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Event: Conflict Resolution
—An Exhibition of Work by Teddy Cruz and Pedro Reyes

Location: Walter and McBean Galleries
San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI)
800 Chestnut Street
San Francisco, CA 94133

Opening reception: Thursday, 16 October 2008, 5:30–7:30 p.m.

Panel discussion #1: Conflict Resolution for Iraq
Friday, 17 October 2008, 7:30 p.m.

Panel discussion #2: Design Strategies and Conflict Resolution
Wednesday, 19 November, 7:30 p.m.

Cost: Free and open to the public

Exhibition Dates: 17 October–13 December 2008

Images: High-resolution digital images available

Press Contact: Bob Gamboa, (415) 749-4507, bgamboa@sfai.edu

Conflict Resolution, an Exhibition of Work by Teddy Cruz and Pedro Reyes, Opens at SFAI on 16 October

San Francisco, CA (September 23, 2008)—On Thursday, 16 October 2008, the opening reception for Conflict Resolution—an exhibition of work generated through an ongoing collaboration between architect Teddy Cruz and artist Pedro Reyes—will be held from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Walter and McBean Galleries on SFAI’s 800 Chestnut Street campus. Free and open to the public (Tuesdays through Saturdays, from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.), the exhibition will be on view from 17 October to 13 December 2008. The artists will also lead two Ideas for Iraq panel discussions—the first, Conflict Resolution for Iraq, occurring on Friday, 17 October 2008 at 7:30 p.m.; and the second, Design Strategies and Conflict Resolution (cosponsored by

SFAI's Design and Technology department as part of the Fall 2008 Design and Technology Salon), occurring on Wednesday, 19 November at 7:30 p.m.

For the last two years, San Diego-based architect Teddy Cruz and Mexico City-based artist Pedro Reyes have together been deliberating on, among a host of other interconnected matters, the relation between design strategy and social transformation in the age of globalization. Notably appearing in conversation in the pages of the November 2007 issue of *Modern Painters*, where they consider and actively invoke the power of nonrepresentational diagrammatic reasoning, Cruz and Reyes come together again, under the initiative of SFAI's Exhibitions and Public Programs, to repurpose their "micropolicies" for transfiguring the socio-urban topography as resolution procedures, in particular, for the variously imbricated, ground-level conflicts obtaining in postinvasion Iraq.

Working neither from within nor from outside "the system" (the latter being to them every bit as bourgeois as the former is to the self-styled subversive), Cruz and Reyes seek to engage the hands-on problematic of a war-torn or otherwise-blighted urban landscape in what they refer to, after Herbert Marcuse, as "the mouth of the cobra"—that is, to engage it with critical *proximity* rather than distance. For instance, in no way endorsing the prevailing just-war doctrines promulgated by certain members of the US and EU intelligentsia, Cruz and Reyes nevertheless embrace the unsought but de facto opportunities for understanding conflict, mediation, and facilitation that have been brought about by the situation in Iraq. As with their collaborative ruminations on the alternative design trajectories made available in and by the Tijuana-San Diego border area (conventionally taken, from the planning and architectural perspective, as a promiscuous sprawling muddle), their reflections on how the war in Iraq was actually played out ("bottom up"), as opposed to how it was originally planned ("top down"), discover in the wake of calamity a palpable object lesson: conflict, and the dire wreckage of conflict, is, by its very nature, a base of operations for imaginative intervention and social and geopolitical negotiation—the kind of intervention and negotiation they mean both to explore and to instantiate through their collaborative project at SFAI.

Indeed, the swords-into-plowshares ethos that pervades Cruz and Reyes's thinking is expressly thematized in a number of the works and ventures they will be exhibiting or actualizing within the physical space of the Walter and McBean Galleries or beyond it. Reyes's call-to-action project *Palas por pistolas* (which literally translates as "shovels [in exchange] for handguns")—a campaign to collect, from the embattled citizens of Culiacán, Mexico, some 1,500 weapons to be refashioned into shovels for the planting of trees—will be reactivated within a Bay Area context. Analogously, Cruz's project in distributive justice as nonconformist cartography, *McMansion Retrofitted*, is a proposal—presented through videos, photographs, drawings, models, and maps—to "beat" an existing 8,000 square foot single-family suburban house into a mixed-use multifamily dwelling.

