

**EDUCATORS RESOURCE GUIDE**  
***EL MUSEO'S BIENAL: THE (S) FILES 007***



**Contemporary Latin American Art**

**El Museo's Bienal: *The (S) Files 007***  
**July 25, 2007 – January 6, 2008**

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**Cover:** From left to right: Franklin Evans, *Regeneration: Franklin Garcia*, 2007; Augusto Zanela, *Apunte*, 2007; Shaun C. Leonardo, *Self-Portrait Icon, Painting 2*, 2006; Jessica Lagunas, *Para Besarte Mejor*, 2003

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## A NOTE TO EDUCATORS

Dear Educator,

El Museo del Barrio welcomes you and your students to explore the fifth installation of *El Museo's Bienal: The (S) Files 007*, curated by Elvis Fuentes, Associate Curator of El Museo and Carmen Ramos, Assistant Curator of the Newark Museum. *The (S) Files 007* highlights the most innovative, cutting-edge art being produced by emerging Latino and Latin American artists currently living and working in the greater New York area. The artists are literally "selected from the files." This fifth edition highlights fifty-one artists working in diverse media, as well as five artists from Ecuador, this year's guest country. *The (S) Files* offers students and teachers an opportunity to explore Latino contemporary art through a variety of media – from painting and photography to video, installation, and performance.

For K-12 school groups, tours and workshops will focus on themes that figure prominently in the artists' work including identity, gender, immigration, conflict, and the environment. Gallery discussions and workshop projects will touch upon the artists' use of unconventional materials, pattern, and abstraction to explore such diverse topics as the war in Iraq, border politics, environmental awareness and the preservation of cultural traditions. To help you and your students get the most out of your visit to the Museum, we have created this Resource Guide to provide educators with in-depth information about the exhibition and select artists, as well as pre- and post-visit activities to use with students in the classroom. These projects focus on core curriculum subject areas and address New York State Learning Standards, including art, English language arts, and social studies. Also included are strategies for looking at art and resources for further research.

In addition to the materials presented here, *The (S) Files 007* features an excellent catalogue, with over 50 images, and curator's essays. The catalogue is available in El Museo's gift shop and could serve as a valuable resource in the classroom.

If you are interested in scheduling a guided tour or hands-on workshop for your class, please contact the Education Department at 212-660-7113 or [tours@elmuseo.org](mailto:tours@elmuseo.org). You may access more information about El Museo's School and Educator programs, as well as our exciting calendar of fall programs by visiting [www.elmuseo.org](http://www.elmuseo.org).

We encourage you to use the materials provided here both before and after your visit, in ways that are appropriate for your age group and setting. Please feel free to adapt, modify, and expand upon these suggestions as necessary. Our hope is that they will serve as an introduction to the myriad possibilities for exploring this exhibition further.

Feel free to contact us for more information, or with comments and suggestions.

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## ABOUT EL MUSEO del BARRIO

### MISSION

The Mission of El Museo del Barrio is to present and preserve the art and culture of Puerto Ricans and all Latin Americans in the United States.

Through its extensive collections, varied exhibitions and publications, bilingual public programs, educational activities, festivals and special events, El Museo educates its diverse publics in the richness of Caribbean and Latin American arts and cultural history.

By introducing young people to this cultural heritage, El Museo is creating the next generation of museum-goers, while satisfying the growing interest in Caribbean and Latin American art of a broad national and international audience.

This mission reaffirms the vision of Raphael Montañez Ortiz, who founded El Museo del Barrio in 1969 and of the Puerto Rican educators, artists, and community activists who worked in support of this goal.

### HISTORY

El Museo del Barrio was founded in 1969 by artist and educator Raphael Montañez Ortiz in response to the interest of Puerto Rican parents, educators, artists and activists in East Harlem who were concerned that their cultural experience was not being represented by New York's major museums. The contexts of El Museo's founding were the national civil rights movement and, in the New York City art world, the campaign that called for major art institutions to decentralize their collections and to represent a variety of non-European cultures in their collections and programs.

From the outset, El Museo defined itself as an institution that would educate through a collection of culturally significant objects and as a place of cultural pride and self-discovery for the founding Puerto Rican community. Initially El Museo operated in a public school classroom as an adjunct to the local school district, and then in brownstones in El Barrio, the Spanish-speaking neighborhood that extends from 96th Street to the Harlem River and from Fifth Avenue to the East River on Manhattan's Upper East Side. Between 1969 and 1976, El Museo moved to a

series of storefronts on Third and Lexington Avenues, in the heart of El Barrio. In 1977, El Museo found a permanent home in the spacious, neo-classical Heckscher Building at 1230 Fifth Avenue.

The move to upper Fifth Avenue allowed El Museo to maintain contact with its core community yet reach out to a wider non-Latino audience. In 1978 El Museo became a founding member of the Museum Mile Association, comprising nine of the city's most distinguished cultural institutions along 20 historic and scenic blocks on Fifth Avenue, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Guggenheim Museum, The Jewish Museum, and The Museum of the City of New York. The accessibility of the site, participation in this prestigious association, one of New York City's major tourist attractions, and a growing interest in Latin American art have brought a huge increase in our non-Latino visitors, today about 40% of our audience.

El Museo's original educational mission continues to drive its collections and programs. At the same time, in response to substantial growth and demographic shifts in El Barrio, in New York, and across the U.S., El Museo broadened its mission, collections, and programs in 1994. El Museo's permanent collection remains a treasured resource for developing exhibitions and education programs. In recent years public programs have been developed to address the educational needs of diverse populations--seniors, adults, adolescents, public school students, and very young visitors.



***El Museo's renovation is underway!***

## ABOUT THE EXHIBITION: EL MUSEO'S BIENAL *THE (S) FILES 007*



El Museo's Bienal celebrates the experimental, immediate pulse of contemporary art, and supports the work of emerging Latino / Latin American artists based in the New York metropolitan area. The exhibition was curated by Elvis Fuentes, Associate Curator, El Museo del Barrio, and E. Carmen Ramos, Assistant Curator for Cultural Engagement, The Newark Museum, NJ. In addition, guest curator Rodolfo Kronfle Chambers (independent curator, Guayaquil, Ecuador), has included in the exhibition a selection of works by five artists from Ecuador, this year's invited guest country.

*The (S) Files* are literally "the selected files", as many of the works on display have been chosen from the unsolicited submissions to El Museo's Artists' Archive over the past two years. This selection is the most expansive to date, with 51 artists showcasing work in traditional mediums such as drawing, painting and photography, as well as more experimental projects incorporating light, sound, and interactive elements, mobile sculptures and site-specific installations.

*The (S) Files* is an exciting endeavor that is received every year with great enthusiasm by artists, critics, gallery owners, and art collectors in New York. In just one decade, this project, conceived and implemented by Deborah Cullen, Director of Curatorial Programs of El Museo, has established itself as a launching pad for new and emerging Latin/o artists while recognizing the contribution of our community to, and encouraging dialogue with, the wealth of the city's art scene.

Even among the diversity within the works presented in *El Museo's Bienal: The (S) Files 007*, the curators recognize several recurrent themes that have emerged organically within the exhibition. Some of the artists reference the hyper-reality of contemporary culture of violence and war, often in relation to social perceptions of masculinity. Others explore the public dimension of art and examine issues of labor, immigration, language and identity, frequently documenting the artist's experience or citing art historical traditions. Resounding another global concern, many of the artists approach the environment and the natural world through landscapes real or imaginary, most especially evident in the selection of work from the five artists from Ecuador.

In curator Carmen Ramos' words: "*By presenting the work of contemporary artists of Latino and Latin American descent working and living in the greater New York region, The [S] Files offers a unique opportunity to witness an expansive picture of American art in progress. However clichéd, it is important to highlight that the work of the over forty-nine artists in the exhibition, performance and video programs that comprise The [S] Files resonate in multiple cultural, aesthetic and historical contexts. Many are American by birth or born elsewhere and here to stay. Others live much more virtually, here (U.S.) today, there (Latin America, Europe, Asia, etc.) tomorrow. Several resonant themes emerged organically. Some artists explore our contemporary culture of violence, war, risk and/or notions of masculinity itself. Others affirm a return to nature—real, artificial, or constructed—expressed as landscapes or potent natural forces that evoke cultural heritage and personal experience. Appropriate to artists working in a nation at war, some biennial artists examine the pressing concerns of the public sphere—from labor, to immigration and the myths of nations.*"

## PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

1. Alejandro Almanza Pereda (1977) Mexico City, Mexico.
2. Blanka Amezkua (1971) Mexico City, Mexico.
3. Alessandro Balteo Yazbeck (1972) Caracas, Venezuela.
4. Saidel Brito (1973) Matanzas, Cuba; lives in Ecuador.\*
5. Melissa A. Calderon (1974) New York, NY; Puerto Rican.
6. Pablo Cardoso (1965) Cuenca, Ecuador; lives in Ecuador.\*
7. Liset Castillo (1974) Camagüey, Cuba.
8. Vidal Centeno (1960) New York, Nuyorican.
9. Cecile Chong (1964) Guayaquil, Ecuador.
10. Cesar Cornejo (1966) Lima, Peru.
11. Pedro Cruz-Castro (1970) Caracas, Venezuela.
12. Franklin Evans (1967) Reno, NV; Mexican descent.
13. exit static (latino & gringo collective)
14. Fernando Falconí (1980) Guayaquil, Ecuador; lives in Ecuador.\*
15. Andrés García-Peña (1961) Milan, Italy; Colombian.
16. Florencio Gelabert (1961) Havana, Cuba.
17. Eduardo Gil (1973) Caracas, Venezuela.
18. Tamara Kostianovsky (1974) Jerusalem, Israel; raised in Argentina.
19. Jessica Lagunas (1971) Managua, Nicaragua; raised in Guatemala.
20. Cristóbal Lehyt (1973) Santiago, Chile.
21. Shaun El C. Leonardo (1979) Queens, NY; Dominican/ Guatemalan.
22. José Lerma (1971) Seville, Spain.
23. Adriana López Sanfeliu (1976) Barcelona, Spain.
24. Luis Mallo (1962) Havana, Cuba.
25. Cecilia Mandrile (1969) Cordoba, Argentina.
26. Norma Márquez Orozco (1966) Chicago, IL; Guadalajara, Mexico.
27. Justin Mata (1979) Woodland, CA; Chicano descent.
28. Iván Monforte (1973) Merida, Yucatan, Mexico.
29. Alex Morel (1973) New York, NY; Dominican descent.
30. Lisette Morel (1974) New York, NY; Dominican descent.
31. Andrea Nacach (1975) Buenos Aires, Argentina.
32. Oscar Oiwa (1965) Sao Paulo, SP, Brazil.
33. Renzo Ortega (1974) Lima, Peru.
34. Sebastián Patané Masuelli (1978) San Juan, Argentina.
35. Javier Piñón (1970) Miami, FL; Cuban descent.
36. Maria Teresa Ponce (1974) Quito, Ecuador; lives in Ecuador.\*
37. Dulce Pinzón (1974) Mexico City, Mexico.
38. Manuela Ribadeneira (1966) Quito, Ecuador; lives in England.\*
39. Jesús Rivera (1956) Ciego de Avila, Cuba.
40. Carlos Rodríguez Cárdenas (1962) Cabaiguan, Cuba.
41. José Ruiz (1975) Lima, Peru.
42. Reinaldo Sanguino (1973) Caracas, Venezuela.
43. Analia Segal Rosario, Argentina.
44. Courtney Smith (1966) Paris, France; raised in Brazil.
45. Germán Tagle (1976) Santiago, Chile.
46. Sandra Valenzuela (1980) Mexico City, Mexico.
47. Mary A. Valverde (1975) Queens, NY; Guayaquil, Ecuador.
48. William Villalongo (1975) Hollywood, FL; Puerto Rican descent.
49. Karin Waisman (1960) Buenos Aires, Argentina
50. Katarina Wong (1966) York, PA; Cuban-Chinese descent
51. Augusto Zanela (1967) Quilmes, Buenos Aires, Argentina

\* Indicates artists from The (S) File's 2007 Guest Country, Ecuador

## USING THE RESOURCE GUIDE

This Resource Guide has been designed around six themes that are referenced by different artists in *The (S) Files 007*.

