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“Disponible: A Kind of Mexican Show” on view at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Featuring eight Mexican contemporary artists who explore the challenges and contradictions of modern society

BOSTON, MA (September 12, 2011)— Within Mexico’s urban setting, contemporary art and other experimental and creative practices such as architecture, design and music flourish, forming one of the most original and intriguing art scenes in the global landscape. Taking its name from the empty advertisement billboards across Mexican city skylines, *disponible* means at once available and potentially changeable or disposable. The word also interestingly, and quite accurately, reflects the reality of Mexican society in perpetual transition from post-colonial revolution to its current negotiation with globalization. **“Disponible: A Kind of Mexican Show”** brings together eight of Mexico’s most innovative contemporary artists as they critique and explore the challenges and contradictions of their native country. The exhibition is on view September 13–November 19, 2011 in various locations at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (SMFA), including the Barbara and Steven Grossman Gallery, Mrs. E. Ross Anderson Auditorium and the outdoor courtyard.

Originally organized at the San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI) as a part of the celebration of the bicentennial of Mexico’s independence and centennial of the republican revolution, “Disponible” was co-curated by Hou Hanru, SFAI’s director of exhibitions and public programs and chair of Exhibitions and Museum Studies program and Guillermo Santamarina, an independent curator based in Mexico City. SMFA brings this exhibition to Boston just as the city’s contemporary art scene benefits from the opening of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston’s (MFA) Linde Family Wing for Contemporary Art; the MFA’s open house on September 18 includes a performance of “Disponible” artist Teresa Margolles’ *Las Llaves de la Ciudad* with key maker Antonio Hernández Camacho. Each of these eight artists, who turn critical eyes on some of Mexico’s cultural issues including environmentalism, capitalism, urban tension, social justice, politics and ethnic diversity, are important voices in the international contemporary art dialogue.

The Mexican population is in a constant state of actively engaging social and economic progress and modernization. Simultaneously, Mexico is involved in a permanent inquiry into defining its common destiny while wrestling with radically diverse cultural, historical, political, religious, and ethnic contexts formed by complex and hybrid origins. These continually transforming identities have created a fabulously dynamic and intense, sometimes violent, social reality.

This exhibition seeks to reflect on two major tendencies in the current creative scene—social critique and witty design solutions—as two mutually entangled and reinforcing strategies developed in response and resistance to the complex reality of life in modern Mexico. “Disponible” articulates the dimensions of social critique and confrontation with conflicts and violence, while also presenting various active and inventive solutions to the challenges of contemporary life.

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

- **Arturo Hernández Alcázar's** *Never Work/No Trabajes Nunca* (transformation of knowledge into work, work into energy and energy into a hot soup) is a site-specific outdoor, sound installation documenting the unfulfilled process of economic, material and energy transformation.
- **Natalia Almada's** film *El General* creates a portrait of a family and a country under the shadow of the past. Almada inherited a unique legacy entangled with Mexico's tumultuous history: she is the great-granddaughter of controversial political figure and former Mexican president, Plutarco Elias Calles.
- **Edgardo Aragón's** video *Matamoros* is a recreation of his father's real-life journey from Oaxaca to Tamaulipas when he was trafficking drugs to the United States.
- **Marcela Armas'** video *Ocupación* offers clever response to urban and environmental issues, navigating her body (as vehicle) through congested city traffic.
- **Manuel Rocha Iturbide's** installation *I play the drums with frequency* transforms a drum set into a laboratory studying the interactions between the vibrations of drums and metallic structures of cymbals.
- **Mauricio Limón's** video *Bisco Merolico Chorus* artfully organizes the voices of Mexico City subway vendors into a chorus of sales pitches and the video *Heyyoulistentome! (si o no papi?)* documents a battle between two street characters, *viene viene* (a squeegee), who clean windshields at red lights for money.
- **Teresa Margolles'** *Las Llaves de la Ciudad* performance/installation features key maker Antonio Hernandez Camacho, who shares his experiences living and working in the U.S.-Mexico border city of Ciudad Juarez, which has been deeply affected by drug violence.
- **Hector Zamora's** *White Noise—Shed 6 Installation* includes video documentation of the project, which was originally created for the Auckland Arts Festival 2011 in response to the complex history of ownership of land and seashore in New Zealand, plus a new site-specific installation at SMFA.

EVENTS

“Disponible: A Kind of Mexican Show”

September 13–November 19, 2011

Gallery hours: Monday–Saturday, 10 am–5 pm; Thursday 10 am–8 pm; closed Sundays and holidays.

September 13, 5–7 pm (*Barbara and Steven Grossman Gallery, School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*)

Opening reception with performances by Manuel Rocha Iturbide and Teresa Margolles with key maker Antonio Hernandez Camacho.

September 13, 12:30–2:30 pm (*Alfond Auditorium, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*)

Accidents Waiting To Happen: A Conversation Regarding Some Influence Forces Behind “Disponibile, A Kind of Mexican Show” with Arturo Hernández Alcázar, Manuel Rocha Iturbide, Mauricio Limón and Teresa Margolles and co-curator Guillermo Santamarina, independent curator based in Mexico City.

September 18, 11 am–4 pm (*Education Center of the Druker Family Pavilion-Room 159, Linde Family Wing, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*)

Performance of Teresa Margolles’ *Las Llaves de la Ciudad* with key maker Antonio Hernandez Camacho as part of the Linde Family Wing for Contemporary Art Open House.

September 27, 12:30 pm (*Alfond Auditorium, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*)

Lecture by co-curator Hou Hanru, director of exhibitions and public programs and chair of exhibition and museum studies, SFIA. ***Exhibitions: Making Places*** explores how curating has become a driving force in the formation of new cultural localities in the age of globalization.

October 18, 12:30 pm (*Alfond Auditorium, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*)

Screening of Natalia Almada’s film, *El General*.

For more information, visit www.smfa.edu/exhibitions or call 617-369-3718.

“Disponibile: A Kind of Mexican Show” was co-curated by Hou Hanru and Guillermo Santamarina for the Walter and McBean Galleries at the San Francisco Art Institute. This exhibition is made possible through the generosity of Susan G. Kohn and Harry Kohn, Jr.

About the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston:

Founded in 1876 and accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design, the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (SMFA), is one of only three art schools in the country affiliated with a major museum—the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Our mission is to provide an education in the fine arts—for undergraduate and graduate artists—that is interdisciplinary and self-directed. This education values cultural, artistic and intellectual diversity; it embraces a wide range of media; it stresses the development of individual vision and its relation to culture in general; it values equally the knowledge gained by thinking and doing; it is deeply engaged with the world as a whole. If the mission is constant, its practice is always transforming. For more information about our programs and partnerships, visit www.smfa.edu.

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