

For Immediate Release

SERGIO VEGA: TROPICAL RUSH
CURATED BY PABLO SCHUGURENSKY

Exhibition Dates: May 22-July 5, 2008

Opening Event: Thursday, May 22, 6:30-9:30 PM

Artist Lecture: Saturday, May 24, 4 PM at the Henry Art Gallery auditorium

Open Satellite Hours: Tuesday-Saturday 12-6 PM, second Thursday of the month 12-8 PM

For the past ten years, Sergio Vega has developed a project titled "El Paraíso en el Nuevo Mundo" [Paradise in the New World]. Based on a book of the same name written by Antonio de Leon Pinelo in 1650, Vega's project includes a growing number of photographs, sculptures, videos and text-based works that document his journeys to Pinelo's paradise, located by Vega in modern day Brazil, and the people, architecture, and the flora and fauna he encountered there.

Pinelo's text acts as a foundation for Vega's documentations of his own travels, although the artist's tone is often ironic, sometimes slapstick. Vega aligns Pinelo with Dante, who traveled through Hell and Purgatory to arrive in the celestial paradise. And like Dante and Pinelo, the artist encountered people and places of unexpected historical and social significance. Vega's contemporary view of Pinelo's Paradise is of a landscape marked with architectural evidence of European Colonialism adapted to the vernacular. These Baroque or Modern buildings dialogue with the dwellings and visual culture of the native populations.

At Open Satellite, Vega will extend the focus of his project to examine the resettlement of communities in relation to the Gold Rush, reflecting on the physical, social, and emotional effects of new settlements. Vega will tie this local material into his larger conversation with Colonialism and the myth of the Earthly Paradise, presenting a series of large photographs and a seven-minute video. The centerpiece of the installation will be the transformation of the gallery's window wall into a tropical dark forest silhouette, intended to conjure the impenetrable forest of Dante and the elusiveness of the unconscious, as well as represent the physical absence of the forest in the present environment.

The project will resonate with the Puget Sound's transformation by European immigrants who traveled West in the 19th century to claim large tracts of land. In 1897, the Klondike Gold Rush exploded Seattle's population and economy as a result of the city serving as a launching point for prospectors heading to Alaska. This rapid growth, while disrupting the Native American population, had immediate and lasting results on the physical landscape, which was altered to serve the growing population of European and Asian immigrants, and on the density and type of architecture in the area.

989 112 Ave NE
SUITE 102
BELLEVUE WA
98004
V. 425 454 7355
F. 425 454 7346

Born in Argentina, Sergio Vega attended the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program in 1992, and in 1996, received an MFA in sculpture from Yale University. He has staged solo shows at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston and Palais de Tokyo, Paris and has appeared in numerous international exhibitions and surveys, including the 2005 Venice Biennale, the 2001 Yokohama Triennale, the 2000 Kwangju and Lyon Biennales, Sonsbeek 9 at the Arnhem Museum of Modern Art, and Site Santa Fe's 1999 International Biennial. Vega is the recipient of a 1999 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship and a 1990 Pollack-Krasner Foundation grant. Since 1999, he has been on the faculty of the School of Art and Art History at the University of Florida in Gainesville. He is affiliated with Galerie Karsten Greeve, Paris and Umberto Di Marino Arte Contemporanea, Naples.

About the Curator:

Pablo Schugurensky is an independent art consultant in Seattle. Before attending art school in the United States, Schugurensky coordinated the exhibition program at La Trastienda, an alternative space in Buenos Aires, which led to his continued inquiry about the perception and placement of art and artists in society. Schugurensky worked for the New York State Council on Arts' Visual Artists Program (1987-92) and managed the Washington State Arts Commission's Art in Public Places Program (1992-97). From 1997 to 1998 he was the Director of the Microsoft Art Collection, and from 1998 to 2005, he acted as Director of Art Collections at Vulcan Inc. In October 2005, Schugurensky launched Meta Arte, an art consulting company, to advise individual collectors and companies in building art collections, public art efforts, and philanthropy in the arts.

About Open Satellite:

Open Satellite is a contemporary art exhibition hall for the Seattle metropolitan area. The residency-based program provides an opportunity for emerging and mid-career artists from outside the region to work for an extended period to create large-scale artwork in any medium. Exhibitions are staged four times annually with every fifth show focused on architecture as a critical position.

Open Satellite was formed in 2007 and is sustained by Su Development.

Media contact: Abigail Guay, abigail@opensatellite.org