots, but they want to be part of the grander dialogue. So we integrate and deliberately mix these artists within the Fondation Beyeler program, as we did when we showed Felix Gonzalez-Torres with Mark Rothko. I have had the chance through my former job at Art Basel to get to know a lot of great artists in Latin America, and I've included them in the program where it makes sense. I don't want to show artists because it's hip to "show China or Brazil," in fact quite the opposite, we want these artists not to be representative of a nation, but to be taken seriously as individuals.

CB: *What is your advice to a collector wanting to buy art from Central America today?*

SK: I would advise a collector to go to the country, and use a biennial, an art fair or a relationship with somebody in the country as an entry point, and then see artist studios and galleries, off-spaces and museums. Then of course use the international platforms such as Art Basel, the Venice Biennale and Documenta, who all show artists from Latin America, to inform themselves and to see what some of the leading curators think is interesting. Today, thanks to the Internet, it is so much easier to access information, and there are also magazines such as *ArtNexus* (see page 170) that regularly cover the art scene in these countries. My best recommendation is of course to go and see the art and meet the artists in person.



CILDO MEIRELES
MISSÃO/MISSÕES
(*COMO CONSTRUIR CATEDRAIS*)

1987
MISSION/MISSIONS (HOW TO BUILD CATHEDRALS)
COINS, BONES, COMMUNION WAFERS, LIGHT, PAVING STONES AND FABRIC
DAROS LATINAMERICA COLLECTION, ZÜRICH
IMAGE CREDIT: ZOE TEMPEST
© THE ARTIST

BONNIE CLEARWATER

DIRECTOR AND CHIEF CURATOR
MUSEUM OF ART | FT. LAUDERDALE



INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
JANUARY 24, 2013
IN MIAMI

CLAIRE BREUKEL: *What was the motivation for your first visit to San Salvador in 2006?*

BONNIE CLEARWATER: Mario Cader-Frech invited me to be a judge to select the finalists for the Central American Biennial award, which happened in San Salvador that year. I also met with collectors, saw galleries and visited artists' studios.

CB: *What was your first impression of contemporary art in San Salvador?*

BC: It's vibrant and connected. I could see it was not just El Salvador "on show" for the Central American Biennial, there is a lot going on in the country generally. I think I even ran into someone I was very surprised to see there. The biennial featured projects all through the city, and it was fascinating to see the city through these projects. I really responded to a project that explored the idea of what constituted the main center of town—there was an earthquake and everything had moved—and it explored how the city shifted because of this geological happening. There was also a project by Mayra Barraza that used balloons to send out messages to loved ones who had emigrated due to the civil war, and a project by Ronald Moran that featured a loaded gun in a glass case that read in Spanish "break glass in case of emergency" within a town square that happened to be a rather violent place. The theme of violence in this project was obvious, while the project with the balloons was a kind of celebration that chose not to focus on violence. It was really interesting to see art projects right on the sidewalk, and contemporary art among people doing their daily activities and responding to the street environment.

MAYRA BARRAZA
*UN SALUDO DESDE LA HERMANA
REPÚBLICA DE EL SALVADOR*

2006
VIDEO STILL
PHOTO COURTESY THE ARTIST



aria
aura
arlinez
(canadá)

amor
paz



CB: How would you contextualize artistic practice in El Salvador in relation to artistic practices in more established art areas, like Mexico?

BC: I spent a lot of time in Mexico in the early 1990s and a little later that decade we started seeing this very vibrant, young scene emerging with the likes of Gabriel Orozco and Francis Alÿs. At the same time artists started doing interventions in the city that became a model for a lot of contemporary work that was developed in Central and Latin America. This model from Mexico City, of intervening into public space outside of art spaces, was most interesting to me and also very important for the institutions that worked with contemporary art—to show art in a meaningful way that made it possible for people to have access to it. I think this is a parallel in contemporary practice in El Salvador.

CB: In your opinion, what support would most benefit artists working in El Salvador?

BC: The issue for all local artists is distribution outside of their scene.

“THIS MODEL FROM MEXICO CITY, OF INTERVENING INTO PUBLIC SPACE OUTSIDE OF ART SPACES, WAS MOST INTERESTING TO ME AND ALSO VERY IMPORTANT FOR THE INSTITUTIONS THAT WORKED WITH CONTEMPORARY ART—TO SHOW ART IN A MEANINGFUL WAY THAT MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR PEOPLE TO HAVE ACCESS TO IT. I THINK THIS IS A PARALLEL IN CONTEMPORARY PRACTICE IN EL SALVADOR.”

How do you get to know exciting artists in these different countries if they don't have a strong commercial gallery, which is the natural source to see art for most countries? Artists need galleries that go to art fairs and develop markets for their artists.

Ella Fontanals-Cisneros (see page 112) recognizes this and shows artists outside of their countries. Her foundation brings awareness to curators, collectors, artists and critics without necessarily having the work be a commodity. She has also helped curators in Latin America become known as authorities internationally. We included many of these curators in MoCA's New Methods Symposium [a symposium held at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Miami where Bonnie Clearwater was the former Director and Chief Curator]. We recognized that a lot of curators, like in El Salvador, don't have travel budgets, so we worked with alternate spaces for input on their local situation.

In El Salvador there are a few galleries, but not enough. However, there doesn't necessarily need to be a “New York” model of gallery scene consensus; consensus can be made in a completely different way. For example, in

early 2000 all these Scottish artists started showing thanks to the Scottish government subsidizing artist exchanges. This created awareness for Scottish artists, and renowned artist Douglas Gordon was part of this group. This shows that its about recognizing how to use the current systems to create a consensus and awareness of local artists, and to find new methods to get their work out.

CB: *What resulted from your trip to El Salvador?*

BC: Individual efforts are crucial to these scenes and it takes someone with vision to be a catalyst to make things happen. Without a big budget, Mario Cader-Frech and I arranged to show MoCA's Optic Nerve, an annual short film festival at the Museum of Art of El Salvador [MARTE]. MoCA has been acquiring works since 1984, and as video is portable the collection could be shared and seen in different places as a way of getting our artists beyond the local scene. We really liked that arrangement.

CB: *A lot of artists in and from El Salvador have worked as part of collectives, such as with ADOBE and Hétero (see page 48). There appears to be a prevalent intuition to work together. Can you speak about the phenomenon of artist groups in Central America?*

BC: The collective phenomenon stems from a kind of Marxist attitude—with the idea that workers come together as a commune and defy the market. This is not only seen in Central America but is something that was dealt with in the 1990s everywhere. In the early 1990s, there was no market due to the recession, so there was a deeper sense of “let’s work together, let’s collaborate.” Artists leave art school and it’s lonely, so this idea of having a kind of collaborative relationship when the stakes are particularly low is common. Some artists have even made this part of their ongoing practice, such as Rita Ackerman, the Hamburg group and Jonathan Meese who all love to collaborate.

CB: *There are artists from El Salvador who have shown work internationally, however none of them are household names so to speak. In your opinion, what is missing, and what do you feel is needed to elevate their position?*

BC: The art world is mutable and keeps changing, because there is no one

person making decisions. A number of people help to shape the global art world and this means there are overlaps, for example, at the São Paulo Bienal and in NADA in New York the most interesting artists that kept popping up were under-recognized in the 1970s. They came out at the same time as other famous artists, but the art world can only focus on one artist at a time. It’s a matter of who and at what time. So I think we should start a major curatorial shift and stop trying to create a “star.”

CB: *Are you implying that it is important to experience art in the context of its origin?*

BC: It is important for collectors, curators and critics to travel to where the work is being made to understand it within context rather than getting a superficial impression of the work. Seeing one or two works of each artist doesn’t mean anything. If you see one work at an art fair and people say “that is good,” but the artist is uneven, what is the point?

ROBERTO GALICIA

DIRECTOR OF THE MUSEUM OF ART
OF EL SALVADOR [MARTE]



INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
JANUARY 27, 2014
IN SAN SALVADOR

SIMÓN VEGA: *You work as an artist and have also taught art. Tell us about your professional trajectory.*

ROBERTO GALICIA: Throughout my career I have needed, and have been able, to combine my work as a painter with other activities that put my creativity to public service. I worked at the National Center for the Arts (CENAR) from 1978 to 1984, and I was the dean of the School of Applied Arts at the Dr. José Matias Delgado University. From 1985 to 1995, I focused exclusively on my career as an artist and was president of the Association of Artists of El Salvador before assuming the presidency of the National Council for Culture and Arts (CONCULTURA) from 1995 to 1999. In 2000, I took over the coordination of the Museum of Art of El Salvador [MARTE], where I have been the executive director since 2003.

SV: *The School of Arts at the University of El Salvador is sometimes criticized as being outdated. Do you think the National Center for the Arts (CENAR) can help to bring forth change?*

RG: Art education has always been limited. Unfortunately, speaking of institutions, we must recognize that the profile of the School of Arts at the University of El Salvador is very limited and conservative. This situation has changed in recent years, mostly because of the interest of the students, but not of the school's authorities. What has been achieved is the sum of a lot of personal effort and the commitment of the artists. However, it is necessary to recognize the role of the School of Applied Arts for its impact on the professionalization of design in our country and for their contribution, tangential and unplanned, to the development of contemporary art. Currently, art education takes a general approach, so those who want to specialize need to study abroad. In my opinion, the National Center of Arts has lost its way and has limited activity. So, I think that in order to improve the quality of art education at a university level, the existing institutions need to be reinforced in the fields where they have achieved greater development.

SV: *What role did the National Council for Culture and Arts (CONCULTURA) play in the development of art in El Salvador?*

RG: It is necessary to keep in mind that the role of a state cultural institution, for many reasons, is always limited. In the past, CONCULTURA was





MUSEUM OF ART OF EL SALVADOR

very paternalist, however creating CONCULTURA indicated a very important change: to become a facilitating institution. It allowed for the contributions of many non-governmental organizations to be added to institutional efforts. This allowed for the involvement of a larger number of people and for the development of important projects, for example, the recovery of the National Exhibition Hall and the restoration of some pictures from the National Collection.

In addition to these two projects, CONCULTURA exhibited work by the most important artists from the country. For instance, there was an important exhibition of the work by Francisco Wenceslao Cisneros, who was the

first Salvadoran painter to have an exhibition as a historic record. This was possible thanks to the support of the National Museum of Fine Arts of Cuba, and had been unthinkable up until that time.

We received major exhibitions by international artists, and organized national and regional events

where the younger generation of artists took on a greater role and more responsibilities. These artists founded different groups, promoted shows and conducted meetings and training activities. This, along with the construction of the new National Museum building to house the Museum of Art of El Salvador [MARTE], created a favorable environment to promote (initially with the support of the Patronato Pro Cultura of El Salvador) the museum project.

“MUSEUMS ARE STILL VIEWED AS ELITIST INSTITUTIONS DESPITE ONGOING EFFORTS OF BOTH THE NATIONAL AND PRIVATE MUSEUMS. FOR THE MUSEUM OF ART OF EL SALVADOR [MARTE], BREAKING THIS VIEW WAS ONE OF ITS MAIN CHALLENGES.”

SV: *The museum is now eleven years old. How has the vision of the Museum of Art of El Salvador [MARTE] been implemented over the past decade?*

RG: Although the National Museum is one of the oldest cultural institutions in El Salvador (it was founded in 1883), there is no museum culture in the country. Museums are still viewed as elitist institutions despite ongoing efforts of both the national and private museums. For the Museum of Art of El Salvador [MARTE], breaking this view was one of its main challenges. In these eleven years, which is a very short time for the development of a museum, we have come a long way and become a benchmark nationally and beyond in Central America. This has been achieved thanks to the vision and support of the board of the Museum of Art of El Salvador Association, collectors and artists, all of whom, in different ways, contribute to its support.



MUSEUM OF ART OF EL SALVADOR

I must also highlight the support of museums and international institutions similar to MARTE who have supported us from the beginning. This support has allowed us to show the work of great masters from the art world. Picasso's "Vollard Suite" exhibition that we opened with is a good example.

SV: *The Museum of Art of El Salvador [MARTE] is known for its extensive Salvadoran art collection. Does the collection represent Salvadoran artistic practices of the past?*

"IT IS IMPORTANT THAT PEOPLE IN EL SALVADOR SEE QUALITY CONTEMPORARY ART FROM EL SALVADOR, BUT AT THE SAME TIME WE HAVE TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR ARTISTS TO TRAVEL TO PARTICIPATE IN OPPORTUNITIES IN OTHER COUNTRIES."

RG: Our main commitment as an institution is Salvadoran art. Over the years we have shown three exhibitions covering its development. These exhibitions have been curated by Salvadoran art professionals, and these different views have allowed us to approach the same works, but from different perspectives.

Throughout the three exhibitions, painting occupies an important place, because its development has been steady and it has dominated the national art scene. However, we are also open to new artistic languages and, actually, in the "Al compás del tiempo" (A compass of time) exhibition, there is a hall devoted to contemporary art.

SV: *What impact did El Salvador's civil war have on artistic production?*

RG: The civil war affected all Salvadoran people, and that cruel reality was reflected in different ways in the art produced at that time. This painful time was present, with different emphasis, in the three exhibitions mentioned. Our collection also includes important works of this period, and the most iconic piece is *The Sumpul* by Carlos Cañas.

After the war, the biggest challenge for Salvadoran art in both the national and international world is to stand out from what is being done in other countries in Central America. We have made a great effort to have the country included in regional activities by promoting our involvement in different shows and biennials. I believe that the most evident breakthrough happened in 1998 with the first Central American Biennial in Guatemala that

included six artists from El Salvador: two of them with completely nontraditional proposals.

The most significant change came with the opening of the museum and the founding of the MARTE Contemporary program. While the themes this program addresses are more universal, they also do not leave out those parts of daily shock that is the reality we live in.

SV: *MARTE Contemporary has focused on creative exchanges, bringing curators such as José Ruiz (see page 74) to work on exchange-based exhibitions. Have these exchanges succeeded at bringing Salvadoran art to the rest of the world?*

RG: It is important that people in El Salvador see quality contemporary art from El Salvador, but at the same time we have to make it possible for artists to travel to participate in opportunities in other countries. The “Bartered States” exhibition that you mention is an emblematic example that greatly helped the development of MARTE Contemporary. In addition to the exchange the curator, José Ruiz, took the time to get to know the local artists’ work deeply. We facilitated the start of an exchange, and it is up to the artists to foster its continuation.

SV: *How would you describe the infrastructure supporting contemporary art in El Salvador today?*

RG: It’s relative. Sometimes I think that artists have moved too far away from the public, and should try to produce access routes for audiences to better understand the work. Exhibition spaces are limited and exhibition openings are generally hard to find out about unless you are in the art field. In this case, perseverance is key.

However, there is a new young group of Salvadoran collectors that have been exposed to other types of stimuli such as new technology, and that accept with a greater ease things that may seem distant to older collectors. Institutionally, the hard work developed by the Cultural Center of Spain in El Salvador has been significant.

SV: *How do you envision the future development of the Museum of Art of El Salvador [MARTE]?*

RG: In the broadest sense, the biggest challenge of the museum is to keep its doors open and to establish itself as an institution that, beyond its exhibitions, becomes a space for study, discussion and dissemination of art and culture from our country. Moreover, it is vital to maintain direct contact with what is happening outside. Only then will we be in line with the public expectations that we work to meet.



CURATORS

JOSÉ RUIZ

ELVIS FUENTES

ALANNA LOCKWARD

ALANNA HEISS

JOSÉ RUIZ

ARTIST, CURATOR, AND CO-FOUNDER OF
PRESENT COMPANY IN BROOKLYN, NY



INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
MARCH 8, 2013
IN NEW YORK



CLAIRE BREUKEL: *Have you traveled to El Salvador, and if so, what was the motivation for these visits?*

JOSÉ RUIZ: The first time I went was when Mario [Cader-Frech] and I came up with the idea to do an exchange project. The project would bring artists from El Salvador to New York to show their work at the Bronx River Art Center [BRAC] where I was the Curator and Gallery Director, and bring artists from New York to San Salvador to exhibit at Art Museum of El Salvador [MARTE]. I received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts for the artists to travel to New York, produce work and to print an exhibition catalogue. The project was called “Bartered States” in New York and “Zonas de trueque” in El Salvador, which are near translations of each other. In total, I visited El Salvador four times between 2009 and 2011.

CB: *What is your general impression of the artistic landscape of El Salvador?*

JR: When I was younger my family lived in Peru and Brazil, and we had the chance to travel to Panama and Costa Rica, so I understood what the geography of El Salvador would be like, and I also knew about the political situation of the country. However, I didn’t know too much about the art scene. The general consensus in Peru in the 1980s and 1990s was that if you wanted to be an artist, you had to move to Paris to study, or you would stay at home to study regional variations of Picasso. When I went to review portfolios in El Salvador I saw thirty or so really good and diverse submissions, with at least ten or so artists doing contemporary work that was socially and politically engaged, which was a surprise. Since then, however, new artists have emerged and I feel like the scene has grown.

CB: *Tell me about the “Bartered States” exchange and what it meant to have artists trading places?*

JR: The idea for the exchange was situated around transmigration and acculturation—because of the civil war in El Salvador there is a large Salvadoran community located in Washington D.C., Los Angeles and Texas, so in this sense we are used to seeing Salvadoran culture at large and in the context of emigration. Emigration inspires an idea of a better life if you work hard—the American dream—but in reality, and in my experience, in a new country you have to start at the bottom and work your way up. At the same time, while



KARLOS CARCAMO
UN MOVIMIENTO CONCRETO
(A CONCRETE MOVEMENT)

2009
VINYL RECORDS, CONCRETE
ON VIEW AS PART OF THE "BARTERED STATES" EXHIBITION
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST



"BARTERED STATES", NEW YORK
(INSTALLATION VIEW) FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:

DANNY ZVALETA
JAINA (GANG GIRL)
2009
WALL PAINTING

RONALD MORAN
POLAROID
2008
POLAROID DOCUMENTATION OF ACTION;
COROZAL FRONTIER, CHIAPAS, MEXICO

SIMÓN VEGA
UPTOWN AND THE BRONX (DETAIL)
2009
SITE-SPECIFIC INSTALLATION

IMAGES COURTESY THE ARTISTS

people are growing accustomed to their new setting, they lose the customs they know. Based on this idea of acculturation, I decided that the project had to be a physical exchange between two countries and two spaces. All of the artists that I picked from New York were Latin American-born artists, and two of these artists, Irvin Morazan and Karlos Carcamo, were from El Salvador but had never actually been back to or shown their work in El Salvador. The goal was to provide an exchange experience that would create partnerships between these two teams of artists, and through the exhibition process, these two teams became good friends and started to work together on their own. That for me is the most you can get out of a project, that is culture versus the commercial, let's say.

CB: *Does this exchange speak to the benefits of being transitory?*

JR: An artist seeking a commercial career is different to an artist working with relational projects—

that is to say, projects focused on education, development and intervention—essentially social practices. These artists need to be able to go everywhere to develop their practice—in fact they should go everywhere. Up until only a few years ago, artists from El Salvador weren't included in the international dialogue, partly due to issues of distribution and accessibility. Salvadoran artists couldn't easily travel or access international publications like *ArtForum* or *Art in America* to see what was happening abroad. Now at least, there's the Internet and blogs provide an important triple dialogue, and you don't have to be based anywhere specific to write or read them.

One thing I realized is that there is something to be said for not being tied to huge rents, like artists are in New York. Artists from El Salvador, for example, don't have to compete in oversaturated real estate or commercial art economies, and as a result, they can focus on being creative. I think it is a privilege to be an artist there or in New York, but there is a different type of purpose when you work within the true economy of a place.

CB: *In El Salvador I noticed a strong presence of artist collectives, which speaks to your participation in the collective Decatur Blue...*

JR: I co-founded Decatur Blue in Washington D.C. right after I completed

my undergraduate degree in 1999. My current project, Present Company [an artist-run space in Brooklyn, New York] is in many ways a direct extension of everything I learned back then. At the time Washington D.C. was very conservative and there was a lack of art spaces that functioned just as a space. The tendency was also for tourists to go to a museum as opposed to a gallery, so our idea was to group together our little funds to try and achieve more. We shared a lot of ideas and processes, and although our space was regional, the artists we showed were young, energetic and extremely ambitious. This is how my own practice began—mixing being an artist with being a curator and a “gallerist”—so now with Present Company our mission is to create a program that matches the mixed practices of its three principals.

“WE CAN'T FORGET THAT THIS GENERATION OF CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS GREW UP DURING THE SALVADORAN CIVIL WAR SO FOR THEM SOCIALLY-BASED PRACTICES AND WORKS OF PROTEST ARE A SERIOUS ENDEAVOR.”

CB: *Do you think your experience is comparable to that of collectives in El Salvador?*

JR: Yes. Collaboration often happens from an aspect of necessity, and the result is that artists grow together. Even though many artists in a collective maintain their individual practice, there is a certain net worth in working as a group. Members of artist collectives all have to support each other, and collaboration is key to so many movements around the globe, especially in places with limited resources like El Salvador.

