

Carlos Amorales – *Life in the Folds*

Pavilion of Mexico in the 57th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia

Arsenale, Sale d'Armi, Tesa B

May 13th - November 26th, 2017

Opening: Thursday May 11th, 11:30 hours.

Performance: May 10th to the 13th 2017, at 11:00 am and 4:00 pm

Artist: **Carlos Amorales**

Curator: **Pablo León de la Barra**

Commissioner: **Gabriela Gil Verenzuela**

PRESS RELEASE

The Ministry of Culture of Mexico through the National Institute of Fine Arts (INBA) presents *Life in the folds*, a proposal by the artist **Carlos Amorales** with the curatorship of Pablo León de la Barra. This project represents **Mexico** at the 57th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia.

The opening of the pavilion will take place on **Thursday May 11th, 2017 at 11:30** hours at the Venice Arsenale, Sale d'Armi, Ground Floor, Tesa B, with the presence of the artist Carlos Amorales, the curator Pablo León de la Barra, the director general of INBA Lidia Camacho Camacho, and the Mexican Ambassador in Italy Juan José Guerra Abud.

Lidia Camacho highlights that in this edition, México commemorates the first decade of its participation with an official pavilion in Biennale Arte 2017, the most important event to promote contemporary art worldwide. To celebrate this special occasion, INBA has selected Carlos Amorales with his work *Life in the folds*, in which the artist “introduces us to a world where prints, sculpture, music, and cinema combine to give life and form to a new way of looking into reality, which materialize critical thinking and today’s problematics in contemporary art”.

Carlos Amorales studied in Netherlands, and participated in residencies in France and the United States. His artistic explorations led him to generate the *Liquid Archive*, an image bank that the artist has used in multiple ways, with which he has evidenced the crisis existing in the communication systems. Throughout his practice the artist puts at the center of his reflection language, codification, music and the implications of art in society.

Carlos Amorales’ project for Biennale Arte 2017 is the outcome of an extensive research in which the artist introduces a formal language that unfolds in the works which comprise the installation. The title of the exhibition makes reference to Henri Michaux’s novel *Life in the folds* published in 1949. For the artist, this means being “in the folds where a tension arises between the very concrete and the very abstract, it is here where a series of poetic images related to the places where we find life appear, not in the middle of the pages, but in the folds, in the cracks, and in the breaches, in the smallest things”.

The exhibition opens with a set of poems written in an encrypted alphabet created by the artist with abstract three-dimensional shapes. The texts displayed on seven tables, that formally refer us to paper sheets, imply a transition from the typographic to the phonetic. Each letter is a ceramic wind musical instrument, also known as ocarina that, when played, releases a specific sound for each letter. This coded language can be interpreted verbally, but can also be played as music. Around a thousand ocarinas establish a relation with an graphic musical score of 92 pages mounted on the walls of the pavilion. All these elements come together in the film *The cursed village*, which narrates the story of a migrant family that is lynched as they arrive to a foreign town. Where a puppeteer controls the characters of the story and a music ensemble playing the ocarinas, interprets the soundtrack, dialogues, and soundscape of the film.

In words of the curator “Life in the folds becomes a total work of art, one where the different involved disciplines, visual arts, animation, cinematography, music, literature, poetry and performance converge. In this Biennale Arte 2017 that, from its title **VIVA ARTE VIVA**, celebrates art and its capacity of embracing existence and facing the reality of a world full of conflict, *Life in the folds* invents new vocabularies, languages, images and sounds that allow life to be reinvented”.

Venice, May 2017

PRESS KIT, PHOTOS and VIDEOS AT THE LINK: <https://bienaldivenezia.mx/en/press>

Press office (in Italy):

Maria Bonmassar | T. +39 06 4825370 - M. +39 335 49 03 11 | ufficiostampa@mariabonmassar.com

Press office (in México):

Roberto Perea | T. +52 10005600 ext. 4052 | rperea@inba.gob.mx

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Open to the public: May 13th - November 26th, 2017

Location: Venice, Arsenale, Sala de Armas, Tesa B

For more information regarding the access to the 57th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, go to the following website: www.labiennale.org

PUBLICATIONS

Two publications were produced on the occasion: The **exhibition catalogue** with contributions by Pablo León de la Barra, Carlos Amorales, Irmgard Emmelhainz, Josh Kun, Mónica de la Torre and Humberto Beck, and a **newspaper**, created by the artist with the encrypted alphabet, will be available at the pavilion.

Follow the Mexican Pavilion:

www.bienaldivenezia.mx

Twitter: @bienalveneciamx

Facebook: /bienaldiveneziamx

Instagram: @bienaldiveneziamx

#lifeinthefolds #pavilionofmexico

LIFE IN THE FOLDS – STATEMENT BY CARLOS AMORALES

I believe we are at a time when it is crucial to discuss freedom of thought if we want to live in a society in which different points of view can mingle and substantiate our understanding of equality and justice. From an artistic point of view, I've researched the way in which writing is encrypted by inventing a form of abstract typography as a strategy to preserve contents that would be silenced if they were in legible form. For the Mexican Pavilion at the Biennale Arte 2017 I encoded the alphabet as a formal language, starting off with abstraction until I got to a level of figuration where communication can occur openly.

