

# UC Berkeley

## Symposia

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Art, Politics & the City in Mexico and China | Fall 2015 Symposium

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# ART, POLITICS, & THE CITY IN MEXICO AND CHINA

GLOBAL URBAN HUMANITIES  
SYMPOSIUM FALL 2015

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Cover Image: Ever, "Religious silence in a communist context," 2012.

# SYMPOSIUM DESCRIPTION

## ART, POLITICS & THE CITY IN MEXICO AND CHINA

*A GLOBAL URBAN HUMANITIES SYMPOSIUM*

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**Location:** Bauer Wurster Hall, Berkeley, CA

**Date/Time:** Friday, October 23, 2015, 8:30AM-6PM

This wide-ranging interdisciplinary symposium examined art, commerce, politics, violence, history, and urban space on both sides of the Pacific. Creative artists and scholars explored contemporary performance, film, art, and activism in Mexico City from the Revolution to today. Ruben Gallo of Princeton University gave a keynote presentation examining the place of ruins in Mexico City imaginaries. Discussions of modern and contemporary culture and politics with leading performers, filmmakers, and scholars followed, including Gaston Alzate, Minerva Cuevas, Michael Dear, Ivonne del Valle, Tatiana Flores, Daniel Hernandez, Edward J. McCaughan, Jesusa Rodríguez, Juan Carlos Rulfo, and Maite Zubiaurre.

As a counterpoint from the other side of the Pacific Rim, Margaret Crawford and Winnie Wong of UC Berkeley presented an exhibition on current art and urbanism in China's dynamic Pearl River Delta, manufacturer to the world of both smartphones and mass-produced Van Goghs. Research on contemporary Shanghai by a team from the UCLA Urban Humanities Initiative was also presented by Dana Cuff and Jonathan Crisman in a video-based exhibit, and new UC Berkeley publications and websites on participatory urbanisms (focusing on São Paulo and New Delhi) and urban pilgrimage were unveiled.

The symposium was sponsored by the Global Urban Humanities Initiative, a transdisciplinary experiment in innovative methods of investigating cities. Both the UC Berkeley and UCLA initiatives are supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The symposium and exhibitions highlighted the ways in which methods from the arts and humanities can be combined with techniques from architecture and city planning to analyze and represent urban form and human experience.

The symposium was held at the University of California, Berkeley, at Bauer Wurster Hall. The exhibitions were presented at the Wurster Gallery and other spaces in Bauer-Wurster Hall, and the curators were available for discussion and tours.





Ruben Gallo, Keynote presenter speaking with Symposium attendees near the exhibits.

# SYMPOSIUM SUMMARY

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## SCHEDULE- OCTOBER 23, 2015

### 8:30 Registration

### 9:00 Welcome

- Anthony J. Cascardi, Dean, Arts & Humanities, UC Berkeley
- Jennifer Wolch, Dean, College of Environmental Design

### 9:10 Orientation

- Susan Moffat, Project Director, UC Berkeley Global Urban Humanities Initiative

### 9:15 Keynote Presentation

- Ruben Gallo, Princeton University

### 9:45 Break

### 9:55 Panel 1: Modernity in Process: Creative Practice, Urban Experience and the City

- Tatiana Flores, Rutgers: “Mexico City—Avant-Garde City?”
- Ed McCaughan, San Francisco State University: “Art, Activism, and New Ways of Being Mexican”
- Daniel Hernandez, Vice News “Me Encanta la Ciudad!: The Perils of a More User-Friendly Mexico City”
- Discussant, Ivonne del Valle, UC Berkeley
- Q&A

### 11:25 Break

### 11:35 Introduction of Exhibitions

- Introduction by Susan Moffat, Project Director, Global Urban Humanities
- Margaret Crawford and Winnie Wong, UC Berkeley: Art+Village+City (Pearl River Delta)
- Jonathan Crisman and Dana Cuff, UCLA: Now Shanghai
- Kirsten Larson and Karin Shankar, UC Berkeley: Participatory Urbanisms
- Mia Narell and Lawrence Yang, UC Berkeley: Urban Pilgrimage

### 11:50 Exhibition Tours

- Bauer Wurster Gallery and Bauer Wurster Lobby

### 12:30 Lunch

- Bauer-Wurster Courtyard

### 1:30 Exhibition Tours

- Bauer-Wurster Gallery and Bauer-Wurster Lobby





Symposium attendee interacting with the Art+Village+City Exhibit.



**2:00 Panel 2: Insurgent Cities: Politics, Space and Urban Action in Mexico D.F.**

- Juan Carlos Rulfo, Filmmaker: “Searching for Identity”
- Minerva Cuevas, Artist: “Dissidence, Mapping Resistance in Mexico City”
- Jesusa Rodriguez, Theater Director and Actor: “Mexico City: The Insatiable Mouth”
- Discussant, Gaston Alzate, California State University, Los Angeles
- Q&A

**3:50 Break**

**4:05 Closing Remarks**

- Maite Zubiaurre, UCLA
- Michael Dear, UC Berkeley

**4:30 Audience discussion**

**4:40 Reception**

- Faculty Club



Attendees enjoyed lively discussions at the Symposium reception.