This year, unlike previous biennials, the curators (people whose responsibility it is to select and install works of art) identified three overarching themes that emerged organically during the process of selection:

**A Wild Eye:** Nature is present in the work of many artists in the exhibition. They approach the subject from different perspectives: landscape, decorative arts, ecology, economy and politics.

**Adrenaline:** Urban culture and its manifestations of hyper masculinity are explored in works that refer to subjects like extreme sports, violence, risk, superheroes, among others.

**Art Agora:** A group of works dealing with language, communication and expression in relation to both Art History and the migration experience of the artists and their milieu.

In turn, for educational purposes, the exhibition themes have been divided into the following sub-themes:

Why is this art? Making art with unconventional tools and materials

The environment: issues and awareness

Patterns and abstraction in nature and the built environment

Conflict: reflecting on personal and global struggles

Identity: gender, race and ethnicity

Immigration: displacement, bi-cultural identity and home

Each theme is accompanied by pre- and post-visit activities as well as information about related artists and artworks. A full page image of the highlighted artwork for each theme has been included. Educators can print this image or make a transparency of it to use in class. On page 28, you will find brief information on additional artists who are connected to each of the six themes previously referenced. The themes are followed by a number of suggested questions to guide your discussion with students. Resources to aid in developing some of the pre-and post-visit activities are found in the webography starting on page 43. Whenever you find words that are bold and underlined in this **guide**, please refer to the webography corresponding to this section or theme. Art terms used throughout the guide are defined on page 33.

The suggested questions are based on object based learning and the use of inquiry to explore works of art. Using open-ended questions, works of art may be used to develop students' critical thinking, communication skills, and visual literacy. Growth is stimulated by three activities: looking at art of increasing complexity, responding to developmentally-based questions, and participating in group discussions that are carefully facilitated by teachers. Using a learner-centered method, students are engaged in making connections with works of art through questions based on observation, analysis and interpretation. Museum educators facilitate discussions encouraging scaffolding of observations and interpretations. Students support opinions with evidence, listen and share information and ideas, and construct meaning. Through this method of teaching, museum educators nurture students' curiosity, and develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

## USING ARTWORKS AS PRIMARY SOURCES

### What is a primary source?

Primary source information is original material, such as a first-hand account of an event or a work of literature or art that has not been interpreted by anyone other than its creator. Common types of primary sources are diaries, letters, autobiographies, oral history interviews, speeches, organizational records, poetry, drama, sheet music, government documents, maps, artifacts, films, video, sound recordings, photographs, artwork, and natural specimens. Primary sources enable the researcher to get as close as possible to what actually happened during an historical event or time period. Primary sources were either created during the time period being studied, or were created at a later date by a participant in the events being studied (as in the case of memoirs) and they reflect the individual viewpoint of a participant or observer.

### How can we use art as primary sources for teaching?

If we consider the mission of the artist as the thermometer of an era, that is, if we see the role of the artist to portray and interpret their times, then we can understand the importance of using artworks as tools to teach various subject areas. Using an inquiry-based approach, students can learn to look at artworks in a critical way and make connections between the arts and other subjects such as Social Studies, Language Arts, Science and Technology. Examples of artworks as primary sources in *The (S) Files 007* can be seen in Almanza Pereda's piece and his comment on immigration and border crossing in El Paso, Texas; in Alessandro Balteo's mobile which is based on historical events in Iraq; in Eduardo Gil's collection of objects that are a criticism of Hugo Chavez' democratic socialist government; in Tamara Kostianovsky's comment on the effects of the Argentinean economic crisis in the year 1999; in Justin Mata's depiction of the fourth branch of government; in Oscar Oiwa's painting representing the growth of violent world conflicts; in Dulce Pinzon's photographs which share stories about immigrants living and working in New York, and in Manuela Ribadeneira's comment on the war between Ecuador and Peru in 1986.

Artists themselves often use primary sources to inform their artworks.

A good example of this is *(S) Files 007* Ecuadorian artist Saidel Brito with his piece *Que la multitude conviva* (Let the Masses Interact).

The painting is inspired by the indigenous uprising that shook the country in 2000 and toppled President Jamil Mahuad. Brito reproduced the paintings created by indigenous people from the Tigua community by substantially enlarging the



scale and altering their cheerful chromatic treatment. In doing so, the artist calls attention to a historical moment and a group of people that may have otherwise been forgotten



Saidel Brito, *Que la Multitud Conviva* (Let the Masses Interact), 2003-2007. Mixed media installation.

## HIGHLIGHTED ARTISTS AND THEMATIC ACTIVITIES

### THEME: WHY IS THIS ART? MAKING ART WITH UNCONVENTIONAL TOOLS AND MATERIALS

What is art? This question has no definitive answer. Throughout the history of art, the function of art and role of the artist has evolved in response to the times. Though many have debated the nature and purpose of art, most agree that contemporary artists incorporate a variety of ideas, techniques, materials and approaches. As a result, however, sometimes, a viewer may find contemporary art to be challenging or difficult to understand, spurring the question – why is this art? Through careful observation of materials and process, viewers may discover the many layers of meaning inherent in a work of art.

What kinds of materials do we usually associate with art-making? Artists have always made choices about color, line, texture and composition and the materials used to express an idea, concept, story or emotion. More recently in the history of art, artists have moved from only using materials that are traditionally associated with art making, such as oil paints and canvas, to using a wide variety of materials to create art.

Many contemporary artists experiment with everyday materials, thus changing the public's perception of 'what is allowed' in art-making, and opening their minds to other possibilities to convey meaning. Several of *The (S) Files* artists make artworks with unconventional materials such as tissues, plastic trees and flowers, corn husks, joss paper, carpeting material, vegetables, cardboard boxes, electric transformers, and even their own clothes! These kinds of materials are also known as alternative media.

Why do artists choose to work with unconventional materials? Does the material used to make an artwork affect the idea the artist wishes to communicate with his or her work? Does the material suggest meaning or is it the other way around? The activities in this resource guide prepare you to start a conversation around this topic, and reach answers as a group.

### HIGHLIGHTED ARTIST

**Melissa Calderon (1974; New York, NY)**

Melissa Calderon is a “multidisciplinary artist” and curator born and raised in the South Bronx. Calderon’s work examines the intersection of race and gender for Latina women. Her artwork is both personally cathartic and socially critical. Calderon explains that her work “*is reflective of [her] extreme introspective and emotional nature.*” However, Calderon also attempts to reconstruct the stereotype that Latina women can’t be emotional and self-sufficient, confident and independent. She expands: “[My work] *speaks of the internal conflicts of the female role in society and how outward expressions of emotions are classified as typical female behavior and viewed as a weakness. Within the context of the vulnerability of the medium I used, everyday household [objects], my artwork speaks of the feminine role of domestication and today’s ‘feminist’ conflict to break that traditional barrier.*”

### ABOUT THE ARTWORK

***Permanence of Pain-1100 (La permanencia del dolor), 2005. Steel, cried-on tissues, silver tissue box. 66 x 120 inches.***



'Permanence of Pain-1100' is made with a large amount of 'cried on tissues,' that is, tissues used by the artist to wipe away her tears. The tissues contain the artist's tears and therefore symbolize her pain. What made her cry? We don't know for sure, but she created a beautiful and powerful piece in response to that pain. If you look at this work from a distance, you will see the tissues come from a silver tissue box attached to the

wall. The tissues take the shape of a curve overflowing onto the floor like a waterfall. This artwork is minimalist in color and the use of materials, yet overflows with emotion and meaning. While the artist has chosen to use a material that is delicate or weak in nature, she has used it to create a powerful structure supported by steel rods and wire. About this work, the artist states, "it speaks of the internal conflicts of the stereotypical Latina role in society and how outward expressions of emotion are classified as dramatic and over-exaggerated. Calling attention to the vulnerability of the medium, I use tissues to illustrate the whirlwind of emotions and clashing cultural ideologies. I challenge the new dynamics Latina women face having to balance the traditional and modern feminist roles."

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Take a minute to look at this artwork.

What has the artist used to create it?

When do we usually use tissues?

All of these tissues have been used to wipe away the artist's tears. How much do you think the artist cried?

What makes you cry?

Discuss the concept of 'artist's choice'. What kinds of choices do artists make? (i.e. type of materials, colors, surfaces, techniques). What are the reasons behind those choices?

Describe the material used to create this work of art. Why do you think she would choose to use this material?

How does the artist use this material to convey meaning?

Where do the tissues seem to be coming from?

What shape has the artist formed with the tissues? What do you think it resembles?

Why might she have chosen to design it in this way?

Do you think the artist is a man or a woman? Why? What stereotypes exist about men or women crying?

### OTHER ARTISTS RELATED TO THE THEME

See pages 28 to 32 of this Resource Guide for brief artist bios and thumbnail images of the following artists and works of art:

Cesar Cornejo  
Justin Mata  
Manuela Ribadeneira  
Analia Segal

The following artists are highlighted in other sections of this guide as follows:

Alejandro Almanza Pereda: p. 16  
Franklin Evans: p. 13  
Mary Valverde: p. 22

### VOCABULARY

Artist's choice  
Artist's intention  
Concept  
Contemporary  
Curator  
Installation art  
Interpretation  
Minimalist  
Multidisciplinary artist  
Process  
Symbol  
Technique  
Unconventional

## PRE VISIT ACTIVITIES

### Activity 1

This activity is designed for Elementary school students but can be used with other grades as well. Have students stand in a circle and pass around an object that they will take turns to 'convert' into something other than the object's original function. For example, pass around a broom. What else could it be? A Q-Tip! A baseball bat! Ask students to demonstrate the use of the broom in its new 'role.' In this way, the students understand the use of an object or material in an unconventional way and will also be introduced to the concept of symbolism (a vocabulary word they will use during their Museum visit).

### Activity 2

This activity is best suited for Middle and High School students. In a writing exercise, ask students to research the meaning of the word 'unconventional' and then have them write a story responding to this concept. They can choose to talk about an unconventional situation, character or place and develop a fictional piece. They can also choose to write their story in an unconventional way, for example starting with the end of the story, or not using punctuation. In this way, they will explore the meaning of the word and apply it to a creative piece of writing. As an example, students could look at the way the Argentinean writer **Julio Cortazar** wrote his book ***Rayuela*** (Hopscotch)<sup>1</sup> in an unconventional way, as a literary experiment. American writer **Hubert Selby Jr.** used unconventional punctuation in novels such as ***Last Exit to Brooklyn***. An excerpt from this novel can be used as an example of unconventional writing.

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<sup>1</sup> Written in an episodic, snapshot manner, the novel has 155 chapters, the last 99 being designated as "expendable." The book can be read either in direct sequence from chapter 1 to 56 or by hopscotching through the entire set of 155 chapters--except chapter 55--according to a table provided by the author that leaves the reader, finally, in an infinite loop between the last two chapters in the sequence. Some of the "expendable" chapters fill in gaps in the main story, while others add information about the characters or record the aesthetic and literary speculations of a writer named Morelli (possibly a stand-in for the author). The novel is also considered to belong in the genre of Latin American magical realism and is an example of multiple endings.

### Activity 3

Have students explore unconventional use of language in a group poem based on the shared drawing exercise, ***Exquisite Corpse***. Pass a paper around in a circle and have everyone add a word to the poem without looking at the prior text. An alternative Exquisite Corpse poem is done by random word selection (such as drawing words out of a hat or blindly pointing at words on flipped dictionary pages).

