



## MoLAA Builds Brand With New Curator's Effort

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The newest rotation of the Museum of Latin American Art's (MoLAA) permanent collection illustrates the institution's branding power as it moves to becoming a dominant force for contemporary art - Latin American or otherwise - this side of Southern California.

Curated by rising curatorial star Selene Preciado, "Anywhere Better Than This Place" looks, feels and sounds like a MoLAA exhibit. Exploring themes of memory and desire in relation to a particular place, the exhibit's installation, including the art's placement,

maintains the museum's ardent position that art be the central focus of any given exhibit.

"Anywhere Better Than This Place" is no different.

Fixtures in this show are the photo-mechanical prints by Felix Gonzalez-Torres titled "Nowhere Better Than This Place" and "Somewhere Better Than This Place" from 1989-1990. Indeed, these provided both the exhibit's overarching theme and title.

"These prints by Gonzalez-Torres are statements of longing for a place that existed in the past, is ceasing to exist, is about to exist or which never existed," states MoLAA's exhibit narrative. "Through the use of language, they also become a sort of metaphorical landscape."

The exhibit includes a diverse range of material from a number of artists who are normally classified as idiosyncratic. However, the art plays nicely with others of its ilk throughout this exhibit - again, an indicator of MoLAA's brand.

Works on paper, paintings, photography, sculpture, installations and video focusing on the concept or sentiment of a place, or landscapes, if you will, aim to incite a dialogue between the art and the viewer once the imagination becomes stimulated.

"In the case of Roberto Montenegro's work 'Rocas/ Rocks,' there is a traditional representation of a rocky mountain seen from below," MoLAA states. "Montenegro's work was often allegorical, but he also made use of the portrait and the landscape to represent critical aspects of the society of his time."

In addition to Montenegro, prominent artists are featured - David Alfaro Siqueiros, Jose Gurruchaga, Ingrid Hernandez, Abelardo Morell, Clemencia Echeverri and Mario Opazo - acting as emissaries reemphasizing the exhibit's goal.

"The exhibition aims to present a wide array of representations of place and landscape that are based on reality or the imaginary," the narrative adds. "Clemencia Echeverri's audio-visual installation titled 'Treno (Funeral Chant),' presents two large-scale projections of the flow of the river Cauca. Carlos Garaicoa's 'Acerca de la Construcción de la Verdadera Torre de Babel' is a commentary on ruins and utopia, but is also an example of the representation of landscape based in a real place with the incorporation of elements of the imagination."

It's evident by the exhibit's presentation, as well as its didactic information, that Preciado's curatorial eye is being guided by the museum's Cecilia Fajardo-Hill and Idurre Alonso. This is exactly what professionals are supposed to do: develop the next generation of leaders. How else would a company build its brand?

"Anywhere Better Than This Place" is a sublime beginning for 2012. With the inclusion of Preciado, MoLAA can continue expanding its curatorial vision and become a branded museum.

MoLAA is at 628 Alamitos Ave. Museum hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, and 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday. General admission is \$9; students and seniors are charged \$6; free for MoLAA members. For more information, call 437-1689 or visit [www.molaa.org](http://www.molaa.org).

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