# SYMPOSIUM SPEAKERS

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## SPEAKER BIOS

### **Gastón Alzate**, CSU Los Angeles

Gastón Alzate is from Cali (Valle del Cauca), Colombia. Currently he is a Full Professor of Spanish at CSU Los Angeles where he teaches Latin American Theater, Performance Art and Literature. During 2011 he was Research Fellow of the Verflechtungen von Theater Kulturen (Interweaving Performance Cultures), Freie Universität, Berlin. Previously, he was Director of Latin American, Latino, and Caribbean Studies (LALACS) at Gustavus Adolphus College (1999-2006). He also served as advisor for the Independent Study group in Cuba, SPAN, University of Minnesota (1999-2000). He worked as Research Associate with David William Foster (1996-1997), and as Teaching Associate at Arizona State University. The central line of his research and publication has been Mexican and Colombian literature with a focus on theater and performance art. His research has generally focused on the connections between Western tradition and Latin American culture, particularly the need to re-accommodate theoretical framework originating in Europe and the US when studying Latin American and US Latino productions. With the collaboration of Dr. Paola Marín, he founded the academic electronic journal Karpa in 2009, devoted to theatrical dissidences, visual arts, and culture. It publishes articles in Spanish, English, and Portuguese. The journal is a peer-reviewed publication indexed by the MLA International Bibliography, which encompasses Latin American and Iberian performing and visual culture manifestations such as political cabaret, dance, performance art, theater, social theatricalities, graffiti, photography, and film. Since 2009 he has been a member of the CSULA Mariachi Band Aguila de Oro (Golden Eagle).

### **Margaret Crawford**, UC Berkeley

Margaret Crawford teaches courses in the history and theory of architecture, urbanism, and urban history as well as urban design and planning studios focusing on small-scale urbanity and postmodern urbanism. Her research focuses on the evolution, uses, and meanings of urban space. Her book, *Building the Workingman's Paradise: The Design of American Company Towns*, examines the rise and fall of professionally designed industrial environments. Crawford is also known for her work on Everyday Urbanism, a concept that encourages the close investigation and empathetic understanding of the specifics of daily life as the basis for urban theory and design. Another interest is Los Angeles urbanism, which led to *The Car and the City: The Automobile, the Built Environment and Daily Urban Life*, edited with transportation planner Martin Wachs. She has also published numerous articles on immigrant spatial practices, shopping malls, public space, and other issues in the American built environment. Since 2003, Crawford has been investigating the effects of rapid physical and social changes on villages in China's Pearl River Delta.

### **Jonathan Crisman**, UCLA

Jonathan Crisman is the director of No Style, a design and publishing practice, and with Jia Gu he forms LA—BOR, an interdisciplinary art and architecture studio. He holds an appointment in the Department of Architecture and Urban Design at UCLA where he is Project Director and Core Faculty for the Urban Humanities Initiative, and he holds degrees in geography, architecture, and urban planning from UCLA and MIT.

### **Minerva Cuevas**, Artist

Mexican artist Minerva Cuevas's prolific and international artistic practice is grounded in conceptually and socially engaged actions. Her site-specific interventions take place in a range of settings from the internet to museums to the cultural commons. She creates political and social interventions, produces compelling videos and photographic work, co-opts various means of distribution to get out her message, irreverently and cleverly tampers with corporate and government identities, and makes bold political-creative work that disrupts political and visual economies. In 1998 she founded Mejor Vida Corp. (Better Life Corporation), an enterprise that provides free products and services such as international student ID cards, subway passes, lottery tickets and barcode stickers which reduce the price of food at supermarket



The audience applauding symposium panelists.

chains. Cuevas also creates posters, billboards, and performances; with these actions Cuevas has assumed the role of both a political and artistic actor. Presently she is developing a series of works on the oil industry in Mexico and Social Ecology studies re-adapting early scientific and optical devices such as magic lanterns and microscopes. Cuevas' work has been shown extensively in solo and group exhibitions.

#### **Dana Cuff, UCLA**

Dana Cuff engages architecture and the city as cultural production. She is the lead Principal Investigator for the Urban Humanities Initiative, funded by the Mellon Foundation. As Director of UCLA Architecture and Urban Design's think tank, cityLAB, Cuff brings a vital discourse to UCLA about contemporary urban design along with a series of design-research projects that engage both students and faculty. She publishes and lectures widely on issues concerning the postsuburban condition, the architectural profession, affordable housing, urban sensing, and the politics of place. She recently edited *Fast Forward Urbanism* (with R. Sherman, Princeton Architectural Press), and is author of *The Provisional City* and *Architecture: The Story of Practice* (both MIT Press). Cuff's current research explores the nature of "public architecture" today, emergent pervasive computing technologies, design opportunities leveraged from infrastructure, and infill housing.

#### **Michael Dear, UC Berkeley**

Michael Dear is Professor Emeritus of City and Regional Planning at UC Berkeley, and Honorary Professor in the Bartlett School of Planning at University College, London (England). Michael's current research focuses on comparative urbanism, and the future of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. He is also co-editing a volume on transdisciplinary work in geography and the humanities. He has recently taught courses on urban theory, the state, social theory, and the borderlands.