CB: *What is your impression of the support of the general Latin American art category?*

JR: The support that you do see in Latin America is through commercial structures such as private collections and galleries. You don't see many opportunities that give artists space to experiment or to travel the world or promote art education. I think because of this, artists often have to leave. So the term “Latin American” in the United States has been internally progressive at best, by mostly offering artists inclusion into shows due to being part of a certain demographic. However, as an artist you have to be almost ambiguous in how you appropriate this assumed identity, because there are



DIEGO MEDINA
CAER HACE ARRIBA (FALLING UPWARDS)

2009
4-CHANNEL VIDEO AND ARCHIVAL PIGMENT PRINT,
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST

also holes to this Latin American category. For example, in the international circuit I feel like the term dictates a need to be very formal and that's why you see minimal work that is pretty clean, when the political history and the economy of the place doesn't match that slickness or posterity.

CB: *Do you feel this kind of work is also often weighted by social and political ideology?*

JR: There is a social ideology, politics and even an element of demonstration in much of the work that is specific to Latin America. I do think it would be awkward if there weren't any of this present in the work, especially work associated with Central America. But political work, as embodied via various forms of social practice, can also be tricky as it is linked to the idea of education. For example, social practice projects sometimes only cater to the artists' friends and at the end of the day the artist feels better for producing the project, but the project does not reach a community or other audiences. I think artwork should be a protest and an expressive act that goes beyond the satisfaction of working hard in order to actually affect change. Many artists like the idea of freedom of expression, but there is a responsibility to making this kind of work. To quantify one's work is hard, and what metric do we use to measure the effectiveness of art?

CB: *In your experience does this sense of responsibility operate in El Salvador?*

JR: The infrastructure in El Salvador is difficult, so artists' voices are more sociopolitically charged than I've seen in other places—it makes me think of the work of Ai Wei Wei. We can't forget that this generation of contemporary artists grew up during the Salvadoran civil war so for them socially-based practices and works of protest are a serious endeavor. Artists such as Ronald Moran (see page 14), Simón Vega (see page 34) and Danny Zavaleta all have stories about growing up during the war that inform their identities, and because of this they have a deep sense of responsibility.



ESPERANZA MAYOBRE
 LA LUCHA POR LA LOCHA VS.
 ANOTHER DAY ANOTHER DOLLAR

2009
 SITE-SPECIFIC INSTALLATION AT MARTE MUSEUM FOR
 THE "BARTERED STATES" EXHIBITION
 IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST

ELVIS FUENTES

CURATOR



*Image credit: Frances Gallardo, Elvis Fuentes.
From the series "Lá grimas," 2010*

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
FEBRUARY 14, 2014
IN NEW YORK



CLAIRE BREUKEL: *In 2011 you curated the "S-Files" Biennial with Rocío Aranda-Alvarado and Trinidad Fombella that included many artists from Central America. What motivated their inclusion?*

ELVIS FUENTES: In 2011 we wanted to have a bigger biennial with more venues. I was really interested in including artists from Central America because the region had been somewhat invisible for a long time, not in a general sense, but because of the political situation and the war we somehow didn't know what was happening there. After peace came to Central America there was this new generation of artists that were finally able to produce work in a war-free environment. That is not to say that there is no violence anymore, but there is not an open war. I was really interested in seeing this new environment, and at the same time we were also working on another project at the museum about art of the Caribbean.

CB: *The "Caribbean Crossroads" exhibition?*

EF: Yes, it was a really ambitious project because I didn't have a penny to do proper research, so I tried to get invited to specific events in the region so I could research the Caribbean show as well as Central American artists for the biennial. For example, Valia Garzón Díaz invited me to "Juannio," which is an important event not only for Guatemala but also for Central America. It is both an auction and a contest in the sense that the artists are selected, and it benefits an organization that works with women in the region. This event has been happening for sixty years and has played a significant role to foster art collecting. In fact, I am sure that Salvadoran collectors have attended "Juannio."

After this, Valoarte from Costa Rica and the Centro Cultural de España (the Cultural Center of Spain) in Honduras invited me visit their countries, and I requested from them that I also go to El Salvador. While I was there I learned about the exchange exhibition "Bartered States." The show was organized by José Ruiz (*see page 74*) between the Bronx River Art Center in New York and the Museum of Art of El Salvador [MARTE] in San Salvador, and he decided to show Salvadoran contemporary artists Simón Vega, Irvin Morazan, Danny Zavaleta and Ronald Moran in New York. Ironically, most of them were in New York when I went to El Salvador, which was actually a good thing because



SIMÓN VEGA
SPUTNIK NY-Z011 TROPICAL CAPSULE

2011
STEEL STRUCTURE, WOOD, CARDBOARD, PLASTIC AND FOUND MATERIALS
IMAGE COURTESY EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO

I got to meet younger artists like Melissa Guevara and Luis Cornejo who were also doing interesting work.

CB: *In Mexico City, for example, the art scene is spread out but there is a lot to see and material available to guide you. In contrast, San Salvador has pockets of activities that are not easily accessed. How did you navigate the art scene in San Salvador?*

EF: I asked the Cultural Center of Spain to help me meet artists. In Cuba, when I worked at the Ludwig Foundation, I would take curators and museum groups to artist studios that we thought were interesting and had something to say. In the same vein, the Cultural Center of Spain arranged

for me to visit the Museum of Art Museum of El Salvador [MARTE], where I met the director Roberto Galicia (see page 66), who showed me work by Rosa Mena Valenzuela, which I had always wanted to see. The museum had a very interesting permanent exhibition showing the history of art in El Salvador. I also visited César Menéndez who I knew of already. At that time he was having a show at a gallery in a government space that was in the middle of a park—I remember the space was very surreal.

“LATINO ARTISTS LIVING IN NEW YORK ARE DEALING WITH THE SAME PROBLEMS THAT MANY ARTISTS ARE DEALING WITH IN LATIN AMERICA, FOR EXAMPLE, ISSUES OF VIOLENCE AND URBAN CULTURE. HOWEVER, ONE THING THAT IS DISTINGUISHABLY DIFFERENT IN CENTRAL AMERICA IS THAT THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM LACKS A MODEL.”

CB: *How did you come to select Simón Vega (see page 34) for the “S-files” Biennial?*

EF: I went to one of the few commercial galleries in El Salvador and saw two drawings by Ricardo Carbonell from the 1970s that were absolutely amazing. I learned that he was a really important architect who had become a painter, and he was very involved in the modernist movement in El Salvador. I arranged for a visit and went to his house and saw a lot of his work, and I found him fascinating. He has many ink drawings about future cities that are incredible, and what I found really interesting is that his work relates to the sensibilities of the 1970s—a sensibility that falls within a humanistic tradition and that has been developing in Latin America as a whole. As a result, I then saw Simón Vega’s work within the relationships he constructs between utopic and futuristic ideas of technology and his use of scrap mate-

rial. This relationship relates to the modernist dream of an artist like Ricardo Carbonell, who underwent erosion and ended up in this parody of futuristic ideas. Simón's work was a very interesting evolution of these ideas and this sensibility. In fact, these two artists are really a show right there.

CB: *Another Salvadoran artist featured in "S-Files" is Irvin Morazan (see page 24) who has lived in New York for many years. How do the themes in his work differ from those in the work by artists living in San Salvador?*

EF: Latino artists living in New York are dealing with the same problems that many artists are dealing with in Latin America, for example, issues of violence and urban culture. However, one thing that is distinguishably different in Central America is that the educational system lacks a model. We have all these young artists who are now able to view the world without the fear of their government, guerillas or war breaking out, but there is no model for them to work within. This is where the role of the institution, such as the Museum of Art of El Salvador [MARTE], is incredibly important. At El Museo del Barrio, we work in a liminal situation in the sense that we study and promote the works of Latin artists in the United States as well as abroad, so it's really open in this sense.

CB: *In your opinion, do the art fairs and biennials happening in Central America help to facilitate their artists' growth?*

EF: We really want to think that biennials and art fairs don't affect what's going on in the arts, but they do. They become models to show work, and I'm not sure if it is for the good. The sad thing is that for countries that are not huge, and therefore don't have a huge presence in the art market, the art fairs and biennials can become something of a goal. The problem is that collecting behaves like the fashion industry, so that if someone is collecting a certain type of work then everybody starts collecting the same thing. However, I don't want to dismiss the work that fairs and biennales are doing, but I do think it can be improved upon. I have always approached the curatorial practice as a tool of art history. For instance, when we presented Simón Vega and Irvin Morazan, we chose them because they represented two traditions in art history: Simón Vega deals with futuristic concepts made out of recycled



SIMÓN VEGA
SPUTNIK NY-Z011 TROPICAL CAPSULE

2011
IRON STRUCTURE, FOUND WOOD, OBJECTS, PLASTIC AND ALUMINUM
INSTALLATION AT SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK, QUEENS, NEW YORK
FOR EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO'S "THE S-FILES"
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST



materials, and Irvin Morazan uses ancient myth combined with contemporary materials. “The S-files” Biennial dealt with urban culture, which is also why these two artists were presented.

Unfortunately, there are many artists that may never be presented in biennials or major exhibitions. So the role of the institution should be to protect the areas that are more vulnerable within the art market—and not in a paternalistic way, rather by providing an infrastructure that promotes and funds projects that would otherwise never be shown. Also, for me, curatorial practice should play a more active role to support artists working in vulnerable areas, such as women artists.

CB: *You are currently working on a PhD at Rutgers University that addresses the role art has played in socialist societies. Can you explain this thematic focus further?*

EF: My dissertation focuses on socialist or “Soviet” culture that developed throughout the 20th century, especially after World War II when the Soviet Union launched plans to internationalize this culture. The Soviet Union basically developed aesthetics that related to engaging art that was very focused on ideology and national image. In this context artists had to play a social role. What happened with the Soviet Union of course touched El Salvador, specifically with the communist support of guerrilla’s during the Salvadoran civil war. Interestingly, in Central America there are also many cases where art is concerned with social issues. As such, I would like to understand the kind of divisions (that are really nonsensical) that define identity in Central America. In particular, how countries identify themselves and how they portray other countries.

IRVIN MORAZAN
GUARDIAN OF THE THICKET

2011
DOCUMENTATION OF PERFORMANCE AS PART OF
EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO’S “S-FILES” BIENNALE.
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST



IRVIN MORAZAN
*PERFORMANCE IN THE
CENTER OF THE WORLD*

DOCUMENTATION OF PERFORMANCE AT TIMES SQUARE, NEW YORK,
AS PART OF EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO'S "S-FILES" BIENNALE.
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST

ALANNA LOCKWARD

INDEPENDENT CURATOR AND WRITER



Image credit: Juan Delancer

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
FEBRUARY 17 & 24, 2013
IN NEW YORK



CLAIRE BREUKEL: *When did you first visit El Salvador and what was the context of this travel experience?*

ALANNA LOCKWARD: It was in 2006 for the fifth Central American Biennial. I was on the jury with Spanish critic and curator Santiago Olmo who curated the Pontevedra Biennial in Spain a few years ago, as well as Paulo Herkenhoff who was the curator of the twenty-fourth São Paulo Biennial, and for a short time, a curator at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. It was a very refreshing experience as my only experience of having seen Salvadoran art was at Art Basel Miami Beach. I saw the work of Ronald Moran (*see page 14*), which was acquired by the Margulies collection. It was one of his *Home Sweet Home* rooms (Ronald has made a series of them), which he exhibited with the Costa Rican gallery Klaus Steinmetz.

CB: *You also curated the exhibition “Transcultura” in San Salvador with Alanna Heiss, which was initiated by Rebeca Dávila. Which artists did you feature and what were the themes of the exhibition?*

AH: My role was mainly as advisor to the proposals that the Salvadoran artists submitted. I interacted with the artists via email and we had extremely productive conversations. I also included the work *In his Shoes* in the exhibition, which was by Bronx-based Dominican-diaspora artist Nicolás Dumit Estévez. This piece included video documentation of a performance where Estévez transformed himself into the personification of the *Infant Jesus of Prague* [a 16th century Roman Catholic statue of Jesus]. The costume that he wore during the performance that originally happened in Prague hung from the ceiling in the exhibition space. The theme of *Transcultura* investigated how artists in the United States Latino diaspora are making their voices heard, as well as how Salvadoran artists deal with the impact of their diaspora in the United States within their local realities. These cross-views interacted in meaningful ways, and it was a wonderful

ALEXIA MIRANDA
ENTRE NUDOS CALACHES Y OTRAS COSAS (DETAIL)

2007
DOCUMENTATION OF PUBLIC ACTION, EL SALVADOR
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST





NICOLÁS DUMIT ESTÉVEZ
IN HIS SHOES, ART AND LIFE EXPERIENCE

2007
 DRESSING AND UNDESSING OF THE INFANT PERFORMED BY ALANNA LOCKWARD.
 PERFORMANCE PRESENTED AS PART OF THE PRAGUE QUADRENNIAL 07 AND FIVE
 ALIVE FROM FRANKLIN FURNACE.
 IMAGE COURTESY MONIKA GOETZ AND THE ARTIST

exhibition. Plus it was the first and only time I have ever co-curated an event with someone with the same name, and above all with someone with the stature of Alanna Heiss (see page 92)—every time we meet I learn a lot from her.

CB: *From these experiences, what was your impression of the art community in San Salvador?*

AL: What really stayed with me is the sense of collectivity, solidarity and support. For example, the artist Danny Zavaleta made a point to introduce me to his friends who were doing work that you could call “very commercial,” which is different to his work that is political—but this was not an issue for him. I found that artists support each other in El Salvador, and this dynamic is evident when they produce projects and exhibitions together.

My first impression was that there are also serious patrons of the arts like Maria Marta Regalado, Mario Cader-Frech and the late Rodolfo Molina who was an artist himself, and who had professionally and consistently supported the artists in El Salvador. I also find the work of collector and gallerist Camila Sol very inspiring. She is based in Buenos Aires, Argentina and has done some very interesting projects in El Salvador.

CB: *The problematic of the term “Latin America” has been addressed in a number of interviews. What is your sense of this?*

AL: For some people Latin American art means one thing and for others it means something else. It suggests a schizophrenic situation that is accentuated by the baggage carried by the ambiguity of what art is. People don’t bother to question where this notion comes from. They don’t bother to question what art and aesthetics mean.

CB: *What do you propose is a better approach to discussing the countries that make up this “space” referred to as “Latin America?”*

AL: It depends on the dimension from which we are approaching it. If we are approaching it from a pragmatic market-oriented dimension then there is one answer, and if it’s the philosophical aesthetic approach then there is another, and if it’s the practice of the artists themselves then there is yet another. I think it’s a very useful term as a tool for marketing a product. There will always be buyers for a secondary market in Latin American art—it is a very well

established market, but it's a closed one. This also means it's a good term for modern art, and to describe the big names like Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, Torres García and the big Venezuelan artists. However, I don't think it's a good term for contemporary art anymore, for example Félix González-Torres is a Latin American artist, but he is also a Caribbean artist, and a Cuban artist. So, there are many categorizations that fall into one artist's trajectory in terms of regional affiliations.

CB: *In El Salvador the art community is striving to gain market exposure, but the artists also desire strong critical feedback. Sometimes it feels these two needs are at odds with each other. How should critical writing function in a community like El Salvador?*

AL: Salvadoran artists have a lot to teach to the world. They have enough criticism in their practice to be an example for art critics and anyone else in this business. This is something that I reflected upon after our work there. Upon further reflection, I also realized how art had created a space for healing in the country, and how brave all the parties involved were in what they call (and rightfully so) a war. Today, it is not a civil war or a rebellion or a terrorist war, it is a war over how people talk in my presence about the aftermath of what they experienced in their lives. It is an epistemic war on how that war took place. I was a student in Mexico while the war was happening in El Salvador and Nicaragua and I was involved in different solidarity groups, so we were informed of what was happening in the region. When I traveled with Alanna Heiss in El Salvador we visited a couple of rural communities where the legacies of war were still very visible. She was curious about how social relations had evolved after the war. We went to visit former guerilla radio stations to interview people so they could share how this transition occurred in their own words. One of the men that spoke to us was a leader in the struggle, called a *campesino* [a word for "peasant" or person living in a rural area], and he said something that stuck with me. He said, "this was a holy war, this was a war between us, the people, the children of God, the children of Christ, the children of the church and the ruling class." I then had the experience of dining at the house of one of the powerful families in the country, and I

"SALVADORAN ARTISTS HAVE A LOT TO TEACH TO THE WORLD. THEY HAVE ENOUGH CRITICISM IN THEIR PRACTICE TO BE AN EXAMPLE FOR ART CRITICS AND ANYONE ELSE IN THIS BUSINESS."



saw the incredible differences that separate the classes. There are massive amounts of barbed wire separating one place to the next. I realized the only spaces that these people talk to each other are in art spaces...the museums and exhibition spaces. That's pretty remarkable and very important as it shows how brave the artists are and what a coward I am.

CB: Can you explain this last statement, why are the artists brave and you a coward?

AL: I was told never to go to downtown San Salvador and I complied. The performance artist Alexia Miranda did a very challenging piece there. I saw the performance documentation of her hanging objects on a line of string in a busy street. What she did is called *cambalache* [bazaar; junkshop], and she exchanged objects that are personal to her with people walking by. I had learned how dangerous it is to be there, and she did this performance and in so doing challenged the notion of how dangerous it is. This is an example of how these artists are doing work on their own terms, and of their own initiative and passion. Another example is a video by Ronald Moran in which

ALEXIA MIRANDA
ENTRE NUDOS CALACHES Y OTRAS COSAS

2007
DOCUMENTATION OF PUBLIC ACTION, EL SALVADOR
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST

he collaborated with *maras* [gangs originating from Central America]. In the video a man is in a dream state and instead of counting sheep to fall asleep he counts *maras*. Moran actually took real *maras* to his studio, which is scary. There was a European filmmaker that survived an attack after making a documentary about the *maras*—the same *maras* he filmed went and tried to kill the filmmaker. So, I think these artists are very brave. They are challenging conventions and create amazing work that is poetic and also humorous to make fun of their reality in a very constructive way, without cynicism.

CB: *There have been comments made that Salvadoran artists need supporters who will buy their work in order for them to find their way? Do you agree?*

AL: I have a lot of respect for collectors, galleries and dealers. In fact, selected dealers, collectors and galleries sponsor my critical work, so I respect their role for putting money into the arts, and I know dealing with art when you are not selling Picasso, Basquiat and Warhol is risky. However, I prefer to have the space to be critical about the things that happen around me and sometimes when people support you financially they expect some ideological affiliations with their particular interests. The artistic practices that I identify with place the importance of the market as a secondary role, if they take it into account at all.

On the other hand, I think that people, institutions and collectors should buy and finance the work of contemporary artists. This allows artists to have an alternative strategy to build a career—while they find a way to materialize their projects outside of the conventional market. I think there is everything right about expecting collectors and institutions to buy your work. That's what should happen, because what artists produce is valuable.

ALANNA HEISS

DIRECTOR OF
CLOCKTOWER PRODUCTIONS



INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
APRIL 4, 2013
IN NEW YORK



CLAIRE BREUKEL: *I know you traveled to El Salvador for the Central American Biennale in 2006. Any comments?*

ALANNA HEISS: Because of our activities in Central America I think that many Americans my age carry certain memories that influence us when we look at the landscape, the people and the culture. I wonder what part we had in either destroying or creating what we see. When I go to Central American countries, I certainly have laden feelings, and because of this it was a very powerful experience when I went to El Salvador.

When I arrived in El Salvador for the Central American Biennial, I had been traveling nonstop. I was director of MoMA PS1 at the time and had many invitations to visit other countries. The opportunity to visit artistic communities was simply irresistible to me, and I received the El Salvador invitation with excitement. I had two assistants who would plan all of my travel, so when I jumped on the plane to go to El Salvador I had no accurate picture of where El Salvador was. In fact, I thought it was closer in location and style to St Bart's. When the plane trip continued on and on I thought, "where am I going?" I looked at the airline guide and to my extraordinary surprise I found that El Salvador was far away. Then everything started to click; the history, the CIA, the long term fighting...everything. I knew the trip was going to be an incredible learning experience, and indeed it was. It was an extraordinary four days and it is still very alive in my memory.

CB: *You founded PS1 (now MoMA PS1) and hosted thousands of exhibitions curated both by you and an international team of curators. Do you remember a fantastic exhibition by the artist collective Group Material, who showed the work "Timeline: A Chronicle of US Intervention in Central and Latin America, 1984"? This work references CISPES, a Salvadoran political group, and I'm curious about this work as well as the proliferation of conversation around the politics of El Salvador at this time. Can you talk about this?*

AH: I have invited many people outside of the "curatorial profession" to organize shows at MoMA PS1. Frequently, artist collectives would come with projects, which would provide a deeper understanding of their efforts and visions. MoMA PS1 is a vast three-story 150-room building. I tried to choreograph shows so there was a balance of different artistic experiences for our



PARTICIPANTS OF THE
TRANSCULTURA EXHIBITION AT THE
ART MUSEUM OF EL SALVADOR

MUSEUM OF ART OF EL SALVADOR [MARTE]



WANDA RAIMUNDI ORTIZ
CHULETA (PERFORMANCE)

2008
AS PART OF THE EXHIBITION "TRANSCULTURA"
IMAGE CREDIT: ANTONIO ROMERO

viewers. This allowed MoMA PS1 to be a rich cultural mosaic. Group Material's exhibition was extremely gritty and confrontational. They were very rigorous in the way they organized exhibitions reflecting their collective's purpose. The time line they created for their show at MoMA PS1 was extraordinarily rich and complex, and came about through their research of other groups such as CISPES and INALSE.

