

**Armory Center for the Arts**  
Sunday, January 14, 2018 and  
Wednesday, January 17, 2018

**ARMORY**

***The Social Body, Performed: Feminist Art and Action of Mexico***

An Armory festival within the Pacific Standard Time Festival: Live Art LA/LA



Image by Donna Senf Carroll, courtesy Amy Sara Carroll.

**Sunday, January 14, 3pm**

**Amy Sara Carroll: A performative gallery walkthrough**

In 1998 in Mexico City, Amy Sara Carroll began researching what would become *REMEMIX: Toward an Art History of the NAFTA Era* (University of Texas Press, December 2017). In that critical monograph, Carroll engages several pieces

included in *Below the Underground: Renegade Art and Action in 1990s Mexico*. Part performative academic lecture, part poetry reading, part guided gallery tour: Carroll remixes REMEX—fragments of the “undocument,” its outtakes, and re-visions.




Image by Eugenio Castro, courtesy Lorena Wolffer.

**Sunday, January 14, 4pm**

**If She is Mexico, Who Beat Her Up?**  
**If They are Mexico, Who Beat Them Up?**  
**If You are Mexico, Who Beat You Up?**  
**If We are Mexico, Who Beat Us Up?**  
A performance by Lorena Wolffer and  
Amy Sara Carroll

In **If She Is Mexico, Who Beat Her Up?** first presented in 1997, Lorena Wolffer sited her own body as Mexico's social, political and economic crisis. The artist as a battered high fashion model—a beaten country that insists on performing itself as salubrious, fashionable, and attractive on the world market—vogued different garments and props on a white runway and posed for photos with audience members. At the time, **If She Is Mexico, Who Beat Her Up?** allegorized the especially abusive and codependent relationship of Mexico and the United States, exacerbated by the 1994 passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the demonization of Mexico in US immigration debates and US Congressional drug de-certification hearings. It cast audience members in an asymmetrical role with the artist insofar as they stood in contradistinction to Wolffer as “Miss Mexico.” Because the performance featured images of a transgender performer, it also implicitly posed the question, **If They are Mexico, Who Beat Them Up?**

Twenty years later, Wolffer in collaboration with Amy Sara Carroll, further gender-troubles the work's title. Testing a range of pronouns, **If She Is Mexico, Who Beat Her Up?**'s rhetorical question mutates into other lines of inquiry that re-script relationships between Wolffer, critic/s, and spectators. Namely, during the re-performance, a make-up artist creates special-effects cuts, bruises, and wounds on Wolffer's body while Carroll—one of the first scholars to write about **If She Is Mexico, Who Beat Her Up?**—voices the re-formulated question, **If You are Mexico, who Beat You Up?** Recounting the history of the performance, Carroll invites audience members in an echo of the work's prior presentations to have their pictures taken with Wolffer. Interpellated spectators assume the mantle of the re-presentation's new question, **If We are Mexico, Who Beat Us Up?** Asked by Carroll to approach Wolffer and share the memories or events they associate with Mexico-US relations from 1997 through 2017, participant-observers co-perform the social body of Mexico becoming a collective action. Additional special affects: a timeline on the wall featuring key events that have taken place over the past two decades on both sides of the Mexico-US border serves as a periodizing guide for audience members to annotate or touch-up.

**Sunday, January 14, 6pm**

***Katia Tirado: Parody Paradise***

In *Parody Paradise*, Katia Tirado uses the idea of the Roman coliseum to subvert an iconic architecture in which tragedy is consumed, desire is delocalized, and our predatory nature is controlled and administered by the power of necropolitics. Using images of “nichos públicos,” she has built an “architecture of the flesh” where these relationships are reversed. The performance involves a “toro mecánico,” or mechanical bull – a familiar amusement at bars family parties, particularly along both sides of the US/Mexico border – onto which the artist places sex toys, while an original soundtrack plays testimonies of people and organizations that are looking for missing persons in Mexico. After approximately 20 minutes, once this action is completed, those present are invited to participate. The total duration of the performance is open and depends on the participation of the audience.

*Parody Paradise* extends from Katia Tirado’s *Exhivilización/Las perras en celo (the bitch is in heat)*, a performance from the 1990s. The work presents an opportunity to focus on and expand the “nichos públicos,” an under-represented

element of *Exhivilización*, on an unprecedented scale in a piece that bridges past and future. Subverting lucha libre’s customary machismo, *Exhivilización/Las perras en celo* involved two punked-out luchadoras on all fours connected by a series of chords and tubing that forced them to move in the same direction. The goal was to arrive at each of the large phalluses erected in the four corners of the wrestling ring in which the performance took place, and ignite them – setting off fireworks representing luminous orgasms, at which point a street singer was placed onto the backs of the still-kneeling performers and belted popular, melodramatic ballads. The reward of *Exhivilización*’s successful climax points to the violence and struggle beneath; quite literally, the romantic fixation on normative pleasures frames the body as the point at which to develop critique. In addition to contemporary references such as punk and lucha libre, *Exhivilización* contains notable pre-Hispanic references, including the deity Coatlicue, the two-headed Nahuatl goddess who embodies birth and death, life and war, and moon and stars.



Image courtesy Katia Tirado.

**Wednesday, January 17, 7pm**

**Artemisa Clark: *La clase de dibujo libre/Free Drawing Class (2000-2004/2017/2018)***

*La clase de dibujo libre/Free Drawing Class (2000-2004/2017/2018)* by Artemisa Clark is a “reperformance” by Los Angeles-based artist Artemisa Clark of Ema Villanueva’s provocative Mexico City street actions from 2000-2002.

*La clase de dibujo libre/Free Drawing Class* was a series of life drawing classes in public plazas in Mexico City and elsewhere from 2000-2002, produced by Edema, a collaboration between

Ema Villanueva and Eduardo Flores. During these performances, Villanueva posed as a nude model while simultaneously engaging in discussions with attendees about contemporary issues such as feminism and social justice—using the objectification of her own body as a means to bring attention to pressing topics of the day. Clark’s reperformance considers Villanueva’s prior actions and offer another interpretation of the traditional role of “the model.”



Image by Ian Byers-Gamber.



*The Social Body, Performed: Feminist Art and Action of Mexico* is a performance art series related to the Armory’s group exhibition *Below the Underground: Renegade Art and Action* in 1990s Mexico, which examines diverse independent artist initiatives – including ad hoc street performances and interventions, clubs, collaboratively produced ‘zines, archives and collections, pirate radio programs, and more. The project also references pronounced divisions of class, race, and gender, with artworks themselves the tangible outcomes of many different conditions of creating, living, and experimenting within the same place. The exhibition, performance series, and related events have been organized by Irene Tsatsos, Director of Exhibition Programs and Chief Curator, Armory Center for the Arts.



Presented as part of the Pacific Standard Time Festival: Live Art LA/LA, organized by REDCAT and supported by a major grant from the Getty Foundation. Pacific Standard Time Festival: Live Art LA/LA is part of Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA, a far-reaching and ambitious exploration of Latin American and Latino art in dialogue with Los Angeles, taking place from September 2017 through January 2018 at more than 70 cultural institutions across Southern California. Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA is an initiative of the Getty. The presenting sponsor is Bank of America.

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[www.belowtheunderground.org](http://www.belowtheunderground.org)