#### **Ivonne Del Valle, UC Berkeley**

Ivonne del Valle is Associate Professor of Spanish and Portuguese at UC Berkeley. One of her projects has to do with the long process of the drainage of the lakes of Mexico City starting in 1607 and finished during the Porfiriato or—depending on the sources and the perspective—unfinished until now. She is interested in analyzing the relationships among technology, religion, culture, and government articulated by the Mexicas, the Spanish empire, and the Mexican nation as seen in their handling of the climatic and hydrographic situation of Mexico City's location. In the second project, she is studying the role of the colonization of America from the 15th century onward in the development of new epistemologies and political theories. She wants to explore the ways in which first, the unprecedented violence of conquest and colonization, and secondly, the need for a correct administration of the colonies, brought about important theoretical, technological, and epistemological changes which may have been conceived to be practiced in the colonies, but which in the long run transformed the way Europe understood and fashioned itself.

#### **Tatiana Flores, Rutgers**

Tatiana Flores is Associate Professor in the Department of Art History at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, with a joint appointment in the Department of Latino and Hispanic Caribbean Studies. A specialist in modern and contemporary Latin American art, she is the author of *Mexico's Revolutionary Avant-Gardes: From Estridentismo to ¡30-30!* (Yale University Press, 2013). A revisionist and interdisciplinary account of Mexican modern art as seen through two avant-garde movements, the book received the 2014 Humanities Book Prize awarded by the Mexico Section of the Latin American Studies Association. It was also runner-up for the Photography / Art category at the Southern California Book Festival and the Los Angeles Book Festival in 2013. Professor Flores is active as an independent curator and art critic. She was an invited expert for the launch of the Getty Foundation initiative Pacific Standard Time 2: Latin America – Los Angeles, which is supporting exhibitions of Latin American art in Southern California in 2017, and is advising on two related exhibitions. She also served on the selection panel for *About Change: Latin American and Caribbean Artists in the Twenty-First Century* organized by The World Bank Art Program in 2011-2012. Her recently curated exhibitions include *Wrestling with the Image: Caribbean Interventions* (Washington, D.C., 2011), *Disillusions: Gendered Visions of the Caribbean and its Diasporas* (New York, 2011), and *Medios y ambientes* (Mexico City, 2012). Flores was the 2007-2008 Cisneros Visiting Scholar at the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies at Harvard University. A regular contributor to *Art Nexus*, her writings have appeared in such journals as *World Art*, *Third Text*, *Woman's Art Journal*, *Review: Literature and Arts of the Americas*, and *ReVista: Harvard Review of Latin America*. She is a member of the editorial board of *ASAP/Journal*, the scholarly journal of





Attendees convening outside Wurster Hall.

The Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present, and also serves as field editor for exhibitions of modern and contemporary art in New York and internationally for *caa.reviews*.

**Rubén Gallo, Princeton**

Rubén Gallo is the Walter S. Carpenter Jr. Professor in Language, Literature and Civilization of Spain at Princeton University. He is the author, most recently, of *Proust's Latin Americans* (2014), an essay about Proust's Latin American circle of friends in turn-of-the-last century Paris. Gallo's other books include *Freud's Mexico: Into the Wilds of Psychoanalysis* (2010), a cultural history of psychoanalysis and its reception in Mexico; *Mexican Modernity: the Avant-Garde and the Technological Revolution* (2005), an essay about the Mexican avant-garde's fascination with machines, and two books about Mexico City's visual culture: *New Tendencies in Mexican Art* (2004) and *The Mexico City Reader* (2004).

He is the recipient of the Gradiva award for the best book on a psychoanalytic theme and of the Modern Language Association's Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize for the best book on a Latin American topic. He is a member of the board of the Sigmund Freud Museum in Vienna, where he also serves as research director. His current project is "Cuba: A New Era," a book about the changes in Cuban culture after the diplomatic thaw with the United States.

**Daniel Hernandez, Journalist**

Author of *Down and Delirious in Mexico City* (Scribner 2011), Daniel Hernandez is a journalist, author, editor, on-camera host, and producer based in Mexico City. Hernandez has been Mexico bureau chief for VICE News after serving a year as editor of VICE Mexico's print magazine. He writes for VICE in English and Spanish, and has reported from Chile, Peru, Colombia, Argentina, in much of Mexico, and across most of Southern California. Previously, he worked in the Mexico City bureau of the *Los Angeles Times* (2010 to 2013), where he covered breaking news and wrote news and features for the L.A. Times print edition in news and arts. He's also been a staff writer at the *Los Angeles Times* in L.A. on the downtown Metro desk (2002 to 2006) and at *LA Weekly* (2006-2007). Daniel has been a contributor to *Gatopardo* magazine in Mexico, *Art in America* magazine, and occasionally on "Latino USA" and "All Things Considered" on NPR. He was born in 1980 in San Diego and studied English literature on a Regents' & Chancellor's scholarship at the University of California, Berkeley. He served one year as editor-in-chief and president of The Daily Californian.