CB: How much of an interaction was there in 1985 between the international art world and what was happening in El Salvador?

AH: My answer is a little and a lot. In my experience the international art community is extremely concerned about political issues around the world, but individual artists become distracted by concerns for their own work and their exhibitions. Generally, visual artists address politics cursorily through their work whereas writers are generally more logical in their practice. A visual artist can go in and out of writing, but a writer actively engages the tools of reporting.

CB: *In my experience critical writing in El Salvador appears mainly online and not in book format. What are your experiences of critical online content from and about El Salvador?*

AH: The experience of reading criticism online is no longer confined to Central American countries. Online criticism is a primary form in which all of us read art criticism. Nowadays, magazines and books exist on another planet that is in the same artistic solar system. The positive thing about this to all of us is that criticism has a whole new audience for those readers who are too poor in spirit or pocket to invest in printed matter.

Prior to visiting El Salvador, I had just added a serious online radio station to the MoMA PS1 “empire.” We started the long process of getting licenses and buying equipment in 2003, and in 2004 we were able to go online. However, at this stage everything was very new to me and I consulted other radio stations, both broadcast radio and extraterrestrial (online) radio. After this year of snooping around, I began to get correspondence from mysterious radio personages in El Salvador. I was unable to understand exactly who these people might be, but when I visited for the Central American Biennial it all came together. It turned out that some of our contact had originated with a few stations apparently run by retired guerillas. Salvadoran friends helped me locate some of these people living in the mountains; and two of them had radio museums.

A trip to the mountains was organized for me and I invited two New York artists to accompany us. We began an exciting journey, which bore a remote resemblance to adventure travel. There seemed to be a lot of cordoned off dirt roads, and from time to time local people often carrying weapons. Weirdly, no one appeared remotely intimidating. We got the chance to ask for directions and talk with some of them, and then we moved on to the next point. It didn’t appear that they were defending themselves, rather that they were amusing themselves in a way that many retired people do. I sensed these men were remembering the times when they were younger, romantic figures whose actions were crucial to the survival of their families and friends. Perhaps a few of these people were lucky and ended with pensions from

“I LOOKED AT THE AIRLINE GUIDE AND TO MY EXTRAORDINARY SURPRISE I FOUND THAT EL SALVADOR WAS FAR AWAY. THEN EVERYTHING STARTED TO CLICK; THE HISTORY, THE CIA, THE LONG TERM FIGHTING...EVERYTHING.”

the same country, the USA, which had supported the parties responsible for bombing El Salvador to smithereens.

Our long trip ended up in a clearing. We talked a lot, mostly but not all, through translators. One of the guerillas said he had had to negotiate in English, so he had learned the language because he didn't want to rely on translators, which I thought was quite cagey. We talked a lot about radio. They explained to me that in countries, particularly with difficult terrain and bad road coverage, that rebels resort to hiding in areas that are unpopulated, and they have no way to communicate with each other except through radio—so radio became a lifeline for guerilla groups. That is why in this particular country, with these particular people, radio was so important. The radio museum was not so much a concern of this particular guerilla I spoke with, because he wasn't interested in having people visit it. But he kept all of the equipment and showed me how they would load up the power sources onto donkeys and pull them behind, and how they would carry them in special backpacks. All of this of course was hugely interesting to me who was starting an online radio station. He told me that they could never have operated any kind of rebellion without radio because no one can control television stations until the very end of a conflict. Remember that from all the rebellions we have watched on television that it isn't until the very end when the rebels come in that you see them on the media—usually looking very dashing and the woman are fabulous looking, like Marina Abramović.

In the evening we traveled to a “radio museum.” This radio museum was in a small two-story building. The museum was on the ground floor and the radio station was upstairs, and it had a few tables with old portable radio broadcast equipment and photographs on the wall of guerillas operating the equipment. Actually, it was really a sort of small radio connection for the local people, and they would play music. I had brought some of my music that we played with the local DJ announcer.

CB: *Did you get any feedback from your broadcast?*

AH: No. I do remember looking at posters and equipment and thinking that they would be quite effective online. It has always been a fantasy of mine to go back and reconnect with this and other stations like it with the idea of

parachuting their popular culture to American online radio audiences. We do that with several radio collectives in the Middle East and find we have many people listening to these programs.

CB: *Tell us about your experience curating “Transcultura” that included artists from El Salvador as well as two guest artists from the United States?*

AH: The exhibition “Transcultura” that Alanna Lockward and I co-curated after an invitation by the initiator, Rebeca Dávila was remarkable in more ways than one. To begin with, “Alanna” spelled this way is unusual, and having two Alanna's as curators managed to confuse anyone investigating the show from conception to current time. For me, it was a remarkable learning experience. When I travel I normally visit local contemporary museums and collecting institutions. I also normally visit artist studios and meet with artists. “Transcultura” seemed to put all these people in the same mixing bowl—artists, curators, organizers, translators, collectors and journalists literally all in the same room, which brought a refreshing directness to the experience. Initially, I was concerned about the reception of Kalup Linzy's work that functions as transgender opera. As a talented actor and mime, his videos are valued because they give such insight into the deep American South and its prejudice. I worried that the homosexual content would be neither welcomed nor understood in El Salvador. I was wrong. Kalup did a series of workshops that were oversubscribed and attended religiously. He felt good about his experience. Wanda Raimundi Ortiz is a strong feminist from the South Bronx coming out of a macho Spanish environment. She has developed performances designed to pull the audience in to considering issues important to her as a minority woman and political minority. We included Ivan Navarro because of his seductive “design” art. We were unable to transport his elaborate neon pieces, which someday I hope will show at the Museum of Art of El Salvador [MARTE]. The other artists were mostly new to me and came to the show due the vision of Alanna Lockward and Rebeca Dávila. When exhibitions include artist from dissimilar political and artistic backgrounds there is sometimes a remarkable discovery between the artists themselves, and such an exhibition lives long past the show and in the works and the minds of the artists themselves. I am looking forward to visiting El Salvador again and maybe even have Clocktower Radio broadcast from the radio museum.



KALUP LINZY
ASSHOLE (PERFORMANCE)

2007
AS PART OF THE EXHIBITION "TRANSCULTURA"
IMAGE CREDIT: ANTONIO ROMERO



ART HISTORIANS

DR. HARPER MONTGOMERY

KENCY CORNEJO

DR. HARPER MONTGOMERY

PATRICIA PHELPS DE CISNEROS PROFESSOR
OF LATIN AMERICAN ART AT HUNTER COLLEGE



INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
MARCH 13, 2013
IN NEW YORK



CLAIRE BREUKEL: *How did you come to focus on Latin American art?*

HARPER MONTGOMERY: I am from Texas and was interested in contemporary artists who were working with border culture, in particular the Chicano artists that were popular in the eighties. Contemporary conceptual practice—what would now be called mainstream practice I guess—is pushed to interesting limits and boundaries when artists work in the context of the border. When I was doing my master's thesis on an artist from the border, my interests coincided with an opportunity and funding to work at the University of Texas with curator Mari Carmen Ramírez. The University of Texas has some of the most important resources on Latin American art in the United States, academically and within its libraries and collections. I then went to the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA), where I met people like Paulo Herkenhoff, who visited New York as part of a series that brought curators from Latin America to MoMA to assess and help strengthen the program. I was able to work with these guests and to travel to Brazil and Venezuela for curatorial projects.

CB: *Another curatorial project you worked on was the San Juan Triennial in Puerto Rico; can you explain the history and significance of this triennial?*

HM: The San Juan Triennial was organized by the government agency called the Center for Puerto Rican Studies and Culture, and is an interesting case. It was actually the first regional Latin American biennial—the Havana Biennial is always thought of as having that role, but the San Juan Triennial actually started before it in 1970. It began as a print biennial as the print tradition in Puerto Rico was enormously strong and incredibly socially engaged. It was established with the express purpose of carving out an antagonistic and political position in the region that was not subservient to the dominant market of the United States. In this way, the Triennial reflects upon the colonial struggles of Puerto Rico in relationship to the culture, economy and politics of the United States. In the 1970s, the print medium was avant-garde and you could solicit prints from many printing shops all over Latin America that were doing interesting and politically important work, however by 2000

INSTANT COFFEE BASSBED

AS PART OF THE YEAR OF LOVE

2004/2005

SAN JUAN PRINT TRIENNIAL, SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO
IMAGE COURTESY OF CECILIA BERKOVIC OF INSTANT COFFEE

It doesn't have to be good to be meaningful

S'është e thënë të jetë e mirë që të ketë kuptim

**FREEDOM
WITHOUT
LOVE**



BRIAN DISCO TRAILER TRASH

**GET SOCIAL
OR GET LOST**





INSTANT COFFEE BASSBED (DETAIL)
AS PART OF THE YEAR OF LOVE

2004/2005
SAN JUAN PRINT TRIENNIAL, SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO
IMAGE COURTESY OF CECILIA BERKOVIC OF INSTANT COFFEE

this was no longer the case. The organizers decided to radically revamp their approach and to bring in directors to run the Triennials that could involve multimedia and experimental practices. In 2004, the year that I curated it, they asked Mari Carmen Ramírez to be the director.

CB: *In your opinion, why are artists from Central America not featured in major exhibitions, biennales and triennials such as this more frequently?*

HM: I would contribute it to a lack of economic resources. One of the reasons why Brazilian art is becoming more important is because Brazil has an economy that is able to support it. The same can be said for Mexico and Venezuela at different points, which have had strong economies that support the arts. However, there seems to be more growth in Central America. The critical work of the late Virginia Pérez-Ratton who was the director of the experimental art space, TEOR/ética in Costa Rica, really expanded the understanding of the region for international audiences. However, I am also sure that if you are an art curator or critic traveling to Central America, there's a lot going on there that hasn't reached the art fairs. In many ways, art fairs bring together a very broad mix of artists from different scenes and different locations in one place.

A major goal of the San Juan Triennial was to bring artists from Latin American countries together who wouldn't normally come together because the market is so dispersed. Two central themes of the Triennial were "ephemerality" and "collectivity" because many artist collectives make multiples and prints, or stage events and create objects that are not necessarily collectable. The Triennial brought regional groups of artists together to offset the main patterns of the global market from a political position, and not from within the marketplace.

CB: *What role do private collections play in supporting art infrastructures in Latin America?*

HM: I think of this support along with state funding—I have noticed that in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico, which are the contexts that I am most familiar with, that they have the most established infrastructures. Buenos Aires has major museums as well as important collections, and so do Brazil and Mexico.

For me, Mexico has the most interesting contemporary spaces that are affiliated with the university system—MUAC at UNAM (Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México) as well as the experimental space “El Eco.” The university affiliation makes these spaces “official,” which is very useful for funding. Consistent state support is good because it creates institutionalized systems. However, I would also say the Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros is one of the most academically and scholarly rigorous collections, and many of our great institutions are the result of one or two visionary collectors such as the Cisneros family.

CB: *Some of the people I have interviewed have issues with the term Latin America as it relates to the market. How do you feel about the use of the term?*

HM: I also have a problem with it. It is a term that has meant different things throughout the course of history. The French coined the term during the 19th century after the War of Independence. There is a reference to it in Dawn Ades' textbook *Latin American Art in the Modern Era* that is still very useful. She refers to this specific historical instance (that we know of) when it was first used as a French diplomatic term to refer this territory that the French had to “deal with.” However, over the course of the political history of the region, it has been either embraced or rejected by political leaders. For example, in the 19th century it was embraced by Bolivar, who was as a huge believer in America, as well as by Jose Martí, the Cuban poet. Martí, a revolutionary poet, wrote the very famous text “Our America” where he called on the term as this idea in opposition to the north, and in opposition to the neocolonialism of the United States of America. So it has been both a colonial term and a term of resistance. It is important to note that many of the reasons why unacceptable political situations have continued in Latin American countries is because of the very active intervention by the United States government in the region.

If you are an academic, the term is a way to carve out a space for yourself in this increasingly complex and fragmented notion of what constitutes modern and contemporary art. For modern art, it means different things for artists and intellectuals who embraced it temporarily and knowingly as a political or

intellectual strategy. In the contemporary field, I think we must be especially aware of how its meaning reflects a market.

CB: *My last question asks for your advice. How can one avoid addressing Salvadoran contemporary art without alluding to it as a geographical space and without falling prey to exoticizing it?*

HM: I think you have to address head on what it means to make art in El Salvador, what the expectations of the artists are and how they see themselves. I would like to see work by these artists as I would imagine that it defies expectations, in particular the expectations from the United States. El Salvador has a very charged history with the United States' neocolonialism and domination in Central America. I would be very interested to know how the Salvadoran artists see themselves with respect to a global market.

There is an interesting archive in the Museum of Modern Art libraries from PAD/D (Political Art Documentation/Distribution), which was a collective that included Fred Owens and Lucy Lippard and a group of artist activists from the East Village during the 1970s and 1980s. They dealt a lot with El Salvador; in particular the United States intervention in El Salvador, and their work included street work, poster art, stencils and graffiti. Now I really need to go to El Salvador!

“EL SALVADOR HAS A VERY CHARGED HISTORY WITH THE UNITED STATES' NEOCOLONIALISM AND DOMINATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA. I WOULD BE VERY INTERESTED TO KNOW HOW THE SALVADORAN ARTISTS SEE THEMSELVES WITH RESPECT TO A GLOBAL MARKET.”

KENCY CORNEJO

ART HISTORIAN



INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
MAY 5, 2013



CLAIRE BREUKEL: *What is your relationship with El Salvador?*

KENCY CORNEJO: My parents are from El Salvador, and they emigrated to Los Angeles right before the war officially began in 1980. They met in Los Angeles, where I was born. Traveling to El Salvador has been a personal investigation into my own history and culture, and I consider myself part of its diaspora. Currently, I'm writing a dissertation titled "Visual Disobedience: The Geopolitics of Experimental Art in Central America, 1990-Present" that focuses on the postwar period and the relationship between art and politics in the entire region. During my undergraduate studies at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) I wrote an honors thesis that investigated political posters in El Salvador, considering gender issues and representations of women by both rightwing and the revolutionary groups in these posters. I traveled there to conduct research and worked with a collection at the Center for the Study of Political Graphics (CSPG) in Los Angeles. Then, for my master's thesis research at the University of Texas (UT) in Austin, I focused on liberation theology and arts in El Salvador and made further visits. Every time I traveled to El Salvador, I investigated the art scene a little more. Recently I was there for fourteen months with the support of a Fulbright-Hays—Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship. I was based in San Salvador and traveled throughout the region via bus to see exhibitions and speak with different artists, curators and people involved in various artistic events and initiatives.

CB: *How would you describe the contemporary art climate in San Salvador today?*

KC: There has always been a lot of art production in San Salvador, with many artists working in different areas and fields of interests. There is still a lot going on, and the art field is in transition. Central America has received much more visibility in the last twenty years, and this has made a clear difference between the war period and the postwar period. There is more of a connection between the artists, not only within El Salvador, but also between Salvadoran artists and artists from the region. This has been facilitated with the presence of biennials such as the Central American Biennial, which has increased interregional dialogue and collaboration. Many artists are also increasingly exhibiting their work internationally, so there is a greater connection to the



WALTERIO IRAHETA
CASA EN ILOBASCO 6, EL SALVADOR

FROM THE SERIES "FARAWAY BROTHER STYLE"
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST

diaspora as well as the international art scene. Generally, there is a lot of creativity and a lot of experimentation with medium and subject matter. Artists are engaging a range of issues from postwar violence, migration and urbanism to environmental concerns, public space and memory, among others. These issues pertain to both the social and individual fabric of the country. I see that the younger generation of artists has learned from the previous generation, and are creating their own spaces for exhibition and knowledge production. It's definitely time to pay attention.

CB: A lot of your research addresses issues of emigration largely attributed to the Salvadoran civil war and the presence of gangs in the country. How have these sociopolitical conditions impacted the kind of contemporary art that is being made in El Salvador?

KC: During the 1980s, artists were doing more figurative work using drawing and painting as their medium, and addressed themes of violence directly. Now, I see that artists are addressing the aftermath of war, including themes of mass migration and the creation of a diaspora, as well as how the people who have stayed in El Salvador navigate their urban spaces differently. The economy has changed, as there has been an influx of money coming from

"I SEE THAT THE YOUNGER GENERATION OF ARTISTS HAS LEARNED FROM THE PREVIOUS GENERATION, AND ARE CREATING THEIR OWN SPACES FOR EXHIBITION AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION. IT'S DEFINITELY TIME TO PAY ATTENTION."

the families that have left and send money back to El Salvador. This phenomenon has actually changed the architecture and the aesthetics of living spaces in many places in Central America. The exhibition "Arquitectura de Remesas" (Architecture of Remittances) addressed this effect on architecture, and the photographer Walterio Iraheta (see page 30) has also documented this phenomenon.

Another topic artists have addressed in their work is that of transnational communities, specifically transnational gang visual culture. Through artists work, gang violence is given critical and historical understanding, not just an exotic representation. Artists consider the formation of gangs and gang violence as a consequence of the United States intervention, anti-immigrant policies and a culture of fear in the country perpetuated by current political powers. Even in an indirect way migration, and the consequences of it, have been addressed visually through architecture, urban culture and in artistic production.

CB: *Expanding on this, it seems that modes of artistic expression in San Salvador freely meld with other fields. Can you comment?*

KC: Yes, at this moment artists are inspired and exploring different strategies, and that has in part to do with the increase of communication between each other. The Internet offers access to different types of information and artists are traveling more. As a result, artists are working with performance, installation, conceptual work and even graffiti to really challenge the idea of traditional artistic practice. Many of the art schools and even some art spaces are still very conservative, so artists are challenging this conservatism. There is a lot more melding now, but it is also important to note it was happening before, and that it just wasn't documented.

CB: *In your opinion, what binds contemporary practice in Central America to the rest of Latin America?*

KC: What really differentiates the region's approach is that Central American artists are addressing issues that concern everybody globally—issues of migration, urban space and cultural globalization— but from the perspective of the Central American experience. This is in dialogue with other perspectives from Latin America and other parts of the world, but it is speaks from a unique geopolitical space and environment, with a specific history and with unique concerns that differentiate it from, let's say, Brazil or Mexico. There are always points of convergence, but it is a unique perspective.

CB: *What is your impression of the museum and gallery scene there?*

KC: The Museum of Art of El Salvador [MARTE] is a very good space, but it is a problem for artists that there is only one venue to exhibit. It would be great for the contemporary program to do more research-related conferences and seminars. More recently, the art collective The Fire Theory has worked to increase exhibition spaces and opportunities, using the Tecleño Municipal Museum, which was formerly used as a detention center for political prisoners during the war.

CB: *A number of Salvadoran artists have shown their work around the world, yet despite this there is still an affiliation with these artists being part of an emerging scene, and as such are considered "emerging." Can you comment?*

KC: In El Salvador these artists are known, but there does need to be more serious writing on their work. These artists are often included in international exhibitions and they get a very good response, but I have yet to see academically rigorous writing about their work. Critical writing is one of the biggest challenges in the region. There are people working on it but at the moment you rarely have critical analysis of this work that puts it in a global context or in conversation with other artists.

CB: *I talked with Celia Birbragher, the editor of ArtNexus magazine, (see page 170) about the differences between printed text and online. In your opinion, what role does blogging play in adding to critical dialogue about art in El Salvador?*

KC: I love that there is text online as it offers easy access to information, but there is a big difference between print and online. Blogs are important for getting images and information out there, but often it only offers a short introduction or presentation. Published text in books is often more critical, and the printed book helps to historicize the information within the context of what is going on in Central America. These ideally need to be in Spanish and English. In Central America, there are people working on exhibition catalogs, but the catalogs are hard to access outside of Central America, or they are not in English.

CB: *Knowing the contemporary art climate in El Salvador what forms of support do you feel the art community could use most?*

KC: Support is needed from within the country. Creating an interest in the higher value of art will lead people to appreciate it more, to be more involved and maybe even purchase it. Giving artists access to exhibitions and residencies internationally would also really help.



WALTERIO IRAHETA
CASA EN CHALATENANGO, EL SALVADOR

FROM THE SERIES "FARAWAY BROTHER STYLE"
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST



COLLECTORS

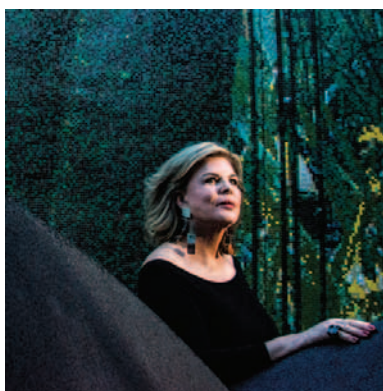
ELLA FONTANALS-CISNEROS

CHRISTY TURLINGTON BURNS

TOM HEALY

ELLA FONTANALS-CISNEROS

FOUNDER OF THE
CISNEROS FONTANALS ART FOUNDATION (CIFO)



INTERVIEW CONDUCTED IN
JANUARY 2013
IN MIAMI



CLAIRE BREUKEL: *It has been documented that you started collecting seriously in 1999 with works by Jesús Rafael Soto and Rufino Tamayo. What inspired you to start collecting artists from Latin America?*

ELLA FONTANALS-CISNEROS: Actually, I have been collecting many renowned artists for over thirty years. At first, I started looking at Latin American masters such as Tamayo, Wilfredo Lam and Roberto Matta, but having grown up in Venezuela, a country with a significant art history of abstraction, I became increasingly aware of the significance of this style. In fact, I've felt overly inclined toward abstract artists for some time, in particular Lygia Clark, Gego [Gertrude Goldschmidt], Mira Schendel and Carmen Herrera. It was clear to me that, due to the quality of their work, it would only be a matter of time before they would gain recognition from the art world.

