

Research Grant – CoTA Faculty Research Grant Fall 2015

Faculty Member: Cesar Cornejo

Unit: School of Art & Art History

Proposal Title: Sharpe Walentas Studio Program

A. Abstract:

I am applying for this fellowship to request support to produce work for the Sharpe Walentas Studio Program Open Studios, which will take place on the weekend of May 20 to May 22, 2016 in Brooklyn New York. The funds will be used to buy materials necessary to complete three new bodies of work that I am currently working on in preparation for that event. The Open Studios have high attendance, with many prominent curators, gallery owners and artists coming. This will be an excellent platform for to display my work and have access to further opportunities.

B. Proposal:

I am currently attending the Sharpe Walentas Studio Program, in Brooklyn New York, which is one of the most prestigious residency programs in that city. The residency provides with studio space for one year from September 2015 to August 2016.

The residency's main event is the open studios weekend, which is scheduled to take place takes place from May 20th to 22nd 2016.

This event is broadly announced in New York and is very well attended counting among the audience many prominent art curators, galleries and collectors. This will be an excellent platform to show my work and have access to new opportunities like exhibitions, grants and commissions among others. For this event I am currently preparing three bodies of work: Calamina Portraits, Retablos and Urban Mountains. These bodies work derive my over twenty years research on the relationship between art, architecture and society, and they also synthesize my experience living and working in four different continents, which becomes evident in the processes used to create them, in the subjects that they portray and in their multidisciplinary nature.

Calamina Portraits: This is a collection of 30 portraits of children from Puno-Perú, acrylic paint, on paper stuck on corrugated metal sheets (known in Peru as calaminas). The paper is cut in a way that the color of the corrugated metal sheets becomes part of the drawings, composing the portraits. In Puno Perú an average of 30 children die every winter due to the low temperatures and the poor living conditions, lack of proper clothing and bad nutrition found in that area. These works will also stand as a reminder of the harsh conditions that similar communities endure in other parts around the world.

Retablos: These works are inspired in the tradition of Peruvian Retablos (reliefs), original from the north of that country. They are composed of aluminum boxes that present environments that are constructed by combining photography and sculpture to create the illusion of a real place, trying to bridge illusion and reality, and redefining the concept of photography and sculpture in that process.

Urban Mountains: These are sculptures and drawing that present key buildings and neighborhoods of New York placed on accumulations of found objects and trash which are urban versions of mountains, , making a statement about the unstable foundations on which our societies are built. Some of the buildings that are being included in this series are The New York Stock Exchange, The Empire State Building and The New World Trade Center. The works are made in different scales and finished in colors that make reference to a particular aspect of the scenes that they portray.

The CoTA Research Grant would enable me to buy the necessary materials complete these works, which otherwise on my current partial paid status, I would not be able to afford, and to capitalize the opportunities that the open studio event will present, and through them raise awareness about the research being carried out at School of Art and Art History and CoTA.