



## MUSEUM STARTER KIT: Open With Care

### Artist Bios

**Beverly Acha** (b. 1987, Miami, Florida) earned her BA from Williams College in Studio Art and American Studies, with a concentration in Critical and Cultural Theory (2009), and her MFA from Yale University School of Art in Painting and Printmaking (2012). She is the recipient of a Robert Schoelkopf Memorial Travel Grant (2011), Frederick M. Peyser Prize in Painting (2009), Berkshire Art Association Fellowship (2008 and 2009), and a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship (2007). In 2010, she participated in a residency at the Vermont Studio Center. Most recently, Acha's work was exhibited in a two person show, "Over Here, In There" at Clemente Soto Velez in New York City. This June, she will be attending the Salem Art Works Residency/Fellowship for two months. Acha lives and works in New York City.

**Perla de Leon** (b. New York City) documented the neighborhood in the Bronx where she taught in her early years working with the New York City Board of Education. This neighborhood, the intersection of Fox and Intervale Avenues, was largely abandoned, desolate, and burned. Continuing to work for the Board of Education, de León has made a number of educational films and videos.

**LNy/Lunar New Year** (b. YEAR, Quito, Ecuador) is an artist defined by borders and hybridity. Growing up between the U.S.A. and his native Ecuador the artist creates drawings and murals that question politics, injustice and public identity, often by making visible the stories of those who are invisible to the cities in which he works His murals are a combination of graffiti and painting techniques as well as mythological animals, portraits and secular iconography.

**Mata Ruda** (b. 1989, San José, Costa Rica) is an artist/painter/muralist who currently lives in Newark, NJ. He was born in San Jose, Costa Rica to a Colombian-American mother, and a Costa Rican-German father, and lived in Caracas, Venezuela until he was 11, in 2000 when he moved to the United States with his family. His public art work primarily focuses on identity vs. reality, language, immigration, and the definition of being American.

**Geraldo Mercado** (b. 1986, Yauco, Puerto Rico) is a multi-disciplinary Brooklyn-based artist. Geraldo creates extreme body-based performance art, experimental video art, mobile installations, analog and computer based images, and conceptual websites and programs. Geraldo also has a pop-up shop where you can purchase experiences for one dollar. Geraldo's digital works explore the space that technology occupies in modern life, how information is spread (and the reasons for it), the idea of popular culture as the new mythology, and how old methods become new movements. Geraldo's



performative work explores the idea of the body as an empathetic zone. Geraldo pushes his body past its own physical limit, inviting the audience to reflect on themselves and their own bodies.

**Raphael Montañez Ortiz** (b. 1934, Brooklyn, New York) is an American artist, educator, and founder of El Museo del Barrio. He is a graduate of Art and Design High School of New York City, and studied at Pratt Institute, where he began as a student of architecture, decided instead to become a fine artist, and received his BFA and MFA at Pratt Institute in 1964. He continued honing both his artistic skills and his formal education, finishing a doctorate in Fine Arts and Fine Arts in Higher Education at Columbia University's Teacher's College. Ortiz's works are in the collection of the Pompidou Centre in Paris and the Ludwig Museum in Cologne, Germany, the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse, New York, the Chrysler Museum of Art in Virginia and the Menil Collection in Houston, Texas.

Ritual, coincidence, duality, transcendence, humanism, performance, gesture, religion and history are only a few of the subjects that the artist has addressed through his works. From the beginning of his career, perhaps his most important concern was avant-garde practice. He worked on the margins of cultural production, creating art from non-art objects, such as domestic items, which he would unmake in a process of (de)struction. While he was interested in avant-garde movements such as Dada and Fluxus and, readings in psychology and anthropology influenced him most and acted as the link between his early Archaeological Finds series and his interest in the perceptions of the unconscious mind.

Ortiz incorporated indigenous elements to the process of deconstruction, underscoring his awareness of indigenous cultural practice and its possibilities as a model for contemporary aesthetics. In the creation of his earliest film works from the late 1950s, he hacks a film into pieces while chanting. Placing the pieces into a medicine bag, he then arbitrarily removed each piece and spliced them together in a completely random fashion. In his film work from the early 1980s, the artist used an Apple computer hooked up to a laser disc player. He scratched the laser disc, creating a stammering image, and a disconnection between time and space.

**Zilia Sánchez** (b. Havana, Cuba, 1926) studied at the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes San Alejandro in Havana. Since the early '50s, Sánchez has developed a language that is highly significant when reconsidering the seemingly resolved history of minimalism. She has stated: "I guess I am not a Minimalist, but rather a Mulata."