CB: *Have you always loved art?*

EC: When I was a teenager I wanted to be an artist. Maybe this is the reason why I developed a special interest in works by female artists. Then, in my early twenties, I opened a gallery in Caracas. I remember that Alejandro Otero (who was in financial distress back then) offered my former husband and I one of his stainless steel sculptures. That piece is still in my collection, along with the first Jesús Soto piece I purchased. Soto's work is a 1961 informalist piece of great artistic and historic value, and it is very rewarding and gratifying to see how these great abstract masters from Latin America are finally being recognized.

CB: *What has been your experience meeting and collecting artists from Central America?*

EC: I really appreciate the work of many artists from Central America, especially the new generation of artists such as Priscilla Monge, Dario Escobar, Federico Herrero and Regina Galindo, all represented in my collection with excellent works. I established the CIFO Foundation ten years ago. Every year, through CIFO's Grants Program, we receive close to two hundred applications, many originating from Central America. Earlier this year, Guatemalan artist Benvenuto Chavajay was announced as one of the ten grant recipients, so I feel very confident that with the growing support of the private sector and public institutions, we will start seeing many artists from this region gain international recognition.



BENVENUTO CHAVAJAY
CONGELACIÓN (FREEZING)

2013
INSTALLATION VIEW
MIXED MEDIA
IMAGE COURTESY OF ORIOL TARRIDAS AND
THE CISNEROS FONTANALS ART FOUNDATION



BENVENUTO CHAVAJAY
CONGELACIÓN (FREEZING), (DETAIL)

2013
MIXED MEDIA
IMAGE COURTESY OF ORIOL TARRIDAS AND THE CISNEROS FONTANALS ART FOUNDATION

CB: It seems there has been significant attention given to Latin American artists over the last decades. Do you agree?

EC: Yes, in the last fifteen years there has been a shift in the art world benefiting Latin American artists. At the beginning it was a joint effort of a small group of collectors and institutions, and now it seems that most museums, collectors, galleries, biennials and curators are aware of the significance of Latin American art. Today, it is very common to see artists represented in international biennials like Venice and Documenta, and in prestigious institutions and museums such as the Tate Modern, the Museum of Modern Art and Reina Sofia, who have done a fantastic job creating some of the most acclaimed Latin American institutional collections in the world. Fortunately, collecting Latin American art has also become part of the strategy of other renowned institutions, such as the Metropolitan in New York, the Chicago Art Institute and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

CB: How do you feel Latin American artists are viewed internationally in contrast to say what is termed an “American” artist?

EC: We conveniently use the term “Latin America” to refer to a vast continent with a population of over twenty nations and 500 million people. It is easy to label everything as “Latin American art,” but it is misleading and inaccurate to assume that the region and the art emerging from it are uniform.

It is precisely its diverse ethnicity, rich culture and humanity that give way to enormous creativity, different forms of expression and new talent. In fact, from country to country, artists are exposed to different realities. The region overall has lived through dictatorships, civil wars that have lasted decades, socioeconomic and political disparities, neglect as well as thriving economies. Then some countries share similarities, cosmopolitan areas surrounded by shantytowns, an established catholic heritage, modernist architecture of enormous influence, freedom to express the relationship between work ethics and existentialist concerns and the mix of cultural identities, to name a few. At the CIFO Foundation, our focus is not only to promote artists, but also to break the paradigms and stereotypes associated with work produced by visual artists in the region.

CB: *What, in your opinion, do artists from Latin American countries with developing contemporary art scenes like El Salvador need today?*

EC: Few countries in the region have developed strong art markets meaning that artists from Latin America still need support to produce and promote their work. Only a handful of places like Brazil and maybe Mexico present opportunities for artists to make a living from their work, but the region as a whole lacks a comprehensive art system. It is great to see how cosmopolitan areas such as Bogota, Lima and Buenos Aires have experienced an increase in contemporary art spaces, but there is still much work to be done. We need to inspire committed art collectors, encourage museums to exhibit new art, modernize educational programs and instill support in arts education.

CB: *What is your opinion of the growing art fairs in countries like Mexico City and Colombia?*

EC: I have regularly attended the art fairs in Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Bogota and Mexico. I am really impressed by the progress of the art fair in Bogota in particular. The fact that the art market in Latin America is growing at such a rate should make us all proud.

CB: *What would you say to a young collector looking to buy Latin American art?*

EC: I believe in art collecting strategies based on research, expertise and market analysis. I would suggest new collectors tap into different resources that can help them make informed decisions, including reading publications and networking with experts and museums that specialize in Latin American art.

I would, however, also encourage new collectors to take risks and invest in the talented pool of emerging Latin American artists. Although it can take years to see how an artist's career will develop, it is very satisfactory to see how some gain recognition—and what was once a small investment suddenly becomes a valuable asset. Art is highly regarded as a record of history and imagination. By making art accessible to the public whether through exhibitions, loans or donations, collectors can help make a long-lasting impact on their societies. It is a win-win for all.

“ART IS HIGHLY REGARDED AS A RECORD OF HISTORY AND IMAGINATION. BY MAKING ART ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC WHETHER THROUGH EXHIBITIONS, LOANS OR DONATIONS, COLLECTORS CAN HELP MAKE A LONG-LASTING IMPACT ON THEIR SOCIETIES.”

CLAIRE BREUKEL: *Your mom is from El Salvador. Can you describe your own affiliation with El Salvador growing up?*

CHRISTY TURLINGTON BURNS: I feel like I've always had a strong affiliation with El Salvador. My mom grew up in Los Angeles after coming to the United States in the late 1940s. I spent my childhood visiting my mom's family in Los Angeles and then going to El Salvador for a few summers when I was very young. I remember traveling down to visit with family. My mom hoped we would learn Spanish, but that never really happened, because everyone in El Salvador wanted to practice their English on us. My mom would send my sister and I on the overnight flight from Los Angeles to San Salvador, and we would arrive to what felt like thousands of people waiting for us who we didn't know that well. It was exciting and scary but we always had each other.

I grew up connecting my mom more to Los Angeles where she spent most of her life until we started to actually travel to El Salvador and meet the extended family. This gave me a better sense of the place, its smells and all the amazing food. My sisters and I always loved *pupusas* [a traditional Salvadoran dish].

CB: *Did you see or feel the impact of the civil war in El Salvador at that time?*

CTB: I think the war started in 1979, so our first two big trips to El Salvador were well before that time and there were no obvious problems I recall from those visits. We didn't visit during wartime at all but heard stories of the horrible things that were happening and how that was affecting our family too. During that period my family moved to Miami—my mom had been a flight attendant for Pan American until she had my sister and my dad was a training captain for Pan American—so my mom had lived and traveled all over the world. Looking back, that time in Miami represents an end of innocence for me as a child. Traveling as a family when we were very young opened the world up for us, and a big part of this was visiting El Salvador and getting to know our family there and moving to Miami, which felt closer even.

I remember for the first time thinking that I didn't understand what the war in El Salvador was about and my mom either didn't understand or wanted to shelter us from it. I remember feeling like maybe being from there was not something that I should be after all. I think this was more connected to my

CHRISTY TURLINGTON BURNS



Image credit: Karl Markus

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
FEBRUARY 19, 2013
IN NEW YORK





ARTIST NEGRA ALVAREZ DESCRIBES HER WOMEN SERIES:

"I AM A WOMEN AND MOTHER OF THREE, SO MATERNITY HAS BEEN AN IMPORTANT THEME IN MY WORK. THE PRESENCE OF FRUIT, AS A METAPHOR, SYMBOLIZES THE RESULT OF GESTATION OR THE EFFORT TO ACHIEVE A GOAL. DOORS ARE USUALLY PRESENT IN MY WORK, AND ARE AN ELEMENTAL PART OF MY COMPOSITIONS, AS WELL AS SILENT WITNESSES TO EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS WITHIN THEM."

NEGRA ALVAREZ
FROM THE "WOMEN" SERIES, 1997

OIL AND PENCIL ON BANANA PAPER
IMAGE COURTESY CHRISTY TURLINGTON BURNS COLLECTION

adolescence and not wanting to seem different or feel shame, but for a few years I thought maybe I should just keep my connection to El Salvador to myself. Ultimately, it was being American that made me feel shameful, once the facts came out about the role we played in the war.

I think that if I had spoken the language I would have felt more connected to it. We didn't travel to El Salvador again until after the war. I started my career as a young model in Miami in the early 1980s, then moved back to California in 1983 and then to New York a few years later.

CB: How did you feel then about being identified as Salvadoran?

CTB: As soon as I was an adult and established in my profession, I realized that being connected to this place was really special, and it actually became a point of interest for those who followed my career in magazines. It quickly became an important fact about me and the way people perceived me. Physically, people could never put their finger on where I was from exactly (my dad was American of English and German descent). So I loved saying I'm from El Salvador as it was not a country that you hear a lot about. Then, I think because I talked more about being from El Salvador and having a connection there that people started to approach me to be involved in various related projects. So the next project I was invited to support was called Intercambios Culturales, which was a cultural exchange program that involved a couple of expats who were part of a community of artists and journalists who were moving down to El Salvador.

CB: What was your motivation to support the Intercambios Culturales project?

CTB: I thought that maybe a project supporting the arts and artists living in El Salvador was an interesting way to get others involved and I might have more opportunities to travel there and reconnect with family. I worked on the project for a couple of years and helped them to fundraise to start programs and open a center in San Salvador. We did a big fundraiser at Christie's auction house in 1994. I attended an exhibit at El Museo Del Barrio for an event organized by a group called Friends of El Salvador. Patty Cisneros was on the museum's board at the time. She had a reception for Intercambios at her home as well, which I also attended. We did a few different events to

fundraise, but I started to feel like I was only invited to help raise money and that didn't feel very rewarding. I knew that nonprofits need help and support with all that, but I felt that I wanted to be more meaningfully engaged than I was being asked to be. I wanted to contribute but I really wanted to understand my connection to this country and figure out my relationship to it and my mother too.

To inaugurate the center, we brought a delegation down and featured a multimedia print show of Robert Rauschenberg's work called "Fuerte Cambios." He didn't come down to El Salvador but gave us his blessing and several works. The center was a two-story house with a gallery space and a computer space. It's not there anymore, but I know people who were involved who still talk about it. I invited a bunch of high-profile guests that included Quincy Jones and Tom Freston who was the president of MTV at that time, and MTV Latin America came to cover it. There was also a representative from the Japanese design company Felissimo, who became really involved in Intercambios for a while. She also introduced me to the American author Toni Morrison who was coincidentally my neighbor at that time and who donated her prize money from a Felissimo project to ours. Exchanging ideas is important and it's a wonderful way to get in tune with yourself and your culture. I think it can be very helpful to see oneself in relation to another place, both for artists and human beings in general.

CB: *I find the different ways in which you are portrayed really interesting. You are part Salvadoran and a face in Timothy Greenfield Sanders's "Latino List: Volume Two," and you are also recognized globally as American. Is the complexity strange for you?*

CTB: What is interesting is that on one of the return trips to El Salvador in the 1990s, I was interviewed for *Latina* magazine and I remember the writer starting her questions by telling me, "you're such a closeted Latina," but I have never tried to do that. I've had a lot of opportunities to talk about my background and that's always been a part of my story. The fact that Turlington is such a British last name, and my Salvadoran mom's name, Parker, is also British, made it a bit less obvious, but that has nothing to do with me. Being asked to shoot for *Latina* magazine felt good, and again it helped me in my own search for a connection to that part of the world. I recently met a

woman when I got off the plane in San Francisco who is half Salvadoran too and she said, "I had to talk to you because I knew you are from the country where I'm from," and it felt nice to make that kind of connection.

CB: *You have bought artwork in El Salvador. What was the first art piece that you bought there?*

CTB: I went to visit the Espacio gallery on the trip when I went down for a calendar shoot, and it turned out the gallerist, Rina Alviles, is my mom's cousin! I bought two pieces of art. One was *El Tambor* by Mexican artist José Luis Cuevas, which I still have on my wall, and the other was a painting by Negra Alvarez from her "Women" series, and it depicted a torso of a pregnant woman with the head cut off—it was dark but not like in the depictions of the massacres that happened during that time. I felt that a lot of the artwork being made by younger postwar artists was really interesting, and I just couldn't help but connect to the works that addressed women losing their babies and being exposed to brutality and violence.

CB: *This theme is understandably significant for you as you founded your nonprofit Every Mother Counts (EMC) to support and promote maternal health. Interestingly, in May last year you teamed up with Minted, who launched an art print project to help raise money for EMC. How did this collaboration come about?*

CTB: Minted is one of EMC's partners and they use crowd sourcing to find the artists who create their design products. Many of the artists are women and moms living throughout the world. The project gives these artists a platform for their work. They regularly have contests where the community helps Minted to curate their offerings. So yes, Every Mother Counts, the nonprofit I founded in 2010 to end preventable deaths related to pregnancy and childbirth, and Minted partnered to raise awareness and funds for maternal health programs around the world. Since we established our partnership around Mother's Day in 2012, Minted's founder and CEO Mariam Naficy has joined our board.

CB: *Returning to your art collection, you also have a lot of photography. How did your passion for collecting evolve?*

CTB: Photography was an easy medium for me to collect first of all because

it was really prolific at that time and I had exposure to it and the people making it. When I started to collect photography it wasn't as expensive as it is today, and I also knew a lot of photographers that were the collectible ones. So it started with those I knew and had worked with. I have a lot of black-and-white nudes that felt, to me, to be classic. These are still my favorites photographs.

I have known the photographer and filmmaker Timothy Greenfield Saunders for several years and was really happy to be included in "The Latino List" documentary film. It has a huge range of Hispanic people that come from many Latin American countries and communities and it allows others to see the full spectrum of what that can, and does, mean for so many of us.

CB: What support do you think would benefit the art community in El Salvador?

CTB: One of the things I always thought about is how El Salvador could benefit from publishing quality art books. I remember seeing some books with beautiful images but they were badly bound or the paper quality was not on par with the art it was representing. The artwork itself is so beautiful and it's a pity that they haven't found a way to improve the printing process.

CB: How do your children relate to El Salvador?

CTB: I brought my daughter Grace to El Salvador a few years ago when she was six along with her cousins for my mother's seventieth birthday party. That was really special because I could see that she was beginning to consider her own connection to the world outside of our home in New York City. They both love to draw and they are both quite good. Art has been integrated into their lives on some level every day and they feel like artists too. It's not something that either has aspired to be, it just is.



FRANCESCO CLEMENTE
RED FLOWER ON SCORCHED EARTH

1996
COPYRIGHT: FRANCESCO CLEMENTE
IMAGE COURTESY MARY BOONE GALLERY, NEW YORK
AS PART OF THE CHRISTY TURLINGTON BURNS COLLECTION

TOM HEALY

AUTHOR, COLLECTOR AND CHAIRMAN
OF THE FULBRIGHT FOREIGN
SCHOLARSHIP BOARD



INTERVIEW CONDUCTED IN
JULY 2013



CLAIRE BREUKEL: *You have worked in the creative field for many years. When did you first become interested in collecting contemporary art, and what was the first artwork you bought?*

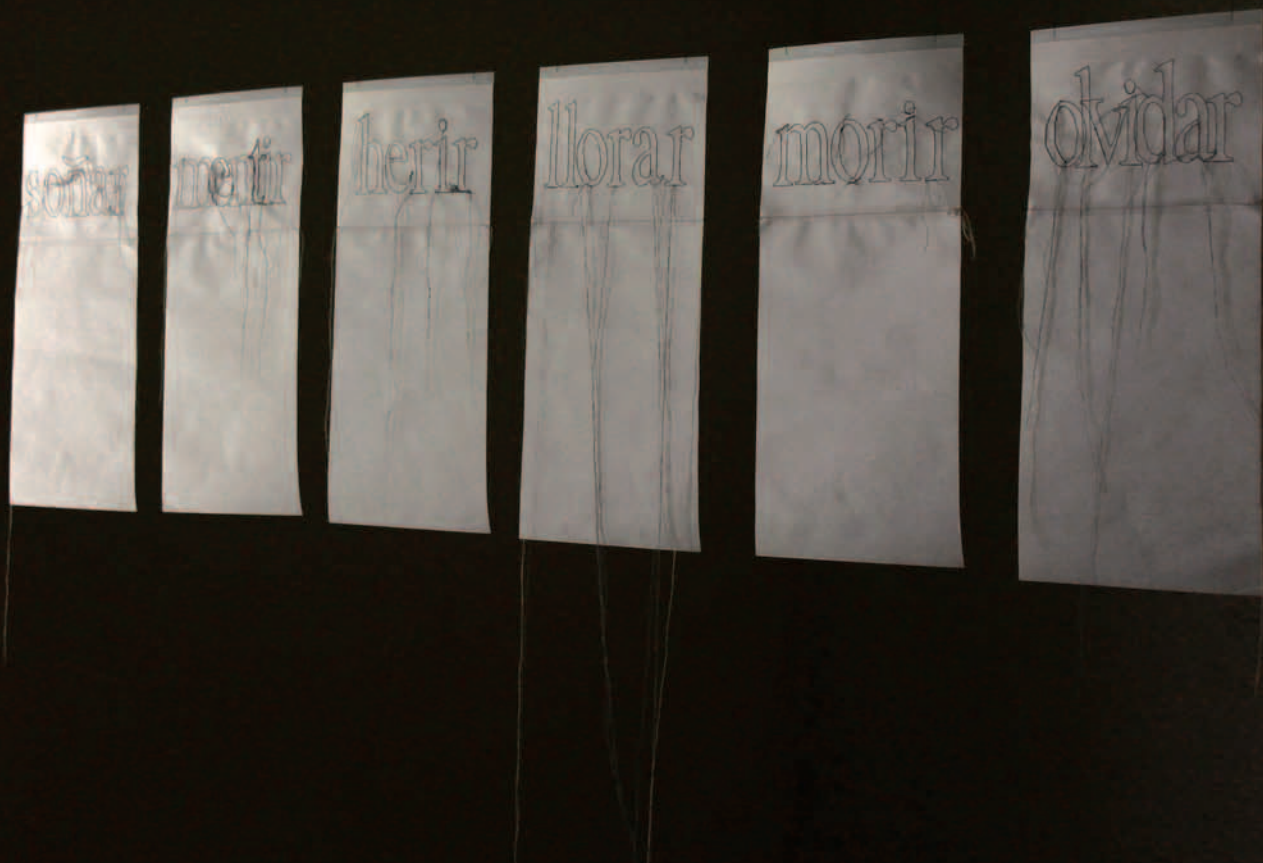
TOM HEALY: I got interested in collecting art in a textbook example of a bad idea: I opened an art gallery. This was 1994 when SoHo in New York was still the center of the art world. But it was expensive, the spaces were often small and the vibe was already becoming more tourists and shopping than the right atmosphere for art.

Three of us went looking at neighborhoods all over Manhattan and moved to the same block in Chelsea—Matthew Marks, Pat Hearn and my gallery with Paul Morris. We were the original pioneers there. The Dia Center for the Arts was down the street, so we thought we'd have a critical mass, enough to get the attention of collectors, curators and artists. And we opened on Sundays, which no galleries in New York did.

Still, everyone thought we were crazy and for the first few years very few other galleries moved there. But then the art market went crazy and Chelsea changed dramatically. Having a gallery was thrilling. It was like a big, public salon. Everyone came for conversation, gossip and debate about art and the pleasure of looking and discovering something provocative, something beautiful.

But the reason opening a gallery was a bad idea was that all too quickly I got more interested in buying art than selling it. My husband often reminded me that this was not really the best business plan. But I've never had any real talent for business.

I'll never forget the first piece I bought. I was visiting Robert Therrien, an important California artist whose minimalism, craftsmanship and subtlety deeply impressed me. We sat at a small table off to the side of his vast, industrial studio. And above the table was hanging a brown squiggle on a beige ground. It was simple and beautiful and it obviously meant enough to him that it was over his table. I wanted it. He didn't want to sell it. Just as I was leaving, one of his studio assistants came up to me and whispered \$5,000. That was a lot of money for me. But I suddenly felt that compulsion every collector can tell you about. I had to have it. I still love it. It was recently appraised and turns out I might not be nearly as bad at business as I believe.



ABIGAIL REYES
PRELIBRI 7 POLYPTYCH

2013
NEWSPRINT AND THREAD SEWING MACHINE
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST



CB: In your writings, such as “Because a Fire Was In My Head,” you write about contemporary artists. Is your literary practice integrated with visual arts?

TH: Perhaps it’s a little simplistic to say it this way, but when I write poetry, I basically write about my family. When I write about art, I write about my friends. I’m not good with boundaries or keeping a calm, appropriate critical distance. I’ve never written about the work of strangers. I write about work I love made by people who matter to me. Writing about artist friends feels like giving back, thanking them for showing me that understanding the

“THE PROBLEM IS THAT LOCAL CULTURES—WHETHER THAT’S IN KANSAS CITY OR SAN SALVADOR—ARE OFTEN PUT IN A DEFENSIVE POSTURE ABOUT NEW YORK OR LOS ANGELES OR LONDON OR PARIS. ARE SMALLER PLACES MORE PROVINCIAL? ARE THEY ‘SLOWER’ TO CREATE NEW WORK, LESS WILLING TO BE PROVOCATIVE? I DON’T KNOW THAT THESE ARE FAIR QUESTIONS.”

world doesn’t always mean having something to say about it. There are ways to see and feel and know ourselves that are silent, wordless.