### POST VISIT ACTIVITY: Develop a group installation using unconventional tools and materials

**Objective:** To give students the experience of experimenting with different tools and materials to make art; to reflect on the possibilities of art making and to connect the concept of the piece with the choice of materials.

**Workshop Procedure:** What kinds of tools and materials do you use for making art? Have you ever thought about using tools you use for cooking or beauty products to make an artwork? Brainstorm a list of traditional and unconventional materials with your students and write their responses as a list on a large sheet of paper. Which kitchen utensils, beauty products, or other everyday materials might you choose to experiment with to create a group installation?

As a group, choose a theme to focus your installation on, such as identity, immigration or the environment. It could be one of the themes discussed during your visit to the Museum, or included in this guide.

Once you have selected the theme, brainstorm with your students on the choice of materials to convey the right meaning. Examples of materials to use: beauty products such as cotton balls, Q-Tips, fake nails, hair rollers, hair pins or office supplies such as Post-It pads, paper clips, rubber bands, index cards, and file folders.

Since most schools have space constraints, you may want students to work individually on parts of the installation, and once finished, find a place to install the work built from the individual parts. The actual form of the installation depends on the theme and the materials you decide to work with. Have students write an artist statement describing the work they did and use it to accompany the display of the installation.

## IDENTITY: GENDER, RACE AND ETHNICITY

Gender, race and ethnicity are some elements that compose a person's identity. Some of *The (S) Files 007* artists reflect on or question the stereotypes associated with gender, race and ethnicity.

What are the elements that define our identity? How can we define the self? What makes us who we are? Are there elements of our identity that are qualities dictated or constructed by society and others that we are born with?

New York is a multi-ethnic city. People from all over the world have migrated here for centuries, mainly in search of opportunities that they cannot find in their countries of origin. This produces a city of many multiple races and ethnicities; of mixed identities. As a city, New York responds to its diversity and the specific needs of every different community in terms of language and cultural traditions. These cultural manifestations shape the city. Immigrants, in turn, adopt what is known as 'transitory or transient identities,' that is, *"to swing from one side to the other, to have two countries, throughout your life, (...) to swing from one side to the other, to have two countries throughout your life and yet none, to feel at home everywhere and yet to be forever alien."* Text by Ivo Andric, excerpted from *Ivo Andric Revisited: The Bridge Still Stands* (University of California, Berkeley International and Area Studies, 1996).

How does culture define our identity? Can an individual alter culture? Is it important to know as clearly as possible what shapes OUR identity? To what point are we in charge of shaping it? How do we understand ourselves as individuals and also as part of a collective? While these questions have no exact answers, by reflecting on them, we may increase our awareness of where we stand as unique individuals in the world.

### HIGHLIGHTED ARTIST

**Franklin Evans (1967; Reno, NV; Mexican descent)**

Franklin Evans is a third generation Mexican-American artist born in Reno, Nevada in 1967. Evans completed his Masters in Fine Arts in Painting from the University of Iowa in 1993. His work primarily consists of paintings and drawings that combine various elements, such

as watercolor, ink, color pencil, graphite, and mixed media on walls. The artwork is characterized by the use of vivid color and powerful, yet precise, brush-strokes. Evan's latest undertaking is the exploration of his identity as a "mixed-ethnicity artist." Evan's states: *"I have frequently been misunderstood as 'white,' particularly with the name 'Franklin Evans.' In the past year I have begun works that offer the artist signature as 'Franklin Garcia' as a way of disrupting what some of the public has come to understand my work and identity to be as 'Franklin Evans'...My interest lies less in identity construct and politics and more the prevalence of misreading and its companion: the possibility of knowing."*

### ABOUT THIS ARTWORK

***Regeneration: Franklin Garcia, 2007. Site-specific mixed media installation, 124x96x96.***



In his site specific installation *Regeneration Franklin Garcia*, Evans presents us with questions about his own dual identity. Using a variety of everyday materials such as tape and string; and an unconventional surface (sheetrock), Evans builds a mini-environment where he repeats a figure which he calls a mutation of a Mesoamerican<sup>2</sup> god. According to

<sup>2</sup> Mesoamerica is a region in the mid-latitudes of the Americas, namely the culture area within which a number of pre-Columbian societies flourished before the Spanish colonization of the Americas in the 15th and 16th centuries.

the artist, this double figure represents how Evans, as a mixed-ethnicity artist, may be seen “as one person with two or more identities, recombinant, fragile, decaying, transient.” As Carmen Ramos, one of *The (S) Files 007* curators states: “Franklin Evans’s expansive wall composition—beautiful, messy and destructive—blends painting, drawing and mixed media as a meditation on hybrid, miscegenated cultures.”



(Detail)

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Take a moment to observe this artwork.

What surface has this artist used?

Describe any patterns you may find in this installation.

Do the patterns resemble something from nature or from the built environment?

Find and describe the figure that is repeated in this installation. What could this image symbolize? What might this tell us about the artist’s identity?

The artist, Franklin Evans was born in the US of immigrant parents. How does this information change your thoughts about the installation, and the dual image?

What do you think it means to have a dual identity or to be bi-cultural?

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The culture area extends from central Honduras and northwestern Costa Rica to Mexico. This culture area included some of the most complex and advanced cultures of the Americas, including the Olmec, Teotihuacan, the Maya, and the Aztec.

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How do you think the artist feels about having a ‘dual’ identity?

## OTHER ARTISTS RELATED TO THIS THEME

See pages 28 to 32 of this Resource Guide for brief artist bios and thumbnail images of their works of art:

Lisette Castillo  
 Cesar Cornejo  
 Jessica Lagunas  
 Shaun El C. Leonardo  
 Adriana Lopez San Feliu  
 Renzo Ortega  
 Analia Segal

The following artists are highlighted in other sections of this guide as follows:

Melissa Calderón: p.10  
 Mary Valverde: p. 22

## VOCABULARY

Installation  
 Mixed media  
 Symbol  
 Memoir  
 Photo essay

## PRE VISIT ACTIVITIES

**Activity 1 :** Read *When I Was Puerto Rican* by Esmeralda Santiago. This book is a narrative of a young girl’s coming-of-age in 1950s Puerto Rico and of her subsequent move to the very different world of New York City. Have your students reflect on the issues of identity she encounters as she starts a new life in New York. After reading the book, ask students to write a memoir based on their own experiences considering how their identities were formed by their experiences and family background. When they finish their written memoirs students can design a cover for it, trying to capture the essence of what the memoir portrays about themselves.

**Activity 2:** Ask students to build a word self-portrait. Ask them to think of words that describe who they are and type them in a Microsoft Word document. Ask them to then think of different fonts they can use, depending on the meaning of each word. Ask them to proceed to cut out the words and glue them onto a piece of colored

cardstock, creating a design of a symbol that can represent them. The color of the cardstock they choose can also be chosen intentionally to add to their portrayal of their identity. If computers are not available, the activity can be done by cutting out 'fonts' from magazines or newspapers.

## POST VISIT ACTIVITIES

### A Visual Memoir

This activity is an extension of the Pre Visit Activity using the book *When I Was Puerto Rican*. The activity can also be adapted as a visual memoir portraying a loved one or family member.

**Objective:** Through this project students will develop an artwork about identity balancing the use of image and text. Students will learn how to create a self-portrait or a portrait of a loved one in a narrative form.

**Workshop Procedure:** After completing their written memoirs in response to Esmeralda Santiago's *When I Was Puerto Rican*, ask students to create a photo essay representing their identity. Several examples of photo essays are listed in the Resources section at the back of this guide. Alternatively, you may ask your students to think of an important person in their lives who has impacted their growth and identity.

Students may use disposable or digital cameras. The camera they choose will affect the presentation of the photo essay. You may want to give students the option of using color or black and white photography, or a combination of both. Discuss how these choices affect the portrayal of the person.

Ask students to take a series of photographs of themselves, of their friends, or family members in various environments or of the person they have selected to portray in their photo essay. Ask them to not only include posed photographs, but to try to capture candid shots of their subject(s) during daily life. They may also want to focus on important objects in their home (favorite books, foods, toys, etc.) that are associated with themselves or their subject.

Ask students to use excerpts from their written memoirs or to interview their subject and select excerpts to add as text narrating the photo essays. Students can also write poems about

their subjects and include them in their final project. Another alternative is to include lyrics from songs their subject enjoys or identifies with.

Once their photos are ready, have students edit them to a selection of 10 to 12 photos and to organize them in a logical sequence to tell their story. You may want to give students a number of options for displaying the photos and text. One option is to make a simple accordion book (see Resources section of this guide). The photo essays can also be presented digitally using the website <http://www.flipbook.com> or go to <http://www.blogspot.com> to present them as a blog. Their blog could contain photographs, poems, journal entries, podcasts, videos, etc. Blogs may be displayed in class using an LCD projector connected to the internet.

### For Elementary students:

Books tell stories. Ask students to create a simple accordion book that tells *their* story. Use these guiding questions as a starting point: Who am I? Who do I want to be? Where do I come from? Students are encouraged to use texts, photographs, drawings and objects to convey who they are. Student's books can be exhibited in the classroom when finished.

## IMMIGRATION: DISPLACEMENT, BICULTURALISM AND HOME

For many years, immigrants have come to the United States in search of economic opportunity and personal, political, and religious freedom. Once in the U.S., they often experience racism and cultural stereotyping. Immigrants' many important contributions to American culture have a significant impact on all aspects of life in the United States. Immigrants move from one country to another, start a new life and build a new home.

In the case of *Latino* immigration, families from all over South and Central America and the Caribbean come to this country, specifically to New York, searching to improve their economic situation, support their families back home, and give their children a better education. This migration of people inevitably brings a change in the culture of the City as well as in its physical aspect. Immigrants bring their own traditions which are then mixed with American culture producing unique hybrid-communities in New York City.

Many of the artists in the *(S) Files 007* addressing the theme of immigration are sons of immigrants or immigrants themselves. Through their work, they question and reinterpret their new identity, or express their biculturalism. They portray what their 'new homes' look like, by exploring language, neighborhood, space, and their identities.

### HIGHLIGHTED ARTIST

**Alejandro Almanza Pereda (1977; Mexico City, Mexico)**

Alejandro Almanza Pereda earned his BFA in Sculpture from the University of Texas at El Paso in 2005, after leaving his native Mexico. Pereda's work explores elements of risk and danger in our daily lives. His aim is not to gratify the audience with scenic images of beauty, but to deliberately create discomfort. He states, "I take preconceived ideas of what is considered dangerous and create tension and awkwardness for the spectator." Whether they are light bulbs suspended in mid-air holding the weight of a cement of block, or light beams suspending chairs in midair, his work manages to do just that.

### ABOUT THIS ARTWORK

***Untitled (after Dionysius) [Sin título (Después de Dionisos)], 2007. Cinder blocks, light bulbs, electrical cable, industrial plugs. Dimensions variable***



Almanza's piece is made using a combination of materials that are very dissimilar in nature. The heaviness of the cinder blocks contrasts with the lightness of the light bulbs, which actually hold the cinder block in place. This is achieved through balance and tension. Altogether, the piece looks like a chandelier made with unconventional materials. It creates a sensation of uneasiness and awkwardness in the spectators. Can it fall? Can the balance be maintained? Is it precarious? The artist went to school in El Paso, Texas, which is near the U.S./Mexico border. In this work of art, Pereda refers to issues related to immigration and the risk involved in border-crossing from Mexico to the US. The immigration experience can be packed with uncertainties just as the light bulbs in this piece can explode or the cinder block can finally fall. The title of the artwork may refer to the Greek god Dyonisius who in a number of his stories moved into a city, was resisted, and then destroyed those who opposed him.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

What materials did the artist use to create this work of art?

