

August 2010
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



MoCP
Museum of
Contemporary Photography

COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO
600 S Michigan Ave
Chicago IL 60605
Phone 312.663.5554 Fax 312.369.8067
mocp@colum.edu mocp.org

La Frontera: the Cultural Impact of Mexican Migration

October 8 - December 23, 2010

Opening reception: October 7, 5 – 7pm

**Michael Hyatt
Andy Kropa
Yoshua Okón
Heriberto Quiroz
Juan Pacheco
Antonio Perez
David Rochkind
Marcela Taboada
David Taylor**

Chicago — The Museum of Contemporary Photography (MoCP) is pleased to announce the exhibition *La Frontera*,, curated by MoCP Director Rod Slemmons, opening in October 2010.

The idea for this exhibition originated when MoCP Director Rod Slemmons served as a member of the Mexican Community Roundtable of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. He realized that there were many layers and generations of migration and immigration present at the table, all with varying agendas and degrees of mutual understanding and tolerance. He felt that these multiple viewpoints were quite different from the simple, commonly held notions of immigration promulgated by the news media in the U.S.

With experience working within arts communities in Mexico for 25 years, and familiarity with photographers dealing with these issues in both the U.S. and Mexico, Slemmons created this exhibition to explore the following layers of impact of immigration over time and in detail.

The exhibition addresses the dynamics of the border itself as the choke point, including Minute Men, Border Patrol, and humanitarian groups. This section will primarily be drawn from the work of David Taylor from Las Cruces, New Mexico, and Michael Hyatt from Tucson, Arizona. David Taylor has just published a book titled *Working the Line* that records his extensive experience with the Border Patrol.

La Frontera also explores the routes to the border in Mexico collectively called El Camino Real, an ironic reference to the 17th century route from Mexico City to California. Some of these routes are illegal and exploitive of the people desperately seeking work in the north. This situation is exacerbated by the increasing volume of drug trafficking that is permanently changing the cultural parameters of Mexico forever. David Rochkind contributes a strong image essay from his project *Heavy Hand, Sunken Spirit*.

Transformed communities on either side of the border are a focus as well. An example is the town of West Liberty, Iowa, which has been photographed extensively by Andy Kropa. The town has been home to Mexican farm workers since the 1940s, of whom almost all hail from the town of Allende in the Mexican state of Durango. Unlike previous waves of immigrants from Europe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries who had no desire to return, there is constant contact between the two towns. A less-positive example of the effects of migration, especially of men looking for work, is the town of San Miguel Amatilan in the state of Oaxaca. Here women have been forced to take over traditional male occupations such as building houses of adobe, mainly because the majority of the men have moved to the U.S. in search of work and have not come back. Marcela Taboada contributes a project based on this town called *Women of Clay*.

La Frontera includes photographs from Chicago exploring the lives of families in different waves of immigration who are now living in Pilsen, produced by Antonio Perez and Heriberto Quiroz. The exhibition also addresses Mexican artists in the U.S. who attempt to escape the expectation that they deal only with "Mexican themes," while they still experience being foreigners in a foreign land. Juan Pacheco contributes a project called *De Colores*, and Yoshua Okón contributes an installation about an imaginary factory on the border that "cans" laughter.

MoCP SPONSORS

The exhibitions, presentations, and related programs of the MoCP are sponsored in part by After School Matters; the Terra Foundation for American Art; the Lannan Foundation; the Lloyd A. Fry Foundation; the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; the National Endowment for the Arts; the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Arts; the Mayer and Morris Kaplan Family Foundation; The Kristyna M. Driehaus Foundation; U.S. Bank; American Airlines, the official airline of the MoCP; and our members.

ABOUT MOCP

The Museum of Contemporary Photography (MoCP), a resident organization of Columbia College Chicago, is the only museum in the Midwest with an exclusive commitment to the medium of photography. By presenting projects and exhibitions that embrace a wide range of contemporary aesthetics and technologies, the MoCP strives to communicate the value and significance of photographic images as expressions of human thought, imagination, and creativity.

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Rod Slemmons is the Director of the Museum of Contemporary Photography at Columbia College Chicago. From 1982 to 1996 he was the Curator of Prints and Photographs at the Seattle Art Museum, and from 1996 to 2002 he taught Photography, the History of Photography, and Graduate Museum Studies at the University of Washington in Seattle. He was the National Chair of the Society for Photographic Education from 1990 to 1994. He has served as a peer review panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts and as a grant reader and site evaluator for the National Endowment for the Humanities. He has organized numerous exhibitions including: *Diane Arbus* (1986); *Like a One-Eyed Cat*, a 30-year retrospective of the photography of Lee Friedlander (1989); *Shadowy Evidence: The Art of E. S. Curtis and His Contemporaries* (1989); *Persistence of Vision*, a retrospective of the digital work of Paul Berger (2003); and *Witness: Contemporary Mexican Journalism* (2004). His essays and reviews have appeared in dozens of publications including *Afterimage*, *Black Flash*, *image*, and *Reflex*.

PRESS CONTACTS

Audrey Michelle Mast
Web/PR/Marketing Administrator
Museum of Contemporary Photography
600 S. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, IL 60605
P: 773.459.5777
F: 312.344.8067
audrey.m.mast@gmail.com

Jeffrey Arnett
Manager of Development and Marketing
Museum of Contemporary Photography
600 S. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, IL 60605
P: 312.344.7779
F: 312.344-8067
jarnett@colum.edu

IMAGE: David Taylor, *Pedestrian Fence Construction, NM, 2007, 34x43"*, Archival Inkjet Print