And then the irony is that my way of saying “Yes, yes, you’re right. I get it. Thank you!” is to go off

and...say something, write something. But then again, I can barely draw a decent stick figure. We all do what we have to do. Why write or make anything? Artists just can’t help themselves. And I’m interested in that compulsion. I’m particularly interested when the makers are people I know and love and talk to and argue with. The way people say all politics is local, I think all art is local too. It’s personal, it’s intimate, it matters every day.

ABIGAIL REYES
PRELIBRI 2 DIPTYCH

2013
100% COTTON PAPER, ACID FREE DRAFT LASER
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST

CB: *Fifteen years ago you traveled to Cuba with Amy Cappellazzo (see page 142) and purchased work by Los Carpinteros. What first drew you to their work?*

TH: I've been to Cuba three times. As you know, those 90 miles from Miami are some of the farthest a United States citizen can travel. When I first went, I remember taking a library of art books with me. The artists there were craving contact, craving knowledge of a larger history of influences and ideas to which their own creativity could be connected. We are overwhelmed by images, but without the Internet, without reproductions of so much great art they'd heard about, young artists in Cuba had this urgent, beautiful hunger. It was humbling to be able to bring them something useful.

I loved Los Carpinteros immediately. They were sexy dreamers, but they were suave, confident world builders, magic realists who could also weld and hammer and change a tire. That mix of fantasy and practicality is something many great artists have. They follow joyful whims, but they have blisters and callouses to show for it. It's a powerful combination.

CB: *You have also traveled to Guatemala and other regions in Central America—what was the motivation for these trips?*

TH: My Spanish is embarrassingly weak, but I love Latin America. Almost every country I've been to south of the United States seems in constant motion, sometimes convulsive and chaotic, but always surprising and passionate. I love the cultural heat, the intellectual humidity.

I have traveled many places in the Americas with Mario [Cader-Frech] and his partner, Robert—often for art exhibitions or art fairs—São Paulo, Guadalajara, Mexico City, and sometimes for personal celebrations such as extravagant birthdays and anniversaries.

CB: *How would you describe the arts in Central America?*

TH: I have been fortunate to travel all over the world. So I get to see firsthand how changes in technology and communication have in some ways “flattened out” the world and created a global art culture with similar styles, values, and a focus on the market. But it's too easy just to see a “Western influence.” If you look deeper, you see that all culture is local, all influences get adapted, all

artists have conversations with their friends and teachers and local artists—not just with international art stars. The problem is that local cultures—whether that's in Kansas City or San Salvador—are often put in a defensive posture about New York or Los Angeles or London or Paris. Are smaller places more provincial? Are they “slower” to create new work, less willing to be provocative? I don't know that these are fair questions. I'm reminded of the famous line from a 19th-century Tammany Hall politician: “I seen my opportunities and I took 'em.” That's what good artists and writers do, they make virtues out of necessities and they just get to work. They don't worry about where they fit in some global system of prominence and recognition. They aren't crippled by the anxiety of influence. As Picasso said, “Good artists copy. Great artists steal.”

CB: *You are now chairman of the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board. Do students from El Salvador benefit from these awards?*

TH: There are many Fulbright scholarship opportunities for Salvadorans to study, do research and teach in the United States. Many prominent Salvadorans from fields as science, government and the arts have been Fulbright Scholars. There are yearlong programs and shorter, mid-career programs, such as the Humphrey Fellows. And many Americans go to El Salvador every year through this program. It is an important way for us to share our two cultures and talents. Creative projects are definitely encouraged, whether someone wants to travel to the United States to write a novel, or, say, a critical study of the poet Roque Dalton or a history of guerilla art in San Salvador. What it takes is a great project and a strong reason for why doing it will strengthen the bonds between our two countries.



ART FAIRS

MARC SPIEGLER

ZELIKA GARCIA

MAURO HERLITZKA

MARC SPIEGLER

DIRECTOR OF ART BASEL



Image courtesy of Art Basel

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
DECEMBER 20, 2013

CLAIRE BREUKEL: *Historically, there have been no galleries from El Salvador participating in the Art Basel fairs. Why is this?*

MARC SPIEGLER: This has to do with the nature of Art Basel—it's an organization founded by galleries for galleries. Art Basel is not a biennial of artists; rather we are a stage to thousands of artists by virtue of being a platform for galleries. So the bridge between a country's art scene and Art Basel is the gallery scene, and the presence of a country is determined by the strength of its galleries. Some countries have strong artists, but a less strong gallery scene, so they are less present at our show. While there is an immense effort to be international, we don't take a certain quota from each country. A gallery has to reach a certain level to be included, and this can happen fast, for example in countries like Colombia and Peru, whose gallery scenes are growing, have much more presence than they used to have at Art Basel in Miami Beach.

CB: *What has contributed to the gallery scene growing in these two countries?*

MS: There is a surging level of patronage by collectors, which is what galleries need to survive. Few galleries can survive merely by selling to museums rather they need private patrons who buy regularly across the program. Of course you have to have at least one strong gallery, and ideally there are several gallerists who have the energy, finances and connections to launch a commercial gallery, which makes for a gallery scene that is both collegial and competitive.

In many ways, it's more complex to run a commercial gallery than it is to run an artists' space. When you run an artists' space you need the means to curate shows, but when you run a gallery you're also responsible for the entire career of your artists. It's not just about producing exhibitions, it's also about helping the artist secure shows in museums and biennials, as well as forming partnerships with other galleries all over the world. In essence, it requires an entrepreneurial spirit along with artistic engagement, as well as a vision and a good head for business.





IMAGE COURTESY OF ART BASEL

CB: *I know that you come from an extensive writing background. El Salvador, from what I have experienced, has little critical dialogue around contemporary art being made there. How important is journalistic critical dialogue to the art community?*

MS: To some extent, because of the Internet local journalism or a critical scene is less important than it used be. People can learn a lot about the global art world by going online. What is still essential is the kind of open criticism that makes each art scene and its artists stronger. Public criticism forces artists to confront weaknesses and misdirections in their work. Art critics and journalists are the only people who will offer artists constructive criticism, which is especially important for successful artists or artists who sell in the market.

CB: *Some of our interviewees have noted that it's really important to see art in the countries where the art is being made, that is, within context of its production as well as at art fairs hosted within the city/country. Can you comment on this suggestion?*

MS: If you are exclusively concerned with discovering artists, it is enough just to go to galleries and studios. However, the value of an art fair to its local scene is significant. An art fair brings a lot of people from all over the world to see the fair and the local scene. So it's both an education on the international scene and a contextualization of the local scene in relation to the global art world.

CB: *Salvadoran artist Ronald Moran (see page 16) exhibited an installation, Home Sweet Home, at Art Basel Miami Beach in 2004. The work is overtly political. How do you feel about showing work that has such strong political content at the fair?*

MS: I never get into the endless, eternal "what is Art?" debate, as everyone has a different notion. However, my notion of good art is that good art changes you. It can change the way you see the world and the way you see yourself. So by definition I think good art can have a strong sociopolitical component. As for politics in the fair: would you really want to go to a fair where everything is just pretty or just shocking without being substantial?

The only danger is that political artwork can be merely didactic, and that's not so interesting. If you're trying to make a didactic political point, you're better off writing an essay for the *New York Times* or *El País*. To be interesting, a work has a political impact when it speaks from the conscious mind of the artist to the conscious mind of the viewer. But, to be good art it must also speak from the unconscious to the unconscious mind. Some of the most powerful works have been made by artists like John Heartfield, aka Helmut Herzfeld, during World War II, and more recently by Teresa Margolles from Mexico, Doris Salcedo from Colombia and Santiago Sierra from Spain. They all make strong political works that bring a lot to the art world.

Along these lines, one of the most interesting dynamics of the Art Basel fairs is that they happen on three different continents, and each continent has a different aesthetic, as well as a social and political context. For example, work in Hong Kong is completely different to work in Latin America, not only in its form, but also in its content, its message and the metaphors that artists use. Sometimes this uniqueness makes work difficult to understand, especially if you're coming from out of the context in which it has been made. It is easy for political content to be misjudged if you haven't done your homework.

"WHAT IS STILL ESSENTIAL IS THE KIND OF OPEN CRITICISM THAT MAKES EACH ART SCENE AND ITS ARTISTS STRONGER. PUBLIC CRITICISM FORCES ARTISTS TO CONFRONT WEAKNESSES AND MISDIRECTIONS IN THEIR WORK."



IMAGE COURTESY OF ART BASEL

ZELIKA GARCIA

CO-FOUNDER & DIRECTOR OF
ZONA MACO ART FAIR IN MEXICO CITY



INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
JANUARY 24, 2013

CLAIRE BREUKEL: *Can you describe your exposure to contemporary art growing up in Monterrey, Mexico?*

ZELIKA GARCIA: I studied painting and sculpture, not administration or curating. At that time there were no international galleries in Monterrey. Eventually a French gallery called BF15 opened that showed artists like Teresa Margolies and Santiago Sierra, who are now very important, so we had some exposure. Some of my fellow classmates are also still involved in the arts: Sofia Hernández works with the Patricia Phelps de Cisneros collection, and Mario Garcia Torres is a very well-known artist who works with Proyectos Monclova.

CB: *How did you come to develop the Zona MACO art fair?*

ZG: When I was a student we attended an art fair, Expo Guadalajara in Guadalajara, Mexico. It was an international art fair that was small but very good, and it was my first real contact with galleries of contemporary art. It operated from 1991 to 1998, and when it closed I had the idea of starting my own fair. From there I visited other art fairs like Art Chicago, the Armory in New York and Art Basel Miami Beach, and I just couldn't understand why there was no equivalent art fair in our country. It was something that I really thought was possible.

CB: *Can you describe the first year of Zona MACO?*

ZG: The first fair was held in Monterrey and it wasn't called Zona MACO back then. We only had twenty-two galleries that were mostly local, including some from Mexico City, but we also had international galleries from Colombia, one from London and one from Cuba. Every year we added approximately ten extra galleries, and most were international galleries. This year is the fair's tenth anniversary and we have over 120 galleries at the fair.

DAVID ZINK YI
UNTITLED

2010
CERAMIC, COATED WITH COPPER AND LEAD
JOHANN KÖNIG GALLERY
SOUTHERN SECTION ZONA MACO
IMAGE COURTESY ZONA MACO





CB: *Has Zona MACO ever had a gallery from El Salvador participate?*

ZG: No, we have never received an application from El Salvador, but we have had visits from collectors and artists from El Salvador. Collector Mario Cader-Frech promotes El Salvador all the time and he introduced us to Salvadoran collectors who we invited to the fair. We also showed work by a Salvadoran artist Walterio Iraheta (see page 30) as part of the VH1 booth in 2011.

CB: *Can you explain Zona MACO's collaboration with VH1 and MTV Latin America?*

ZG: We began by supporting the MTV and VH1 Foundations that raise money to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. Zona MACO tries to work with different foundations in order to give back, and so the fair has another side to it that is not only commercial. Each project is chosen by a guest curator, and then the proceeds from the sale of the artwork goes to the respective foundations—the UN, MTV and VH1. It also provides a platform for the artists they select to become better known, such as artists from El Salvador not showing with a gallery at the fair.

We actually have another section in the fair called Zona MACO Sur that was started five years ago by curator Adriano Pedrosa. It's a special section for solo projects that are selected by invitation. It began by featuring only Latin America artists. Pedrosa curated it for three years followed by Patricio Alpenel, and now Juan Gaitan is the curator this year. The project has since evolved to include artists from emerging countries, including countries within Africa and the Middle East.

CB: *What is the benefit of investing in this kind of programming?*

ZG: These platforms present artists to the international world, and also bring the international world to them. The exchange between artists and the public is important, but so is the artist's exchange with galleries. Many artists who only show with local galleries are introduced to international galleries. They are then collected abroad and have shows in museums outside of Mexico, El Salvador and Latin America. All of these connections allow them to become international artists and not just local artists.

CB: *What infrastructural support do artists in Mexico City have that artists in El Salvador don't have?*

ZG: Mexico City has a long tradition of art, and is home to well-known artists like Diego Rivera, David Siqueiros, Gabriel Orozco, Frida Kahlo and surrealist André Breton who came to live in Mexico. I'm not sure if this is still a fact today, but Mexico City was the city with the most museums in the world, so there is a long history of culture. There are also major local collections like the Jumex collection, the Fundación Televisa [Televisa Foundation] and Fundación Jose Cuervo [Jose Cuervo Foundation]. To be honest I have never been to El Salvador, but from what I have seen in Brazil, Colombia and other countries in Latin America, Mexico is unique in this sense. What artists produce depends a lot on their surroundings: what they see, the news they hear, the medium they work in, and the people that surround them. Mexico has a lot of resources. However, I know that in countries that are not as economically privileged, creativity can also be very strong, for example, Cuba has a lot of creativity. This could be the same in El Salvador.

"IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE COMMUNITY TO BUILD MUSEUMS AND A COLLECTOR BASE, IT CAN'T ONLY DEPEND ON THE ARTISTS OR A SINGLE GALLERY, COLLECTOR OR MUSEUM. ALL OF THESE THINGS NEED TO WORK TOGETHER."

CB: *In your opinion, what does a country like El Salvador need in order to develop an art market?*

ZG: Number one, they need collectors. The artists who produce work need money, and collectors help by supporting and promoting artists. Collectors also help local galleries to function, which are in themselves important as galleries travel to fairs introducing artists to an international market. Museums also play a significant role, and a lot of countries invest in public collections and museums to attract visitors. It is important for the community to build museums and a collector base, it can't only depend on the artists or a single gallery, collector or museum. All of these things need to work together.



ZONA MACO

MAURO HERLITZKA

INSTITUTIONAL DIRECTOR OF
PINTA ART SHOW



INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
APRIL 27, 2013

CLAIRE BREUKEL: *The PINTA Art Show aims to provide a platform for art from Latin America. Can you talk about your motivation for starting the art fair and the role it currently plays in the art market?*

MAURO HERLITZKA: PINTA is an excellent platform to place works of art within the market. Of course the fair is a commercial venue and we need to rent out spaces, so often galleries from emerging economies cannot participate, because they can't afford it. The fair is a trip, a hotel and a booth rental. Nevertheless, I think the fair offers the possibility of having contact with the art market. It also brings a lot of people from different towns to one place, from New York to Buenos Aires. It is a moment for courageous people; artists, gallerists and professionals from the field to come together and interact with each other, so beyond being an economic venue, the fair is a moment for interaction.

CB: *How many art spaces from Central America show at PINTA in relation to the rest of Latin America generally?*

MH: The attendance from Central America is very poor. It is like the Caribbean in that way—in Argentina we call it Latin America including the Caribbean instead of saying Latin America and the Caribbean. From Central America we have had artists from Panama, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala show at the fair, but these are rare. There is little support in these countries due to a lack of an art market and a lack of knowledge of these places. However, I see a growing interest in Central America. For example, New York University is working with many Central American art institutions, and the Museum of Art in Houston has created a platform for art from Central America and the Caribbean. TEOR/éTica in Costa Rica was very important when Virginia Pérez-Ratton was alive, and now there is a new group re-organizing and re-launching TEOR/éTica, which is very exciting for the region.

FUGALTERNATIVA CONTEMPORARY ART SPACE EL SALVADOR AT
PINTA NEW YORK, 2013 EXHIBITING WORK BY:

RONALD MORAN
WALTERIO IRAHETA
SIMÓN VEGA

IMAGE COURTESY FUGALTERNATIVA CONTEMPORARY ART SPACE





Simón Vega





CB: It is interesting that PINTA also includes art spaces from the United States and Europe while the focus of the fair is art from Latin America. Can you describe how art from Latin America is integrated within the global art market?

"SOME INSTITUTIONS ARE STARTING TO DO THINGS WITH CENTRAL AMERICA, BUT IT NEEDS MORE FUNDING, MORE INTEREST AND MORE OF A DIALOGUE BETWEEN INSTITUTIONS IN THE REGION."

FUGALTERNATIVA CONTEMPORARY ART SPACE EL SALVADOR AT
PINTA NEW YORK, 2013 EXHIBITING WORK BY:

RONALD MORAN
WALTERIO IRAHETA
SIMÓN VEGA

IMAGE COURTESY FUGALTERNATIVA CONTEMPORARY ART SPACE

MH: The art structures in Latin America exist from as far back as the 19th century. Since then, art museums have been established in Buenos Aires, Chile, Rio de Janeiro, and Mexico. With the expansion of art history and the art market over the past twenty-five years, these museums became better known. Instead of avoiding or blocking each other's history, these museums have compiled their histories collectively as "Latin America." There has also been significant help from Latin American art acquisition committees in museums like the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA), the TATE in London and the Museum of Art in Houston. This is why MoMA's "Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century" exhibition in 1993 was so wonderful—it showed Latin American art as a rich field that will continue to expand. I feel that Central America, as a field, has a lot of room to grow as well.

CB: *A few people we have interviewed have expressed concern about the term “Latin American art” saying it is too strongly affiliated with the art market. What are your thoughts?*

MH: We can see this in two ways: an intellectual way and an economic way. Both ways are considered a strategy and a construction, but there is a real basis in them too. “Latin America” is a common term with a common history, and it shares trade and cultural links. Latin American art exists as a strategy—an umbrella title composed of differences—that offers a new way to study and work on art history. Without it, it’s hard to talk about this region over the last thirty years. Latin America is a construction of the artworks and exhibitions of the 1920s, 30s and 40s. Today, the expansion of the art market includes Latin America collectively and it works very well, and has proven to be sustainable.

CB: *Private collections have played an important role in lending exposure to Latin American art. Has this kind of support impacted how Latin American art has been received around the world?*

MH: During times of dictatorship, many national and city governments in Latin America had no budget for the arts. This was a moment of struggle and many of the proactive administrations that promoted art collections were abandoned. With better administration in Latin America these activities have started to expand again. Many private collectors don’t benefit from tax exemptions, but many have a sense of community and a mission to collaborate in the art world. As such many collectors have created organizations and institutions to collect, support and promote Latin American art. The Jumex collection in Mexico City, the Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection in Caracas and New York, MALBA in Buenos Aires, and Bernardo Paz’s Center for Contemporary Art in Brumadinho all do this. Beyond these big names there are an increasing number of people that support the arts by organizing exhibitions, researching and supporting artists.

CB: *You are involved with the Latin American art committees at the Museum of Modern Art and the Frick Collection, both in New York. Are Central American artists represented in these spaces?*

MH: Some institutions are starting to do things with Central America, but it needs more funding, more interest and more of a dialogue between institu-

tions in the region. I don’t know how institutions in Central America work compared to in other countries, but in places like Buenos Aires and Lima they originate shows, bring curators to work with specific programs and they write and publish about art. Argentina has many great artists—many interact with international curators, however other artists find it difficult to attract international attention. This is sometimes because they don’t deserve it, but often because they don’t know how to do it or they don’t interact with other artists in their community who have that access. People from Africa, Australia and China all want to be in the mainstream so it’s very competitive too. Many institutions don’t take initiative and invite people to come and see the artists locally, so they need to be more proactive to be included.

CB: *What other advice would you give to programs in Central America looking to enter into dialogue with the international art community and art market?*

MH: I have never been to El Salvador so it is hard to comment specifically. Each institution must have a clear focus—not just a big space but quality programming. Four or five exhibitions per year with small catalogues, seminars and invited guests to see the exhibitions is great, and so is exchanging exhibitions with other Central American and Caribbean institutions. Traveling exhibitions and exchanges can save money and also open dialogues. I believe Central America can become a force if the countries work together just as Latin America has become an art force. Currently, we see little of Belize, Guatemala or El Salvador, and I hope this will change.



MARKETS

AMY CAPPELLAZZO

MARIA BONTA DE LA PEZUELA

PATRICIA GARDINER AMARE

ERNST HILGER

AMY CAPPELLAZZO



INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
MARCH 6, 2014



CLAIRE BREUKEL: *In the book introduction Mario Cader-Frech accredits you with encouraging him to invest in the contemporary scene in El Salvador. How did this discussion begin?*

AMY CAPPELLAZZO: In 2003, Mario and I traveled to the Venice Biennale together with Tom Healy (see page 122), and we spoke about the benefits of collecting art as well as supporting art programming that would be of benefit to artists while developing the contemporary art community. This is something Mario took to heart when he began supporting the arts in El Salvador. Mario is no doubt a major leader in the field of Central American contemporary art, El Salvador in particular.

CB: *Are you optimistic the contemporary art scene in the region will grow?*

AC: As the larger art market takes rise, hopefully too this more niche area of collecting gains attention. As with most cases, only time will tell how an artist, a movement or a region grows momentum. I believe now more than ever we are in a truly global art world. Post studio, post one dealer, post one nationality. With this type of playing field, Central America's art scene certainly has a chance to rise.

CB: *In your opinion, how has the advent of the Internet impacted the globalization of art?*

AC: The Internet has given artists access to information about art from all time periods, and from around the world. Artists can easily be informed about shifts in creative practice as well as activities related to the art market—from galleries to art fairs to auction houses. It has also allowed collectors to monitor the market and seek out work being made by lesser-known artists, or artists living and working in emerging regions.