What do you notice about how the materials interact? (Is the cinder block supporting the light bulbs or is it the other way around?)

Where has this artwork been placed?

How would you feel if I asked you to stand below it? Would you do it? Why or why not?

Why do you think the artist would choose to hang this object in this way?

In what ways do you think risk forms part of our daily lives?

If I were to tell you that the artist is interested in addressing issues related to immigration and dangers involved in border-crossing from Mexico to the US – would this change your interpretation of the work?

## OTHER ARTISTS RELATED TO THIS THEME

See pages 28 to 32 of this Resource Guide for brief artist bios and thumbnail images of their works of art:

Pablo Cardoso  
Lisette Castillo  
Cesar Cornejo  
Tamara Kostianovsky  
Adriana Lopez San Feliu  
Renzo Ortega  
Sebastian Patane Mauselli  
Dulce Pinzon

The following artists are highlighted in other sections of this guide as follows:

Franklin Evans: p.13

## VOCABULARY

Collection  
Space  
Symbol  
Unconventional materials  
Haiku  
Stencil

## PRE VISIT ACTIVITIES

### Activity 1

Have your students discuss words they associate with personal space. Where do they live? Do they have a space they consider their own? Is this space special, a haven, does it provide a sense of comfort? Is a home made up only of material things like walls and tiles, or are there other intangible things that form one's concept of home? What happens when one loses their home or is displaced? Make a list of the students' responses.

Ask students to describe their bedroom in detail as a journal entry. What about it makes them feel that it's 'their' space? What material things in it give them a sense of comfort and safety? What do they feel when they are in their room? Ask students to think of the kinds of objects they collect in their personal space. What do these objects say about them?

An alternative is to have students to write a haiku poem about their home that describes what makes You can find several examples of haikus online (see Resources section of this guide for more information). The journal entries and haikus can be displayed in your class.

This activity can also be done as a blog where students can post entries, photos, drawings and podcasts.

### Activity 2

**Immigration:** Map your class' immigration experience on a world map. Use a large world map to identify the places where your students, their parents or grandparents came from. Ask the students to interview family members to trace back the experience of immigration in their families. Have students make a comic book with their findings. Their comic books should tell the story of how their families came to the U.S.A., describing their journey until the present day.

### Activity 3

#### Transition and Movement

Ask students to document their daily trips to school for a week. Using a journal or portfolio, students may take notes, write poems, collect found objects, draw places seen, or take photographs. This journal will depict their journey from point A (home) to point B (school), and will allow them to experience their routine journey in a special way. This activity will help

students pay close attention to this movement and to then be able to further understand the topic of immigration (e.g. to leave home and go to school, I choose certain objects that I need in my day, like books, but also, others that will give me comfort, like an I-Pod).

## **POST VISIT ACTIVITIES**

### **Art as Activism**

**Objective :** Students will each produce a poster using simple printmaking techniques. The poster will raise awareness about a group of people who have been displaced or are **homeless**. They will use their posters in a campaign to raise awareness at their school or in their community.

**Workshop Procedure:** Study Puerto Rican artist **Pepon Osorio's** work ***Home Visits***. Brainstorm with your class on groups of people that have been displaced or have lost their homes due to war or natural forces. According to The NYC Department of Homeless Services, there are 34,620 homeless people to date in NY. <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dhs/downloads/pdf/dailyreport.pdf>. These individuals and families live in temporary shelters and drop-in centers. Students will design a poster to help raise awareness about homeless people. Due to their living conditions, many homeless adults and have a difficult time rebuilding their lives and finding a permanent home. Often society looks at the homeless with disdain. Reflect on these issues and add a slogan to your poster. Use your posters to begin a campaign in a neighbor school.

Take a piece of stencil paper or sturdy cardstock and a pencil. Draw a symbol that speaks about finding a solution to the problem of homelessness in New York. Cut out the shape with scissors, this will be your stencil. If needed, tape the paper. On a separate stencil paper, design a slogan that explains the concept of your campaign, for example 'Respect the Homeless.' On colored cardstock paper print your symbol and slogan using water-soluble printmaking ink and a foam roller.

When the posters are completed, decide as a group how to display them at school or distribute the posters throughout the community.

As an extension to this activity you can visit other cultural organizations like **The Lower East**

**Side Tenement Museum** where students can explore how immigrant families established new homes in the early twentieth century and compare their experiences with modern day immigrants' in New York City. Visit the **Ellis Island Immigration Museum**, where nearly twelve million immigrants landed in their search of freedom of speech and religion, and for economic opportunity. At the museum, students can experience immigration history directly.

## CONFLICT: REFLECTING ON GLOBAL AND PERSONAL STRUGGLES

Throughout the history of art, artists have been concerned with representing conflict, such as histories of war, national strife or personal struggles. Violence, terror, post 9/11 society... how do artists reflect on these current events and interpret them? What do (S) Files artists have to say about these issues? What does it mean to live in a country at war? What are the effects of conflict and war on a population or your community? What kinds of conflicts do you experience closer to home? How can we represent conflict? Why do artists feel it's important to portray these issues? What is the mission/role of the artist in society? Several (S) Files artists address the topic of conflict from different perspectives: personal, social, global. When artists address war and conflict in their work, they often represent two sides engaged in oppositional struggle, and thus encourage the viewer to consider alternative views on an issue.

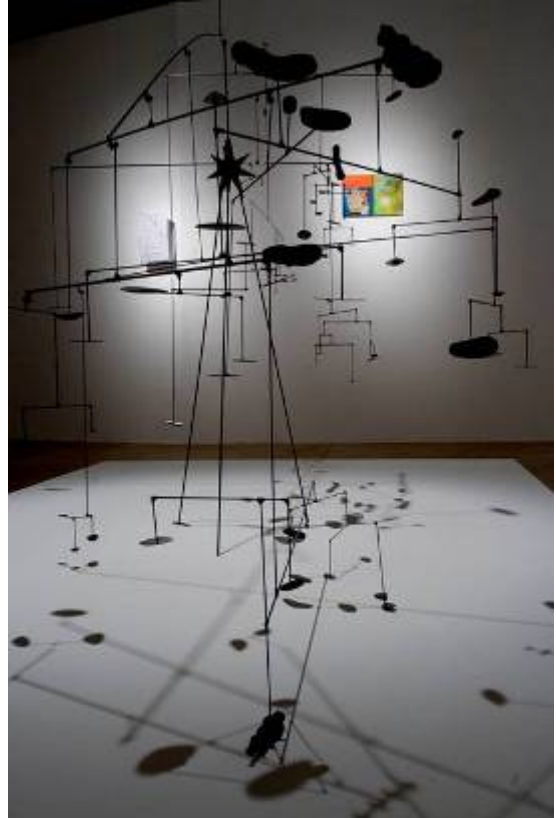
### HIGHLIGHTED ARTIST

**Alessandro Balteo Yazbeck (1972;  
Caracas, Venezuela)**

Balteo is an interdisciplinary artist born and raised in Caracas from an immigrant family of Italian and Lebanese descent. He completed his BFA in Fine Arts and a Masters in Sculpture, while in Caracas, as well as coursed other studies in photography and architecture in different Venezuelan universities. After moving to New Jersey, he completed studies on translation at Montclair State University. Balteo's work is concerned with the effects of modernity in contemporary societies. To show these effects he traces complex entanglements within the modern world involving history and politics. Balteo explains that he bases these entanglements in personal and social experiences of art history and mainstream culture.

### ABOUT THIS ARTWORK

***UNstabile-Mobile*, 2006. Installation of documents, magazine and sculptural model of Iraq oil infrastructure, artist proof in Calder's style. Dimensions variable.**



In *UNstabile-Mobile*, Balteo presents us with a complex piece that addresses the current political moment. His installation merges historical and political issues with an art historical reference to American sculptor Alexander Calder (1898-1976). To create this work of art, Balteo gathered research and data from <http://www.judicialwatch.org>, including a map that details the location of Iraqi oilfields, pipelines, refineries and terminals. Balteo transposes data from this map to create visual patterns that ultimately form the basis of his stabile. The organic forms of the sculpture refer to the sites of the oil fields, the star at the center represents Baghdad, the capital city of Iraq, and the color chosen is black to represent oil. While most elements of the piece are based on factual research, he includes one fictional element -- the signature on the artwork: '*Calder 2006*'. The installation is accompanied by a handout which contains a map and documents which describe Balteo's primary sources.

As Balteo explains, the Judicial Watch documents show us the motive for the invasion of Iraq. In Spanish, Balteo's native tongue, the word motive would be translated to *mobil* which also means mobile. In this way, the artist plays

with both words, signifying the mobile as artistic object and also the motive for the invasion of Iraq. In contrast to a mobile that is a kinetic sculpture based on the principle of balance, Balteo's sculpture is a stabile. A stabile is an abstract sculpture that has movable parts similar to a mobile, but that is attached to a solid, unmovable base rather than suspended. In this case, Balteo's stabile is purposely unbalanced, as one arm of the sculpture is weighted to the ground. This element symbolizes the loss of balance that is present in conflict. The piece addresses three moments in time: the past with its reference to Marcel Duchamp's coining of Calder's new sculptures as "mobiles," a pun in French referring to both motion and motive and the formation of Iraq as a nation (both in the year 1931); the present by addressing the current war in Iraq, and the future – Balteo's prediction of future world conflict caused by the permanent desire for oil in Iraq.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

How can we describe this artwork? What do we call an artwork with these characteristics?

Do you think this piece moves? Why or why not?

Notice the title of the piece. How does this 'mobile' differ from others you might be familiar with?

Though titled *UNstabile-Mobile*, Balteo's sculpture is actually a stabile. How is the artist using balance in this stabile?

What is the color of this stabile? Why do you think the artist would choose to only use black?

Let's look at the first page of the handout that the artist has included with this piece, and now observe the shadow produced by the mobile. What do you think the symbols the artist is using might stand for?

What part of the world is the artist referencing?

Do you think the artist has made up this information or is it based on facts?

What kind of conflict is this artwork referring to?

### OTHER ARTISTS RELATED TO THIS THEME

See pages 28 to 32 of this Resource Guide for brief artist bios and thumbnail images of their works of art:

Cesar Cornejo  
Tamara Kostianovsky  
Jessica Lagunas  
Justin Mata  
Renzo Ortega  
Manuela Ribadeneira

The following artists are highlighted in other sections of this guide as follows:

Franklin Evans: p.13

### VOCABULARY

Balance  
Mobile  
Stabile  
Zine

### PRE VISIT ACTIVITIES

#### Activity 1

Study the lyrics of **Grandmaster Flash's song *The Message***. Analyze the struggles the song describes. What are the struggles you and your students face living in New York City? Ask students to reflect on conflicts in their life, community and country. Have them keep a "Conflict" journal for two weeks. It can contain images and written entries. In their journal, they can reflect on how they deal with conflict in their everyday life.

**Activity 2:** In class, write a list of local, national or world conflicts. Ask students to work in pairs to research about the issue of their choice and write a position paper on both sides of the given conflict. Ask the pairs to present their findings on the issue in class in the form of a debate.

### POST VISIT ACTIVITIES

#### Make your own zine!

**Objective:** To create opportunities for self-expression for young people, using the **zine** format.

**Workshop procedure:** Use the research collected in the *Pre Visit Activity 1* or *2* to create a zine about personal or global conflicts. You

may use images such as your own photographs, drawings; texts such as brief essays, poems, song lyrics or mix both. If computers are not available, students can do it 'the old school way' by cutting and pasting their written texts on to paper and reproducing their zine with the help of a copy machine. If computers are available, use software such as Microsoft Word, Photoshop or Publisher to design your zine. You may choose to do this project individually or in groups. When finished, you can make multiples of your zine by copying and stapling it. Students may choose to distribute the zine widely to members of your school community, and to friends and family. This project could become an ongoing one, as students could make monthly or bimonthly issues of their zines. This project could also take the shape of an **e-zine** (see Resource page at the end of this lesson plan for more information).

