



RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
Office of Communications and Public Relations
Press Release
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International Exhibition Highlighting Abstraction Strategies Opens at Ramapo College November 4

MAHWAH, N.J. -- The Ramapo Curatorial Prize exhibition *Turn on the bright lights* opens in the Kresge and Pascal Galleries at Ramapo College on Wednesday, November 4 with an opening reception from 5 to 7 p.m. There will be a curator and artist's talk at 6 p.m. The exhibition continues on view through December 11.

The Ramapo Curatorial Prize is presented each year to a second-year graduate student at the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College. The 2014 winner was Carla Acevedo-Yates. Artists featured in the exhibition include Damien Catera, Kajsa Dahlberg, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Jason Mena, Trevor Paglen and Adán Valleccillo.

"Abstraction in the visual arts has often been misunderstood through the lens of the historical avant-garde and high modernism, whose utopian ideals of universality and humanism were intertwined with the totalizing ambitions of the social and political projects of Western modernity," said curator Acevedo-Yates. "In contrast, the artists in the exhibition deploy abstractions – indeterminate geographies, image negation, abstracted soundscapes, and the monochrome – as a formal strategy and conceptual device to map and represent that which remains invisible."

Exhibiting Artists

Damien Catera

b. Utica, New York, 1964

Damien Catera is an interdisciplinary sound and media artist, and an electro-acoustic composer and improviser. Catera's work reflects interests in critical analysis, experimental composition/improvisation, and transmission. *The MYSTIC Way* (2015) is an automated surveillance system, which continuously transforms captured audio into a constantly evolving, abstract soundscape. A reflection on bulk intelligence data collection and the blurring of boundaries between public and private communication, this installation system is always listening to and reshaping the space that it operates in, whether the listener notices or not.

Kajsa Dahlberg

b. Gothenberg, Sweden, 1973

Working both individually and collaboratively, Kajsa Dahlberg is an artist whose work spans film, installation, and performance within the sphere of political representation and labor. In the video *Female Fist* (2006) Dahlberg researched how activist groups work politically while attempting to stay outside of already-existing political frameworks. The video features an interview with a queer activist from Copenhagen filmed with the lens cap on the camera.

Felix Gonzalez-Torres

b. Guálmara, Cuba, 1957 (d. 1996)

Felix Gonzalez-Torres is one of the most important artists of the twentieth century. Using found objects and materials, he created sculptures and installations that deal with space, time, and affect in a personal and yet political way. In "Untitled" (North) (1993) the mythical North of immigration and longing is represented as a metaphor through light bulb strings that can be configured to form an abstract representation.

Jason Mena

b. San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1974

Jason Mena's work explores the contradictions that exist within social formations, their visible and latent tendencies in both everyday life and the broader economic structure. His investigation has focused mainly on the Shadow Market, its relationship with state politics, global finance, and the impact these forces have on art production. The installation *El Universal* (2013) is part of the artist's broader investigation into the black market in Mexico and its relationship with state politics and global finance.

Trevor Paglen

b. Maryland, U.S.A., 1974

Trevor Paglen is an artist and experimental geographer whose work spans image-making, sculpture, investigative journalism, writing, engineering, and numerous other disciplines. In *The Fence* (Lake Kickapoo, Texas) (2010) Paglen worked with a radio astronomer to map a vast and extremely powerful radar system surrounding the United States used to detect ballistic missiles, and made of electromagnetic waves invisible to the naked eye. In this work, the light from "the fence" was shifted into a visible spectrum.

Adán Vallecillo

b. Danli, Honduras, 1977

Adán Vallecillo's artistic practice directly intersects with the context of its production, blurring the boundaries between the artistic, the personal, and the political. Whether participating in actions or collecting materials on-site to make artwork, Vallecillo's work critically engages with the realities of the historical moment while addressing the art historical legacy of abstraction, object making, and found materials. In the action *Pintura política* (Political painting) (2013), Vallecillo references and makes manifest the political aspirations of the historical avant-garde by inserting an abstract painting into a political protest.

About the curator

Carla Acevedo-Yates

b. San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1978

Carla Acevedo-Yates is a curator, researcher, and art critic based in San Juan, Puerto Rico. She earned a Master of Arts in Curatorial Studies and Contemporary Art at CCS Bard College, and a B.A. in Spanish and Latin American Cultures from Barnard College, Columbia University. Recent projects include *Turn on the bright lights* at the Hessel Museum of Art, *Soy Isla* at Artists Space Books and Talks, *The Dialectic City: Document / Context* at Laboratorio de Artes Binarios, and *OB-R* at ARTLAB753, a project that experimented with exhibition formats and collaborative production models. Her writing has appeared in *Art Agenda*, *Artpulse*, *Mousse*, *La Tempestad*, and *South as a State of Mind*.

This project is funded in part by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts. The Kresge and Pascal Galleries are located in the Berrie Center for Performing and Visual Arts. Gallery hours are Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 1 to 5 p.m. and Wednesday 1 to 7 p.m. For more information, call 201-684-7147.

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Ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as fifth in the Best Regional Public Universities North category, Ramapo College of New Jersey is sometimes mistaken for a private college. This is, in part, due to its unique interdisciplinary academic structure, its size of approximately 6,000 students and its pastoral setting in the foothills of the Ramapo Mountains on the New Jersey/New York border.

Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor's degrees in the arts, business, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include nursing and social work. In addition, Ramapo College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels. The College also offers eight graduate programs as well as articulated programs with Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New York Chiropractic College, New York University College of Dentistry, SUNY State College of Optometry and New York College of Podiatric Medicine.