CB: *Can you mention other effects of globalization on art markets in niche areas like El Salvador?*

AC: The art market is susceptible to trends, and the up side is that when focus is on a region their artists gain exposure and opportunity. A global network also ensures that artists who are living and working in the diaspora stay connected to their country of origin. Nowadays, identity is considered with much more complexity.



"I BELIEVE NOW MORE THAN EVER WE ARE IN A TRULY GLOBAL ART WORLD. POST STUDIO, POST ONE DEALER, POST ONE NATIONALITY. WITH THIS TYPE OF PLAYING FIELD, CENTRAL AMERICA'S ART SCENE CERTAINLY HAS A CHANCE TO RISE."

TOM HEALY, MARIO CADER-FRECH & AMY CAPPELLAZZO
AT THE VENICE BIENNALE

MARIA BONTA DE LA PEZUELA

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND HEAD OF
REGIONAL OPERATIONS, AMERICAS
AT SOTHEBY'S



INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
MARCH 4, 2013
IN NEW YORK



CLAIRE BREUKEL: *When did you join Sotheby's, and what is your current reach within Latin America?*

MARIA BONTA DE LA PEZUELA: I started at Sotheby's Miami office sixteen years ago, before moving to New York to join the Latin American art department. I now run the business for all the Americas from Canada to Argentina. The places in Latin America that I know the best are Mexico, Brazil and Argentina where we have our offices, and are the biggest markets for Sotheby's. We also have an office in Venezuela and we had one in Chile for ten years.

CB: *Today many artists working in Latin America still go to study in Europe. Why is this?*

MB: There is a historical basis for that. At the turn of the century, Paris was the center of the art world and many artists that made modernist work in Latin America were being informed from European schools. It made sense for them to study in Paris. If you look at the most important modern artists from Latin America, such as Diego Rivera and Wifredo Lam, many made the move to Europe. I don't see it as a colonial relationship, rather a reality of the global art world. Today, many artists come to New York, for example.

CB: *How, in your opinion, has the Internet impacted artistic practice in the region?*

MB: The world is more global than ever, especially because the Internet has sped up communication. But I would suggest that the only thing that has changed is speed. What we are looking for has always existed. If you look back one hundred years, artists traveled and then took what they learned back home to reinterpret it into a local dynamic. This continues to be the case, and it seems only natural. Some people make the point that globalization has affected the art world, and ask if artists are really from, let's say, Brazil if they are living in New York? My feeling is that if they are from Brazil they will always be from Brazil, regardless if they live in Dubai, Paris or New York. Obviously the experiences artists have as they visit other countries and move through life will inform who they are as artists, but there is a reality that where you are born feeds who you are as a person.



Sotheby's

Sotheby's

Lot Number 13

USD (\$)	725,000
EUR (€)	539,596
UK (£)	450,203
SWI (F)	864,434
HK (D)	5,619,939
JPY (¥)	72,518,857
ARG (P)	4,382,915
BRZL (R)	1,647,055
VEN (B)	4,568,225
MEX (P)	9,495,746



Sotheby's

*SOTHEBY'S NOVEMBER
LATIN AMERICAN ART EVENING SALE*

2013
IMAGE COURTESY SOTHEBY'S



“THE WORLD IS MORE GLOBAL THAN EVER, ESPECIALLY BECAUSE THE INTERNET HAS SPED UP COMMUNICATION. BUT I WOULD SUGGEST THAT THE ONLY THING THAT HAS CHANGED IS SPEED. WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR HAS ALWAYS EXISTED.”

CB: Has the Internet made collecting in the Latin American region more accessible?

MB: Collecting in Latin America has grown as collecting worldwide has grown. As markets become more globalized, collecting increases. So, what is happening in Latin America is not different from the rest of the world.

CB: Some of our interviewees have highlighted that “Latin America” is a market-generated term and therefore problematic. What are your thoughts?

MB: I have no problem with the term. It is a reality that South America, specifically Mexico, is part of North America so that is why one cannot say South America—instead we say Americas. With a few exceptions, most of the population south of the Rio Grande speaks Spanish, and therefore you can call the region Hispanic America or Latin America. Latin America is the term of today. That is a reality, as much as Europe is Europe and there is European taste and European art. It is also a reality that anything that is sold needs to be identified, in order to be marketed.

MARIA BONTA DE LA PEZUELA BIDDING AT THE LATIN AMERICAN ART AUCTION.
IMAGE COURTESY SOTHEBY'S

CB: *So, Latin America is a geographical space rather than a conceptual space?*

MB: It's a geographical space that is accompanied by a concept. It is up to curators to define what the boundaries of this concept are, and this is where the interesting conversations about the term happen.

CB: *A history that includes war and gang violence stunted the contemporary art market in El Salvador for some years. The country is changing. In your opinion, what could be done to build a better contemporary art market?*

MB: I have to say that I've never been to El Salvador so I'm speaking hypothetically, and basing my argument on other places that I've traveled. I believe it is up to El Salvador, the collectors, gallery owners, artists and journalists living in El Salvador to work together to develop a market. Artists do need markets to promote their work. In the auction field we talk about primary and secondary markets. You need the primary market to sell the artwork to a collector, ideally through a gallery. The work lives with the collector while the artist continues to build his/her career. Eventually the collector dies, and his/her estate is sold at auction to the secondary market. In order for this to happen everything needs to work hand in hand. The artist needs to produce good work, the galleries need to exist to represent the artist in good faith, the museums need to place work within a larger framework and context, journalists need to write critically about exhibitions and collectors need to buy the art. All these mechanisms are interdependent and it's really difficult for an artist to produce good work and grow without these mechanisms around them.

CB: *How does the art fair factor in to the art market?*

MB: Art fairs are part of the gallery scene as they are platforms for galleries. In the past five to ten years, art fairs have grown providing an important service by making art available in the primary market, and some to the secondary market too. An art fair is a fantastic opportunity to look at art in one place. Latin America has important fairs in Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Chile and Colombia. These began as regional fairs and are growing. The organizers of SP-Arte in São Paulo, ArtRio in Rio, ArteBA in Buenos Aires and Zona MACO in Mexico all work on outreach to the marketplace. Having so

many fairs may not be sustainable, but those fairs that do outreach and are able to get clientele to travel have been successful.

CB: *And the role of biennials?*

MB: Biennials are like museums, only they are not institutionalized. They provide a territorial critical view of a moment in art. In fact, the São Paulo Biennial is the oldest in America, and is of immense importance, second only to the Venice Biennale. For example, Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* went to the São Paulo Biennial when it was sent out of Spain. It is vital that artists get to exhibit in a place that is curated, and not in the market. I believe the art space and the commercial space are equally important and function interdependently. I couldn't do my job if I didn't go to biennials to find out what people are talking about, so we can eventually sell it at auction, once the market is ready.

CB: *What kind of advice would you give to a collector looking to buy art from El Salvador?*

MB: Go, look critically and buy what you like. There are people who buy just for names and buy what other people are buying, but that's not a way to collect. My advice is to look and learn—that's the excitement of the work. Personally, I love Ronald Moran's work (see page 14), he's an artist with a tremendous sensibility and intelligence.

CB: *Do you think there could be a collection, like a Jumex collection in Mexico City, in El Salvador?*

MB: Absolutely, the wonderful thing about the Jumex collection is that they expose the local collector base to artworks that are valued as collections worldwide. Many museums and institutions host Jumex collection exhibitions so many people get to see the work. It would be a pity if something like this didn't happen in El Salvador, or let's say the opposite, it would be awesome if something like the Jumex collection would open in a country like El Salvador—it would be revolutionary.

PATRICIA GARDINER AMARE

DIRECTOR OF GALLERY 123
IN SAN SALVADOR, EL SALVADOR



Image credit: Walterio Iraheta

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
APRIL 9, 2013

CLAIRE BREUKEL: *How long have you been running Gallery 123?*

PATRICIA GARDINER AMARE: We have had Gallery 123 since 1971. It began as Adalberto Cohen's Gallery, and now fourteen years later I am managing it with my partner Leonardo Cohen.

CB: *Does your exhibition program focus on both local and international artists?*

PGA: We show artists from all over the world. From Latin America we have shown artists from Peru, Argentina, Colombia and several countries in Central America, and we have also shown artists from Paris and London. We also work very closely with artists from Mexico.

CB: *How important is it to your program to show artists from El Salvador?*

PGA: We have very good artists in El Salvador, and we think it is important that they show outside of the country, so we try our best to show them elsewhere. We have contacts with galleries in South America and Central America and we always try to do exhibitions with artists from El Salvador in their galleries or at art fairs. We mostly go to art fairs in Miami, but we also do a fair in New York because there are a lot of collectors there, and we have a good following there. We also organize exhibitions in Mexico and Colombia, where we have great support.

CB: *In addition to exhibitions what other programming does Gallery 123 engage in?*

PGA: Our program is not like the programs of galleries in the United States. We have an annual exhibition calendar that we set at the beginning of the year, and then we focus a lot on outreach, which means traveling to Mexico, Colombia, and other places to show artwork.



LUIS CORNEJO

IMAGE COURTESY GALLERY 123 AND THE ARTIST





CB: Is there a big local art buying community in El Salvador?

PGA: No, we have a small local art buying community, but we do have more and more people starting to work in the arts, especially within the younger generation. They have also begun to buy art from a variety of places. This is a huge development from just a few years ago, before the civil war, when it was only older people who bought art and the younger generations were not interested in art.

CB: What kind of art is this younger generation buying?

PGA: Mostly paintings and sculptures. They are not yet interested in things like video.

CB: So how does the art buying taste of the younger generation differ to that of the older generation in El Salvador?

PGA: The older generation buys more traditional currents of art and not work by the younger contemporary artists. The contemporary work being made today shows more experimentation and expresses ideas that respond to day-to-day experiences. Most collectors buy art for their homes, and they

don't have spaces like the Museum of Art of El Salvador [MARTE] to show their collections, so they mostly collect paintings and sculpture by these artists. There is a small group of younger collectors in El Salvador that have very good collections and are always buying new things from us. For example, we had a very good exhibition "Fuerza Armada" (Armed Forces) at the gallery. It was a solo show by the artist Maria Dolores Castellano who is from Guatemala. The show consisted of sixteen pieces, and we sold all of them. Collectors from El Salvador do buy a lot of artists from Central America and Latin America.

CB: *Has the interest in art from El Salvador grown over the past decade?*

PGA: El Salvador has grown and yes, as a result the art market above all, has grown.

CB: *How many art galleries are there in El Salvador currently?*

PGA: Now there are three. When the gallery opened in 1971 there was one other gallery and it is no longer around. Other galleries have opened and closed over the years.

CB: *How did the civil war in El Salvador impact what you showed and sold at the gallery?*

PGA: It's complicated. The war impacted what the artists were making at that time. The gallery has never closed, even during the war, but sales dropped. A lot of painters (as a result of the experience of war) started painting very dark scenes, and people living under the darkness of war don't want that kind of work in their homes. However, I understood the artist's need to express this darkness. Slowly, things became safer and artistic practices started to change.

CB: *What role has the museum played in San Salvador?*

PGA: The Museum of Art of El Salvador [MARTE] is the first art museum in El Salvador. The people who work at the museum do a great job, because even though they don't have much support, they find a way to make sure the museum survives. That being said, I also treat the gallery as a museum and spend my time making sure it keeps running. We invite art students from all

the schools and towns in El Salvador to come and see the gallery and learn about the art we exhibit. We try to teach students about what we do, and about different artistic practices. Sometimes we invite an artist to come and talk to the students as well.

CB: *How would you describe the work of artists in El Salvador twenty years ago to now?*

PGA: The older generation of Salvadoran artists made traditional work that was representational and from real life. Benjamin Cañas was very influential in El Salvador and was influenced by Salvador Dalí. During his time, this kind of art was considered cutting-edge and people didn't understand it. Now they tell you it's beautiful.

I have also worked with contemporary artists Ronald Moran (see page 14), Walterio Iraheta (see page 30) and with Mayra Barraza (see page 20). They make great work, and collectors, as well as other artists, are looking at them closely right now.

"A LOT OF PAINTERS, AS A RESULT OF THE EXPERIENCE OF WAR, STARTED PAINTING VERY DARK SCENES, AND PEOPLE LIVING UNDER THE DARKNESS OF WAR DON'T WANT THAT KIND OF WORK IN THEIR HOMES. HOWEVER, I UNDERSTOOD THE ARTIST'S NEED TO EXPRESS THIS DARKNESS."

CB: *Is it hard to be a full-time artist in El Salvador?*

PGA: The artists struggle a lot, so for me it's important to showcase them. They often come to us when they first begin and we try to build them up for three or maybe four years. We show their work locally and also travel their work, and some have become very successful. Otherwise artists end up selling work from their homes and it rarely gets seen outside of El Salvador.

CB: *It must also be hard then to have a gallery space in El Salvador when the collector base is small..*

PGA: It is hard, and I don't know how we do it to tell you the truth. However, the gallery is in good shape, so we must have a very good angel upstairs helping us.



GALLERY 123
IMAGE COURTESY WALTERIO IRAHETA

ERNST HILGER

OWNER OF HILGER GALLERY
IN VIENNA, AUSTRIA



INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
DECEMBER 5, 2012
IN MIAMI

CLAIRE BREUKEL: *How long have you been running your galleries in Vienna, and tell us a bit about how your program progressed from modern to contemporary art?*

ERNST HILGER: I've had Hilger Modern gallery for forty-two years, the contemporary gallery was a project I ran for ten years, which I closed in 2012. Instead I opened two new spaces; BROTKunsthalle four years ago and NEXT this year. Both programs focus on showing contemporary artwork from different areas of the world.

My gallery started amateurishly—I was always someone who loved art and wanted to work with art—and I winged it the first years. In the 1970s we started showing Expressionist and Surrealist art, and in between we would show local artist's work. We began with this mix so we could sell enough to keep going and experiment. In the 1980s, mostly through my continuing participation at art fairs, I opened my eyes to what was happening internationally and began working with modern masters like Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró, Andy Warhol and Max Ernst. It was a booming time and we expanded the gallery to a bigger space in the city, and later on to Frankfurt. Then the first crash in the 1990s proved to be a new opportunity, because we had the chance to acquire works by Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring, Andy Warhol and others. By the end of the 1990s I was working with the company Siemens Austria developing Siemens Artlab, and also opened a gallery in Paris called Espace Ernst Hilger.

We opened Hilger Contemporary in 2001, which brought completely new streams of people into the gallery. At that time people were willing to take a risk and buy work that was not confirmed, but rather for the inspiration and the joy of art. For me the contact with artists is what is most inspiring. I do not see myself as a dealer but rather a gallerist that could at least be a footnote in the life of the artist.



CAMERON PLATTER
BIGGER THE BETTER

JACARANDA WOOD
IMAGE COURTESY HILGER GALLERY AND THE ARTIST

MAMA SHAKIRA
SPECIAL ENLARGEMENT
NO SIDE EFFECTS 100% GUARANTEED
SEES ALL YOUR PROBLEMS!!!
Power Of Madonna
IT MAKES YOU
HARD, LONG & STRONG
LONG & LASTING
JERRIE EMBERY 78 DEER STREET
STOP SUFFERING IN SILENCE
CALL 011 411 1998

CB: BROTKunsthalle, your third space, specifically facilitates curated exhibitions that often deal with geographical themes. How did this come about?

EH: Around 2007, at the beginning of the financial crisis, I realized I had to separate my ambitions and learn what was happening in the world of art outside of my program, and more so, aside from a commercial program. BROTKunsthalle is a place of inspiration for me, and a place where I can meet different curators and give them a platform to do exhibitions. I was lucky to have you [Claire Breukel] curate a show in the early stages of the space, and other young curators have been willing to collaborate with me on large exhibitions. Its not a money-making space, but it is really talked about and gets me in contact with artists that I would otherwise never meet.

“FOR A LONG TIME ECONOMIES IN THESE AREAS WERE LIMITED, BUT NOW THEY ARE “BOOM AREAS” IN THE SENSE THAT WHILE EUROPE IS GETTING OLDER AND FEEBLE AND AMERICA HAS ITS OWN PROBLEMS, THESE AREAS ARE PICKING UP SPEED AND CREATING A NEW AND EDUCATED MIDDLE CLASS. THIS NEW MIDDLE CLASS GIVES ARTISTS A CHANCE TO SELL ARTWORK, AND AS WE KNOW, ART NEEDS MONEY TO EXIST.”

CB: Before you opened BROTKunsthalle had you traveled to Central America?

EH: The exhibitions at BROTKunsthalle were my first contact with contemporary art from Central America.

This area is attracting a lot of international interest and we plan to expand our interaction with the region. The impression I had of the region was that it was somehow occupied by a handful of older artists like Fernando Botero and Rufino Tamayo, but after seeing artists like Simón Vega I have the feeling that a lot of exciting contemporary work is being made there.

CB: Can you describe what your view of Central America would have been twenty years ago?

EH: Central America for many Europeans was a “United Fruit Company” area, and not associated to art other than by historical references to Mayan, Inca and the Aztec practices. Everybody who has a good education knows these historical references and one might even take a trip and see the old ruins. Twenty years ago no one even thought of Mexico City as a center for contemporary art. We participated in one of the first Zona Maco art fairs, not to make money, but to meet the scene. I felt then that it was very much dominated by the big names that were already established in Europe and America. I saw the Jumex collection and there was nothing surprising there, because they collected the same international artists that the other



SIMÓN VEGA AND CAMERON PLATTER
FEATURED IN THE EXHIBITION
COCA-COLONIZED
AT BROTKUNSTHALLE VIENNA

2011
IMAGE COURTESY GALLERY HILGER



CAMERON PLATTER
POPPERS URN

2012
CERAMIC (INCL. HOPE [PRINT ON PAPER]) ED. 12+2
IMAGE COURTESY HILGER GALLERY AND THE ARTIST

collectors around the world collected. Finally, doing these shows with curators at BROTKunsthalle—your show introduced me to Simón Vega, an artist from El Salvador—was creating something new. I'm not looking for confirmation of what a hundred other galleries already say is good.

CB: *What do you think has contributed to making art from Mexico and countries in Central America more accessible?*

EH: The Internet has surely contributed to this. Suddenly all of the artists that have traditionally been blocked by a lack of regional infrastructure have access to the whole world. There has also been an economic upswing. For a long time economies in these areas were limited, but now they are “boom areas” in the sense that while Europe is getting older and feeble and America has its own problems, these areas are picking up speed and creating a new and educated middle class. This new middle class gives artists a chance to sell artwork, and as we know, art needs money to exist.

CB: *BROTKunsthalle has hosted two exhibitions featuring Simón Vega's work, and this year you are featuring his work at NEXT. What draws you to his work?*

EH: My first impression of his work was that it appeared gimmicky, but then I learned that it has serious content. He is constantly developing new techniques and media, and is now developing his strategies on paper before creating his sculptures—which for NEXT will be a series of surveillance cameras made of cardboard. Seeing his drawings made it much more serious for me.

CB: *Are there any observed differences to exhibiting an artist from El Salvador than, let's say for argument's sake, exhibiting an artist from Vienna?*

EH: I think Viennese artists can draw on a significant history of collector interest. Even though we don't have that many millionaires in Austria there is a tradition of buying contemporary art, and over the last twenty years more than ever. Historically, this is very different for artists from El Salvador who, from very early on, find their own way. Even though there is a new middle class, there is still a lot to be done before there will be a real contemporary art buying scene within the country.

CB: *There is that a lot of focus on contemporary art in and from Brazil and Argentina, but El Salvador, with the rest of Central America, remains a lesser focus. Do you think the country could attract enough attention in the future to sustain full-time artists' careers?*

EH: If you look at the former Yugoslavia, Lithuania, the Ukraine and Romania, their art scene is much stronger than say the Russian art scene even though it's a bigger country. As a small country you can be great at two things: you can be great at art and you can be great at sport. These two activities do not depend on numbers alone, rather they depend on the nurturing of new talent. If you give artists the feeling that they are respected and have the opportunity to be furthered, then a small country can become a megacountry in the art world. For example, through the Swiss institute program Switzerland dominated with their artists in the 1970s and 1980s, and now, Indonesia has a stronger artist scene compared to China that has millions of artists, but many are mediocre. El Salvador doesn't have millions of artists but they have some very good ones.

CB: *You mentioned that you had once participated in the Zona Maco art fair in Mexico, what stopped you from going back?*

EH: Basically the cost of transport and very high taxes made it expensive, and I still remember my terrible experience with customs in Mexico. I also had little exposure to local artists, and felt that if you don't have local artists supporting you then the collectors look at you in a different light. Now that we work with three artists from the area, it is time to take a step and curate shows that combine their work with our European artists to show that we are confident that they are of the same quality.



PUBLIC ART PROGRAMS

BRANDI REDDICK

BRANDI REDDICK

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY ART AND
PUBLIC PLACES OFFICES



Image credit: Spinello Projects

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
APRIL 22, 2012
IN MIAMI

CLAIRE BREUKEL: *When did you first travel to El Salvador and what was the motivation for going?*

BRANDI REDDICK: I visited the Museum of Art of El Salvador [MARTE] in March 2012. I had the honor of being invited to present a lecture on public art. The lecture was presented in conjunction with MARTE Contemporary's annual fundraiser, which is similar to Miami's Locust Projects "Smash and Grab" event. In conjunction with the fundraiser, the museum sponsored an intensive weekend for artists that included a symposium and portfolio reviews.

