

## Curatorial Statement

Noel Smith, Curator of Latin American and Caribbean Art

The 11th Havana Biennial (May 11 – June 11, 2012) sprawled over the historic Cuban capital, filling its museums, galleries, plazas and streets with advanced contemporary art from all corners of the world under the theme “Art Practices and Social Imageries.” Director Margaret Miller and I agreed that one of the most intriguing exhibitions was *Open Score*, an ambitious and expansive gathering of works in new media that combined elements of high and low technology, by artists living and working in the Western Hemisphere from Canada to Argentina. *Open Score* was titled in homage to artist Robert Rauschenberg’s 1966 *Open Score*, one of his pioneering and visionary works with art and new technology.<sup>1</sup>

*Open Score* seemed appropriate for our USF audiences: The critical nature of its content correlates with the educational mission of USFCAM to engage our students and community in art that resonates with the challenging and critical issues of our times, while its reference to Rauschenberg builds on the university’s relationship with the late artist, his work and his legacy. Moreover, beyond the campus, the exhibition’s interactive artworks with their diversity of forms, ease of operation and compelling aesthetic imagination promise to engage a wide community audience. The multi-media works are by a diverse roster of artists whose practices lie at the core of international contemporary art discourse. The exhibition deals with issues of collective authorship and civic participation; the manner in which computerized technology and software influence group imagery and model the perception of reality; and the possibilities that technologies offer as tools for poetic expression in both art and daily life. *Open Score* responds to one of the most pressing imperatives of our time, the need for increased levels of visual literacy in our image and information-saturated culture.

Curators Luis Gómez and Dannys Montes de Oca agreed to allow USFCAM to present a version of *Open Score* in Tampa. Because the exhibition in Havana filled the two galleries of the stately early 20th century palace housing the Centro Hispanoamericano de Cultura, a space far larger than USFCAM, they collaborated with me to create an edited version that maintained and honored the curatorial and artistic intent of the original. I contacted a selected group of artists to discuss how their work could be optimally presented in Tampa. Ingrid Bachmann (Canada), Patricia Clark (USA), Luis Gómez (Cuba), Antonio Gómez

Margolles (Cuba), the duo Camilo Martínez (Colombia) and Gabriel Zea (Colombia), Barry Moon (USA), Levi Orta (Cuba), Mariano Sardón (Argentina), and Bill Vorn (Canada), all graciously agreed to participate.

For more than two decades beginning in the early 1970s, Graphicstudio enjoyed a close working relationship with Robert Rauschenberg. In collaboration with the atelier, the artist made over 60 print and sculpture editions, which are included in a total of over 175 works by the artist held in CAM’s collection. In the 1980s, also in partnership with Graphicstudio, he created the exhibition project, Rauschenberg Overseas Cultural Interchange (ROCI), which toured exhibitions of the artist’s works through eleven countries including China, Mexico, Chile, Malaysia, and Cuba. Through this project he demonstrated his commitment to international peace and his belief that “one to one contact through art” could be an effective tool in bridging differences. ROCI’s 1987-88 Cuba project is still remembered and honored, and the exhibition *Open Score* attests to Rauschenberg’s lasting influence on the visual arts of the Caribbean island.

The USF Institute for Research in Art’s commitment to the visual arts of Cuba has supported my research for over a dozen years, and has empowered extraordinary and close relationships with Cuban artists, curators and arts institutions; these have resulted in individual and group exhibitions at CAM, numerous academic and community events, scholarly publications, and artist residencies at Graphicstudio. Despite its geographic, political and economic isolation, Cuba’s art community is among the world’s most advanced in terms of its conceptual and material production, and its emphasis on the importance of socially-engaged art has so much to teach us about the value of art in the life of a nation. Due to considerable economic and political hurdles, the development of technology in Cuba has lagged behind that of other countries; however, Cuban society is inevitably experiencing a growing relationship with these new media. Whatever our varying levels of reliance on computers and informational systems, we inhabit the same rapidly changing world environment and share many of the same problems. *Open Score* creates a fascinating incubator for the development and discussion of globally important issues that concern us all.

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1. The first of 9 Evenings: Theatre and Engineering, 1966.