Sánchez's early work in Cuba developed an approach to formal abstraction through paintings and drawings, alongside the design of furniture as well as



theater sets. Influenced by the Havana based modernist painter Victor Manuel, she became associated with a group of artists and intellectuals known as Sociedad Cultural Nuestro Tiempo. She designed scenography for guerilla theater group Los Yesistas (The Plasterers) signaling her involvement with the pre-revolutionary, anti-Batista movement. As a result of regular exhibitions in Havana, she received grants enabling her to travel to Europe, before moving to New York in 1964. Living in the city for eight years, she began working with elaborated stretcher frames producing shaped canvases, emphasizing the sculptural abstraction of bodily form. Her paintings have regularly taken on a modular character, comprised of two or more abutting parts. This seriality has become a cornerstone of Sánchez's work: she continues to rework and add to paintings begun as early as the 1970s, considering each work to be a part of a larger whole. Alongside the sensual and haptic "queering" of a hard-edged minimalism, her multi-part works bear relation to the temporal and semiotic sequencing of musical notation, as well as to the architecture of tropical modernism.

In 1972 Sánchez moved to Puerto Rico, where she lives today. Between 1972 and 1975 she designed the literary journal *Zona de Carga y Descarga* (Zone of Charging and Discharging), a short-lived but highly influential publication principally edited by writer Rosario Ferré, marking a moment of experimentation in Puerto Rican writing commissioning marginalized Latin American, Portuguese, Puerto Rican, and Nuyorican writers. Sánchez's use of photomontage, innovative typesetting and layered layouts of image and text inscribed into the publication a fractured topology. This was paralleled by Cuban author, fellow *Zona* contributor and close friend Severo Sarduy's own reflections on writing that emerged around his involvement with the Parisian literature journal *Tel Quel*, collectively published in his compendium of essays, *Written On a Body* (1969). *Zona* was configured as both a place and as a way of working, intrinsically connected to Sánchez's paintings as "actualizing in space (and in the skin of the canvas)... the ludic meaningfulness of language, as both a tense, a wracked, and a martyred system of differential signs, and as a related erotic display of desire." Since the 1980s such textural and scriptural qualities have become more defined, through line drawings on the surface of the canvas, including the occasional literal appearance of figurative transfers of semaphore and sign language.

Over the last three decades, Sánchez has taught at the Escuela de Artes Plásticas de Puerto Rico, becoming an inspirational figure for many artists. Her work however has seldom been exhibited outside Puerto Rico – the exhibition at Artists Space marks a long overdue survey of her practice.<sup>1</sup> Benigno Trigo, "Zona. Carga y Descarga. Minor Literature in a Penal Colony," *MLN*, (John Hopkins University) Volume 124, Number 2, March 2009

**Romy Scheroder** (b. 1969, San Fernando, Trinidad) received her BFA in Ceramics from Florida Atlantic University and her MFA in Sculpture from the



University of the Arts in Philadelphia. In 2011 Ms. Scheroder among 9 other artists was awarded an artist's public art commission from the Rockefeller Foundation to create public art on Randall's Island, NY. In the summer of 2012 she will be installing her second public work on Governor's Island with Figment Project, NY. She has exhibited in a number of venues domestically and abroad, including Wave Hill Arts Center / Bronx Museum, The Asian Arts Initiative, Brunei Gallery, Exit Art, Visual Arts Center of New Jersey, Woman Made Gallery and university museums including Norwich University, the State University of New York at Brockport, The University of the Arts and the University of Tennessee. She currently lives in Brooklyn, NY.

Romy Scheroder's work transforms the inanimate functionality of domestic objects, particularly chairs, into lyrical figures with evolved and peculiar traits. In conversation with one another, this comforting distortion of reality also uncovers the dynamics between the object and the user and considers the friction of power between the two. She studied at the Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, Florida (BFA, 1999) and The University of the Arts, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (MFA, 2005).

**Papo Colo** (b. 1947, Santurce, Puerto Rico) works in a variety of media including painting, graphic design, performance, and theater. A co-founder of the alternative art center Exit Art (1984–2012) and a founder of the arts organization Cultural Space (1991–93), Colo views his professional activities in a political light. He states: "I am an artist that is a cultural impresario.... Puerto Ricans are boxers, baseball players, but they never got to cut the cake.... So I decided to be an impresario as a political statement."

Colo's often endurance-based performance works also refer to socio-political realities. In *Superman 51* (1977), for example, he ran down the deserted West Side Highway dragging behind him 51 wooden sticks attached to his body. Written on each of the sticks was the name of a state as well as that of Puerto Rico, Colo's birthplace. He performed this action several times to protest the rejection of President Gerald Ford's proposal to grant statehood to Puerto Rico in 1976. In *Jumping Fences* (2007), he jumped 51 fences in New York and around the world, wearing a mask-like disguise, to call attention to the ways in which fences and borders divide human communities.