**Kirsten Larson, UC Berkeley**

Currently in her fourth year as a dual-degree candidate in the Master's of Architecture and Master's of City Planning programs at the University of California, Berkeley, Kirsten's work and research focuses on the intersections between the Arts, Planning, Architecture, and Urban Theory in cities of the Global South. Her current thesis work, specifically, is sited in São Paulo, Brazil. Along with Karin Shankar (PhD candidate in Performance Studies) and support from UC Berkeley's Global Urban Humanities initiative, Kirsten is co-editing an interdisciplinary web publication titled P[art]icipatory Urbanisms (to be launched in Fall 2015). P[art]icipatory Urbanisms is a compilation of interviews with urban practitioners, arts and activist groups in São Paulo and New Delhi, and a critical anthology of peer-reviewed articles, examining the triangulation of urban participation, aesthetics, and politics. Kirsten has a BFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago with emphasis in Public Art, Art Education and Architecture (2008) and was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship in Architecture, Brazil (2010).

**Padma Maitland, UC Berkeley**

Padma Maitland is a PhD student in the Departments of Architecture and South/Southeast Asian Studies. He is the co-editor of *Light of the Valley: Renewing the Sacred Art and Traditions of Swayambhu* and founding editor of *Room One Thousand*, an interdisciplinary journal on the intersection between the humanities and architecture. Padma's current research focuses on the development of modern religious sites in India and the impact of exchanges with South Asia on the counter-culture movement in California.

**Edward J. McCaughan, San Francisco State University**

Edward J. McCaughan is Professor of Sociology at San Francisco State University. He earned a M.A. in Latin American Studies from Stanford University and a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of California, Santa Cruz. Over the past four decades, McCaughan has published several books on social

change in Mexico, including *Art and Social Movements: Cultural Politics in Mexico and Aztlán* (Duke UP 2012), *The Famous 41: Sexuality and Social Control in Mexico, c. 1901* (Palgrave, 2003, co-edited with Robert Irwin and Michelle Nasser), *Reinventing Revolution: the Renovation of Left Discourse in Cuba and Mexico* (Westview, 1995); and *Beyond the Border: Mexico and the U.S. Today* (NACLA, 1979, co-authored with Peter Baird). He is currently working on a book about art, identity and LGBTQ movements in Mexico. McCaughan is on the editorial board of the journal *Social Justice*.

### **Mia Narell**, UC Berkeley

Mia Narell is an artist, writer, and 3rd year student in the Masters of Architecture program at the College of Environmental Design and a member of the editorial board of Room One Thousand, the architecture journal. Her visual artwork is based in experimental book arts and installation. She has been an artist-in-residence and curator at ABCo Artspace; and has exhibited her work in the Bay Area and New York City. She also works as a designer of spaces and places whenever possible.

### **Jesusa Rodríguez**, Resistencia Creativa

México 1955.

Actriz y directora de teatro.

1980 dirige *¿Cómo va la noche Macbeth?* adaptación a Shakespeare

1983 *Donna Giovanni*, adaptación al *Don Giovanni* de Mozart y Da Ponte

1988 *El concilio de amor*, de Panizza

1989 *Yourcenar o cada quien su Marguerite*, y *Crimen de Yourcenar*.

1990-2004 Con Liliana Felipe restauran el Teatro La Capilla y fundan El Hábito

1996 dirige para video la ópera *Cosí Fan Tutte* de Mozart y Da Ponte.

2000 actúa en *Las Horas de Belén* con el grupo Mabou Mines de NY.

2001 a 2004 imparte 25 talleres para mujeres indígenas y campesinas en México.

2005 dirige y actúa "El Maíz".

2008 presenta *El Primero Sueño* en el Claustro de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.

2009 escribe, actúa y dirige el espectáculo "Diálogos entre Darwin y Dios".

2010 escribe, actúa y dirige el espectáculo "La cruda del Bicentenario"

2011 Escenifica la *Ofrenda Olmeca No. IV*

2012 Escribe, dirige y actúa "El sexto sol con Liliana Felipe.

2013 Dirige las cartas de Frida "ópera de toilette" de Marcela Rodríguez.

2013 Dirige "Los Vecinos" canciones de Liliana Felipe con a Orquesta de BC.

2014 Dirige la ópera para niños: "Apoidea" de JM Delgado.

2014-2015 Escribe, dirige y actúa: Juana la Larga.

Premio como mejor actriz por *El Concilio de Amor*. Festival De Las Américas, (1989)

Recibió el OBIE award del *Village voice* de New York (2000)

### **Juan Carlos Rulfo**, Filmmaker

A director, producer, photographer and promoter of documentary films, Juan Carlos Rulfo graduated from Communication Sciences at Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, UAM, then specialized in movie direction at Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica, CCC. One of the most important filmmakers of contemporary Mexico, his films have been shown worldwide and have won several national and international awards at film festivals, including those at Guadalajara, Morelia, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Bacifi, Miami, Madrid, Biarritz, IDFA, Karlovy Vary and Sundance. At Sundance, he received The World Documentary Jury Award in 2006. He has received scholarships from Rockefeller & MacArthur, the Guggenheim Fund, and el Sistema Nacional de Creadores de Arte, in Mexico. He was awarded the Humanitas Prize, considered the film version of the Pulitzer Prize, the Haskell Wexler Prize for best photography, and the Educational Leadership Award from the World Fund of New York.