Life in the Folds is based on the title of a book by Henri Michaux. This title evokes an image that is about being between things: between the pages of a book or a newspaper, between countries and cultures, between opposed ideologies, between oneself and the other. This “being between” has been the focus of my artistic exploration: masks, whether taken literally or as visual language, placed like a membrane between conflicting contexts.

The installation consists of formally interrelated pieces that merge in a film. For the work, I used seventy-four flat, irregular shapes—cardboard cutouts—with which I made an alphabet that mutated into musical instruments, used to tell the story of a family of immigrants who were lynched: a story based on hundreds of cases that have taken place in Mexico over the last few decades.

In this piece, images of migration and lynching are metaphors of a generalized crisis that we need to discuss. On the one hand, migration is the consequence of current economic policies that have decimated entire communities or even regions. On the other, the murders that have taken place over the last decades, the recent executions carried out by citizens and private militias evince conditions of self-governance, where people administer justice subjectively, though in principle this is something the State should administer objectively.

Placing these metaphors in a national structure—paradoxically situated on a global platform—allows us to ask urgent questions that concern us on both a local and a global level. In view of the new nationalist movements' opposition to globalization, at a time when most of a nation's territory already has owners, what type of nationalism are we talking about?

Carlos Amorales
March 29, 2017

PERFORMANCE

Performative practice has been a constant aspect in the work of Carlos Amorales. In *Life in the folds*, the artist presents a performance that activates the elements of the installation. The work conjugates simultaneously theater, music and poetry. The ensemble **Liminar** will interpret the score for ocarinas and will showcase live music for the film. Simultaneously, two actors will give away a newspaper created by the artist and written with the encrypted alphabet, which contains critical essays on relevant Mexican current politics.

Liminar is an independent ensemble of contemporary music based in Mexico City. Established in 2011, its members are dedicated to new and experimental music. Their programs explore the boundaries between sound art, musical theater and performance, expanding the limits of the concert halls.

Philippe Eustachón is a French Vietnamese author, actor and director who lives and works between Paris, Antibes and Burgundy. He has participated in many theater, street theater and circus projects as an actor or director in more than 30 countries. He collaborates with Carlos Amorales since 2011 on the films *Supprimer, modifier et préserver*, Amsterdam, *The man who did all things forbidden*, *The Eye-me-not* and on several performances in Switzerland and San Francisco.

Vladimir Bojórquez is a puppeteer, theater actor and director. For 10 years he has specialized in miniature theater, incorporating plastic arts, narration and acting. He has participated in multiple performing projects in Mexico and abroad. He studied theater direction and dramaturgy with Ludwik Margules, with whom he collaborated for 12 years.

The performance will take place from May 10th to the 13th at 11:00 am and 4:00 pm. Additionally, it will be presented on selected dates during the exhibition period, to be announced on the pavilion's social networks and website.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE:

Dates: May 10th to the 13th 2017, at 11:00 am and 4:00 pm.

Location: Venice, Arsenale, Sala de Armas, Tesa B

For information on upcoming dates, follow the Mexico Pavilion at:

www.bienaldivenecia.mx

Twitter: @bientalveneciamx

Facebook: /bientalveneciamx

Instagram: @bientalveneciamx

#lifeinthefolds #pavilionofmexico

BIOGRAPHIES

CARLOS AMORALES (1970), ARTIST. Lives and works in Mexico City

Multidisciplinary artist who explores the limits of language and translation systems to venture into the field of cultural experimentation. He uses graphic production as a tool to develop linguistic structures and alternative working models that allow new forms of interpretation and foster collectivity. In his projects, Amorales examines identity construction processes, proposes a constant re-signification of forms present in his work, and provokes a clash between art and pop culture.

His research processes are complex; they are based in an ample repertoire of empirical methodologies to develop extensive projects that conjugate historical, cultural, and personal references. His practice expands to diverse media such as drawing, painting, sculpture, or collage; as well as performance, installation, animation, sound art, film, writing, among other non-traditional formats. He studied visual arts in the Gerrit Rietveld Academie and the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, both in the city of Amsterdam, Netherlands.

The most extensive researches in his work encompass *Los Amoraless* (1996-2001), *Liquid Archive* (1999-2010), *Nuevos Ricos* (2004-2009), and a typographic exploration in junction with cinema (2013-present). Between his numerous individual exhibitions, we can mention: *Black Cloud, Power Plant*, (Toronto, 2015); *El Esplendor Geométrico*, Kurimanzutto (México, 2015), *Germinal*, Museo Tamayo (México, 2013); *Nuevos Ricos*, Kunsthalle Fridericianum (Kassel, 2010); *Four Animations, Five Drawings and a Plague*, Philadelphia Museum of Art (2008); *Discarded Spider*, Cincinnati Art Center (2008). Some of his most outstanding collective exhibitions: *Under the Same Sun. Art From Latin America Today*, Guggenheim Museum (New York, 2014); *New Perspectives in Latin American Art*, MoMA (New York, 2007); *Mexico City: An Exhibition About The Exchange Rate of Bodies and Values*, MoMA PS1 (New York, 2002); and performances as Amorales vs. Amorales, Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris 2001), SF MoMA (San Francisco, 2003), and Tate Modern (London, 2003). Additionally he has participated in biennials like *Manifesta 9* (Belgium, 2012), *Bienal de la Habana* (Cuba, 2015 y 2009), *Performa* (New York, 2007), *Berlin Biennial* (2001 y 2014), and the *La Biennale di Venezia* (2003 y 2017).

