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Even the Smallest Change Can Be Profound
Exhibition Dates: June 1, 2011- through August 3, 2012

MACLA/Movimiento de Arte y Cultura Latino Americana is pleased to present *Even the Smallest Change Can Be Profound*: Recent Work by Efren Álvarez, Vic de la Rosa, Gregory Michael Hernandez, Monica Martinez, Gwen Mercado-Reyes & Esteban Salazar.

As agents of change, artists take a leadership role in society by examining transformation from the cultural, experiential, historical and scientific perspective. The artists included in this exhibition fulfill this role by presenting work that seeks to challenge the viewer by calling attention to issues such as: the immigrant journey, the changing landscape of national identity in the US, the complex history of place, our relationship with insects, life-threatening illnesses, and the cause and effect of social and political upheaval.

Efren Álvarez, a Bay Area-based artist, explores the experience of the immigrant. Álvarez's work *The Game of Hope (El Juego de la Esperanza)* is made up of 63 images adapted from the Mexican game *La Oca* and reflects Efren's personal experience as an immigrant living in the United States. In Efren's work he employs the repetitious patterns of red and white stripes that references the American flag, nationalism and simultaneously a circus atmosphere. By doing so he represents the United States as a real place that is equal parts fantasy and illusion when it comes to the idea of sustaining the American Dream for immigrants. He goes one step further with a large scale game installation where the viewer has the opportunity to play the role of the migrant partaking in a symbolic but very real journey. Each image takes you to the crossroads of a reality that immigrants like Efren continue to navigate daily.

Vic de la Rosa is a San Francisco-based artist who explores the boundaries and intersection of technology, art and design in the realm of textiles. Through the use of various media he explores the convergence of technology, stereotype, history and race as one reaction to the Mexican-American experience. Through a close look at the US/Mexico border he explores

issues of geographic boundary and national identity; and in the process questions the idea of provenance, the inevitability of change and the futility of trying to harness the human desire for advancement or preservation.

Vic de la Rosa presents *Study for 2050 U.S. Flag* and *Study for 2035 California State Flag,* inspired by and utilizing US Census and other demographic information. Vic states, "One by one human birth has shaped our world and defined time. Time ignores manmade borders and nationality is continually redefined." The works are presented in a state of construction and deconstruction alluding to the fact that definitions of identity and nationality are constantly being redefined in today's American landscape.

Gregory Michael Hernandez is a Los Angeles-based artist whose work mines the complex history of place and landscape, and how we visually and physically perceive it. He weaves together painting, photography, sculpture and installation. Hernandez looks at space, our place in it and the political, historical and philosophical implications that have defined it. Hernandez's work included in the exhibition pulls from the differing architectures of the Bay Area leaning towards architecturally prominent spaces broken up into categories he has defined as homestead, monastery, fortress and exile and challenges us to consider the history of these individual spaces.

Monica Martinez is a Bay Area-based artist who for over the last year has been investigating and developing different micro architectural structures (small farms) for the edible mealworm, a high protein and low cost food source. The piece on display *Wurm-Haus* was inspired by the architectural works of Peter Behrens, Le Corbusier and the forms of industrial silos, granaries and warehouses. Martinez has envisioned an integrated system of living, equal part housing and individual run small farm. Her recent project Don Bugito takes inspiration from pre-Hispanic and contemporary Mexican cuisine and features edible insects grown organically in California.

Gwen Mercado-Reyes looks at the impact of the disease Systematic Lupus Erythematosus, otherwise known as SLE Lupus on the body by exploring the mechanisms and the psychological effects of living with the disease in her art. Mercado-Reyes's pieces are culled from scientific material recreated into installations. The space of the gallery becomes a stand-in for the physical body and cells; bacteria and various organisms take form in soft sculpture. The butterfly which is used repeatedly in the installation entitled *Pollyanna's Wonderland* and *Malar Butterfly Season* references the Malar Rash or Butterfly Rash, a characteristic appearance of a butterfly shape on the face of Lupus carriers when the disease is in a heightened state.

Esteban Salazar's work pulls from personal memory and history, specifically the decades of the '80s and '90s and the events that took place during this time in his former homeland of Colombia. Salazar employs glass and light as his material of choice and has been interested in exploring the symbolic meaning of cracks, fissures, and fractures: sites of geographic, physical and emotional trauma. According to Salazar, fractures reveal the tribulations of geographic

displacement as you lose the connection to your native environment, emotional relationships and cultural practices.

Friday, June 1, 2012 at 7pm
Join us for the opening reception and engaging artist talk and gallery walk through with Efren Alvarez, Vic de la Rosa, and Gregory Michael Hernandez.

Friday, August 3, 2012 at 7pm
Join us for an engaging artist talk and gallery walk through with Monica Martinez, Gwen Mercado-Reyes & Esteban Salazar.

Gallery Hours:
Wednesday & Thursday, 12pm to 7pm
Friday & Saturday, 12pm to 5pm
And by special appointment
Free Admission

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image credits:

1. Vic De La Rosa, Study for *2035 California State Flag*, Digital Print on Cloth, Embroidery, Applique & Crochet, 2012
2. Gwen Mercado – Reyes, *Malar Butterfly Season*, Digital Photography on metal, 2012
3. Efren Álvarez,*The Game of Hope*, 63 oil on canvas paintings, 2011