He is currently working on the development of his next project: *Érase una vez, Once upon a time*

Filmography:

- *De panzazo, el drama de la educación en México*. Full length documentary, 2012.
- *Carrière, 250 metros*. Full length documentary, 2011.
- *Los que se quedan. Those who remain*. Full length documentary, 2008.



- *Será por eso*. Short movie, 2010.
- *El crucero*. Short movie, 2007.
- *En el hoyo*. In the pit. Full length documentary 2006.
- *Silverio*. Short movie in *Diminutos del Calvario 1*, 2000.
- *Luvina*. Experimental, 1999.
- *Del olvido al no me acuerdo. I forgot, I don't remember*. Full length documentary, 1999.
- *El abuelo Cheno y otras historias. Grandfather Cheno, and other stories*. Short movie, 1995.

**Karin Shankar**, UC Berkeley

Karin Shankar is a Ph.D. Candidate in Performance Studies in the Department of Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies. Her research interests include urban space and social art practice, contemporary experimental aesthetics in India, political economy and culture, and feminist theory and aesthetics. Along with Kirsten Larson (dual-degree student in Architecture and City Planning) and support from UC Berkeley's Global Urban Humanities initiative, Karin is co-editing an interdisciplinary web publication titled P[art]icipatory Urbanisms (to be launched in Fall 2015). P[art]icipatory Urbanisms is a compilation of interviews with urban practitioners, arts and activist groups in São Paulo and New Delhi, and a critical anthology of peer-reviewed articles, examining the triangulation of urban participation, aesthetics, and politics.

**Winnie Wong**, UC Berkeley

Assistant Professor of Rhetoric Winnie Wong's research is concerned with the history and present of artistic authorship, with a focus on interactions between China and the West. Her theoretical interests revolve around the critical distinctions of high and low, true and fake, art and commodity, originality and imitation, and, conceptual and manual labor, and thus her work focuses on objects and practices at the boundary of these categories. She has written on product placement in the Hollywood film industry, popular culture and public space in postcolonial Hong Kong, performance art and consumer rights activism in 1990s Beijing, and American trademark law and experience design. More recently, her work has focused on image-making practices at the heart of modern and contemporary encounters between China and the West. Her book *Van Gogh on Demand: China and the Readymade* was awarded the 2015 Joseph Levenson Prize by the Association of Asian Studies and named one of the Top 10 Art Books of 2014 by Hyperallergic.

**Lawrence Yang**, UC Berkeley

Zi-Qiao Lawrence Yang is a Ph.D. student in Sinophone Literatures and Cultures with a Designated Emphasis in Critical Theory. He received his MA in comparative literature and a B.A. in English, both from National Taiwan Normal University. His broader theoretical interests include phenomenology, cultural criticism of The Frankfurt School, affect theory, and bio-politics. He is currently exploring the questions of ephemerality/monumentality in 19th and 20th century Chinese/Taiwanese literatures and material cultures, with a particular focus on architecture.

**Maite Zubiaurre**, UCLA

Professor Maite Zubiaurre initiated her career as literary translator from novels in German into Spanish for the publisher Alfaguara. She holds a degree in Comparative Literature from Columbia University, and taught at the University of Texas, Austin, UNAM (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), ITAM (Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México), and USC (University of Southern California), before joining the Department of Spanish and Portuguese and the Department of Germanic Languages at UCLA. Her areas of expertise are comparative literature; gender studies; urban studies; cultural studies; modern and contemporary Peninsular literature; European (particularly German) and Latin American Realism; Latin American women's fiction; and Latina and Chicana fiction. She is the author of *El espacio en la novela realista. Paisajes, miniaturas, perspectivas* (Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2000), a book-length study of the dialectics of space and gender in European and Latin American realist fiction; and of *Cultures of the Erotic. Spain 1898-1939* (Vanderbilt University Press, 2012), the first scholarly monograph that analyzes the diverse visual and textual representations of the erotic in Spanish popular culture during the so-called "Edad de Plata" or Silver Age (1898-1936).



Panel on Modernity in Process: Creative Practice, Urban Experience, and the City.

# SYMPOSIUM EXHIBITIONS

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## FILM SCREENING-

### IN THE PIT / EN EL HOYO

**Bauer Wurster Hall-** A film by Juan Carlos Rulfo • 2006 • 83min

Presented in Spanish with English subtitles

Winner, Sundance Film Festival  
Best International Documentary, Grand Jury Prize  
“...An absorbing documentary about work and the transformation of men into laborers.” – The New York Times

The screening was followed by a Q&A with the filmmaker.



## ART+VILLAGE+CITY

**Bauer Wurster Gallery**

Art+Village+City (Winnie Wong and Margaret Crawford, UC Berkeley) explored the rural villages that have urbanized in diverse ways the process of being engulfed by the megacities of Guangzhou and Shenzhen. In this dense and complex urban/rural landscape, villagers have fought to maintain a political autonomy rare in China, while churning out “Van Goghs” for export and cultural products that are both intensely global and local. In this exhibition, the students in the research studio who traveled to the Pearl River Delta in spring 2015 represented their work through creative methods including diorama, video, and painting.