## Acknowledgements

Margaret Miller, Director, Institute for Research in Art

In Havana, over the last two decades, many artists have achieved international visibility and are highly regarded in Cuban society. Artists and curators are intellectual leaders and art functions as an integral part of Cuban society. Even knowing this, the exhibition *Open Score*, curated by Luis Gómez and Dannys Montes de Oca for the 11th Havana Biennial (May 2012), was a surprise because in Cuba the use of computer technology, particularly for internet connections, is intermittent and restricted in its full development and use. *Open Score* is an international exhibition, placing Cuban artists in a broad context of artists who consider the challenges and perceptual shifts that are required of all of us as we interact with new technologies. The artists demonstrate that technology can serve as a mechanism of exchange and poetical transformation of reality.

On my very first visit to Havana for the 7th Havana Biennial (November 2000), I visited the studio of Luis Gómez. I have continued with great interest to follow his work and curatorial projects. I therefore visited *Open Score* in Havana with much anticipation knowing that Luis Gómez developed it with Dannys Montes de Oca and in collaboration with many of the artists in the exhibition. Noel Smith, USF Institute for Research in Art’s visionary Curator of Latin American Art, has many substantive connections with Cuban artists and arts leaders. She has worked closely with Luis and Dannys and with the artists she selected for the version of *Open Score* presented in the USF Contemporary Art Museum.

Mariano Sardón, *Libros de Arena (Books of Sand)*, 2004



Patricia Clark, *Malecón*, 2012

I should also note that part of the rationale for bringing *Open Score* to Tampa is that Donald J. Saff, founding director of Graphicstudio, organized the ROCI project (Rauschenberg Overseas Cultural Interchange), which included a major exhibition of Rauschenberg’s work in Havana in 1988. Luis Gómez and many other Cuban artists working today remember and were inspired by the exhibition. The title of the exhibition, *Open Score*, refers to Rauschenberg’s 1966 performance, held at the 69th Regiment Armory, New York City. Ten New York artists and thirty engineers and scientists from Bell Telephone Laboratories collaborated on a series of innovative dance, music and theater performances, 9 Evenings: Theatre & Engineering.

There are many staff to acknowledge that have assisted with the organization and presentation of *Open Score* at the USF Contemporary Art Museum: Alexa Favata, Associate Director, coordinated the project; Shannon Annis managed the loans; Taylor Pilote assisted with technical aspects of the installation; Tony Palms worked directly with Noel Smith and the curators to design the exhibition; and Vincent Kral managed the installation. Don Fuller designed the invitation, publication and promotional materials, Amy Allison planned the reception and coordinated the multiple events associated with the opening, and Randall West managed all fiscal matters. Additional staff, students and interns that assisted with the project include Drew Ahern, Kienan Almeida, Ian Foe, Chris Gentry, Jay Hollick, Eric Jonas, Ashley Martinez, Ville Mehtonen, Desiree Moore and Andrea Tamborello.

