

The New Museum

OF CONTEMPORARY ART

583 BROADWAY NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10012 (212) 219-1222

News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Charlayne Haynes
Katie Clifford
212/219-1222 Fax 212/431-5328

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COMMUNITY PROJECT FEATURING LATINOS IN NEW YORK CITY OPENS AT THE NEW MUSEUM

Testimonio is a collaborative installation by and about Latinos living in the New York City neighborhoods of East Harlem, Williamsburg, and Washington Heights. It is on view in The New Museum's WorkSpace and New Work Galleries from September 10, 1993 through January 2, 1994.

Mural painting, works on paper, photography, documentary video, and printed and recorded oral accounts, present a multifaceted view of Latino culture, social and economic history, and community politics.

Testimonio was conceived as a complement to Trade Routes, an international exhibition of art in the main gallery concerned with the globalization of trade and culture. Undeniably, Latinos themselves have been affected by the kinds of geographical and cultural movements that Trade Routes explores.

The works in Testimonio represent a process of combining academic research and collective experience to expand on ideas about community and identity. They reflect the shift in immigration which has occurred during the past decades, from an immigrant group predominantly European to one largely consisting of people from the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Colombia, and other Latin American and Caribbean countries. Specifically, the role of memory and imagination is central in building these communities' histories, as well as the role of community activism in achieving Latino political and economic rights.

Testimonio, a two-year collaboration between The New Museum of Contemporary Art, the CAMEO Project of the Center for Cultural Studies of the CUNY Graduate School, and neighborhood residents, artists, workers, and community based organizations in East Harlem, Washington Heights, and Williamsburg, is accompanied by a bilingual (English/Spanish) brochure.

Doña Petra Allende, Puerto Rican immigrant and community activist in El Barrio, collaborated with Carmen Medeiros, a member of CAMEO--an acronym for Community, Autobiography, Memory, Ethnography, Organizing--to produce a multimedia montage entitled Las memorias de Doña Petra: Places and Memories of Puerto Rican

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Struggles in New York. The project focuses on issues Doña Petra has been closely involved in: political representation, bilingual education, work and welfare, housing, and women's rights.

Adult students from El Barrio Popular Education Program, a native language literacy program in East Harlem, have created a limited edition artists book. Alternating silk-screened images with printed text, the students have identified issues that directly affect their communities, such as the need for appropriate housing and neighborhood safety, and reflect on how they perceive their future in this country.

The frequency of death, at an early age and by violent means, is another issue that critically affects Latino communities in New York City. Residents from Williamsburg have painted on the gallery wall a memorial mural, a kind of funerary marker which has been prevalent in urban neighborhoods since the early 1980s, as a means to commemorate those who otherwise go "officially" unrecognized. AREITO ART, a collaborative artists group in Washington Heights, has also painted a mural to commemorate the dead: two slain Dominican men who were victims of racial hatred and police brutality in 1991 and 1992.

Other community projects include an installation by Southside TV, a collective which trains members of Southside Brooklyn in video production; and a series of workshops conducted by Musica Against Drugs, a community based organization which serves Latinos/Latinas affected by HIV/AIDS and recovering addicts in the Williamsburg area. In addition to addressing political and social issues, these two community organizations' projects also emphasize expressive culture--music, dance, poetry, theater--and its role in social and political empowerment.

Workshops and a performance will take place at the Museum in conjunction with Testimonio: Theater of Inspiration Workshop with Chris Lanier and Alma Villegas, Thursday, September 30, 1993, 6:30-9:30 PM; Call and Response: Poetry and Drawing Workshop with Juan Sanchez, Thursday, October 14, 1993, 6:30-8:30 PM; and La Cultural Tambien Cura, music and poetry performance with Manny Maldonado and Alfredo Miranda, Saturday, November 6, 1993, 6:00-8:00 PM.

Support for Testimonio was provided by The National Endowment for the Arts, The New York State Council on the Arts, and The New York Community Trust.

The New Museum of Contemporary Art is located at 583 Broadway between Houston and Prince Streets in Soho. Hours are Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Sunday: Noon to 6:00 PM; Saturday: Noon to 8:00 PM, 6:00-8:00 PM free; Monday and Tuesday, closed. Admission is \$3.50 general; \$2.50 artists, students, seniors; members and children under 12, free.

For recorded information, please call 212/219-1355.