## PATTERNS AND ABSTRACTION IN THE NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Nature presents itself to us in wonderful and unique ways, but we rarely take a moment to truly pay attention to it. How do we respond to and record the world around us? For those living in an urban environment such as New York City, it is easy to lose one's connection with the landscape and nature. Throughout our daily lives, nevertheless, we are surrounded by a variety of patterns such as those created by bricks in a wall, the giant publicity posters placed repetitively on the streets, the tiles in a subway station and Manhattan's grid of streets and avenues.

Many of the artists in *The (S) Files 007* use nature and the landscape as backgrounds to explore different concerns such as national conflict, chaos, identity, emotional turmoil and cultural stereotypes. As artists living in the New York City, they also look at the built environment for inspiration. Many, inspired by nature and the built environment, use patterns to create abstract works of art, developing a unique personal language. Cities are created by human beings. Their structures follow patterns similar to those that exist in nature, and many times repeat patterns and rhythms from it.

### HIGHLIGHTED ARTIST

**Mary Valverde (1976, Queens, NY)**

Mary Valverde received her BFA at the School of Visual Arts in 1999. Valverde was born in Queens, New York and is of Ecuadorian descent. She currently lives and works in New York City. Mary Valverde's work is informed by memory, ritual and culture. Valverde is interested in how patterns both strengthen and beautify physical spaces, our bodies and our psyches; creating abstract works that can be read in multiple ways such as random patterns, pure design or expressions of divine order.

### ABOUT THIS ARTWORK

**12 Angles (12 Angulos), 2007. Mixed media installation. Dimensions variable.**



The title of this piece refers to the Incan wall of 12 angles in Cuzco, Peru. Valverde states, "*The idea that it could not be destroyed because of its perfect points led me to initiate the investigation with these 12 points as a statement of endlessness/ so perfect it could not be torn down. Like the culture of the Incas still till this day transcends time.*" *12 Angles* is a site-specific installation made with unconventional materials such as corn husks, joss paper, fabric, and metal mesh – all which hold symbolic meaning for the artist. With these materials, Valverde builds a variety of abstract patterns that are organized mainly in groups of twelve. Valverde is interested in memory, ritual and culture. There are twelve corn husks in the central part of the piece that refer to the vital importance of corn for her Andean Inca ancestors. These husks are displayed in the form of a lotus leaf, referencing Asian culture. The 'braid-like' structures, made of cloth, refer to 'Quipus' or counting systems used by the ancient Incan culture. The piece is suspended by four braids which reference the four seasons, while twelve braids on the lower portion of installation refer to the twelve months in a year or a life cycle. In addition, Valverde uses joss paper (Chinese hand made paper) to refer to the ritual of burning paper in traditional Chinese

funerary ceremonies, and the colors red and gold, which symbolize good fortune in some Asian cultures.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Take a few minutes to look closely at this artwork. Describe the different materials the artist has used.

Have you ever used these kinds of materials to make an artwork?

Describe the textures and patterns created by these materials.

What kinds of shapes can we find here? What do these shapes remind us of?

Count how many 'braid-shape' elements are present in the lower part of this artwork. Do you think that number has a specific meaning? Why do you think the artist would choose to highlight this number (in the braids and in the title)?

Explore the materials more closely. Why might the artist have chosen to use some of these materials? What might they symbolize? Discuss the symbolic significance of Valverde's materials (the braids, joss paper, corn husks, etc.)

Knowing all this, what do you think this artist is concerned with?

## OTHER ARTISTS RELATED TO THIS THEME

See pages 28 to 32 of this Resource Guide for brief artist bios and thumbnail images of their works of art:

Pablo Cardoso  
Luis Mallo  
Justin Mata  
Lisette Morel  
Carlos Rodriguez Cardenas  
Analia Segal

The following artists are highlighted in other sections of this guide as follows:

Melissa Calderón: p.10  
Franklin Evans: p.13  
Florencio Gelabert: p.25

## VOCABULARY

Abstract  
Built environment  
Composition  
Design  
Joss paper  
Mandala  
Mixed media  
Pattern  
Printmaking  
Repetition  
Rhythm  
Symbol  
Unconventional

## PRE VISIT ACTIVITIES

### Activity 1

Read *An Open Letter to New York City*. These lyrics show us a view of New York City as seen through the eyes of Brooklyn based hip-hop band The Beastie Boys. What kind of city are they describing? How is it different to living in the suburbs or in the country? Listen carefully to the song. How do the lyrics and the rhythms create patterns? Write your own lyrics in response to your experience of living in the city. Consider the sights, sounds, smells of your neighborhood.

### Activity 2

Discuss the meaning of the word 'pattern' and ask students to keep a pattern journal for a week. Students can include photographs of found patterns from magazines, drawings of their own patterns, rubbings of patterns they find at home and in school, and texts.

### Activity 3

After studying the meaning of pattern, take a 'photo pattern safari' in your neighborhood. This could be a walk around the block from your school with digital or disposable cameras. Take photos of different patterns you find in your neighborhood both in nature and the built environment and display them in your class as a group installation. As another option, create an online photo essay and display it on a classroom blog.

## POST VISIT ACTIVITIES

### Printmaking and creating patterns with unconventional materials

**Objective:** To create an abstract work of art using patterns and unconventional materials.

**Workshop Procedure:** Study artworks from *The (S) Files 007* that show a use of unconventional materials and others that incorporate patterns and abstraction. Discuss how these artists are not limiting their work to the use of traditional materials and how they are experimenting with various everyday materials. Discuss basic printmaking techniques with your students. You may ask them to make simple hand prints first for them to better understand the printmaking technique. Ask them to then think of objects found in the kitchen they can print with. Here are some examples:

Vegetables: cucumbers, pepper, carrots, onions, broccoli; onions

Fruits: apples, pears; oranges, grapefruit

Other: Mushrooms, potatoes

Kitchen utensils: potato mashers, cheese graters

Use water-soluble printing ink or thick tempera or acrylic paint (the thicker, the better), clean meat trays and rollers. You can roll each color you want to use in each meat tray with a roller, and then dip the piece of fruit or vegetable to be printed, and stamp it onto paper.

Ask students to create patterns as they print. A good example would be to use a mandala pattern.

When the printing is complete, students can choose a detail of the finished print (using a viewfinder - two L- shaped pieces of paper). Using pencil and paper, ask students to sketch this detail, paying close attention to the repetition of shapes or lines. Display their abstract drawing next to the print in your classroom.

## THE ENVIRONMENT: ISSUES AND AWARENESS

We live in and share one world, but how concerned are we with preserving the environment? We destruct to construct; to build cities and living spaces, we often destroy nature.

Consumerism is a major problem of modern society and especially of developed countries such as the U.S. Consumerism and waste affects our natural resources and creates global warming. Natural resources such as water are commodities to be sold in the modern world. How long will natural resources last? What do artists have to say about living in environments that are slowly being destroyed?

How do contemporary artists observe, respond to and record the world around them? Several (S) Files artists are inspired by nature, by their environment and the power struggle between nature and its human inhabitants. But, as city creatures, artists are not only referring to the natural environment; in many cases they are concerned with the built environment and space as a broad concept. As first or second generation immigrants, many of these artists are also reflecting on the environment or home one must create when starting a new life in a different country.

### HIGHLIGHTED ARTIST

#### Florencio Gelabert (1961; Havana, Cuba)

Cuban born artist, Florencio Gelabert, received his Masters in Fine Arts from the University of Miami in 1998, after leaving Cuba in 1991. Gelabert dissects and attempts to reconstruct the relationship between humanity and the environment. Over the years, Gelabert has constructed a series of sculptures and installations, using artificial materials (wood, foam, artificial grass), ironically, to remind us of the value of the natural world. He states, "*My sculptures alter the intrinsic value of the definition of objects in such a way as to evoke new interpretations of conception alchemy forcing the audience to reevaluate the relationship between organic elements and technology. I am fascinated by creating sculpture and site specific works relating to people and their environment, and in particular, power, destruction and violence as global problems of a new age.*"

### ABOUT THIS ARTWORK

*Imagine... The Possible Island, 2007.*

Plywood, crystal resin, artificial plants, clay, foam. 10 x 96 x 38 inches.



Gelabert's work asks the viewer to look at the island of Manhattan stripped of the buildings and concrete that characterize it. In his interpretation of this New York City borough, he has replaced the built environment with artificial plants and a pond made of fiberglass and resin. There is also a small island located in the center of the pond. *Imagine the Possible Island*, as the piece is titled, is placed on the floor on casters and is meant to be moved; Gelabert has conceived it as a nomadic sculpture. His choice of using synthetic materials to represent natural ones is ironic and refers to his concern with how we, as humans, relate to the environment.

Gelabert drew inspiration from the image of the island of Manhattan which can be seen on New York City subway maps and the place known as *Strawberry Fields* in Central Park's Westside, a memorial to musician John Lennon. The title of the piece refers to John Lennon's song *Imagine* which speaks of tolerance and respect among human beings. *Strawberry Fields* reminds Gelabert of "a small island in the immensity of the park." Another reference in this project is an investigation Gelabert began in 2006 about endemic plants, after visiting the Botanical Garden of Washington, Gelabert states "... I was deeply impressed by the immense deforestation and the absence of conscience in people about this fact." Gelabert brings together three ideas: the map of the New York City subway, an homage to John Lennon in Central Park and the idea of deforestation. In this way, he intends to provoke the viewer to consider these ideas and experience an aerial view of the City as they walk around the sculpture.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Let's look at the shape of this artwork. What does it resemble?

Describe the elements of this island. Do you think the flowers and plants look real? Why or why not?

How is this similar or different to the island of Manhattan?

What has the artist left out? Why do you think he did that?

This piece is titled *Imagine... the Possible Island*. What kind of island of Manhattan is Gelabert imagining?

Why do you think he is imagining this kind of island?

## OTHER ARTISTS RELATED TO THIS THEME

See pages 38 to 42 of this Resource Guide for brief artist bios and thumbnail images of their works of art:

Fernando Falconí  
Luis Mallo  
Justin Mata  
Sebastian Patane Mauselli  
Maria Teresa Ponce  
Manuela Ribadeneira

The following artists are highlighted in other sections of this guide as follows:

Alessandro Balteo Yazbeck: p. 19

## VOCABULARY

Land or Earth Art  
Shape  
Fiberglass

## PRE VISIT ACTIVITIES

### Activity 1

Begin the session by discussing environmental issues such as climate change, conservation, energy, land degradation, nuclear issues, overpopulation, ozone depletion, pollution, resource depletion and toxic waste. Discuss how recycling can benefit a community. Start a recycling program in your school.

### Activity 2

Have students study the artwork of British artist **Andy Goldsworthy** who gets his inspiration and material from the natural world. Discuss how the artist makes these pieces. Have students select one of his artworks and ask them to write a poem that describes their response to the work. Study the art movement known as Land or Earth Art that came to be in the U.S. during the sixties. Take a class trip to a natural area such as Central Park, Prospect Park, Rockaway Beach, or any **park or community garden in your neighborhood** to collect materials from nature. Be sure to check the park's policies on collecting natural materials before you begin. Use the found materials to create onsite installations and document them by taking photographs. Display the photographs in school or online on a class **blog**. A list of community gardens and parks is available in the Resources Section.

## POST VISIT ACTIVITIES

### Environmental Campaign-Poster or Canvas Tote Campaign

Use the research about environmental issues suggested as a pre-visit activity to build an environmental campaign for your school focusing on one of the environmental issues studied.