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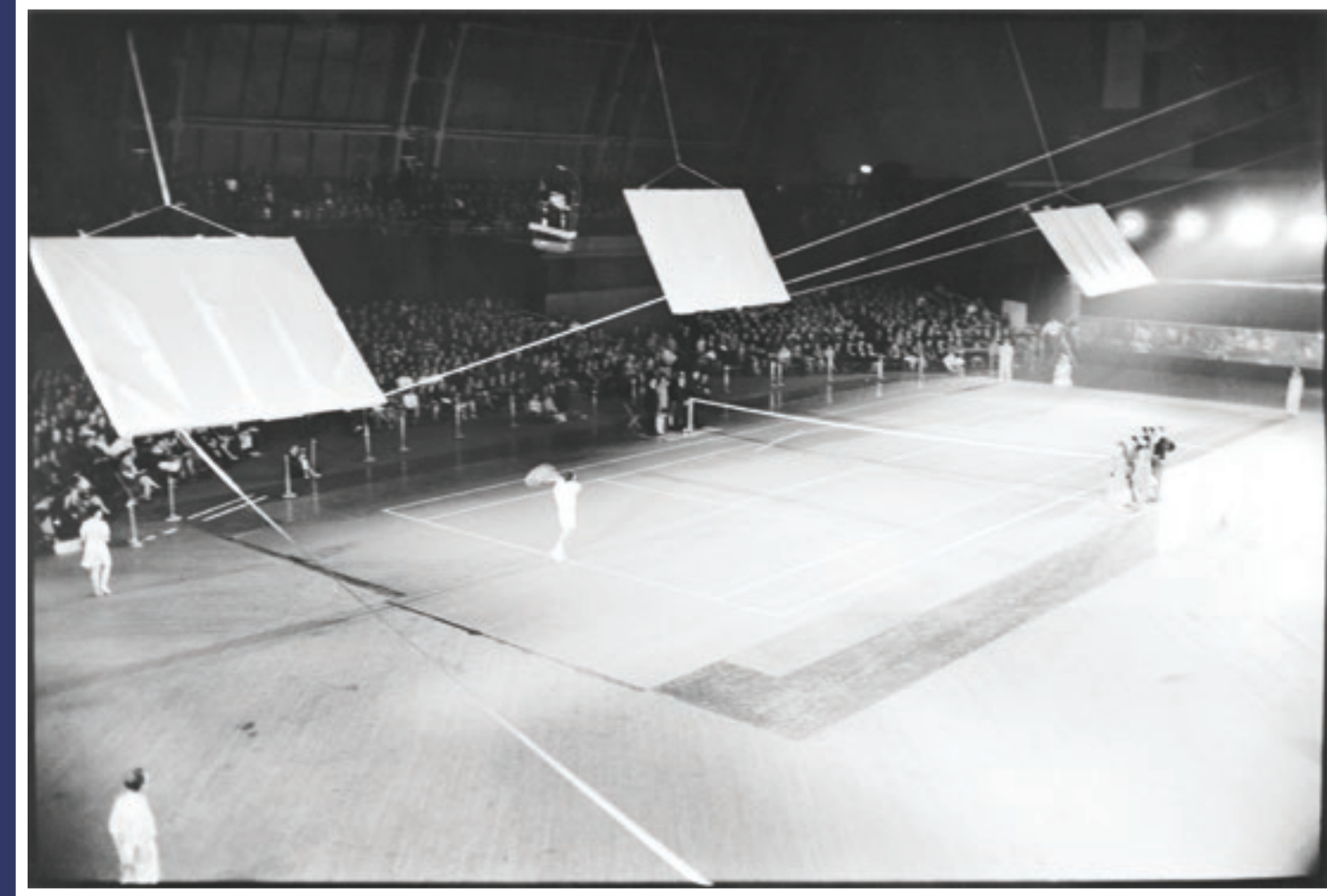


*Open Score* is supported in part by the Arts Council of Hillsborough County and the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners. Mariano Sardón’s visit to USF made possible in part by Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero. The Institute for Research in Art is recognized by the State of Florida as a major cultural institution and receives funding through the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Council on Arts and Culture, and the National Endowment for the Arts. The USF Contemporary Art Museum is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums.



Cover image: The tennis game in Robert Rauschenberg’s *Open Score* for 9 Evenings: Theatre & Engineering. The three screens for later projection of infrared images hang above the audience. Photo Peter Moore

# Open Score



January 18 – March 9, 2013  
USF Contemporary Art Museum

## Open Score

Luis Gómez and Dannys Montes de Oca, Curators

The original version of *Open Score* was part of the 11th Havana Biennial (May–June 2012), and was the first exhibition of the Biennial to be completely dedicated to the subject of technology. We proposed to articulate a discourse focusing on the relationship between the most recent technology (or high tech) and first generation technology (second hand technology or low tech), and on the place of technology in the construction of artistic and social imaginaries in contemporary societies.

The original checklist was composed of artists and theorists from several regions and countries including Cuba (Luis Gómez, Fernando Rodríguez, Antonio Gómez Margolles, Levi Orta, Leslie García, Lainier Díaz, Yusnier Mentado), Canada (Ingrid Bachmann, Emmanuel Sevigny, Bill Vorn, Arlan Londoño), Spain (David Maroto, Lino García), Germany (Michael Bielicky and Kamilla B. Richter), Argentina (Mariano Sardón), Colombia (Camilo Martínez and Gabriel Zea), and the United States (Patricia Clark, Barry Moon). As curators, we cited as our source *Open Score*, one of the first approaches of a technological nature made by Robert Rauschenberg, during a performance event that gathered important artists from the period.<sup>1</sup>

It was an interactive performance that made use of the technology existing at the time, and was conceived as a tennis game between two persons. Wireless microphones were installed in each one of the rackets. While the game was taking place and with the participation of audio technicians, the sound resulting from the hitting of the ball against the rackets' surfaces gradually became distorted, as well as the entire environmental sound. Propelled by Rauschenberg's action, we launched an exploration of the recent development of computer systems and their accelerated adaptation into the arts as models of communication and as visual arts environments. However, we took into consideration their usage in both economically developed and underdeveloped countries.