## NOW SHANGHAI / 闹海

### Bauer Wurster Lobby

Incorporating film and mapping practices at four sites in Shanghai, *Now Shanghai / 闹海* (Nao Hai) (UCLA Urban Humanities Initiative) aimed to expand the discourse and speculative possibility of scholarly research on contemporary cities. The title draws from the Chinese legend Nezha Nao Hai, or Nezha Conquers the Dragon King (哪吒闹海): nao (闹) represents the loud and busy nature of the contemporary Asian megacity, as in naoshi (闹市), or busy market or downtown. As a verb, nao means to disturb, play with, or celebrate an event with jubilation. It also responds to the contemporary Chinese idiom “nao na yang” (闹哪样), asking “what’s the matter?” in response to something incomprehensible. *Now Shanghai / 闹海* captured the UCLA Urban Humanities Initiative’s approach to investigating contemporary urban issues, contested space, and issues of identity in Shanghai today.



## PARTICIPATORY URBANISMS

### Bauer Wurster Lobby

*Participatory Urbanisms* (edited by Karin Shankar and Kirsten Larson, UC Berkeley) was an experimental publication exploring the multifarious meanings of “participation” and its conditions of possibility in making art and politics in urban spaces.



## URBAN PILGRIMAGE

### Bauer Wurster Lobby

*Urban Pilgrimage* (edited by Lawrence Yang and Padma Maitland, UC Berkeley) was a special Global Urban Humanities Initiative issue of the journal *Room One Thousand* exploring cities and itineraries.

# SYMPOSIUM REFLECTIONS

## ART, POLITICS & THE CITY IN MEXICO AND CHINA: KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

*January 27, 2016*

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By Lyndsey Ogle

In his keynote address, “Mexico City: From Revolutionary Ruins to Global City...and Back Again,” Rubén Gallo asked the question, “What does it mean to use Havana to think about Mexico City?” With radically different first impressions of each capital, Gallo suggests that each city reflects an omnipresence of ruins. While ruins have almost become a stereotype of Havana, the official discourse of the ‘new’ Mexico City, centers on the city as a thriving metropolis, experiencing a moment of discrete economic growth, yet ruin has always defined the city’s history. In the Zócalo or main square of central Mexico City are the remains of a great temple of the Aztec city of Tenochtitlan. The Zócalo later became the site of colonial power, flanked by a 16th century church and governmental building and now stands as one of the foremost tourist destination in the city. The 1920s and 1930s were seen by many scholars as the golden age of Mexican art, with Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, and experimental poetry and literature “synchronized to reflect the modern new world,” but life during that period was also framed by the everyday experience of collapse as demonstrated in photos of the destruction left behind by the Mexican Revolution—images which Gallo points out are more often associated with Havana than Mexico City. Gallo argues that though the 1920s was a moment of life in shambles, most scholars reflect on it with optimism, focusing on new building, expansion, and experimentation. In the 1950s, Mexico City entered what many believe to be its golden age of economic and political stability.

Gallo cites the construction of Mario Pani’s 1960’s housing development, Conjunto Urbano

Nonoalco Tlatelolco, which was the largest in Mexico and one of the largest in the world, as an example of the new development intended to convey a “new” Mexico City. During the excavation, the ruins of what was believed to be a pre-Columbian necropolis were discovered, however, Pani refused to halt the construction of the complex, limiting future scholarship of the site. This project intended to distance the city from the image of ruins itself became a site of ruin, first in 1968 with the Tlatelolco massacre and then in 1985 when an earthquake left parts of the complex in ruins for decades. Gallo asks if ruins are a constant presence, why do most scholars not think about the city as a city of ruin? Today Havana is critiqued for turning its ruins into sites for tourism while Mexico City has used the disruption of modern



Keynote speaker, Ruben Gallo and audience.

construction as a way of concealing its ruins. This dialectic of exposure and concealment, problematizes “exactly what type of ruin that is being concealed?”

“Never has Mexico City been so fragile on the inside—drugs and corruption have penetrated every level of society, justice and ministries are in shambles, all systems meant to take care are in ruins.” Gallo leaves us with the question: “Havana’s ruins can be fixed but how do you rebuild trust, ethics, and respect for human rights? Where does a society begin a process of national reconstruction?”



Keynote speaker, Ruben Gallo presenting on Mexico City and its Revolution



# ART, POLITICS & THE CITY IN MEXICO AND CHINA: PANEL 1 | MODERNITY IN PROCESS

January 27, 2016

By Katherine Bruhn

The symposium's first panel entitled "Modernity in Process: Creative Practice, Urban Experience and the City" began with a presentation by Tatiana Flores, Associate Professor in the Department of Art History at Rutgers. Professor Flores' presentation, "Mexico City: Avant-Garde City?," explored the history of the Mexican avant-garde with a focus on the relationship of Manuel Maples Arce to the work of modern artists. Maples Arce is known for his 1921 publication *Actual No. 1*. This document, seen as a manifesto of the avant-garde movement, asserted that the new post-revolutionary era required a renovation in the arts that would occur through the embrace by contemporary artists of modernity and subjects including the city and new technologies. As Flores stated, Maples Arce believed that the "modern artist should be a city dweller." Following an examination of the work of numerous modern artists who engaged with Maples Arce's texts, Flores concluded her presentation, bringing the conversation full circle with the example of contemporary artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, who in 2000 "realized Maples Arce's dream of a technological modernity" through his installation *Vectorial Elevation* in Mexico City's historic Zócalo Square. According to Flores, through this interactive installation, which allowed for the engagement of masses



Presentation by Tatiana Flores

of locals as well as a global audience, "Lozano-Hemmer achieved a milestone in Mexican art.