### POSTER CAMPAIGN

1. Using newspaper from the classroom recycling campaign, select a two-page spread as your printing surface.
2. Take a piece of stencil paper or sturdy cardstock and a pencil. Draw a symbol that speaks about finding a solution to the selected environmental issue.
3. Cut out the shape with scissors, to use as your stencil. If needed, tape the shape back together.
4. On a separate stencil paper, design a slogan that explains the concept of your campaign, e.g. 'Help preserve the environment: please recycle!'
5. On the newspaper surface, print your symbol and slogan using water-soluble printmaking ink and a foam roller or sponge. Use bright colors to contrast with the newspaper print.

You have created your poster!

## **TOTE BAG CAMPAIGN**

### **Pre-order blank canvas tote bags for this project.**

Canvas bags are the best alternative to using plastic bags when buying groceries. Environmentalists state that it may take up to 1000 years for one plastic bag to disintegrate. While paper bags may seem environmentally friendly, trees are cut down to produce them. This campaign will help students raise awareness about a chosen environmental issue inside and outside of the school. Canvas bags can be stenciled using the same process described above for the poster campaign or silk screened. You can also do Xerox transfers. This process allows you to transfer images generated from magazines, newspapers, photographs, photocopy/Xerox machines, onto any surface that will accept acrylic paint. It can be done with a wide variety of acrylic mediums depending upon your desired effect.

#### **Directions: Selecting Image**

1. Select image of your choice and make a Xerox of it. If your image has text, you will need to use the mirror option on the copy machine

#### **Coating Image**

1. Brushing Method: Using a soft brush, coat image with gloss medium acrylic varnish or thick white acrylic paint. Place acrylic paint face down on the tote bag and flatten carefully. A dry hard roller is good for this.

2. Allow to dry overnight.

#### **Soaking Transfer**

1. Submerge the tote bag in lukewarm water and soak 10-15 minutes. The longer the image is submerged in water, the easier it will be to remove the paper from the back of the image. Do not soak the tote bag longer than 20 minutes. When submerged in water, the clear medium may turn slightly milky.

2. Remove the tote bag from the water and using your fingers, gently rub off the paper. Continue to rub off the paper until only the image remains.

#### **Drying Transferred Image**

1. Blot with paper or cloth towel. Place flat between layers of wax paper, then paper towel.  
2. Place a weight on top and allow the tote bag to dry, insuring that image dries flat.  
3. When tote bags are completely dry, iron them.

4. Spread the word: share these tote bags with family and friends.

## OTHER SELECTED ARTISTS (in alphabetical order)



**Pablo Cardoso (1965: Cuenca, Ecuador)**

***Lejos cerca lejos (Far Close Far), 2004***

**Acrylic on wood , 320 pieces, 3.9 X 5.9 inches each**

**Thematic connections:** Pattern and abstraction in nature and the built environment; Immigration: displacement, biculturalism and home

*"Far Close Far tells about my journey from the threshold of my house in Cuenca, Ecuador to the pavilion of the Bienal de Sao Paulo. Three hundred and twenty photographs that were later copied using a paintbrush: a slow process that, in contrast to the ephemeral nature of photographic images, introduces some themes I'm interested in, especially in relation to time and the perception of reality."*



**Lisette Castillo (1974; Camaguey, Cuba)**

**From the series *Pain is Universal but so is Hope: White***

**(De la serie *El dolor es universal, pero tambien lo es la esperanza: Blanco*), 2007**

**C-Print on Dibond 70 x 92 inches. Edition 5, 2 artist proofs**

**Thematic connections:** Identity: gender, race and ethnicity; Immigration: displacement, biculturalism and home

Castillo works with photography and sculpture, expressing her particular interest in urban landscape. She states: *"I'm really interested in architecture and urbanism. I think cities as amalgams of buildings and people, inhabited settings from which daily rituals---the mundane and the extraordinary---derive their validity."* Since her departure from Cuba, Castillo began to work with sand as metaphor for the re-building of a new home, the inevitability of change, and the ties that unite humanity. She has created a series of buildings, cities, labyrinths, and "urban grids," that although small in size, are grand in their significance. She explains: *"I work with sand and water as metaphor for the inconsistency and the ephemeral state of things in life...I document with photographs the moment something in which something is born and will disappear, the fragile memory of an extinguished world."*



**Cesar Cornejo (1966, Lima, Peru)**

***q.e.d.(quod erat demonstrandum)\* 2006***

**Electric transformers, cable, light bulbs, wood**

**Thematic connections:** Why is this art? Making art with unconventional materials; Immigration, displacement, biculturalism and home; Conflict: reflecting on personal and global struggles; Identity; gender, race and ethnicity

With 'q.e.d.' Cesar Cornejo makes a statement on our global culture and what gets lost in translation. *"In this work I tried to present that transformation: language, cultural, general,"* said Cornejo. *"And in a way, the transformers do that to the light and then you'll see how the intensity of both, even though being from the same watts strength, they come differently from the change in the transformers."* Cornejo considers this piece to be open to many interpretations. He refers to how different cultures misunderstand each other. Having lived in different countries like Japan and England, he feels language and culture present a barrier and the messages lose their meaning. The piece is also a comment on how government institutions function in Latin America. Just as the light bulb that is directly plugged into the outlet produces more light than the one that is hooked to several transformers, so does bureaucracy in countries like Peru make you go through unnecessary ordeals to get to the same results (although, less 'brighter' ones).

*\*This title refers to l.q.q.d 'Lo que queremos demostrar', which during the 90s was an expression highly used in Peru by circles of professors and intellectuals. It comes from an expression used in mathematics after demonstrating a theorem.*



**Tamara Kostianovsky (1974; Jerusalem, Israel)**

**Second Skin**

**Various articles of clothing belonging to the artist, embroidery floss, batting, armature wire, and meat hook**

**Thematic connections:** Why is this art? Making art with unconventional materials and processes; Immigration: displacement, biculturalism and home; Conflict: reflecting on personal and global struggles

*“For Argentines, the cow is a symbol of national identity: it is the core ingredient in most people’s diet and one of the main exports of the country. By creating sculptural works where cows appear skinned, tortured, or dismembered, I intend to speak about the escalating violence that we have become accustomed to and the conflictive relationship between homeland and émigrés.”*



**Adriana Lopez San Feliu (1976; Spain)**

**From the series *Life on the Block***

**(De la serie *Vida en el “bloque”*), 2006**

***Women of the Block (Mujeres del “bloque”)*, 2006**

**Silver gelatin print, 16x20 inches**

**Thematic connections:** Immigration: displacement, biculturalism and home; Identity: gender, race and ethnicity; Conflict: reflecting on personal and global struggles

*Life on the Block* is a photographic exploration of the physical and mental boundaries of young Puerto Rican women living in Spanish Harlem (Manhattan, NY) today. It is a testimony of the roles of women in a machista culture, as Latinas in a dominant white society, and as mothers of the upcoming American generations. I see photography as an open window, an invitation to dialogue that turns conversation into compassion.”



**Jessica Lagunas (1971; Nicaragua; raised in Guatemala)**

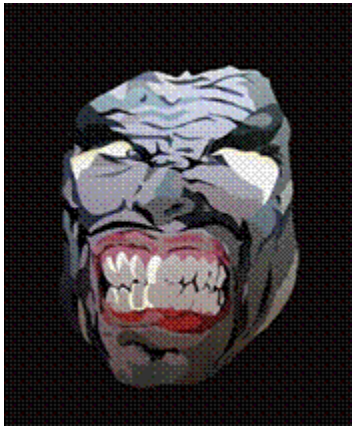
***Para besarte mejor (The Better to Kiss You With)*, 2003**

**Single-channel video**

**57:48 minutes**

**Thematic connections:** Conflict: reflecting on personal and global struggles; Identity: Gender, race and ethnicity

*“Contemporary society rarely explores the condition of woman, her sexuality, beauty and aging. I am interested in questioning women’s obsession with their images and bodies. With a minimalist approach, I use various media: installation, collage, objects and video-performances. In *The Better to Kiss You With* video, I experiment with feminine beauty rituals, performing them in exaggerated ways to reflect pressures imposed by today’s society.”*



**Shaun El C. Leonardo (1979; Queens, NY)**  
**Self-portrait Icon, Painting (Icono autorretrato, pintura 2), 2006**  
**Sign enamel on cut plywood**  
**54x46x.5 inches**

**Thematic connections:** Identity: gender, race and ethnicity; Conflict: reflecting on personal and global struggles.

With his current body of work Shaun El C. Leonardo creates and manipulates hyper-masculine heroes to discuss the difficulty a person of complex race and nationality encounters while trying to locate himself within his pop cultures during his own development of masculinity.

*"I believe I have skewed my sense of self since childhood. By projecting myself as hypermasculine heroes, I manifest the ongoing tensions between my desires to represent male virility and the vulnerabilities within my identity developed by these images of power."*



**Luis Mallo (1962: Havana, Cuba)**  
**In Camera, No. 60, 2004**  
**C-Print**  
**38x48 inches**

**Thematic connections:** Patterns and abstraction in nature and the built environment; The environment: issues and awareness.

*"The urban landscapes depicted in these large-scale color photographs are partially obstructed. The patterns and surfaces in the foreground act like veils that simultaneously reveal and conceal urban vistas. Like visual puzzles, we are invited to peek into and look beyond the holes, gaps, tears and openings in the foreground in order to fill in the entire landscape."*



**Justin Mata (1979, Woodland, CA)**  
**The 4th Branch**  
**(La cuarta rama), 2006**

**Site-specific installation**  
**Oil on panel, spray paint, charcoal, cardboard, newspaper, metal studs**  
**Dimensions variable**

**Thematic connections:** Conflict: reflecting on personal and global struggles; Patterns and abstraction in nature and the built environment; Why is this art? Making art with unconventional materials and processes.

Mata's use of traditional (paint and canvas) and non-traditional (newspaper and cardboard) materials result in innovative mixed media installations bubbling with meaning. As a self-proclaimed Chicano artist, Mata often utilizes a hybrid of imagery and text to explore issues of identity, often highlighting the complexities of multi-cultural identities. His work also illustrates a critique of the dominating influence of the media on social-political values. His artwork often simultaneously evokes feelings of both frustration and anxiety caused by the "media-saturated, judgment-dominated, prejudiced world." Mata's artwork demands that the audience confront the creators of history, and the version of history that seeps through the pulsating veins of popular culture.



**Lisette Morel (1974; New York, Dominican descent)**  
**Untitled (Sin titulo), 2007**  
**Pastels and graphite on paper**  
**Site specific drawings on wall**  
**Dimensions variable**

**Thematic connections:** Identity: gender, race and ethnicity; Pattern and abstraction in nature and the built environment.

*"...the limited colors and the limited materials, the rough materials,... had a lot to do with how, inside my head and subconsciously, I was reacting towards this whole idea of identity, and who I am."*



**Renzo Ortega (1974; Lima, Peru)**

***Bitácoras de ciudad***  
**(City Diaries), 2000-2006**

**(details)**

**Artist Books**

**Mixed media, watercolor, acrylic, markers, collage, fabric, crayons, pencils, pen, ink, spray paint**

**Dimensions variable**

**Thematic connections:** Immigration: displacement, biculturalism and home; Identity: gender, race and ethnicity; Conflict: reflecting on personal and global struggles

*“Artist books are not just useful to take down notes for future works. In many cases, these books compile your experiences, becoming a record of your life, not simply a work of art. These City Diaries I share are a selection from my personal diaries from the last 7 years in New York. They contain personal information and aesthetic/political opinions; they describe what it means to be an immigrant and activist-engage artist in ‘Babylon’”*



**Sebastian Patane Mauselli (1978; San Juan, Argentina)**

***Julia's Last Dream***  
**(El Último Sueño de Julia), 2007**

**Site-specific interactive video installation**

**Dimensions variable**

**Thematic connections:** Immigration, displacement, biculturalism and home; The environment: issues and awareness.

*“Any work of art is an infinite number of things. This one is above all the awakening of Julia (who is still dreaming), an attempt to understand what a liminal space is conceptually (the space between sleep and wakefulness), physically (the space between the real and the false museum wall, inside and outside, the window), and historically (the space between pre-established spaces that an immigrant carves for him/herself).”*



**Dulce Pinzon (1974; Mexico City, Mexico)**

***The Hulk*, 2005**

**C-Print**

**20 x 24 x 2 inches**

**Thematic connections:** Immigration: displacement, biculturalism and home; Identity: gender, race and ethnicity; Conflict: reflecting on personal and global struggles

*“I am a photographer working in a satirical documentary style featuring ordinary men and women in their work environment in New York. They are immigrants donning superhero garb, raising questions of our definition of heroism after 9/11 and our ignorance to the workforce that fuels our ever consumer-oriented economy.”*



**Manuela Ribadeneira (1966, Quito, Ecuador, lives in England)**

***Tiwintza Mon Amour*, 2005**

**Mixed media on wheels**

**1:1000 (Dimensions at artist's request)**

**Thematic connections:** Conflict: reflecting on personal and global struggles; Pattern and abstraction in nature and the built environment.