His works are available in international collections such as Museo Tamayo and the Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City; Tate Modern, London; The Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim Museum, New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam; among others.

PABLO LEÓN DE LA BARRA (1972), CURATOR. Lives and works in Rio de Janeiro

León de la Barra is the Curator for Latin America at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, and adjunct curator at MASP, Sao Paulo; from 2013 to 2016 he was the Guggenheim UBS MAP Curator, Latin America at the same institution. He was also Director of Casa França-Brasil, Rio de Janeiro during 2015-16.

He has curated, among many exhibitions 'Under the Same Sun: Art from Latin America Today' (2014-16) at the Guggenheim Museum in New York, Museo Jumex in Mexico City and South London Gallery, London; 'Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster / Temporama' (2015) at MAM, Rio de Janeiro; 'United States of Latin America' (2015) co-curated with Jens Hoffmann at MOCAD in Detroit, 'Incidents of Mirror Travel in Yucatan and Elsewhere' (2011) at Museo Tamayo, Mexico City; León de la Barra was one of the curators of SITE Santa Fe Biennial 2016 in Santa Fe, New Mexico and founder and co-curator of the Bienal Tropical, San Juan, Puerto Rico (2011 and 2016).

He has written for various publications, participated in numerous international symposiums and conferences. In 2012 he was awarded the first Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros and Independent Curators International Travel Award for Central America and the Caribbean in honor of Virginia Pérez-Ratton. León de la Barra is in the advisory boards of the Luis Barragán Foundation, Mexico City; the CIFO, Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami; and the Davidoff Art Initiative, Zurich. He holds a PhD in History and Theories from the Architectural Association, London.

GABRIELA GIL VERENZUELA, COMMISSIONER'S BIOGRAPHY

Gabriela Gil Verenzuela, 1967 (Lives and works in Mexico City).

Holds an Arts Bachelor degree from the Universidad Central de Venezuela. She accredited the Graduate program in Cultural Policies and Management from the Universidad de Barcelona, and a MA in Art Studies from the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City.

She completed the program in High Administration for Museums in the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México, which was a joint program between the The Getty Leadership Institute and the Instituto de Liderazgo en Museos of Mexico. She has experience as teacher for bachelor and graduate students in various universities in Mexico, Spain and Venezuela, in the fields of: cultural management and promotion, heritage management, collections and museum management, museology, administration of cultural projects, arts managements, and Latin-American art.

From 2001 to 2007 she was Exhibition Coordinator in the Museum of the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City. From 2007 to 2010 was academic chair for the Museology Graduate Program in the Escuela Nacional de Conservación, Restauración y Museografía (ENCRyM) of the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH), in Mexico City.

From 2010 to 2016 she was Director of the Centro Nacional de Conservación y Registro del Patrimonio Artístico Mueble of the National Institute of Fine Arts (INBA), Mexico; and representative of Mexico for the Ibermuseos Program, from 2010 to 2015. Since 2010 she is part of the faculty of the Graduate program in Museology of the ENCRyM, and of the Academic Committee of the William Bullock Lecture on Critical Museology (British Council/MUAC-UNAM/INBA). She is advisor of the Secretaría General Iberoamericana (SEGIB) for the subjects of cultural heritage and heritage management. In 2016, she becomes the Academic Coordinator for the Plan Iberoamericano to recognize, safeguard and protect the cultural heritage in the region. She is Commissioner of the Pavilion of Mexico for the 57th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FINE ARTS, INBA

The National Institute of Fine Arts (INBA) is the cultural organization created by the Mexican Government in 1946, to stimulate artistic production and promote the Arts in the country and abroad. Its artistic heritage is integrated by the artworks that were property of the Federal Government, public buildings that safeguarded these collections, the installations of public schools dedicated to multiple artistic disciplines, and by all the artistic goods that the Institute acquires and receives by inheritance or donation.

As part of its cultural development policies, INBA fosters artistic education and research, as well as contemporary production through programs, contests, biennials and awards that recognize the trajectory of artists, and identify new talents to promote their unfolding. Today, the activities developed by INBA encompass different manifestations in the fields of music, dance, visual arts, architecture, literature and theater, through its venues and artistic groupings.

The Institute has a museum network constituted by 17 spaces that show the permanent collections, as well as temporary exhibition of international stature. INBA is responsible of the conservation and preservation of artistic monuments from the 20th Century to the present.