

# THE GALLERIES AT MOORE

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**CONTACT:**  
Michele Cohen  
215.965.4065  
[mcohen@moore.edu](mailto:mcohen@moore.edu)



The Galleries at Moore present  
**Strange Currencies: Art & Action in  
Mexico City, 1990-2000**  
September 19 – December 12, 2015

(Philadelphia, PA) – The Galleries at Moore College of Art & Design are pleased to announce *Strange Currencies: Art & Action in Mexico City, 1990-2000*, a major exhibition that explores what artists were making – and making happen – in the megalopolis during this fraught and formative decade.

*Strange Currencies* examines the emergence and development of experimental artistic practices in Mexico City in the 1990s, a decade defined by a catastrophic economic crisis, enormous social upheaval and poverty, widespread political corruption, a chronic rise in violence, and continuous instability due to the destabilizing effects of rapid globalization.

In this singular, decisive moment in the city’s cultural history, artists were uniquely able to experiment with new forms and take artistic risks that resulted in the creation of works and development of new practices that radically altered the dynamics of the local art scene and profoundly transformed the city’s artistic landscape. In a time informed by hopelessness and pessimism, artists rejected traditional art forms in favor of unorthodox, ephemeral, action-based and socially-engaged practices that were often cynical, subversive and irreverent, linked art and everyday life, and critically reflected the momentous events that were unfolding around them.

The exhibition brings together a group of twenty-eight artists who were living and working in Mexico City in the 1990s and whose divergent practices and perspectives reflect the multiplicity of themes, approaches and perspectives that developed and emerged during this pivotal decade, and will include approximately eighty artworks in a broad range of media, including sculpture, photography, video, painting, installation, performance and sound. All of the works were carefully chosen for their ability to function as points of departure for a deeper investigation and understanding of key issues and ideas that artists were exploring at the time, including gender, class, the flow of economic and symbolic capital, social inequity and struggle, violence, urbanism, youth culture and the realities of everyday life in a city permanently in crisis.

“As we find ourselves in the shadow of Mexico’s complex historical downfall, which still looms large over twenty years later, staging an exhibition with this focus is especially timely and urgent,” said Kaytie Johnson, Rochelle F. Levy Director & Chief Curator, The Galleries at Moore. “*Strange Currencies* functions not only as an important historical document, but also as a contextual lens through which we can view how our current social, political, cultural and economic moment – on a global scale – grows out of the ideas and events of the past.”

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## Page Two – *Strange Currencies* at The Galleries at Moore

*Strange Currencies* will present an alternative, lesser-known history of 1990s Mexico City that has not been presented in previous exhibitions and will recapture the funkiness and dynamic spirit that defined the decade's diffuse and vibrant cultural scene. In order to place the artworks on view into context, the exhibition will also include archival materials and documents, including photographs, video footage and printed media, a range of underground and artist-produced publications and a listening station featuring an artist-curated mix of music from the 1990s. It will bring together iconic and lesser-known works – many never exhibited outside of Mexico – that are both artifacts from a pivotal moment in the Mexico City art world and key markers in the cultural history of the city.

In addition, several seminal works from the time that no longer exist will be recreated or reconfigured especially for the exhibition, notably Eduardo Abaroa's iconic work *Obelisco roto portátil para mercados ambulantes* (*A Portable Broken Obelisk for Outdoor Markets*), (1991-1993).

Featured artists include: Eduardo Abaroa, Francis Alÿs, Marco Arce, Gustavo Artigas, Iñaki Bonillas, Miguel Calderón, Abraham Cruzvillegas, Minerva Cuevas, Claudia Fernández, Thomas Glassford, Silvia Gruner, Daniel Guzmán, Jonathan Hernández, Gabriel Kuri, Teresa Margolles, Taniel Morales, Yoshua Okón, Fernando Ortega, Luis Felipe Ortega, Vicente Razo, Daniela Rossell, SEMEFO, Santiago Sierra, Melanie Smith, Sofía Táboas, Laureana Toledo, Pablo Vargas Lugo and Lorena Wolffer.

The exhibition is curated by Kaytie Johnson, the Rochelle F. Levy Director and Chief Curator of The Galleries at Moore, and will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue. It will be complemented by a series of public programs and events; a symposium; and a curated film series at International House Philadelphia that excavates the media landscape that significantly shaped urban cinema culture in 1990s Mexico.

An opening reception for the exhibition is scheduled for Friday, September 18, 2015 from 6 – 8 pm. A complete list of events and programs scheduled in conjunction with the exhibition will be available at [www.thegalleriesatmoore.org](http://www.thegalleriesatmoore.org)

### EXHIBITION SUPPORT

Major support for *Strange Currencies: Art & Action in Mexico City, 1990-2000* has been provided by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, with additional support from the Mexican Cultural Center and the Consulate General of Mexico in Philadelphia.

The Galleries at Moore receives generous support from Moore College of Art & Design and the Friends of The Galleries at Moore. The Galleries also receive state arts funding support through a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. Support also provided in part by the Philadelphia Cultural Fund. Additional program support comes from the Dolfinger-McMahon Foundation, the Thomas Skelton Harrison Foundation, The Elsie Lee Garthwaite Memorial Foundation and the Lindback Foundation.

*The Galleries at Moore* support Moore College of Art & Design's educational mission and role as a cultural leader by providing a forum for exploring contemporary art and ideas, and enriching the artistic climate and intellectual climate of the college, the Greater Philadelphia community, and beyond. As a gateway between the College and the city of Philadelphia, The Galleries are a catalyst for creative exploration, experimentation and scholarship and function as a gathering place to meet, reflect, learn, challenge and create. The Galleries' exhibitions and programs – which are all free and open to the public – create community through dialogue and participation, and inspire an appreciation for the visual arts as a vital force in shaping contemporary culture.

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## Page Three – Strange Currencies at The Galleries at Moore

**Moore College of Art & Design** educates students for careers in art and design. Founded in 1848, Moore is the nation's first and only women's art college. Moore's student-focused environment and professionally active faculty form a dynamic community in the heart of Philadelphia's cultural district. The College offers ten bachelor of fine arts degrees for women. Coeducational graduate programs were launched in summer, 2009. In addition, Moore provides many valuable opportunities in the arts through The Galleries at Moore, continuing education programs for professional adults, the 91-year-old acclaimed Young Artists Workshop for girls and boys grades 1-12, The Art Shop and the Sculpture Park. For more information about Moore, visit [www.moore.edu](http://www.moore.edu).

**The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage** is a multidisciplinary grantmaker and hub for knowledge sharing, funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, and dedicated to fostering a vibrant cultural community in Greater Philadelphia. The Center fulfills this mission by investing in ambitious, imaginative arts and heritage projects that showcase the region's cultural vitality and enhance public life, and by engaging in an exchange of ideas concerning artistic and interpretive practice with a broad network of cultural leaders. For more information, visit [pcah.us](http://pcah.us).

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### HOURS

Monday – Thursday: 11 am – 5 pm

Friday: 11 am - 8 pm

Saturday: 11 am – 5 pm

Closed Sundays and all academic and legal holidays.

### LOCATION

The Galleries at Moore College of Art & Design are located between 19th and 20th Streets on Race Street, directly across from Aviator Park on The Benjamin Franklin Parkway. Access The Galleries from the College's main entrance lobby.

All of The Galleries' exhibitions and events are **free and open to the public**.

For more information please visit [www.thegalleriesatmoore.org](http://www.thegalleriesatmoore.org) or call 215.965.4027.

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