Not only did he demonstrate the relationship that relationship that Maples Arce had established between technology and globalization. He was also able to address and connect a mass audience in a way that had eluded the artist of the post-revolutionary avant-garde."



Presentation by Edward McCaughan

The second presentation entitled "Art Activism and New Ways of Being Mexican" given by Edward McCaughan, Professor of Sociology at San Francisco State University, continued the conversation of Mexico's art history through a discussion of how, over the past four decades, art has served as a vehicle for the production and expression of a new Mexican identity. Drawing on the work of cultural sociologists who "understand identities, ideologies, and subjects as being constituted by not simply reflected in art" and Latin American social movement scholar Sonia E. Alvarez, McCaughan described the role that Mexican social movements and artists have played in deploying alternative notions of citizenship and unsettling accepted cultural meanings beginning with the student movement of 1968. Following a brief historical background of Mexico's student movement, McCaughan moved to a discussion of artist collectives known as "Grupos" that were a legacy of this history. McCaughan described that at its height the Grupos Movement included at least a dozen collectives in Mexico City with others in areas like Guadalajara. These groups created art that touched on issues ranging from corruption, poverty and repression to environmental destruction and U.S. imperialism. Of particular importance to McCaughan's presentation were examples of street art, feminist art, and art associated with the 1970s Mexican Homosexual Liberation Movement. McCaughan concluded his presentation with a discussion of a recent project intended to archive the work of LGBT activists and allies.

Finally, the third presentation entitled “¡Me Encanta La Ciudad! The Perils of a More User-Friendly Mexico City” given by journalist, author, and current Mexico bureau chief for VICE News, Daniel Hernandez, moved to a discussion of lived experience in contemporary Mexico City. Hernandez’s presentation discussed recent development or gentrification of Mexico City’s center, which despite allowing for some improvement or as Hernandez suggested, making Mexico City “more livable and inviting to foreigners” have in fact “masked or hidden the underlying problems that the vast majority of the city’s population still face.” These changes followed on the heels of the campaign referenced in the presentation’s title ¡Me Encanta La Ciudad! that began in mid-2000. Hernandez’s presentation, describing the lived reality of Mexico City today added greater context to the ideas put forth by both Flores and McCaughan. While Flores and McCaughan expressed a sense of optimism for the possibilities of art in the increased democratization of Mexico City’s public sphere, Hernandez reminded attendees of the continued challenges and violence that plague Mexico City today.



Panel 1 was joined by presenter, Daniel Hernandez

# ART, POLITICS & THE CITY IN MEXICO AND CHINA: EXHIBIT(ION)S AND PUBLICATIONS

October 26, 2015

By Will Payne

Susan Moffat, Project Director of Berkeley's Global Urban Humanities Initiative, kicked off a short session showcasing hybrid approaches to cities with faculty from different departments teaching together, weaving together different methods and bringing together students from different disciplines. First, Berkeley professors Margaret Crawford (Architecture) and Winnie Wong (Rhetoric), accompanied by graduate student members of the studio José Figueroa and Valentina Rozas-Krause, came up to introduce the exhibition that came out of their Mellon-funded studio course in the spring semester of 2015, Art+Village+City in the Pearl River Delta. The group visited a number of villages where art is produced and documented them, producing a complex, multimedia exhibition over the summer, with many hours put in by visiting scholar Ettore Santi. Their website ([artvillage.city](http://artvillage.city)) is "the story of the pedagogical journey of the studio," and all drawings were done by Figueroa during the class.



## Attendees visiting the Art+Village+City Exhibit

Next up were Jonathan Crisman, project director for the Urban Humanities initiative at UCLA and

Dana Cuff, UCLA Professor of Architecture and Urban Planning, to present the Now Shanghai project, also funded by a Mellon Foundation grant. According to Cuff, Now Shanghai is a cross-disciplinary urban methodological investigation wrapped around ideas of film, thick mapping, and experiential ethnography, made up of a group of 24 students incorporating films made in Shanghai about urbanism across many genres, from documentary to fable and travelogue. Crisman described the way in which the project drew on anthropologist Clifford Geert's idea of "thickness," as the group explored a wide range of media "that could embed this polyvocality, multiple voices that are often conflicting" occupying the same space.