To those of us who live in contexts deprived of great possibilities of technological access, this would not pose too great of a problem if it were not for the way in which certain practices of information and control are invading other areas of daily life. This reality can be as beneficial as it can be harmful despite the intentions and results (also admirable) of democratization.

In response to this media verticality, *Open Score* offers both affirmations and interrogations. Even as it emphasizes the artifact, the machine and digital software, the exhibition

privileges their role in the flow of social interaction, and understands technology as a state of consciousness and as a historical application of knowledge and techniques. As such, it could be considered similar to such consensual forms of understanding reality as ideologies, sciences or politics.

*Open Score* explores the use of technology as tools for the poetic transformation of reality and the construction of new collective imaginaries, and avoids the skepticism or fear that this field has generally inspired in novices. It attempts to ease the approach to the complex narrative that surrounds this type of art, with its structure based on the programming of visual, aural and interactive interfaces, and to make visible the origin and meaning of its flows and connectivities as part of an international culture that progresses more and more towards digital participation and interaction.

The public/user will discover projects that understand culture as a sustainable mechanism of exchange and which find in this connection a type of functional intertextuality fed by databases, online communities and never before imagined websites. These include the websites of digital literature and hypertexts activated by Mariano Sardón; Martínez and Zea's counterpoint between local production processes that participate, by means of free software and databases, in global dimensions of fluctuation and value; the insertion of art into operating systems of daily life recreated by Luis Gómez together with Patricia Clark and Barry Moon; and Levi Orta's metaphor for structural dependence.

Bill Vorn creates ergonomic organisms and functions that operate with a degree of chaos, to make visible the lack of emotional and human perspective in artificial intelligence prototypes. Patricia Clark, Antonio Gómez Margolles and Ingrid Bachmann show us environments where small machines, sensors, and devices recreate, in their digital or mechanical states, demagogic relationships between power and the masses, tensions between the historical and the everyday, and confrontations between knowledge and power.

Finally we must recognize how Rauschenberg's pluralistic languages and techniques, introduced to the Cuban public in the 1980s, are an important source for the curatorial premise of the exhibition *Open Score*.<sup>2</sup> The convergence of the simple and the refined shows us the way to many of our most exalted dreams.

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1. Experiments in Art and Technology, 9 Evenings: Theatre and Engineering, 1966.  
2. Solo exhibitions of Robert Rauschenberg in Havana, at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes and the Castillo de la Real Fuerza, 1987.



Ingrid Bachmann, *Pinocchio's Dilemma*, 2007



The Colectiva (Luis Gómez, Barry Moon and Patricia Clark), *ALT CTRL*, 2012



Camilo Martínez and Gabriel Zea, *Generador de Valores (Value Generator)*, 2012

## About the Artists and Curators

**Ingrid Bachmann** (Canada) received her Masters from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She has exhibited her work nationally and internationally including the 11th Havana Biennial, Cuba; Manifestation D'art International 6, Quebec; the Southern Alberta Art Gallery, Canada; as well as exhibitions and festivals in Belgium, the U.S., Estonia, Singapore, Peru, Cuba, and the UK. In 2010, Bachmann was awarded the Paris Studio, La Cité International des Arts, from the Canada Council. Bachmann is currently Associate Professor at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada. Bachmann is also a founding member of Hexagram: Media Arts Institute and the Director of the Institute of Everyday Life.

**Patricia Clark** (USA) is an interdisciplinary artist and educator working in video, interactive media installations and performance, digital prints, and experimental documentary. She received her M.F.A. from Arizona State University's School of Art in Intermedia with a focus on video art and interactive installation. Her individual and collaborative works have been exhibited at the Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal, Canada; URSA in Santa Fe, NM; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the 8th and 11th Havana Biennials, Havana; the Gebert Contemporary Gallery, Scottsdale; and the Centro Cultural Banco do Brazil.

**Luis Gómez** (Cuba) utilizes technology and video in his installations, where he explores human positionality in relation to nature and the universe. He is currently Chair of the New Media Lab of the Instituto Superior de Arte in Havana, Cuba. Gómez has exhibited at the Museo de Bellas Artes, Havana; the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art, New York; the Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst, Aachen, Germany; the Barbican Center, London; and in several of the Havana Biennials. His residencies include the Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh, and The Ohio State University. His work is in the collections of the Ludwig Forum, Aachen, Germany; the Arizona State University Art Museum; the Cincinnati Contemporary Art Center; the NINART, Mexico City; the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana; the Van Reekum Museum Apeldoorn, Holland; and the Wakita Museum of Art, Japan.

