

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER: PLACE, IMAGINATION, AND POSSIBILITY**

September 10, 2017 – January 7, 2018

LOS ANGELES — The Craft & Folk Art Museum (CAFAM) announces ***The U.S.-Mexico Border: Place, Imagination, and Possibility***, an official presentation for the Getty-sponsored initiative Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA. The group exhibition presents the work of approximately 40 contemporary artists who explore the border as a physical reality (place), as a subject (imagination), and as a site for production and solution (possibility). While the selection largely focuses on work executed in the last two decades, it also includes objects by Chicano artists in California who came together in the 1970s and 1980s to address border issues in their work. The inclusion of artists from various disciplines, including design, architecture, sculpture, painting, and photography, reflects the ways in which contemporary artists and designers themselves cross disciplinary borders. Selected artists include **Ana Serrano, Marcos Ramirez ERRE, Betsabée Romero, Teddy Cruz, Studio Rael San Fratello, Tanya Aguiñiga, Einar and Jamex de la Torre, Guillermo Galindo, Margarita Cabrera, Haydeé Alonso, Judith F. Baca, Eduardo Sarabia, Cog•nate Collective, Teresa Margolles, Guillermo Bert, Julio Cesar Morales, Viviana Paredes, G.T. Pellizzi and Ray Smith**. The exhibition is curated by Lowery Stokes Sims, curator emerita of the Museum of Art and Design in New York, and independent curator Ana Elena Mallet. *The U.S.-Mexico Border: Place, Imagination, and Possibility* will be on view from September 10, 2017 to January 7, 2018.

Since the 1990s, the U.S.-Mexico border has become an important site for creative exploration of issues related to emigration, immigration, labor conditions, hybrid identities, and transformation. The U.S.-Mexico border is often thought to include territory within 100 miles of the national boundaries of the two countries; however, this exhibition's parameters includes the whole of the ten U.S. and Mexican states situated directly along the national boundaries. This allows the exhibition to acknowledge the persistence and survival of heritage and culture—long-standing at times—in the passing down of traditional skills and techniques within various communities and families on either side of the border.

"The border has been a contentious site for much longer than the current news cycle's focus on 'the wall,'" says curator Lowery Stokes Sims. "And though the exhibition has taken on a particular urgency in the current political environment, this project recognizes the border as a long-standing site of interdependence and connectivity, despite the painful divisions it causes. We celebrate the creativity and commitment of this selection of designers, artists, and makers for whom the border is a lived experience."

"We are very pleased that Pacific Standard Time has given us the opportunity to engage artists from across both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border who consistently examine and redefine our understanding of this sensitive territory that is impacted by shifting economics, politics, and culture," says CAFAM executive director Suzanne Isken. "This opportunity to work with Ana Elena Mallet from Mexico and Lowery Sims in New York has broadened our perspective beyond expectation."

Much of the creative production around the border unearths the complex ways in which artists, architects, designers, and makers who live in border cities negotiate two divided but interconnected realities. The exhibition examines these ideas through three themes: place, imagination, and possibility.



Pablo López Luz, *Tijuana - San Diego County III, Frontera USA-Mexico*, 2014, digital inkjet print, ultrachrome K3 ink. Courtesy of the artist



Haydee Alonso, *Inter-Acting (1 of 4)*, 2015, copper, brass; digital photograph. Courtesy of the artist



Ronald Rael & Virginia San Fratello, *Burrito Wall*, 2013, composite model. Collection of Rael San Fratello



Margarita Cabrera in collaboration with Candelaria Cabrera, *Space in Between – Nopal (Candelaria Cabrera)*, 2010, border patrol uniform fabric, copper wire, thread, terra cotta pot. Courtesy of the artist, photo by Fredrik Nilsen

Regarding place, or the physical site of the border, photographer Pablo López Luz presents striking visual documentation of the topography of the border fence and the fluctuations of landscapes that the artificial boundary snakes through. *The Border Paintings* by G.T. Pellizzi and Ray Smith are made of earth and vegetation collected from the border region and mixed with acrylic. The cross-border nature of their collaboration is personified by Smith's origins from south Texas (where his family has owned the H. Yturria Ranch since the Spanish colonial era) and Pellizzi's background in Cuernavaca, Mexico, where he grew up to become a transborder citizen who works both in the United States and Mexico. A maquette of Marcos Ramirez ERRE's iconic *Toy-an Horse*, installed at the Tijuana-San Diego border during inSITE 1997, represents a two-headed Trojan Horse that asks the question of both countries: who is invading whom?

