



For Immediate Release

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Keho, *Untitled*, mixed media on paper, 2004

SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS PRESENTS “DATE WITH THE ANGELS”

AN EXHIBITION FEATURING CUBAN ARTISTS’ REACTIONS TO 9/11

September 1 – 19, 2009

**Reception: Friday, September 11, 5 – 7pm
Westside Gallery**

School of Visual Arts (SVA) and Taller Experimental de Gráfica, Cuba’s foremost printmaking facility, present “**Date with the Angels**,” featuring the lithographs of 41 Cuban artists who express their reactions to the 9/11 disaster at the World Trade Center. The images are derived from two documentary photographs by **Richard Falco**, taken in the immediate aftermath of the attack. The exhibition will be on view at the Westside Gallery, located at 133/141 West 21 Street, New York City, from September 1 – 19, 2009. A brochure published by the Visual Arts Press will accompany the exhibition.

“I’m extremely pleased that we are able to show this work in the U.S.,” said SVA Executive Vice President **Anthony P. Rhodes**. “It’s a great example of what can come from artists working collaboratively across borders. SVA draws creative people from around the world, and our community of artists connects with others in many ways, like exhibitions and cultural exchange programs.”

This exhibition was originally presented in Cuba at the José Martí Memorial in Havana in July 2004. SVA board member **Walter Rivera**, who led the College’s first fact-finding trip to Cuba, explains, “We were so warmly received by the people we met and were able to make amazing inroads together—culminating in an exhibition at a place of such cultural prominence as the José Martí Memorial. It was an unforgettable experience.”



The two Falco photographs—one, vertical, showing the structural remains of the buildings; the other, horizontal, depicting rescue workers among the rubble—were converted into multiple large-scale lithographs by **Gunars Prande**, head of the printmaking department at SVA, and hand-carried to Havana. The Cuban artists then printed on, painted on, cut up, manipulated and otherwise intervened with the prints directly. This made for a true hand-to-hand collaboration.

According to **Raimundo Respall**, the late director of Taller Experimental de Gráfica, “To do a show where Cuban artists take as a starting point the works of an American photographer and then work with the very lithographs made by an American printmaker – besides being a gesture of solidarity and support, is also a voice against terrorism, against violence, vandalism. This exhibition can have an incalculable resonance; not just for its cultural and artistic value but because of the influence it can have on other artists. My hope is that this exhibition teaches through art a way to express opposition to all violence, a way to say ‘No.’”

“Since that terrible Tuesday we are all New Yorkers,” remarked **Ricardo Alarcon**, President of the National Assembly in Cuba, at the exhibition opening in Havana. “The sadness among Cubans ran very deep. This [exhibition] is a message of peace and friendship to New York and the United States.”

The participating artists represent a balance of established and emerging artists, from **Eduardo “Choco” Roca Salazar**, a key figure in the contemporary Cuban art scene, to **Rafael Zarza**, a respected and long influential engraver, to internationally-acclaimed artist **Kcho** (Alexis Leyva Machado), whose work was paired with that of Bruce Nauman as the subject of a major exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.

The artists chose diverse approaches to creating new works from the Falco photographs and these pieces express a range of responses. While one artist said he wanted to “reconstruct” the buildings, “to put everything back together again,” another said that he wanted “to make a better image for the world out of this horror.” One of the younger artists, who explained he thought the event was fiction when he first learned of it, wanted to “resolve his personal feelings at discovering it really did happen” through his work.

The title of the exhibition is taken from a song by Silvio Rodríguez, one of Cuba’s most popular singer-songwriters. The song, which speaks of angels who frantically try to warn people when something terrible is about to happen, yet fail to prevent the atrocity, references the Twin Towers, as well as the deaths of Martin Luther King, Jr. and John Lennon, among others. According to **Luis Lara**, the current director of Taller Experimental de Gráfica and one of the participating artists, the Cuban artists unanimously agreed upon this title, as it best encapsulated the theme of the exhibition.

The Westside Gallery is located at 133/141 West 21 Street. The gallery is open Monday through Friday, 9am to 7pm, Saturday 10am to 6pm, and is closed on Sunday and federal holidays. The gallery is accessible by wheelchair. For more information, please call 212.592.2145.

School of Visual Arts (SVA) in New York City is an established leader and innovator in the education of artists. From its inception in 1947, the College has instituted numerous educational innovations, including the selection of professionals working in the arts and art-related fields as instructors. SVA provides an environment that nurtures creativity, inventiveness and experimentation, enabling students to develop a strong sense of identity and a clear direction of purpose.

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