**Antonio Gómez Margolles** (Cuba) graduated from the Instituto Superior de Arte in Havana, where in 2006 he founded the department of New Media, where he teaches new technologies. His recent work focuses on technology and interactivity. His work has been exhibited in many group exhibitions, art fairs and biennials in Europe, Cuba, Latin America and the Caribbean. He lives and works in Havana, Cuba.

**martinez-zea** is **Camilo Martínez** (Colombia) and **Gabriel Zea** (Colombia). They attended the Universidad Nacional de Colombia and are Masters candidates in Electronic Art at Universidad Tres de Febrero in Buenos Aires. Since 2006, they have worked with open source technologies in projects involving collaboration with individuals and groups in different areas of art and beyond. Their work is based on appropriation processes, and experimentation with technology involving the development of their own software and hardware tools. Their projects are inserted in different contexts of interaction and distribution. Their works have been presented in exhibitions such as the 42 Salón Nacional de Artistas, Colombia; Entre-Pontos, Belo Horizonte, Brazil; and recently the 11th Havana Biennial and Estarter #3, Bandung, Indonesia.

**Dannys Montes de Oca Moreda** (Cuba), art historian, curator, author and critic based in Havana, is a graduate of Universidad de La Habana and holds a post-graduate degree from the Instituto Cubano de Investigación Cultural Juan Marinello. Since 2003 she has been a member of the curatorial team of the Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Wifredo Lam and of the Havana Biennial, for which she also organizes the theoretical forum. Curator of several contemporary Cuban art exhibitions in Cuba and all over the world, she has lectured at galleries, museums, universities and art centers in Cuba, Canada, USA, México, Algeria, Germany, Spain and France. Her art criticism and reviews have been published in international publications *La Gaceta de Cuba* and *Arte Cubano* (Havana); *Humboldt* (Bonn); *Public* (Toronto); *Art Nexus* (Bogota); and *Inter Art Actuel*, (Quebec). She is co-author of *Memories: Cuban Art of the 20th Century*.

**Barry Moon** (Australia) earned his Ph.D. in music composition from SUNY Buffalo and joined the Arizona State University faculty in 2006. He has held a long-time interest in sound recording and production, as well as music composition and music performance, and his most recent research interests include video production, real-time audio and video processing utilizing Max/MSP/Jitter, and interface design for performance and installation environments. A sound/video artist, composer and performer, his installations are featured regularly at ASU as well as across the country and around the world. Among his many projects, five have been featured at the prestigious International Computer Music Conference, and in 2008 his composition, "Pop," was featured at the 17th annual Florida Electroacoustic Music Festival.

**Levi Orta** (Cuba) is interested in subjective spaces resulting from the application of "power" in different sociopolitical contexts. He graduated from the Instituto Superior de Arte of

Havana in 2010, and from Cátedra de Arte de Conducta in 2009. Orta's solo exhibitions include the Fundación Ludwig and La Salle Zero. He has participated in multiple biennials including the Havana Biennial, Pontevedra, Liverpool, and Mercosul. In recent years, Orta has participated in exhibitions such as *Spray* in the Kokerei Hansa Museum of Dortmund, *EXPLUM'11* in Murcia, *Per diem* in the center Betonsalon in Paris and in the *Salon of Contemporary Cuban Art*. He has also received various awards including "Estudio 21" in Havana, "DES PACIO" from Costa Rica, the "SOMA" grant to study in Mexico and Darling Foundry residency in Montreal.

**Mariano Sardón** (Argentina) is professor and chair of the Electronic Art Degree Program at the Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero, and is the academic advisor of the Interactive Art Program at Espacio Fundación Telefónica Argentina. He attended the Internationale Akademie Für Bildende Kunst, Salzburg, Austria and studied Physics at the Universidad Nacional de Buenos Aires. He was Art-Science and Technology Program consultant at Daniel Langlois Foundation, Montreal, Canada, and visiting scholar at Hypermedia Studio at the University of California Los Angeles by a grant given by Fundación Antorchas. He has had several solo and group exhibitions, and many of his works are in public and private collections in Argentina and abroad.