## Various displays throughout the exhibit showed videos and other media.

Crisman and Cuff were followed by UC Berkeley graduate students Kirsten Larson (Architecture/City Planning) and Karin Shankar (Performance Studies), to present their coauthored journal and website, P[art]icipatory Urbanisms, a project that came about due to a "blind date" meeting through the Global Urban Humanities Initiative. Larson described how bracketing the [art] in 'participation' also suggests a blurring of the conventional separation between the aesthetic and the political dimensions of urban participation. She offered that urban practices, from spontaneous protests, to organized claims on urban space, are as aesthetic as they are political since they "entail a re-ordering of the field of urban experience and perception." The publication has two main components, a bilingual website ([www.part-urbs.com](http://www.part-urbs.com)) with interviews in English and Portuguese with community activists, artists, and other groups involved in participatory urban processes in Sao Paulo and New Delhi, and a peer-reviewed publication of articles by scholars across disciplines taking on the subjects of participatory practices in art and planning. Shankar outlined their hope that this intervention can help spark conversation and collaboration, and to "assess the radical promise



and the potential pitfalls of participation in both urban politics and art today.”

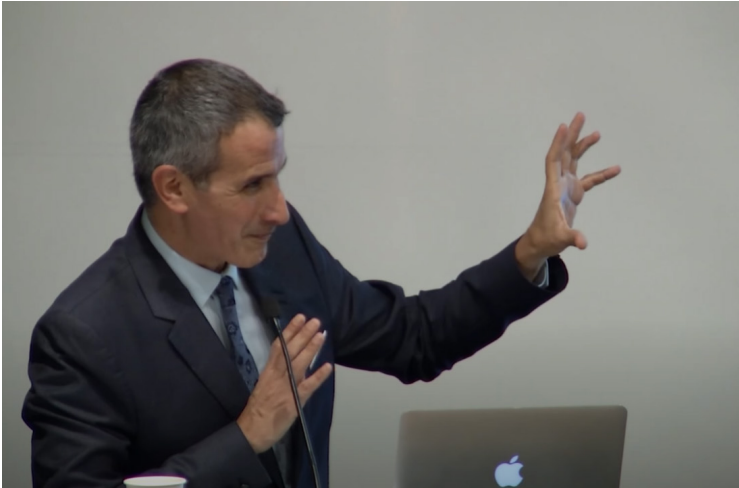
Finally, Berkeley graduate students Mia Narell (Architecture) and Lawrence Yang (East Asian Languages + Cultures) presented Urban Pilgrimage, a special issue of Berkeley’s Room One Thousand student-edited journal on architecture. Narell, who serves on the publication’s editorial board, talked about how pleased she was to be partnering with the Global Urban Humanities Initiative, and read a statement on behalf of Padma Maitland, co-editor of the publication. Maitland and Yang were drawn to the project of “rethinking pilgrimage in the modern urban context” beyond merely religious travel. There were print copies of the journal available for sale at the symposium, but the whole project is also available on their website ([www.roomonethousand.com](http://www.roomonethousand.com)), providing a diverse collection of answers to the question: “What draws and moves us towards and through cities?”



Attendees browsing publications on view at the Symposium.

# SYMPOSIA SESSIONS- VIDEOS

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS: “MEXICO CITY: FROM REVOLUTIONARY RUINS TO GLOBAL CITY AND BACK AGAIN”



**Video 1: (Ruben Gallo, Professor, Spanish and Portuguese Languages and Cultures, Princeton University)**

- This talk explored the place of ruins in Mexico City’s urban landscape since the Mexican Revolution of 1910 to the present, and argued that a crucial element of urbanism has been repressed from the capital’s imagined space. Invoking psychoanalytic theory, Gallo argued that these images have been repressed from the imaginary in order to create representations of the capital that favor illusions of completeness, wholeness, persistence, and solidity.

## PANEL 1: MODERNITY IN PROCESS: CREATIVE PRACTICE, URBAN EXPERIENCE AND THE CITY



**Video 2: (Discussant, Ivonne del Valle)**

- Tatiana Flores, “Mexico City--Avant-Garde City?”
- Edward McCaughan, “Art, Activism and New Ways of Being Mexican”
- Daniel Hernandez, “¡Me Encanta la Ciudad!: The Perils of a More User-Friendly Mexico City”

### **Plus exhibits and publications**

- Art+Village+City : Margaret Crawford, Winnie Wong, Ettore Santi, José Figueroa, Valentina Rozas-Krause
- Now Shanghai: Dana Cuff, Jonathan Crisman,
- P[art]icipatory Urbanisms: Kirsten Larson, Karin Shankar
- Urban Pilgrimage: Mia Fuller, Lawrence Yang

## PANEL 2: INSURGENT CITIES: POLITICS, SPACE AND URBAN ACTION IN MEXICO D.F.



**Video 3: (Discussant: Gaston Alzate)**

- Juan Carlos Rulfo, “Searching for Identity”
- Minerva Cuevas, “Dissidence, Mapping Resistance in Mexico City”
- Jesusa Rodríguez, “Mexico City: The Insatiable Mouth”

## CLOSING REMARKS BY RESPONDENTS MAITE ZUBIAURRE AND MICHAEL DEAR



**Video 4: (Respondents: Maite Zubiaurre and Michael Dear)**

- The day’s panels are discussed by two respondents, Maite Zubiaurre (Professor, Spanish and Portuguese, UCLA), and Michael Dear (Professor Emeritus, City and Regional Planning, UC Berkeley).



ART, POLITICS, & THE CITY IN MEXICO AND CHINA  
SYMPOSIUM FALL 2015