The energy of imagination is personified by architect Armando Muñoz García's monumental figurative sculpture *Tijuana III Millennium* or *La Mona* (1991), situated in the Colonia Aeropuerto neighborhood of Tijuana. In the form of a nude woman posing as the Statue of Liberty, the piece is more than five stories tall and the figure's anatomy act as living spaces: the bedroom is located within the figure's breasts, and the kitchen, in her stomach. Jeweler Haydee Alonso, who lives between the border cities of El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, imagines the border as a point of connection between the two cities. This idea is symbolized in her *Inter-Acting* (2015) jewelry series, where the individual pieces require two or more wearers to achieve their ultimate actualization and function. El Paso-based Adrian Esparza confronts the boundaries of conceptual art and craft by deconstructing traditional woven Mexican *serapes* to create geometric wall installations that reference Minimalist art.

Through possibility, many of the artists featured in the exhibition pursue a creative problem-solving process sometimes described as "design thinking," which involves social engagement, the task of making, and an empathy for those who one is designing for. A 2013 project by architects Ronald Rael and Virginia San Fratello reconceives the border fence as a productive piece of architecture that could provide infrastructure for the communities affected by it, including water repositories for crossing migrants, a cross-border library, renewable energy structures, and vehicles for people to interact despite the barrier. *The Space in Between* (2010) is a long-standing collaborative sewing and embroidery workshop project conceived by El Paso-based sculptor Margarita Cabrera. The sculptures in the exhibition represent cactus plants native to U.S.-Mexico borderlands, their forms made from disassembled border patrol uniforms. The embroideries were created in collaboration with Mexican migrants who contributed their traditional sewing skills to the project, as well as imagery relating to their lived experience crossing the border.

Although this exhibition was conceived before the topic of "building a wall" along the U.S.-Mexico border captured media headlines, its relevance is more potent and instructive than ever before. *The U.S.-Mexico Border: Place, Imagination, and Possibility* demonstrates the humanity and distinct creative cultures along this contested territory and underscores the interconnectedness of the two countries that is in danger of being violently and destructively ruptured by aggressive nationalism, exclusionist policies, and racism.

An opening reception for *The U.S.-Mexico Border: Place, Imagination, and Possibility* takes place on September 9, 2017 from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. The reception is free for museum members and open to the public for a \$12 entry fee.



Ana Serrano, *Cartonlandia*, cardboard, wood, 2007. AltaMed Art Collection, courtesy of Cástulo de la Rocha and Zoila Escobar, photo by Julie Klima



Consuelo Jimenez Underwood, *Home of the Brave*, woven fabric, safety pins, 2013. Courtesy of the artist

## PROGRAMS

CAFAM will offer exhibition-related workshops and events in conjunction with the exhibition, including CraftLab family workshops on the second Sunday of each month from 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. Details can be found at [www.cafam.org/programs](http://www.cafam.org/programs).

## CATALOGUES

A fully illustrated catalogue will be published to accompany the exhibition, which includes essay contributions by Michael Dear, Gustavo Leclerc, Kerry Doyle, Amalia Mesa-Bains, Jose Manuel Valenzuela Arce, Teddy Cruz and Fonna Forman, and Jorge Gracia.

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Situated on historic Museum Row since 1965, the **Craft & Folk Art Museum (CAFAM)** is an invaluable contributor to Los Angeles culture, exhibiting current artists with intriguing perspectives and distinctive practices. Exploring the leading edge of craft, art, and design, CAFAM gives audience to diverse makers and artists whose work is often not represented in larger art institutions. The museum is a place to see art and make art — all under one roof. CAFAM coordinates a robust roster of hands-on workshops led by professional artists and makers. The intimate, atypical museum space and independent spirit at CAFAM combine to create an atmosphere of excitement and innovation, where people in Los Angeles deepen their relationships to art, creativity, and one another. For more information, visit [www.cafam.org](http://www.cafam.org)

Location: 5814 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90036

Admission: FREE every Sunday

Regularly: \$7 for adults; \$5 for students, teachers, and seniors; free for CAFAM members

Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday, 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; closed Mondays. Every first Thursday of the month, extended hours 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.