**Noel Smith** (USA) has an M.A. degree in art history, and is the Curator of Latin American and Caribbean Art at the University of South Florida Institute for Research in Art. Smith works extensively with USF Graphicstudio collaborating with Latin American artists Carlos Garaicoa, Graciela Iturbide, Francisco Toledo, Abel Barroso, Ibrahim Miranda, Liset Castillo and Los Carpinteros. Smith was co-curator for *Los Carpinteros: Inventing the World, Homing Devices: Sculpture from Latin America and the Caribbean*, and *Carlos Garaicoa: La enmienda que hay en mí (Making Amends)*.

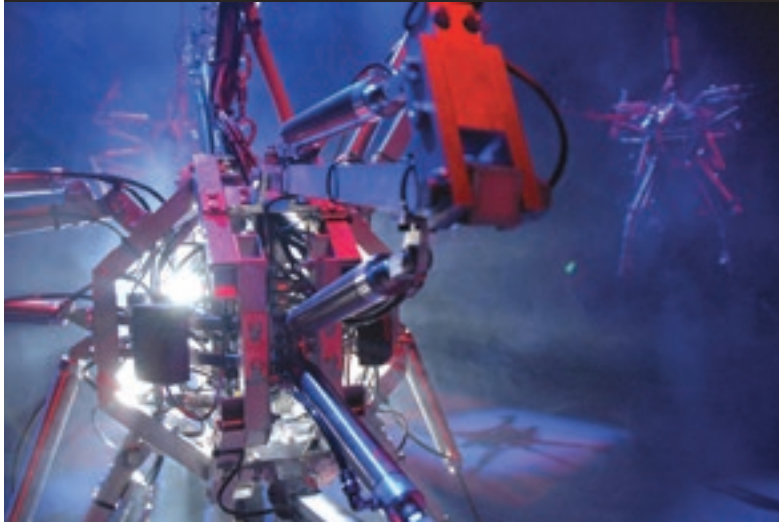
**Bill Vorn** (Canada) has been working in the field of Robotic Art for over twenty years. His installation and performance projects involve robotics and motion control, sound, lighting, video and cybernetic processes. Based in Montreal, he teaches Electronic Arts at Concordia University and holds a Ph.D. degree in Communication Studies from UQAM (Montreal) for his thesis on "Artificial Life as Media". His work has been presented in many international events, including Ars Electronica; ISEA; DEAF; Sonar; Art Futura; EMAF; and Artec. He has been awarded the Vida 2.0 award (1999, Madrid), the Leprecon Award for Interactivity (1998, New York), the Prix Ars Electronica Distinction award (1996, Linz), and the International Digital Media Award (1996, Toronto).



Antonio Gómez Margolles, *Resonancia (Resonance)*, 2011



Bill Vorn, *Hysterical Machines*, 2006



## Exhibition Checklist

**Ingrid Bachmann**  
*Pinocchio's Dilemma*, 2007  
cast resin, servo motors, Arduino microcontroller, metal, Plexiglas, plastic, wood, sensor  
19 ½ x 6 ½ feet  
Courtesy of the artist

**Patricia Clark**  
*Malecón*, 2012  
seven channel video installation  
10 feet  
Courtesy of the artist

**The Colectiva**  
**(Luis Gómez, Barry Moon and Patricia Clark)**  
*ALT CTRL*, 2012  
interactive video installation in real time; projection, computer, software programs, Kinect sensor  
dimensions variable  
Courtesy of the artists

**Antonio Gómez Margolles**  
*Resonancia (Resonance)*, 2011  
interactive installation; 4 photographic frames with motion sensors  
5 x 19 ½ x 10 feet  
Reconstructed 2013 for exhibition by USFCAM with permission from the artist

**Camilo Martínez and Gabriel Zea**  
*Generador de Valores (Value Generator)*, 2012  
interactive installation; wood, typewriter, computer, projector/video, paper  
dimensions variable  
Courtesy of the artists

**Levi Orta**  
*Test*, 2011  
homemade smoke bomb, text, cell phone  
dimensions variable  
Reconstructed 2013 for exhibition by USFCAM with permission from the artist

**Mariano Sardón**  
*Libros de Arena (Books of Sand)*, 2004  
interactive mixed media installation  
33 x 33 x 33 inches  
Reconstructed 2013 for exhibition by USFCAM with permission from the artist

**Bill Vorn**  
*Hysterical Machines*, 2006  
interactive installation; robots, computer, air compressor  
dimensions variable  
Courtesy of the artist