Consistent with its varied themes and methodologies—as well as with the curatorial strategies of SFAI's director of Exhibitions and Public Programs, Hou Hanru—Conflict Resolution is coordinated and presented at the intersection of two of the principal components of SFAI's Exhibitions and Public Programs. The first, *New Models of Production*, contextualizes artistic creations against a backdrop of economic, industrial, and technical production under globalization while also investigating the concept of competing versions of modernity and the

tension between developed and “underdeveloped” worlds. The second, *Acting Out in the City*, utilizes the galleries and spaces of the SFAI campus as points of departure for large-scale projects of urban intervention, conspicuously injecting artistic productions and awareness into public spaces.

Artist Bios

Born in Guatemala, **Teddy Cruz** is a San Diego–based architect who researches and analyzes the urban transformation occurring on both sides of the US-Mexico border. Inspired by the dynamics of geopolitical, economic, and demographic division and negotiation, he studies the relation between architectural sites and the impacts they have on the production of urban spaces. He has also developed a series of critical strategies for innovative urban visions, especially as prompted by studies of the Mexican population. Cruz and his team at Estudio Teddy Cruz have proposed and realized architectural projects that emphasize social mobilization, the recycling of existing materials and conditions, and sustainability. His promotion of “informal” and alternative visions and strategies for city growth have been presented in such art events as the 10th Istanbul Biennial and the 2008 Venice Biennial’s 11th International Architecture Exhibition. His work was also included in *World Factory*, a group exhibition that opened in January 2007 at SFAI’s Walter and McBean Galleries. In April 2007, Cruz also lectured at SFAI as a Visiting Artist and Scholar.

Born in Mexico City, where he lives, **Pedro Reyes** works in a number of mediums, including installation, design, performance, and video—all with a view to social activism. Inspired by various “alternative” non-Western strategies for the production of lifestyles, urban spaces, everyday objects, and social relationships—strategies he finds to be more original and diverse than the dominant hegemonic models of the West—he considers his work a personal system for reinventing everyday environments and social relationships, extending the reach of limited natural (and artificial) resources as well as enhancing social solidarity. He has exhibited at such venues as the South London Gallery, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, El Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid, Yvon Lambert Gallery in both NYC and Paris, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center (MoMA) in NYC, Kunst-Werke Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin, the Seattle Art Museum in Washington (USA), and the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts at Harvard University in Cambridge (Massachusetts, USA). In November 2007, Reyes lectured at SFAI as a Visiting Artist and Scholar.

SFAI’s exhibitions and public programs are supported in part by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and the Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund. Additional support and assistance for Teddy Cruz and Pedro Reyes: Conflict Resolution have been provided by the Consulate General of Mexico in San Francisco, the Bureau of Urban Forestry in San Francisco’s Department of Public Works, the San Francisco Mayor’s Office of Protocol, and AIA San Francisco.

San Francisco Art Institute

Founded in 1871, SFAI is one of the oldest and most prestigious schools of higher education in contemporary art in the US. Focusing on the interdependence of thinking, making, and learning, SFAI’s academic and public programs are dedicated to excellence and diversity.

SFAI's School of Studio Practice concentrates on developing the artist's vision through studio experiments and is based on the belief that artists are an essential part of society. It offers a BFA, an MFA, and a Post-Baccalaureate certificate in Design and Technology, Film, New Genres, Painting, Photography, Printmaking, and Sculpture/Ceramics.

SFAI's School of Interdisciplinary Studies is motivated by the premise that critical thinking and writing, informed by an in-depth understanding of theory and practice, are essential for engaging contemporary global society. It offers degree programs in History and Theory of Contemporary Art (BA and MA), Urban Studies (BA and MA), and Exhibition and Museum Studies (MA only).

For more information about this exhibition and other public or academic programs at SFAI, please go to www.sfai.edu or call 415 749 4563.