CB: *The paradigm of the fundraiser is to sell tickets to be able pick a contemporary artwork. Artists donate the artworks and the ticket sales raise money for the contemporary program. Knowing how the fundraiser works in Miami, how did it comparatively function in El Salvador?*

BR: It was really quite amusing. On the night of the event, ticket holders draw a number to determine the order in which they can select an artwork. In Miami, collectors preview the works and strategize to secure their favorite artists, and the event is wonderfully chaotic with people dashing around the gallery. At the El Salvador version, "Hocus Pocus," the audience was much more reserved and took time selecting their work, and the next number was not called until the recipient had made a final selection. Honestly, this event was a steal for local collectors—you could acquire an original work of art for very well below its market value.

CB: *Do you think the artists who participated felt undervalued?*

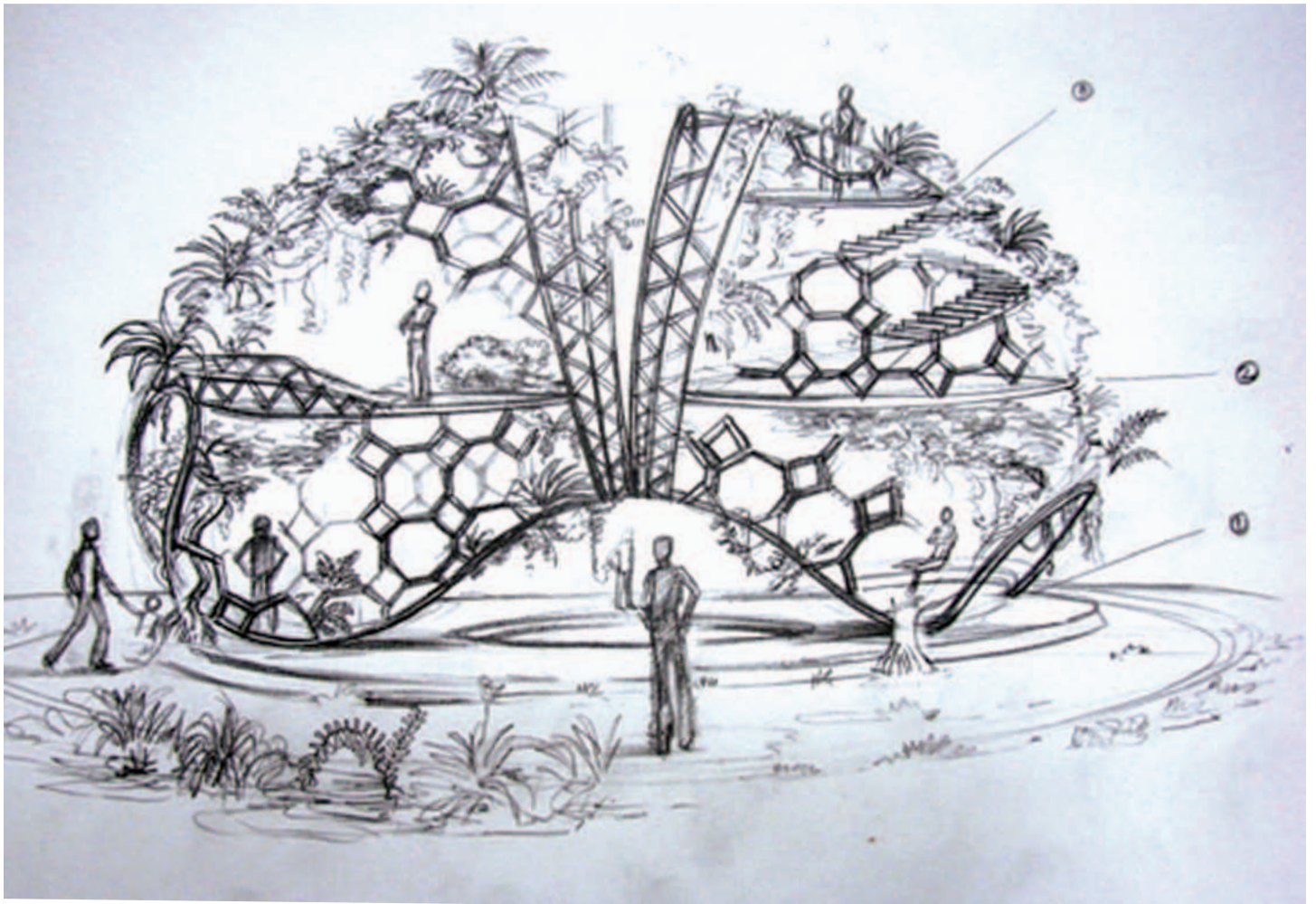
BR: It depended on the artist. The younger, emerging artists were honored to have their work on display in a museum setting and in front of collectors. For internationally recognized artists like Ronald Moran, Simón Vega and Walterio Iraheta, it is a bit more complicated. These artists are defining contemporary art in El Salvador and helping to bring recognition to the museum's contemporary programming. I feel that more respect has to be given to artists who are working on this level.





DANNY ZAVALA
MADE IN

2008
EMBROIDERY ON CANVAS
COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST



SIMÓN VEGA
SKETCH FOR A PROPOSED PUBLIC ART PROJECT

IMAGE COURTESY MIAMI DADE ART IN PUBLIC PLACES AND THE ARTIST

CB: *Simón Vega has just completed a residency in Miami. What was your impression of the work he made here?*

BR: I love Simón's energy—he has this surfer-artist thing going on. I am intrigued with the way his works play off the makeshift architecture and tropical colors of his native country. He is very aware of how people without means create with what they have. To make his work, he collects found objects and transforms street materials into intricately constructed sculptural installations. This is also what he did here in Miami and he said to me, "I'm so interested in the homeless community, I'm interested in the carts they carry and how they arrange the objects they have collected on their carts." There is a South American-Caribbean influence in his work that speaks to the similarities between El Salvador and Miami, so I think it was easy for him to fit in here.

CB: *How much did you know about contemporary Salvadoran art before you went there, and what was your impression of the artists you met when you did go?*

BR: I was aware of the social and political struggles of El Salvador and of "masters" like Benjamin Cañas, but not well-versed in the contemporary art scene—although I was familiar with the cotton wrapped installations of Ronald Moran (see page 14). Before I arrived in San Salvador we commissioned an artist to produce a proposal for a hypothetical public art project, which could be presented as part of my lecture. Simón Vega was selected and agreed to accept the challenge, and he developed the concept of an interactive, organic environment inspired by the shape of an armadillo shell. He proposed a stainless steel sculpture covered in wild vines eight meters high. The sculpture had two levels and a watchtower. I really appreciated that Simón felt the work should be devoid of any references to grand symbolism, political or religious preferences or philosophies, it should simply exist as a space for public amusement. I hope this concept can one day be realized.

I was also introduced to Danny Zavaleta. His work is based on the social codes used between gangs in El Salvador. I really enjoyed his project "Spoken Portrait," where he obtained the diary and letters of a Salvadoran

ex-guerrilla and ex-gang member serving a prison term in Los Angeles. Part of the project consisted of letters sent to the convict's mother and girlfriend that were filled with affectionate language and childish drawings of hearts and butterflies. In another project he designed an exquisite, hand-embroidered tablecloth that was produced by a local group of artisan women. The women delicately embroidered Danny's design that included cryptic symbols representative of local gangs, including tattoo designs, tombstones, sign language and various weapons. The work is a strong statement that highlights the economic and social disparities that exist in this country.

Simón Vega and Danny Zavaleta surpassed my expectations. I also met three or four artists who were making work on a serious level. However, this number could substantially grow if the artists were directed through the right channels.

CB: *What do you mean by the right channels?*

BR: I found it very interesting that Salvadoran artists don't have a formal system supporting their work. Government support for the arts does not exist. There is no cultural affairs program, there is no public art program, and there is essentially very little in place to preserve or enhance Salvadoran arts and culture. If some of these artists just had a little push—such as grants, fellowships and residency opportunities—their artistic practice would flourish.

CB: *Do you feel this lack of support affects how artists produce their work and the topics they choose to address?*

BR: The artists seemed willing to directly address social and political issues without the pressures of having to create for a collector, institution or gallery. For instance, people said to me that no one in El Salvador collects Danny Zavaleta's work because it is too confrontational. Although he is starting to exhibit internationally, he is not being collected locally, nor is he receiving support through grants and fellowships. It would be interesting to see an artist like Danny moved to an area where support exists. One would hope that he would continue to use violent imagery to address a very real situation in El Salvador.

CB: *In your opinion, what support is needed to help the arts in El Salvador?*

“IF SOME OF THESE ARTISTS JUST HAD A LITTLE PUSH—SUCH AS GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS AND RESIDENCY OPPORTUNITIES—THEIR ARTISTIC PRACTICE WOULD FLOURISH.”

BR: The artists would really benefit from a nonprofit exhibition space that could facilitate experimentation. There also did not appear to be a contemporary for-profit gallery system or a place where artists can gather for informal discussions. The artists only mentioned one gallery to me, Gallery 123.

CB: *Often due to the lack of exhibition infrastructure, artists in El Salvador make work in public spaces, or work that directly interacts with the public. How do these public artworks differ from work being made as part of your program?*

BR: It's definitely a different approach. If artists in El Salvador want to create something in public, they are most likely not going to get permission much less a formal commission. They're just going to go out and do it. In fact, the artists I spoke with said they felt the possibility of establishing a formal public art program in El Salvador was unrealistic due to the government's lack of support of arts and culture. During the lecture, I presented large-scale integrated projects in Miami-Dade, as well as smaller, more temporary public artworks from all over the world. I explained that artist-driven performances, street interventions and temporary mural painting projects could be produced “guerilla style” and require few resources. I think those examples impacted the artists more than our complex public projects in Miami, as they were able to envision themselves engaging in these more informal modes of production.

CB: *How would you describe the art community to someone going to El Salvador for the first time?*

BR: They will be pleasantly surprised. I was expecting to only see what we would think of as traditional artwork; and you will definitely find this type of practice but there is also contemporary work. The population of El Salvador is either very wealthy or very poor, and there seems to be a class division between artists and collectors. In fact, the artists did not seem to socialize with the collectors, and I could not understand the reason for this. I also found a lot of the talented artists were very humble.

CB: *It's interesting that you use the word humble. Do you think a non-self-promotional approach may leave artists open to exploitation, in the sense that their work will be more easily undervalued?*

BR: This is a huge risk. If artists are unsupported the possibility of their work being easily undervalued increases. The Museum of Art of El Salvador [MARTE] provides an invaluable service as an intermediary for artists to exhibit work, but the museums are not in the business of selling art. Representation through galleries and financial support is needed for these artists, on both a local and international level.



DANNY ZAVALTA
MANTEL

2008
EMBROIDERY ON FABRIC
COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST



CRITICS

CELIA BIRBRAGHER

ROGER ATWOOD

CELIA BIRBRAGHER

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER OF
ARTNEXUS MAGAZINE



INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
APRIL 3, 2013

CLAIRE BREUKEL: *ArtNexus* has featured the work of Salvadoran artists Ronald Moran (see page 14) and Walterio Iraheta (see page 30). How did the magazine come across their work?

CELIA SREDNI DE BIRBRAGHER: I saw Ronald Moran's work *Home Sweet Home* at Art Basel Miami Beach, it was a living room covered with cotton. I suggested to the gallery owner Klaus Steinmetz to also sell Moran's photographs of the room, because he didn't think he would be able to sell the installation. Much to our surprise the Margulies collection bought it. Later, I saw another installation by Ronald Moran at the Havana Biennial.

We also covered Walterio Iraheta and many other Central American artists within the context of the Central American Biennial. I went to the biennial when it was held in Panama, Costa Rica and Nicaragua, and in 1998 when it was held in Guatemala I was again part of the jury, and we awarded Walterio Iraheta the first prize for his work "Morning Prayer."

CB: *In your opinion, what impact has the Central American Biennial had on the region?*

CSB: The biennial has helped change the perception of contemporary art in the area. At the beginning it was considered the painting biennial. However, when I was a part of the jury in Nicaragua we gave the painting award to Patricia Belli for a work that was a cloth dress with photographs hanging from it. This changed the concept of the biennial, which then became inclusive of other art forms besides painting. The biennial and other similar international events bring forward the most important local artists. However, even though it does a lot for the artists, and *ArtNexus* does coverage of the biennial, the works stay in Central America.

CB: *What role does critical writing play in promoting Central American art?*

CSB: Professional writing is very important, because it is through writing that we understand more about art. If you specialize in art you don't necessarily need it to be explained, but reading boosts your learning, and for the general

PATRICIA BELLI
VUELO DIFÍCIL

1999

PAINT ON SECOND HAND DRESS AND OBJECTS
IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ORTIZ GURDIÁN FOUNDATION COLLECTION,
NICARAGUA AND THE ARTIST





public it helps to understand it. It only takes one good writer. However, art writing is not a very rewarding career and a lot of writers do parallel jobs like teaching, curating exhibitions and working in museums. There is just not enough support to only specialize in writing.

CB: *Is this why you began ArtNexus magazine?*

CSB: Yes. I started *ArtNexus* thirty-seven years ago. I had been working as an artist for two years when one of my professors, Carlos Rojas, won a prize at the São Paulo Biennial. In Colombia, at the time, the only written media that covered fine arts was the newspaper, and Carlos Rojas's prize at the biennial only got a small paragraph. I went to visit him at Colcultura (the government institution responsible for the arts in Colombia at the time) and I told him that as long as there were no art magazines nobody was going to know what was going on with visual arts in Colombia. He said to me, "there is nobody to do a magazine and nobody is going to give advertising money to the government, but you can do it!" The idea haunted me for a couple of months so I called my art history professor and friend, Galaor Carbonell, and he suggested that he be the editor and I be the publisher. It took us six months to produce the first magazine. From then on it was a challenge, and then I suppose it became a passion and a responsibility.

CB: *How has the use of the Internet impacted the publication?*

CSB: People still like to read paper—online media is more about research. In my experience people prefer to read serious writing on paper.

CB: *In places like El Salvador a lot of the art writing happens online, because there is a lack of print publications...*

CSB: A magazine online is also expensive and it's often more demanding. There are blogs that reach many people through the Internet, but today, getting advertising for a magazine is easier in print than on the Internet.

CB: *Is ArtNexus distributed to most parts of Central America and Latin America?*

CSB: It reaches most places, including the United States, but some cities have very poor mail distribution such as Caracas and Mexico City. We do have

a few sales points in Central America, but it's not easy to place magazines there. Distribution of magazines is complicated, and it is one of the reasons why printed magazines don't survive. ArtNexus has survived because I am very stubborn, I guess.

"ART IN A COUNTRY NEEDS THREE THINGS: SUPPORT OF COLLECTORS, SUPPORT FROM INSTITUTIONS AND FROM THE GOVERNMENT."

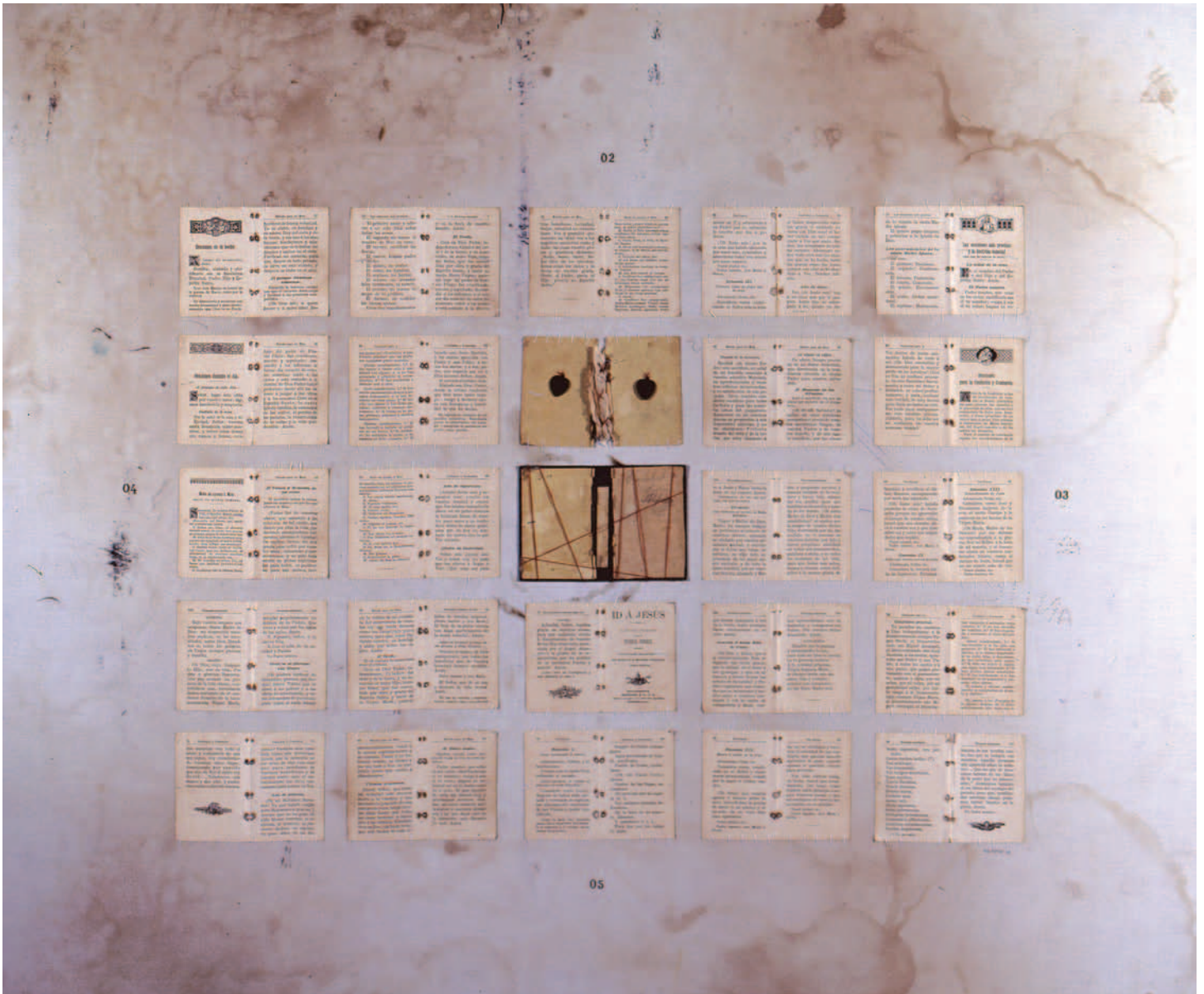
CB: *You cover art primarily in Latin America, how do you decide which countries to focus on?*

CSB: We don't cover Latin America as a region we cover Latin American artists. However, there are certain areas that are more important to cover; for example, nowadays, Brazil. It depends on if there are good writers as well as good artists. There is no rule.

CB: *What, in your opinion, would El Salvador need in order to be considered an important place like Brazil?*

CSB: Art in a country needs three things: support of collectors, support from institutions and from the government. There is government support for the arts in Brazil and Mexico. Venezuela might not have the government support but they have collectors like Patricia Phelps de Cisneros and Ella Fontanals-Cisneros (see page 112) who contribute significantly to the arts.

Galleries that travel to art fairs and give artists exposure are important. However, we haven't seen galleries from El Salvador at art fairs except for Espacio run by Rina Aviles, and she was very active inside El Salvador, but only went to a few art fairs abroad that I know of. The only way that local artists can become international artists is with the support of the government, private institutions and galleries. Virginia Pérez-Ratton, who ran the space TEOR/ética in Costa Rica, did a lot for the Central American region, for example, she convinced Harold Zimmerman to travel through Central America when he was the curator of the Venice Biennale and as a result two artists, Regina José Galindo and Federico Herrera, participated and won awards. Sometimes it takes only one person to make an important impact.



WALTERIO IRAHETA
MORNING PRAYER

1998
NATURAL STAINS, IRON, PAPER AND THREAD ON SHEET
WINNING WORK AT THE BIENNIAL OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN ISTHMUS IN 1998
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST

ROGER ATWOOD

ART CRITIC, ART NEWS MAGAZINE



INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
FEBRUARY 4, 2013



CLAIRE BREUKEL: *You are a journalist who has worked in many countries in Latin America, including for a radio station and a newspaper, and covered a variety of topics. How did you come to write about art?*

ROGER ATWOOD: I went to Argentina in the 1980s on a fellowship and ended up working at a radio station. I worked briefly at the *Buenos Aires Herald* before joining Reuters in Argentina in 1986. I stayed with that company for fifteen years as a correspondent in Brazil, Peru and Chile and also in the New York and Washington D.C. offices. In the late 1990s, I started writing about art for *ARTnews* and somehow it became a career.

CB: *What interaction did you have with contemporary art in Buenos Aires, Brazil and Peru?*

RA: Not very much. I studied history and Spanish at university, and my master's degree was in international public policy. When I was working for Reuters, I would occasionally write features on art or architecture, but their emphasis was on financial news so that's what I focused on. I wrote mostly about foreign debt and commodities, banking and business. Eventually I got tired of writing about people who find new ways of squeezing more and more money out of Latin America, so I turned to what I really care about, which is art. As my background is in journalism, I still approach arts writing as a journalist. Although I constantly read scholarly and critical texts on art, I'm conscious that I'm writing for the general public. After leaving Reuters I did a couple of fellowships and I then wrote a book on looting and the illicit antiquities trade.