*"I am interested in lines, real and imaginary, and the rituals of taking possession of territories. I have been working on a series that deals with border conflicts. I started the series with 'Tiwintza Mon Amour', a scale model of a square kilometer of jungle given to Ecuador as property-not sovereignty-and token of good faith as part of our peace agreement signed with Peru.*



**Carlos Rodriguez Cardenas (1962; Cuba)**

***El Viaje (The Journey)*, 2007**

**Acrylic on linen**

**Dimensions variable**

**Thematic connections:** Pattern and Abstraction in Nature and the Built Environment; Immigration: Biculturalism, displacement and home.

*"The images that I create sprout from the universe, and germinate in the continuity of my journey. My work invites the spectator to question reality, to see beyond what appears to be real, to transform what has been created into metaphors. Time processes our life experiences. My stories are alive between the equilibrium and the simplicity of the cosmos: birth, development, and death. After that comes continuity: journey, existence, and reality."*



**Analia Segal (Rosario, Argentina)**

***Carl, red*, 2006**

**Carpet tiles, rubber. Dimensions variable**

**Thematic connections:** Why is this art? Making art with unconventional materials and processes; Identity: gender, race and ethnicity; Patterns and abstractions in nature and the built environment.

Analia Segal softens the hard edge of the familiar by coolly modifying what she finds indoors. Her work interrogates tradition; her objects generate discussion about the routine gendering of the inanimate and the habitual pairing of the supple with the feminine. Is she feminizing forms? Segal's barely-there installations confront the anonymous nature of something we use everyday, the flat carpets that are standard of most architecture. She applies lip shaped rubber protrusions, creating sexualized spaces. The results of these applications are feminized spaces-but does this mean that we assume rooms are masculine to begin with? Her work produces an intriguing conversation about the way we instinctively give gender to things that have no intrinsic relationships to the sexes. How did ships and cars become feminine? Why is a dog a man's best friend? While there are mytho-historical answers to these queries, Segal raises questions about territory that is more ambiguous and complex. Segal's womanly additions inquire whether architecture generally has a masculine feel. Her sexualized spaces ask if so, why? Her work calls attention to the thoughtless gendering that occurs on a daily basis, but they also remind us that as time changes, the discrete arenas of gender might become less and less so." Adapted from curator Kate Green's text for *Analia Segal and Ethel Shipton: Feminizing Forms*.

## ART TERMS USED IN THIS GUIDE

**Abstract:** Imagery which departs from representational accuracy, to a variable range of possible degrees, for some reason other than verisimilitude. Abstract artists select and then exaggerate or simplify the forms suggested by the world around them.

**Artist's choice:** the choices artists make regarding formal aspects of their work such as format, materials, color, concept, etc.

**Artist's intention:** The idea the artist wants to communicate and express with their artwork.

**Collage:** A picture or design created by adhering such basically flat elements as newspaper, wallpaper, printed text and illustrations, photographs, cloth, string, etc., to a flat surface, when the result becomes three-dimensional, and *might* also be called a relief sculpture / construction / assemblage. Most of the elements adhered in producing most collages are "found" materials. Introduced by the Cubist artists, this process was widely used by artists who followed, and is a familiar technique in contemporary art. "Collage" was originally a French word, derived from the word *coller*, meaning "to paste."

**Composition:** The plan, placement or arrangement of the elements of art in a work. It is often useful to discuss these in reference to the principles of design, as well as to the relative weight of the composition's parts. Composition can also refer to the area of a sheet in which the design appears in a drawing or print. When a composition is limited to a distinct area of a plate or a sheet of paper, it is good practice to note the composition's measurements, as well as the measurements of the plate and of the overall sheet. The design of a composition should either be pleasing or it should be in some other way expressive.

**Concept:** An idea, thought, or notion conceived through mental activity. The words concept and conception are applied to mental formulations on a broad scale.

**Contemporary:** Current, belonging to the same period of time. Usually referring to our present time, but can refer to being current with any specified time.

**Curator:** A person who is responsible for collection building, care, research, exhibition, and writing. Curators often work with community members to determine interests and needs, which will be reflected in special exhibitions, and result in the meeting educational goals.

**Design:** A plan, or to plan. The organization or composition of a work; the skilled arrangement of its parts. An effective design is one in which the elements of art and principles of design have been combined to achieve an overall sense of unity. Also, the production of attractive and well crafted functional objects. Subcategories of the design arts include: architecture, bonsai, fashion design, furniture design, graphic design, Ikebana, industrial design, interior design, landscape architecture, stagecraft, textile design, and Web page design.

**Earth Art:** Earth art (also called "land art") refers to a movement of artists with wide ranging goals, but all created in nature, employing such materials as stones, dirt, and leaves. "Earthworks" is the same movement. Most works are sculptural. Earthworks often refer to phenomena such as the slow process of erosion or to the movement of planets or stars, especially the sun. Many earthworks are intended to help us to better understand nature. Some demonstrate the inherent differences between nature and civilization, often pointing out artists' desires to understand, conquer, and control natural processes. During the late 1960s and early 1970s art began to move outdoors from galleries.

**Fiberglass:** A light and durable material consisting of a plastic resin which has been reinforced with glass fiber. Sometimes called spun glass.

**Haiku:** Haiku is one of the most important forms of traditional Japanese poetry. Haiku combines form, content, and language in a meaningful, yet compact form. Haiku poets, write about everyday things. Many themes include nature, feelings, or experiences. Usually they use simple words and grammar. The most common form for Haiku is three short lines. The first line usually contains five (5) syllables, the second line seven (7) syllables, and the third line contains five (5) syllables. Haiku doesn't rhyme. A Haiku must "paint" a mental image in the

reader's mind. This is the challenge of Haiku - to put the poem's meaning and imagery in the reader's mind in ONLY 17 syllables over just three (3) lines of poetry.

**Installation art:** Art that is or has been installed — arranged in a place — either by the artist or as specified by the artist. It might be either site-specific or not, and either indoors or out. The term became widely used in the 1970s and 1980s, and continues to be employed by many people. Installations may be temporary or permanent, but most will be known to posterity through documentation. As a consequence, one aspect of installations is often the difficulty with which they can be commodified.

**Interpretation:** Interpretation is a stage in the work of art criticism following the describing and analyzing of an artwork, in which one identifies the work's expressive qualities, or the meaning, or the mood, or idea communicated to the viewer. A work of art can be very complicated and may be interpreted in different ways by different people. In art criticism, one's interpretation of a work is personal, based upon the information one has gathered from the work. In art history, interpretation identifies the influences of time and place on the artist: images of the same subject, created at different times or in different locations may have little in common. Their differences reflect the contrasting personal and cultural traditions and values of each artist.

**Mandala:** Any of various radial geometric designs symbolic of the universe, traditionally used in Hinduism and Buddhism as an aid to meditation.

**Memoir:** A memoir forms a subclass of autobiography. Memoirs may appear less structured and less encompassing than formal autobiographical works as they are usually about part of a life rather than the chronological telling of a life from childhood to adulthood/old age. Like most autobiographies, memoirs are generally written from the first person point of view.

**Minimalism:** A twentieth century art movement and style stressing the idea of reducing a work of art to the minimum number of colors, values, shapes, lines and textures. No attempt is made to represent or symbolize any other object or experience.

**Mixed media:** A technique involving the use of two or more artistic media, such as ink and pastel or painting and collage, that are combined in a single composition.

**Mobile:** A construction made of objects that are balanced and arranged on wire arms and suspended so as to move freely.

**Multidisciplinary artist:** An artist who works in different disciplines, such as painting, film, poetry, digital art, video, music or sound, etc.

**Pattern:** The repetition of any thing — shapes, lines, or colors — also called a motif, in a design; as such it is one of the principles of design.

**Photo essay:** A photo essay is a series of photographs that are intended to tell a story or evoke emotions in the viewer. Photo essays can be purely photographic works or photographs with captions or small notes. It is a good idea to organize a photo essay sequentially.

**Print or Printmaking:** A print is a shape or mark made from a block or plate or other object that is covered with wet color (usually ink) and then pressed onto a flat surface, such as paper or textile. Most prints can be produced over and over again by re-inking the printing block or plate. Printmaking can be done in many ways, including using an engraved block or stone, transfer paper, a film negative or even textured objects. The making of fine prints is generally included in the graphic arts, while the work of artists whose designs are made to satisfy the needs of more commercial clients are included in graphic design.

**Process:** The methods artists use and steps they take to produce artworks.

**Rubbing:** The technique of rubbing with crayon or graphite on a piece of paper which has been placed over an object, or an image achieved in this way. It's also known as frottage. Such impressions are usually made from such highly textured subjects as leaves, wood, wire screen, gravestones, and manhole covers. It was a technique especially employed by surrealists, one of whom, Max Ernst (German, 1891-1976), first introduced frottage in his works in 1925, often employing such rubbings as part of a collage, or combining frottage with painting techniques.

**Sculpture:** A three-dimensional work of art, or the art of making it. Such works may be carved, modeled, constructed, or cast. Sculptures can also be described as assemblage, in the round, and relief, and made in a huge variety of media.

**Stencil:** Stiff paper (or other sheet material) with a design cut into it as a template for shapes meant to be copied. Ink or paint forced through the design's openings will produce a print on a flat surface placed beneath. The design need special to producing a stencil: balance the requirement to cut out most of the desired shapes against maintaining the strength of the loosest parts of the stencil. The relationship between the positive and negative spaces is best when no part of the sheet is damaged or lost in its use. In lettering stencils, for instance, the centers of such letters as A, B, D, O, and P are some of the shapes most likely to have this problem. The "bridges" holding these "islands" in position are the chief characteristics of stencils.

**Symbol:** A form, image or subject representing a meaning other than the one with which it is usually associated.

**Technique:** Any method of working with art materials to produce an art object.

**Zine:** Zine is an abbreviation of the word *fanzine*, and originating from the word magazine. It is most commonly a small circulation, non-commercial publication of original or appropriated texts and images. It has a low circulation; the intention of the publication is not primarily to raise profit. Zines are written in a variety of formats, from computer-printed text to comics to handwritten text. Zines are a tool of self-expression, usually made by young people and were originally made in the 'old school way' by cutting and pasting texts and images and then reproduced using Xerox machines.



