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Event: Exhibition: Sanctuary City/Ciudad Santuario, 1989–2009

Location: Queen’s Nails Projects
3191 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94110
Phone: (415) 314-6785

Opening reception: Thursday, 28 May 2009, 8:00–11:00 p.m.

Cost: Free and open to the public

Exhibition Dates: 28 May–21 June 2009

Images: High-resolution digital images available

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

**Sanctuary City/Ciudad Santuario, 1989–2009—an SFAI-sponsored
Exhibition—Opens at Queen’s Nails Projects in San Francisco on 28 May**

San Francisco, CA (May 12, 2009)—On Thursday, 28 May 2009, the opening reception for Sanctuary City/Ciudad Santuario 1989–2009, an SFAI-sponsored exhibition led by artist and educator **Sergio De La Torre**, will be held from 8:00 to 11:00 p.m. at Queen’s Nails Projects (3191 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94110). Free and open to the public (Fridays and Saturdays from 12:00 to 6:00 p.m. or by appointment [phone: (415) 314-6785]), the exhibition will be on view through 21 June 2009.

In 1985, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors backed a resolution designating San Francisco a sanctuary city—one of the first in the US—for certain Central American refugees. The resolution decreed that police, schools, and health and social-service agencies were forbidden from assisting INS agents during potential investigations and arrests of Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees. Though the legislation was revised in the 90s and has been broadly and variously interpreted since its initial enactment, it remains in effect. Nevertheless, in the wake of federal policies implemented after 9/11, San Francisco began to see an increased number of federal immigration raids, leading to growing fear and paranoia not only among undocumented immigrants, but among legal residents as well.

Sanctuary City/Ciudad Santuario, 1989–2009 is the fruition of a two-year process of investigation and research prompted by this post-9/11 increase in federal immigration raids. By consulting with a number of local nonprofits (the ACLU, the Edgewood Center for Children and Families, the Mission Asset Fund, the Mission Economic Development Agency, ¡Poder!, and La Voz Latina,) as well as with national NGOs, international think tanks, and governmental agencies, the team of artists led by Sergio De La Torre—including **Karla Claudio Betancourt** (SFAI student), **Dina Roumiantseva** (SFAI student), **Wenhua Shi**, **Rosario Alicia Sotelo** (SFAI alumna), and **Chris Treggiari** (SFAI student)—has assembled a bloc of video projections and photographs, together with a text-based installation and limited-edition timeline, that explores and questions the ways in which this pattern of increased federal intervention has affected the Bay Area immigrant community.

Based on the methodology used for *Maquilapolis*, a documentary film project developed by De La Torre and Vicky Funari for which twelve factory workers in Tijuana, Mexico, were taught to use cameras and editing equipment so they could tell their own stories, Sanctuary City/Ciudad Santuario, 1989–2009 will similarly involve its subjects as creative participants, thereby directly situating the work in the exhibition within the milieu out of which it was generated. Together with testimonies by family members directly involved in the raids and commentaries by local politicians on San Francisco’s status as a sanctuary city, the exhibition’s video projections will be screened guerrilla-style—both during and after the exhibition—on the facades of those buildings throughout the city that have been raided by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Lead Artist Bio

A photographer and performance/installation artist who grew up in the Tijuana/San Diego border area and migrated to San Francisco, **Sergio De La Torre** focuses his work on issues regarding diaspora, tourism, immigration, and identity politics. Previous to Sanctuary City/Ciudad Santuario, 1989–2009, he collaborated with both local and international nonprofit organizations on *Maquilapolis* (developed with Vicki Funari), a documentary film about factory workers in Tijuana; on the project *Power in the House*, a series of digitally produced cards that narrate the relations between Mexican American teenagers and their immigrant parents; on *The Housing Project*, in which teens and other local collaborators explore how the shortage of affordable housing transforms private into public spaces; and on SFAI-sponsored *Agit-Van*, a series of guerrilla-style projections from an on-the-spot cinema truck equipped with a video projector and sound system that work to transport art practice beyond museums and galleries to more participatory and inclusive spaces. De La Torre is assistant professor in the Department of Art and Architecture at the University of San Francisco.

*Supported by the **Creative Work Fund** (see below), Sanctuary City/Ciudad Santuario, 1989–2009 is presented in collaboration with SFAI’s **Exhibitions and Public Programs**, which are supported in part by the **Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts** and the **Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund**. Also assisting in making Sanctuary City/Ciudad Santuario, 1989–2009 possible were Therese Agnew, Carolina Bilsborough Barnes, Benjamin Canning-Pereira, Evan Cowell, Erika Crail, Minesh Govenji, Morgan Henderson, Andrew Hutcheson, Rachel LeBlanc, Angelica Loza, Jenna Lunsford, Danae Moore, Alejandra*

Rodriguez Bandala, Samantha Roger, Dominic Sondag, Peter Tschann-Grimm, Stephanie Whitney, and Ashley Williamson.

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 Exhibition and Museum Studies (MA only), History and Theory of Contemporary Art (BA and MA), and Urban Studies (BA and MA).

SFAI's Dual Degree MA/MFA program is ideally designed for students who seek a deep and balanced immersion in both theoretical discourse and art practice. A three-year commitment, the degree consists in an MA in History and Theory of Contemporary Art and an MFA in any area of study within the School of Studio Practice (see above).

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.

Creative Work Fund

The Creative Work Fund is a program of the Walter and Elise Haas Fund; it is also supported by generous grants from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the James Irvine Foundation.

Queen's Nails Projects

Queen's Nails Projects (QNP) is a curatorial platform dedicated to presenting collaborative, site-specific, and experimental projects by both artists and independent curators. Codirected and curated by Bay Area visual artists Mike Bianco and Julio César Morales, QNP aims to challenge both emerging and established cultural producers to work outside their normal practice in order to produce new and unique projects.