CB: *Does Central America feature within the grand dialogue of antiquity and art preservation?*

RA: In the 1960s, Central America played a critical role in the development of the modern antiquities trade. Guatemala and El Salvador, especially, were stripped of much of their indigenous patrimony by the antiquities trade, as it became a global industry. Central America has a long history of commercial pillage of their cultural heritage, and the UNESCO agreement of 1970 [to combat the illicit antiquities trade] was in large part a response to reports of wholesale looting of archaeological sites in Guatemala and El Salvador. El Salvador, interestingly, was a pioneer in using international law to protect



HUGO RIVAS
CHISTES ROJOS

2009
ACRYLIC AND OIL ON CANVAS
IMAGE COURTESY THE ROGER ATWOOD
COLLECTION AND THE ARTIST



DINORAH PREZA
VACUIDAD DEL TIEMPO

2003
CARVED STONE ON WOOD MOUNT
IMAGE COURTESY THE ROGER ATWOOD COLLECTION AND THE ARTIST

cultural property. In 1987, it was the first country in the world to reach a bilateral agreement with the United States banning the importation of looted antiquities under the terms of the 1970 UNESCO treaty. You could say that there is a tradition of the governments in Central America seeing ancient monuments and archeological assets as something worth preserving for the public good, even if enforcement has not always been great.

CB: *What motivated you to write a book about antiquity and art preservation?*

RA: I lived in Argentina during the worst hyperinflation and a series of military uprisings, and in Peru at the beginning of the Fujimori dictatorship. It all started to feel a bit unreal. I became more interested in underlying culture as expressed in literature and art, and I began reading Mario Vargas Llosa, Gabriel García Márquez, Osvaldo Soriano, and José Donoso, and lots of other writers, in the original Spanish. The big survey of Latin American art at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1993 changed my life. It was criticized a lot, but I must have seen that show twenty times. In 1999, I started writing for *ARTnews* about art, museums and antiquities in a systematic way.

CB: *Do you feel the view of Latin America as “exotic” has changed now that contemporary art is increasingly in focus within global markets?*

RA: We’re way past paintings of jungles, huddled peasants and whitewashed churches, yet it’s hard to generalize about what’s replaced all of that. What’s happening in San Salvador now, for example, may not bear much relation to Buenos Aires or Lima. However, I do think the way people in North America or Europe see contemporary art in Latin America is different from the way it looks within Latin America itself. Outside it tends to get reduced to a few figures and a few loud, easily discerned trends. In most places I go to in Latin America, there is much more complexity and innovation in themes and materials than you ever get a sense of from the outside.

Also, there is definitely more interest in the avant-garde movements from the 1950s, 60s and 70s that were historically neglected by scholarship, not to mention by the market, and more understanding of their importance as part of the larger social and political story. These movements were marginalized by military repression or provincialism, or both but also by this pernicious

sense, which was really a prejudice, that proper vanguards came from Paris or New York and that anything born in Latin America had to be some kind of derivation of what was happening there. I think we’re all past that now, fortunately. So there is a richer sense of the complexity of artistic creation in the major urban centers in Latin America and in Central America.

CB: *You have traveled to El Salvador extensively. What is your impression of its artistic climate?*

RA: I first went in 1993 just after the peace agreements and now go three or four times a year, in part because I’m married to a Salvadoran. I always spend a lot of time looking at art and buy when I can afford it. I’ve bought contemporary works at the auction at the Museum of Art of El Salvador [MARTE] and works by the old masters (so to speak), such as Camilo Minero and Carlos Cañas.

I think the war created a rupture with the past in El Salvador, and a divorce with what Minero, Cañas, José Mejía Vides and other painters were doing in the 1950s and 60s—although many of those painters did actually survive the war and continued to paint. They looked a bit out of step after the war ended. Before artists would talk about *lo nuestro* or “what is ours”—a sense of asserting and promoting art that would be distinctively national and give a national identity—which produced some very good art but also some very forgettable art. Today there is a sense of engaging with global trends and less of that self-conscious need to develop a national look. At the same time you see artists addressing the country’s pressing social problems, like violence and migration, in ways that are compelling and sometimes shocking, but not overtly political. Artists have moved away from the political, which used to dominate art in El Salvador. It’s important to remember that when Salvadoran artists and writers created so-called political works back in the 1960s, they were trying to make art that was less elitist than what had come before. It may look pedantic or dated now, but they were trying to speak to a wider public by demystifying art and raising issues that had been ignored.

CB: *So, in your opinion, what would define contemporary art being made in El Salvador today?*

RA: Salvadoran artists, and Central Americans in general, are experimenting

more than ever. This came through loud and clear at the last Central American Biennial in Panama in 2013. They incorporated elements of pop art, used video and animation, and all kinds of unconventional materials that are often “readymade.” In El Salvador specifically, there is a great tradition of working on paper, especially drawing and photography. The prevalence of photography is in part a legacy of the war, when photojournalism was vital and top news agencies worldwide came and worked with younger Salvadoran photographers. Nearly every major contemporary artist working in El Salvador that I can think of has worked with photography or video of some kind.

I don't think collectors spend the kind of money on contemporary art that those in Costa Rica, Mexico or South America do, and that makes it harder for artists to make a living in El Salvador, but it also allows them to work with more inventiveness. In this sense the artists' hand is freer of collectors' tastes, fostering this willingness to experiment. I don't see much focus on making what sells and frankly some works are sometimes tough to look at. Artists expose things about society that people don't always want to see. Antonio Bonilla, for example, came to prominence during the war when I assume there wasn't much of an art market in El Salvador. Today artists like Ronald Moran or Walterio Iraheta look at life outside of El Salvador and address issues of migration and dislocation with a more detached, perhaps more ironic tone. It's a little less heroic or grotesque than art made during or just before the war years, but it's equally unsettling.

CB: *So, this more externalized approach has influenced the artists' approach to their work?*

RA: Yes. The issue of migration has been crucial as many Salvadorans have migrated to the United States, and this has transformed the way in which artists think about themselves in the global context. Artists see El Salvador as part of a globalized whole and not some self-contained entity that has to be continually asserting its “identity.” Although the way that engagement with the world plays out can, ironically, end up producing art that looks very distinctively Salvadoran. Generally, I don't see much interest in purely aesthetic questions, but rather a focus on interacting with the world. For

“ARTISTS SEE EL SALVADOR AS PART OF A GLOBALIZED WHOLE AND NOT SOME SELF-CONTAINED ENTITY THAT HAS TO BE CONTINUALLY ASSERTING ITS ‘IDENTITY.’ ALTHOUGH THE WAY THAT ENGAGEMENT WITH THE WORLD PLAYS OUT CAN, IRONICALLY, END UP PRODUCING ART THAT LOOKS VERY DISTINCTIVELY SALVADORAN. “

example, Luis Cornejo incorporates elements of pop culture (including graffiti signs and celebrities) in his work in ways that are clever and pointed.

CB: *What is the climate for journalism and critical writing in El Salvador?*

RA: The lack of decent visual arts coverage in Salvadoran media is a big problem. Artists are starved for well-informed, written criticism of their work. They often have only the foggiest sense of what kind of critical reception their work is receiving because so little is being published about it. Arts writing programs or fellowships at the university level would help, but also the media needs to stop devoting all their cultural space to celebrity chatter. The San Salvador art scene is extraordinarily lively for such a small city, and it has a great institution, the Museum of Art of El Salvador [MARTE], that has had a catalyzing effect on contemporary art and is developing an important collection. Another exciting development is the recent opening of the Pinacoteca Nacional de El Salvador [National Gallery of El Salvador]. The art scene is in constant mutation as great projects come and go, such as La Fábri-K, a collective created in an old industrial space by Baltasar Portillo that has done fascinating work that hybridizes sculpture and furniture. Art turns up in unexpected places all over El Salvador, much of it underground and without fanfare or huge amounts of money.



CARLOS CAÑAS (1924-2013)
UNTITLED

1960
OIL ON CANVAS
IMAGE COURTESY THE ROGER ATWOOD COLLECTION AND THE ARTIST

Y.E.S
ARTIST
DIRECTORY



ABIGAIL REYES
PIEZAS IV

FROM THE "PRELIBRI" SERIES
BOOK AND THREAD
CONLOSCOLOCHOSHECHOS.BLOGSPOT.COM



ALEXIA MIRANDA
*MAN IS THE MEASURE OF
ALL THINGS*

2010
PERFORMANCE AT DEFORMES 2010, AT THE
3RD INTERNATIONAL CHILEAN BIENNAL IN
CHILE, THE BERLIN MONTH OF PERFORMANCE
ART FESTIVAL IN GERMANY IN 2010, AND AS
PART OF MARTE CONTEMPORARY'S
"10" EXHIBITION IN 2014.
ALEXIAMIRANDA.BLOGSPOT.COM



ANTONIO MENA
ACCUMULATION- GREEN

RECYCLABLE MATERIALS
TUBGALLERY.COM



ANTONIO ROMERO
GARDEN (INSTALLATION)

2014
CERAMIC LEAVES, PUMICE STONE AND WOOD
ARTDESSIN.BLOGSPOT.COM
CARGOCOLLECTIVE.COM/ANTONIO-ROMERO



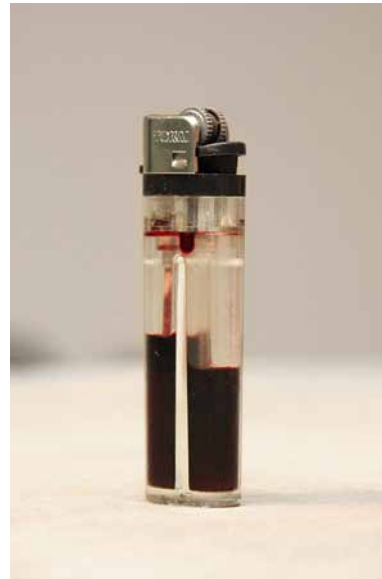
DANNY ZAVALETA
*EMBROIDERED
TABLECLOTH*

2008
EMBROIDERED CLOTH



BEATRIZ CORTEZ
BURNED

2012
BURNED BOOK
BEATRIZCORTEZ.COM



ERNESTO BAUTISTA
MASSAS

2009
TRANSPARENT LIGHTER FILLED WITH
HUMAN BLOOD
ERNESTOBAUTISTA.NET



"CRACK" RODRIGUEZ
*FIRME/ ADMISIÓN
DE TEOREMA DE LA
DESUBICACIÓN*

2013
PERFORMANCE
CRACKRODRIGUEZ.COM



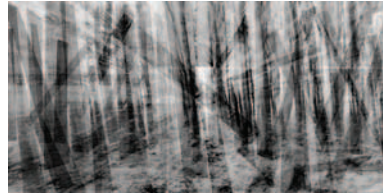
JAIME IZAGUIRRE
INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

2014
WOOD SCULPTURE
JAIME-IZAGUIRRE.BLOGSPOT.COM/



JOSE DAVID HERRERA
QUOTES

2006
CERAMICS



LUIS PAREDES
TERRA BRUTALIS

2012
FROM THE "ESCAPES & STAMPEDES" SERIES
ANALOG PHOTOGRAPH, DIGITAL PRINT ON
COTTON PAPER
EDITION OF 5
LUISPAREDES.COM



KARLOS CÁRCAMO
*PARKED IN AN
EXAGGERATED MANNER;
EAST COAST*

2012/14
1983 OLDSMOBILE CUTLASS SUPREME.
DOCUMENTATION OF SITE-SPECIFIC
INTERVENTION
KARLOSCARCAMO.COM



MAURICIO ESQUIVEL
*CENTRAL AMERICA
INVERTED*

2013
HAND CUT SILVER 25C COIN
MAURICIOESQUIVEL.COM



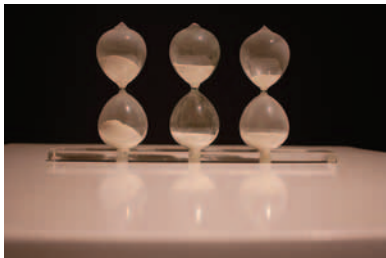
LUIS CORNEJO
I YAM WHAT I YAM

2012
OIL AND ACRYLIC ON LINEN
LUIS-CORNEJO.COM



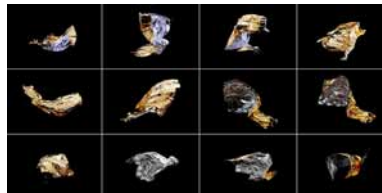
MAURICIO KABISTAN
UNTITLED

2014
HAND-DRAWN LINES FROM DIFFERENT
PEOPLE ENGRAVED ON STONE
MAURICIOKABISTAN.COM



MELISSA GUEVARA
ANTHROPOMETRY

2012
OBJECTS. HOURGLASSES AND
HUMAN BONE POWDER
MELISSAGUEVARA.COM



RAFAEL DIAZ
*ANTIRETROVIRALS,
EXITUS*

2010
C-PRINT
RAFAEL-DIAZ.COM



NADIE
DOLL #1

2012
DIGITALLY INTERVENED PHOTOGRAPHY
FACEBOOK.COM/USERNAMENADIE



RODRIGO DADA
LIGHTSCAPES

2014
DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY
RODRIGODADA.COM



NATALIA DOMINGUEZ
VESTIMENTA

2010
PERFORMANCE WITH BLACK BAGS ALONG
CONSTITUTION BOULEVARD TO THE
MONUMENT TO THE SALVADORAN
CONSTITUTION



VERONICA VIDES
*COME, SIT DOWN, SHUT UP
AND HOLD ON
(TRUNK FORD FALCON,
MODEL 76)*

FROM THE "BOOKS OF IRON" SERIES
METAL
VERONICAVIDES.COM



From Left: Simón Vega, Claire Breukel, Mario Cader-Frech

First edition published in the United States of America in 2014 by
The Robert S. Wennett and Mario Cader-Frech Foundation
1111 Lincoln Road
Suite 760
Miami Beach, FL 33139

ISBN-13: 978-0-9908023-0-3
Library of Congress Control Number: 2014950822
© 2014 The Robert S. Wennett and Mario Cader-Frech Foundation
All Text © 2014 The Robert S. Wennett and Mario Cader-Frech Foundation
All artworks © 2014 by their respective authors

Editor: Claire Breukel
Co-Editor: Simón Vega
Production: Mario Cader-Frech
Concept: Claire Breukel, Mario Cader-Frech, Simón Vega
Assistant Editor: Melissa Diaz
Cover: Ronald Moran

Designed by Jacober Creative
Fonts: Acid, Gotham Narrow
Printer: Artes Graficas Selvi, Valencia, España
Paper: Magno Star Satin 200g, Sappi

Copyright © 2014 The Robert S. Wennett and Mario Cader-Frech Foundation, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, scanned, or distributed in any printed, mechanical, or electronic form without express written permission. Requests for permission should be addressed to 1111 Lincoln Road, Suite 760, Miami Beach, FL 33139. Please do not participate or encourage piracy of copyrighted material in violation of the authors' or contributors' rights. Purchase only authorized editions.

Reproduction, including downloading, of any of the works included in this book in whole or part is prohibited by copyright laws and international conventions without the express written permission of the authors and contributors.

While the authors have made every effort to provide accurate information in this book at the time of publication, the authors do not assume any responsibility for errors, or for changes that occur after publication. Further, the authors assume no responsibility for contributor or third-party content.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTRIBUTORS

Alanna Heiss
Alanna Lockward
Amy Cappellazzo
Bonnie Clearwater
Brandi Reddick
Celia Birbragher
Christy Turlington Burns
Elvis Fuentes
Ella Fontanals-Cisneros
Prof. Ernst Hilger
Dr. Harper Montgomery
Irvin Morazan
José Ruiz
Kency Cornejo
Marc Spiegler
Maria Bonta de la Pezuela
Mauro Herlitzka
Mayra Barraza
Patricia Gardiner Amare
RETNA
Roberto Galicia
Roger Atwood
Ronald Moran
Sam Keller
Simón Vega
Tom Healy
Walterio Iraheta
Zelika Garcia

SUPPORTERS

Abigail Reyes
Adriana Mazariegos
Aya Mousawi
Dalia Chevez
Danny Zavaleta
Ernesto Bautista
El Museo del Barrio
Instant Coffee
Jeffrey Sharlach
Jose David Herrera
Karlos Carcamo
Kara Pickman
Kurt Marcus
Luis Cornejo
Luisa Reyes Retana
Marta Mejia
Marty Margulies
Museum of Art of El Salvador [MARTE]
Natalia Dominguez
Nazy Nazhand
Negra Alvarez
Patricia Belli
Pablo León de la Barra
Paul Jacober
Paz Guevara
Rafael Diaz
Robert Wennett
Ronald Moran
Sotheby's
Sabrina Dupré
Walterio Iraheta

1ST CENTRAL AMERICAN BIENNIAL (MANAGUA)

2001

ADOBE COLLECTIVE

1ST CENTRAL AMERICAN BIENNIAL (GUATEMALA)

HETERO COLLECTIVE

BAJO TIERRA COLLECTIVE

- IX HA (S)
- "LAND" (JOS)

- TRAN NEW YO

ARCHBISHOP ROMERO MURDERED

123 GALLERY

LABERINTO GALLERY

CIVIL WAR BEGINS

1980

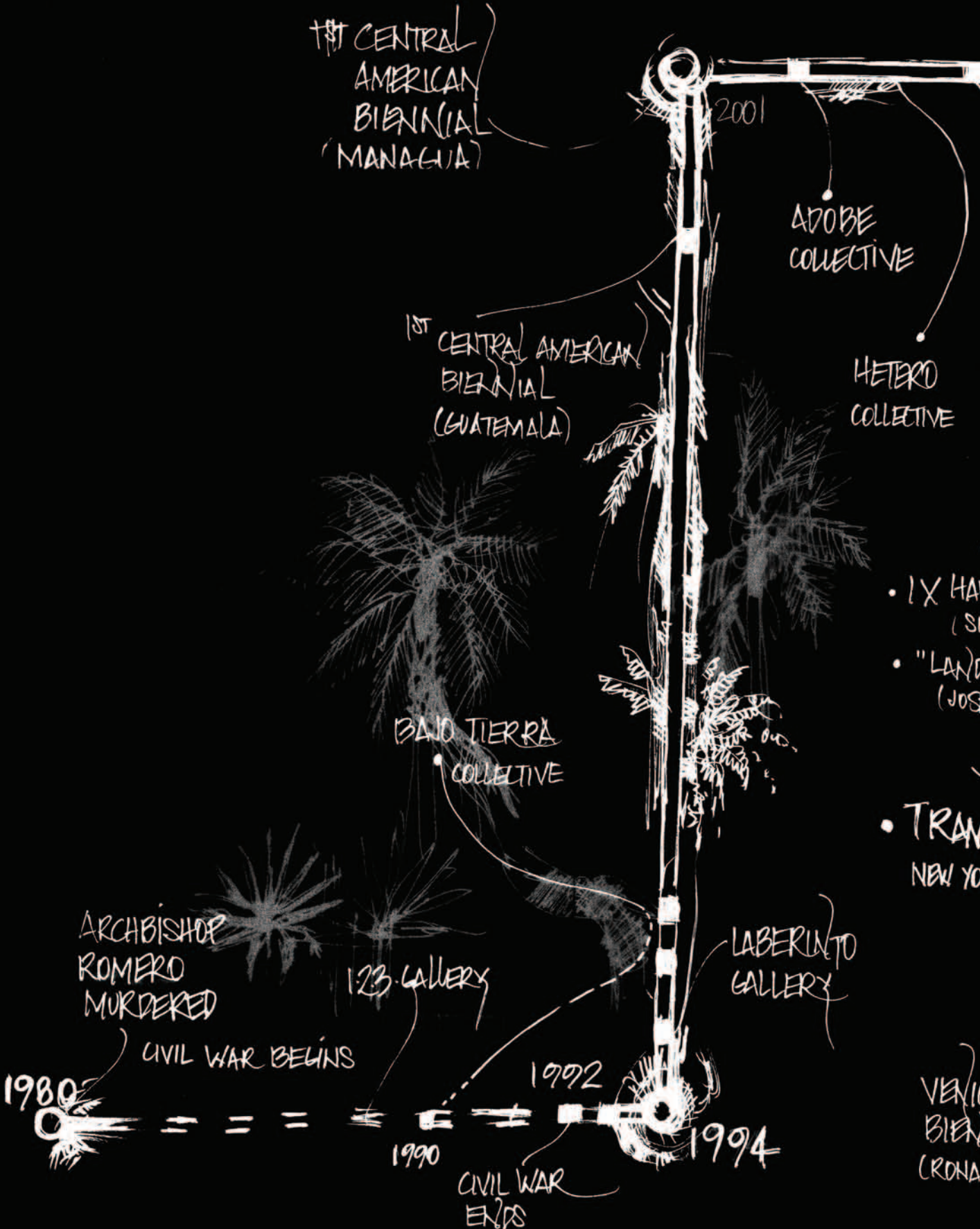
1992

1990

CIVIL WAR ENDS

1994

VENI BIEN (RONA)







ISBN: 978-0990802303

