

**For Immediate Release:**

***The Zuckerman Museum of Art presents exhibition on memory, erasure, and permanence***

**The Don Russell Clayton Gallery at the Bernard A. Zuckerman Museum of Art**

***Recollections, Oscar Muñoz***

August 27 – December 10, 2022

Co-curated by Vanessa K. Davidson, Curator of Latin American Art, The Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, and Cynthia Nourse Thompson, Director of Curatorial Affairs, Bernard A. Zuckerman Museum of Art

**Public opening reception:** Thursday, September 1, 5:00pm – 7:00pm

*Recollections* features six seminal works by Colombian artist Oscar Muñoz. The Zuckerman Museum of Art is pleased to host these works which were featured in the artist's first retrospective in the United States, *Invisibilia*, curated by Vanessa K. Davidson of the Blanton Museum of Art. Oscar Muñoz is one of the most innovative artists working in Latin America today. Best known for his evocative use of ephemeral materials to interrogate the stability of the photographic image, Muñoz poetically equates its intrinsic fragility with the fallibility of memory and the precariousness of life itself. Although his radical artistic practice combines photographic processes with drawing, painting, printmaking, installation, and video, the artist does not consider himself a photographer. In opposition to Roland Barthes's belief that photography is definitive and absolute, Muñoz's works defy fixation, thus calling into question memory, erasure, permanence, and the resolute. Davidson thoughtfully reflects, "Muñoz's works exist between forgetting and remembering, in other words, there is a constant battle between a thing that materializes and then fades away, falls apart. Although the images Muñoz creates often change or disappear, they stay transfixed in our minds." Deeply rooted in the Colombian context, Muñoz's artworks nevertheless have universal resonance. This exhibition is co-curated by Vanessa K. Davidson and Cynthia Nourse Thompson.



Proyecto para un memorial (Project for a Memorial), 2005

Video, 7 minutes 30 seconds

Courtesy of the artist and Sicardi | Ayers | Bacino Art Gallery, Houston, TX

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**Thursday, September 8 at 7:00pm**

Virtual lecture by Vanessa K. Davidson

Co-curator of *Recollections*, **Oscar Muñoz**

Register here: <https://ci.ovationtix.com/35355/production/1131852>

Vanessa K. Davidson is Curator of Latin American Art, at The Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas in Austin. Her most recent project includes *Oscar Muñoz: Invisibilia* (2021-22), this Colombian artist's first US retrospective. Vanessa will discuss Muñoz's retrospective, the work that he has produced throughout his career, and the works selected for the exhibition at the ZMA, *Recollections*. Dr. Vanessa K. Davidson received her B.A. in Hispano-American Literature from Harvard University, and studied Latin American Art and Argentine poetry at the Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina, and Portuguese at the University of São Paulo. She was awarded a Fulbright-Hays fellowship for doctoral dissertation research in Argentina and Brazil, focusing her dissertation on mail art, text-based conceptualism, and performance in Brazil and Argentina from the 1960s to the 1980s. She received her Ph.D. in 20th and 21st Century Latin American Art History from New York University's Institute of Fine Arts. Dr. Davidson has worked at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts as well as at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She also worked for eight years as the Shawn and Joe Lampe Curator of Latin American Art at Phoenix Art Museum, and there organized twelve large-scale exhibitions, two of which traveled internationally. With Dr. Sergio Bessa, she co-curated *Paulo Bruscky: Art Is Our Last Hope* (2014). Accompanying this project, she also curated the largest international exhibition of contemporary mail art in the US since the 1970s: *Focus Latin America: Art Is Our Last Hope* (2014-15). She was the curator of *Horacio Zabala: Mapping the Monochrome* (Phoenix and Buenos Aires, 2016-17), and co-curator with Cauê Alves of *Past/Future/Present: Contemporary Brazilian Art from the Collection of the Museu de Arte Moderna, São Paulo* (Phoenix and São Paulo, 2017-2019).

### **Colombia in Crisis: *La Violencia* and Civil War**

As an historical backdrop to this exhibition, it is fundamental to remember that Colombia has suffered the anguish of a series of civil wars since the nineteenth century. More recently, the explosion of violence that took place in 1948 initiated a period known as "*The Violence*" (1948–58). This armed conflict worsened during the ensuing decades, with clashes between the military and armed insurgents that intensified during the so-called "Cartel Wars" that began in the 1980s. Colombia's National Center for Historical Memory estimates that approximately 200,000 people were killed between 1948 and 1958. An additional 260,000 Colombians are estimated to have died during the violent clashes between 1958 and 2013; the majority were civilians caught in the crossfire.

Associating the precariousness of life with the fragility of the image, Oscar Muñoz often creates poetic reflections on the brevity of both. Many of his works revolve around this relationship between image and life, while others feature explicit images of the dead. Nonetheless, in his artistic practice, his approach to violence as a dire reality in Colombia is more philosophical than political. As he stated:

"No doubt, the fact of having lived and grown up in Cali, in Colombia, a country with numerous, complex, and thorny conflicts, contributes to a certain outlook, a drive, maybe, a need to explore this to some extent in one's work. The development of this reality, of these experiences, taking them to a poetic level, to a universal level and to a level that has to do with artistic language, is more or less what I have explored in my work."

Vanessa Davidson

Curator of Latin American Art, The Blanton Museum of Art  
The University of Texas in Austin

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