

For Immediate Release

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Des Moines Art Center exhibition explores contemporary Latin American culture and related issues



Note: An exhibition preview party will be held at the Des Moines Art Center on Thursday, February 2 from 6 - 7:30 pm to celebrate the opening of "Miguel Angel Rios: Walkabout." Live music by Calle Sur; admission: \$5 (FREE for Art Center members).

DES MOINES, IA (January 2012) – On February 3, the Des Moines Art Center will open *Miguel Angel Rios: Walkabout*, an exhibition that will run through April 22, 2012 in the Anna K. Meredith Gallery and video galleries.

Since 2000, the New York- and Mexico City-based artist Miguel Angel Rios has been creating haunting and poetic works in video and mixed media. *Walkabout* presents a selection of five video and multimedia installations along with paintings and works on paper that demonstrates his unique relationship to the South American and Mexican landscapes. The title of the exhibition invokes the traditional associations to rites of passage, spiritual awakenings, and self-awareness that come from solitary encounters in the desert landscape.

Originally from Catamarca, Argentina, Rios relocated to New York City in the mid-1970s to escape the dire political situation during the military dictatorship in that country. Although Rios initially spent time in New York, he eventually relocated to Mexico, where he was able to reestablish a connection with Latin America yet keep a safe distance from the political strife in his native country. Through his experience of political dislocation, major themes in his work range from the exploration of alternate states of mind, cultural and political conflict, and violence. The most recent works in the exhibition, however, return to his childhood home, which provide moments of contemplation and observation through the abstract texture of sound. *Miguel Angel Rios: Walkabout* is organized by Senior Curator Gilbert Vicario.

Related Programs

Conversations on Art: Miguel Angel Rios

Tuesday, January 31 / 6:30 pm

Levitt Auditorium; reservations required*

The evening's program will begin with the screening of *Behind Mecha*, a 27-minute documentary exploring the artistic process that went into the creation of Rios' video installation *Mecha (Fuse)*, 2010. Immediately following the film, a Q & A between Rios and Gilbert Vicario will take place. (The interview will be translated from Spanish to English.)

Mecha (Fuse) evokes universal themes of violence and a fight for survival through a little known game called *Tejo*. In the game, each player throws a disk, or *tejo*, towards a square of wet mud, trying to hit targets made of pink triangular detonators called *mechas*, which are filled with gunpowder and that explode on impact. *Mecha* attempts to go beyond the reality of the game, and into a parallel reality that suggests urban guerilla warfare, drug trafficking in Mexico and Colombia, or that of gang warfare.

Lecture: "Cosmopolitan Routes: Charting Contemporary Latin American Art"

Gilbert Vicario, senior curator

Thursday, February 16 / 6:30 pm

Levitt Auditorium; reservations required*

This lecture provides an introduction to contemporary Latin American art and illustrates the key movements or cornerstones of contemporary art practice in Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil.

Yoga + Gallery Talk (*the Yoga session is now full*)

Saturday, March 3 / 9 am

Lobby / Anna K. Meredith Gallery

Limit 50 participants

Reservations required*

Yoga novices and enthusiasts alike are invited to practice yoga in the lobby of the Art Center (participants should provide their own yoga mats). Voted as *Cityview's* 2011 Best Yoga Instructor in Des Moines, Ben Easter will lead a 60-minute session, followed by a 45-minute gallery talk by Senior Curator Gilbert Vicario on the exhibition *Walkabout*.

*Seating is limited at these events. Please make your FREE reservations at 515.271.0313 or lectures@desmoinesartcenter.org. Include a name for the reservation, the event you wish to attend (Rios, Vicario, and/or Yoga), a contact e-mail address or phone number, and the number of seats requested.

Walkabout Film Series

This eclectic film series, inspired by Rios' exhibition, explores aspects of violence, human nature, and spirituality. All films will be shown in Levitt Auditorium. For descriptions of the films, visit desmoinesartcenter.org.

Sunday, March 18 / 1 pm

DOUBLE FEATURE

Simon of the Desert, 1965

Luis Buñuel, director

43 minutes, not rated

Walkabout, 1971

Nicolas Roeg, director

95 minutes, not rated

Sunday, March 25 / 1:30 pm

Maria Full of Grace, 2004

Joshua Marston, director

101 minutes, rated R

Caption:

Miguel Angel Rios (Argentinian, born 1943)
Mecha (Fuse), 2010
DVD, Two channel synchronized projection
RT: 10:02 minutes
Courtesy of the artist

Des Moines Art Center

Recognized by international art critics as a world-class museum in the heart of the Midwest, the Des Moines Art Center has amassed an important collection with a major emphasis on contemporary art. The collection's overriding principle is a representation of artists from the 19th century to the present, each through a seminal work. This accounts for an impressive collection that ranges from Edward Hopper's *Automat* to Jasper Johns' *Tennyson*, Henri Matisse's *Woman in White*, Georgia O'Keeffe's *From the Lake No. 1*, Francis Bacon's *Study after Velásquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X*, Bill Viola's *Ascension*, and Cecily Brown's *Half-Bind*.

The Art Center's physical complex marries with the collection for a totally integrated experience. The collection is housed in three major buildings, each designed by a world-renowned architect - Eliel Saarinen, I. M. Pei, and Richard Meier. With the exception of special events, admission to the museum is free.

In September 2009, the John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park opened in Des Moines' Western Gateway Park. Philanthropists John and Mary Pappajohn have provided funding for and donated 27 sculptures by internationally acclaimed contemporary artists to the Des Moines Art Center. The collection of sculptures by such artists as Louise Bourgeois, Deborah Butterfield, Keith Haring, Ellsworth Kelly, Willem de Kooning, Jaume Plensa, Richard Serra, Joel Shapiro, and Mark di Suvero, is the most significant donation of artwork to the Art Center in a single gift in the museum's history. The Pappajohn Sculpture Park is a collaboration of the Pappajohns, the City of Des Moines, the Des Moines Art Center, and numerous corporate and private donors.

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