**Melissa Calderon (1974; New York, NY), *Permanence of Pain-1100 (La permanencia del dolor)*, 2005. Steel, cried-on tissues, silver tissue box. 66 x 120 inches.**



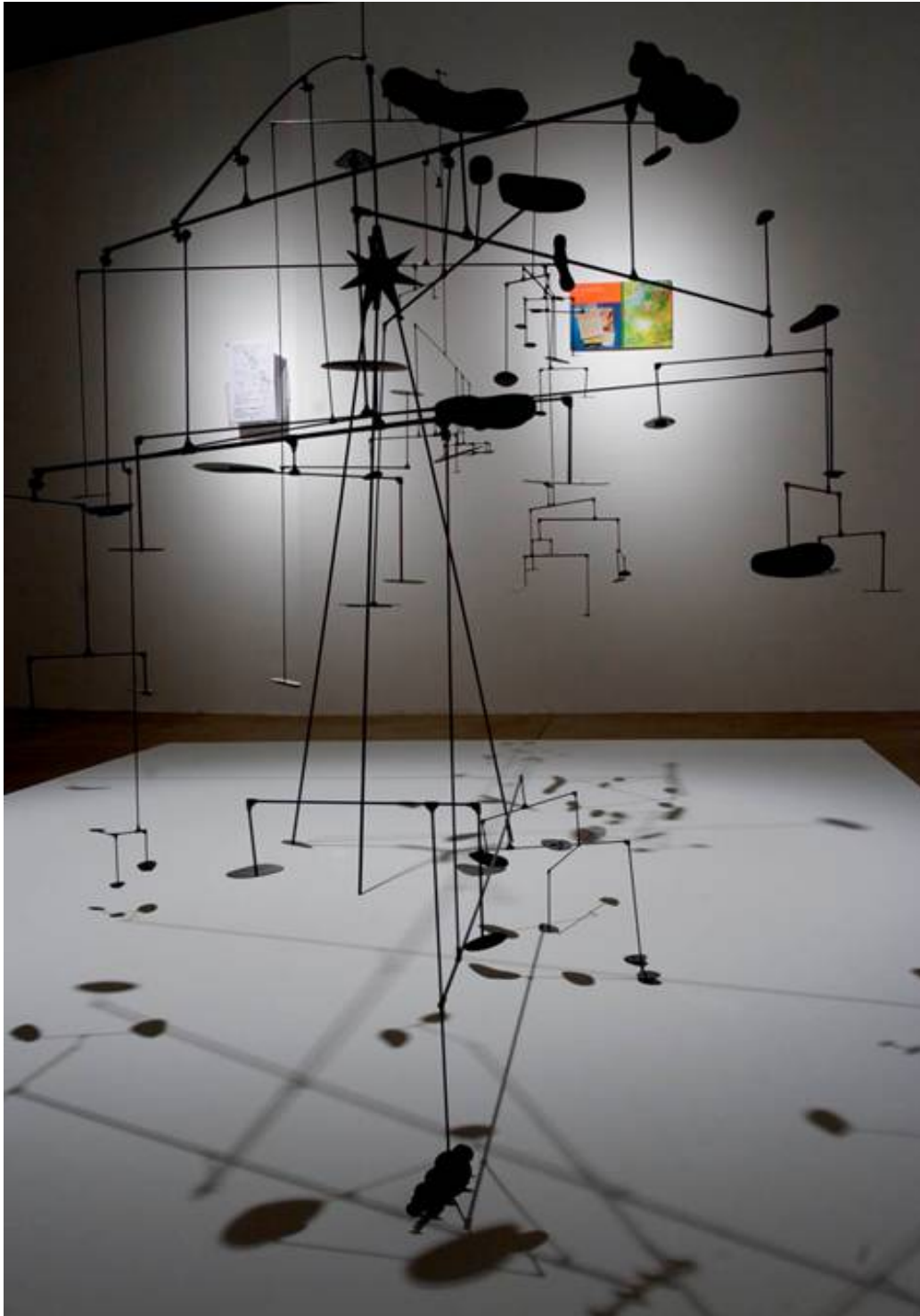
Franklin Evans (1967; Reno, NV; Mexican descent), *Regeneration: Franklin Garcia*, 2007. Site-specific mixed media installation, 124x96x96.



Franklin Evans (1967; Reno, NV; Mexican descent), *Regeneration: Franklin Garcia*, 2007. Site-specific mixed media installation, 124x96x96. (detail)



**Alejandro Almanza Pereda (1977; Mexico City, Mexico), *Untitled (after Dionysius)* [Sin título (Después de Dionisos)], 2007. Cinder blocks, light bulbs, electrical cable, industrial plugs. Dimensions variable**



Alessandro Balteo Yazbeck (1972; Caracas, Venezuela), *UNstabile-Mobile*, 2006. Installation of documents, magazine and sculptural model of Iraq oil infrastructure, artist proof in Calder's style. Dimensions variable



**Mary Valverde (1976, Queens, NY), *12 Angles (12 Angulos)*, 2007. Mixed media installation. Dimensions variable.**



Florencio Gelabert (1961; Havana, Cuba), *Imagine... The Possible Island*, 2007. Plywood, crystal resin, artificial plants, clay, foam. 10 x 96 x 38 inches.



(detail)

## RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

### Artists Webography

<http://www.alejandrealmanzapereda.com/>

Alejandro Almanza Pereda's official website.

<http://www.cesarcornejo.com>

Cesar Cornejo's official website

<http://www.tamarakostianovsky.com>

Tamara Kostianovsky's official website

<http://www.jessicalagunas.com>

Jessica Laguna's official website

<http://www.adrianalopezsanfelio.com>

Adriana Lopez San Felio's official website

<http://www.lmallo.com>

Luis Mallo's official website.

<http://www.justinmata.com/>

Justin Mata's official site.

<http://www.renzoortega.com>

Renzo Ortega's official website.

<http://www.dulcepinzon.com>

Dulce Pinzon's official website

<http://analiasegal.com>

Analia Segal's official website.

### Webography by theme:

#### WHAT IS ART? MAKING ART WITH UNCONVENTIONAL TOOLS AND MATERIALS

<http://www.exquisitecorpse.com>

This site describes the history of the Exquisite Corpse.

<http://www.lapetitezine.org/Transcriptions.htm>

Here you will find a brief description on how to make an Exquisite Corpse and will also find examples of some EC poems made by a New York college English immersion class.

<http://www.skulladay.blogspot.com>

Blog which showcases daily skulls created by an artist as part of a personal project. It shows how far an idea can be stretched through utilizing literally any material that comes at hand and resourcefulness.

<http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/cortaz.htm>

Biography of Argentinean writer Julio Cortazar and a comment on his famous novel 'Rayuela' (Hopscotch).

<http://www.exitwounds.com/Hubert-Selby-Jr-2.htm>

Writer Hubert Selby Jr.'s website

## **IDENTITY: GENDER, RACE AND ETHNICITY**

**<http://imaginingourselves.imow.org/pb/Home.aspx?lang=1>**

Website focused on the theme of 'Image and Identity', presenting inspiring artworks, conversations and stories around the topic.

**[http://www.motherjones.com/photo/2007/07/hidden\\_half-2.html](http://www.motherjones.com/photo/2007/07/hidden_half-2.html)**

Site shows a wonderful photo essay about the lights of women in Afghanistan.

**[http://www.philly.com/inquirer/gallery/Inquirer\\_Photographer\\_Tom\\_Gralish\\_s\\_Pulitzer\\_Prize\\_winning\\_photo\\_essay\\_on\\_the\\_homeless.html](http://www.philly.com/inquirer/gallery/Inquirer_Photographer_Tom_Gralish_s_Pulitzer_Prize_winning_photo_essay_on_the_homeless.html)**

Philadelphia Inquirer Photographer Tom Gralish's Pulitzer Prize winning photo essay on the homeless

**[http://www.time.com/time/photoessays/street\\_art/15.html](http://www.time.com/time/photoessays/street_art/15.html)**

Times Magazine Photo essay on how some artists are recreating the urban landscape.

**[http://www.businessweek.com/2000/00\\_51/b3712215.htm](http://www.businessweek.com/2000/00_51/b3712215.htm)**

Business Week Magazine photo essay on Maya Lin; artist best known for designing the extraordinary Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

**<http://www.kid-at-art.com/htdoc/lesson25.html>**

**<http://www.smart.org/pix/accordionbook.pdf>**

These sites explain how to make an accordion book.

**<http://www.flipbook.com>**

Website where you can design an online photo essay.

**<http://www.blogspot.com>**

Students can access this site to create a free blog.

**<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podcasting>**

Wikipedia site which explains what a podcast is.

**<http://www.podcastingnews.com/articles/How-to-Podcast.html>**

This site guides you in creating a podcast

**<http://www.randomhouse.com/vintage/read/puerto/>**

This site presents information about Esmeralda Santiago's book 'When I was Puerto Rican'

## **IMMIGRATION: DISPLACEMENT, BICULTURALISM, AND HOME**

**<http://www.toyomasu.com/haiku/>**

This site explains what a haiku is and how to write one.

**<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dhs/html/home/home.shtml>**

NYC Department of Homeless Services website, with statistics on homelessness in NYC.

**<http://www.tenement.org/>**

The Lower East Side tenement Museum's website.

**[http://www.ellisland.com/ellis\\_home.html](http://www.ellisland.com/ellis_home.html)**

Ellis Island Museum's website.

**<http://imaginingourselves.imow.org/pb/Story.aspx?id=454&lang=1&q=0>**

Website which has images of Jessica Lagunas' piece 'Ai Spik Inghish'

<http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/osorio/index.html>

Art:21 website with a biography on Puerto Rican artist Pepon Osorio and videos on his piece 'Home Visits'

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mail\\_art/](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mail_art/)

Wikipedia website with history and description of mail art.

## **CONFLICT: REFLECTING ON PERSONAL AND GLOBAL STRUGGLES**

<http://www.gurl.com/findout/guides/pages/0,,625068,00.html>

Site contains information about what zines are.

<http://www.houseoffun.com/action/zines/diy.html>

Site with information on how to make your own zine.

<http://www.calder.org/>

Website with information on artist Alexander Calder

<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2003/iraq/>

CNN website with information on the war in Iraq.

<http://www.lyricsdir.com/grandmaster-flash-the-message-lyrics.html>

Lyrics to the song 'The Message', from musician Grandmaster Flash

<http://www.judicialwatch.org>

Website of Judicial Watch, Inc., a conservative, non-partisan educational foundation, which "promotes transparency, accountability and integrity in government, politics and the law". This website was used by Alessandro Balteo to build his 'UNStabile-Mobile' artwork

## **PATTERNS AND ABSTRACTION IN NATURE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

[http://agutie.homestead.com/FILES/Quipu\\_B.htm](http://agutie.homestead.com/FILES/Quipu_B.htm)

Website containing information on Incan quipus

<http://www.goldenageproject.org.uk/436.html>

Site contains information about the Incan 'Stone of the Twelve Angles'

[http://www.absolutelyrics.com/lyrics/view/beastie\\_boys/an\\_open\\_letter\\_to\\_nyc/](http://www.absolutelyrics.com/lyrics/view/beastie_boys/an_open_letter_to_nyc/)

Lyrics of the song 'Open Letter to NYC' from the Brooklyn based band Beastie Boys

<http://discover.edventures.com/functions/termlib.php?action=&termid=1273&alpha=t&searchString=>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frottage\\_\(surrealist\\_technique\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frottage_(surrealist_technique))

Brief explanations on the rubbing or frottage technique.

## **THE ENVIRONMENT: ISSUES AND AWARENESS**

<http://www.elyrics.net/read/a/a-perfect-circle-lyrics/imagine-lyrics.html>

Lyrics to the song 'Imagine' by musician John Lennon

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Land\\_art](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Land_art)

Wikipedia's description on Land/Earth Art.

<http://www.sculpture.org.uk/image/504816331403>

The sculpture of Andy Goldsworthy

<http://www.bestblanks.com/totebags.html>

<http://www.ingreetings.com/onwholortot.html>

Blank canvas totes

<http://www.noteaccess.com/MATERIALS/Flour.htm>

Instructions for making flour paste.

## **Bibliography**

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