Papo Colo's practice includes painting and graphic design but also extends to performance art and theater. He founded the arts organizations Cultural Space and Trickster Theater as well as cofounding the interdisciplinary art center Exit Art. His solo exhibitions include *Jumping the Fences*, Galeria de la Raza, San Francisco (2009); *Paintings*, Tyler School of Art, Temple University, Elkins Park, PA (1997); *Will, Power, and Desire*, 1976–86, Exit Art, New York (1986); *Lost and Gained Paradise*, Just Above Midtown Gallery, New York (1982); *Untitled / Anonymous*, El Museo del Barrio, New York (1980); and *Contradiction*, Spanish Institute, New York (1977). Select group exhibitions



include 100 Years (version #2, ps1, nov 2009), P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island City, NY (2009); Negritude, Exit Art, New York (2009); Arte ≠ Vida, El Museo del Barrio, New York (2008); Re-Shuffle: Notions of an Itinerant Museum, Art in General, New York (2006); The Downtown Show, Grey Art Gallery, New York University (2006); globe>miami<island, Bass Museum of Art, Miami Beach, FL (2001); Will/Power, Wexner Center for the Arts, Ohio State University, Columbus (1992); NY: The Next Generation, Carnegie Mellon Art Gallery, Pittsburgh (1991); Out of Abstraction, Islip Art Museum, East Islip, NY (1990); Dirty Pictures, White Columns, New York (1982); Illegal America, Franklin Furnace, New York (1982); Ritual and Rhythm, Kenkeleba House, New York (1982); VARS at JAM, Just Above Midtown Gallery, New York (1981); Marking Black, Bronx Museum of the Arts, Bronx, NY; Variations on Latin Themes in NY, Center for Inter-American Relations, New York (1978); and Roots and Visions, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, DC (1977).

**Brolab**, the collective was established in 2009 by five artists who built a practice bridging art and design principles exploring minimalist objects where people can interact with both the artists and the work. BroLab's broad vision includes public sculpture, place making and site-specific interventions. In the canon of collective art, BroLab presents an alternative model by working intuitively, connecting art to a live activity of both making and engagement. BroLab has received critical attention from Architect Magazine, New York Press, L Magazine, NY Daily News, The Times Ledger and artcritical.com. BroLab has exhibited at notable venues and institutions such as the Venice Architecture Biennale, The Bronx River Arts Center, and the Festival for New Ideas and The Center for Book Arts. BroLab has completed successful commissions for the NYC DOT Urban Art Program, the NY Public Library and the Newark Arts Council. Recent projects include a commission for the Bronx Museum of the Arts, a transformative installation for the lobby, as well as a catalog marking recent work as granted by the Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation.

**Tamara Kostianovsky** (b. 1974 in Jerusalem, Israel) received her undergraduate degree from the National School of Fine Arts "Prilidiano Pueyrredon" in Buenos Aires, Argentina (1998) and her MFA from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia (2003). Kostianovsky's iconic works are large sculptures of carcasses made out of her own clothing. Of this series, the artist says, "I was born in Israel, but grew up in Argentina and I came to the US in 2000 to study art. That year, there was a huge default of the Argentinean economy. For those living in the US with Argentinean money, overnight we found ourselves with limited resources. I didn't have money to go buy art supplies, but I did have a lot of clothing I had brought from Argentina. When you travel you pack a lot and often end up wearing only two or three things! So I had all this clothing, warm sweaters and things that connected me to a part of my life in Argentina that I missed. I started by making three dimensional



maps out of clothes. Slowly the imagery of the cows and meat came about. It was the perfect marriage; the sweaters were perfect to make fat and muscles.” Kostianovsky has been awarded fellowships from the New York Foundation for the Arts (2009); Socrates Sculpture Park (2009); the Pollock-Krasner Foundation (2008) and The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (2005). Kostianovsky also received space grants from the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (2008) and Artist Alliance (2009). Kostianovsky’s solo exhibitions include Black and White Gallery//Chelsea (2008), The Philadelphia Museum of Jewish Art (2006), and El Centro Cultural J.L. Borges, Buenos Aires (2000). Her work has been included in group exhibitions at El Museo del Barrio, NY; Exit Art, NY; The University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA; and Pierre Menard Gallery in Cambridge, Mass. Kostianovsky currently lives and works in New York City and is a faculty member at the School of Visual Arts.

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