

INTEGRATION AND RESISTANCE IN THE GLOBAL AGE

10th Biennial of Havana

March – April 2009

Twenty-fifth Anniversary

The 10th Biennial of Havana, to be held from March to April 2009 — marking 25 years since the first of these exhibitions was organized— will be an opportunity to look back on our history and to reflect on the principles that have underpinned this gathering of artists from Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, Africa and the Middle East, in an atmosphere where genuine togetherness, among us and the international community in general, has prevailed.

Since 1984, we have focused our attention on South artists whose works express concerns and conflicts common to our regions, many times of a universal character. Topics which have piqued the interest of artists have included the tensions between tradition and contemporary reality, challenges to the historical processes of colonization, the relationships between art and society, individuals and their memories, the effects of technological development on human communication and the dynamics of urban culture, issues which have been addressed through a myriad of visual manifestations that operate within the cultural system.

The Biennial, however, cannot ignore the geo-political changes which have taken place in recent years and, consequently, the growing number of countries whose conditions begin to resemble those of the so-called South and those which, in a precarious state of development, seek to join the economic block of more privileged nations. In addition to this, the Third World —a concept which has

underpinned our work for nearly twenty five years—has become a vague term whose meaning is constantly shifting. Our interest, in view of these phenomena, is to broaden the participation criteria with a view to including artists from other countries and regions and those who, owing to recent migratory processes, have come to be part of the First World, where their cultures and idiosyncrasies take root.

The Biennial will take place in a supposedly globalized world which shows us many faces, complex phenomena and conflicts, made more complex by a discourse which tends to emphasize economic hegemony, dependency and the control of information and to ignore the different stages of development and socio-political leanings that co-exist in the world. Similarly, the co-existence of age-old forms of expression which have lost none of their original vigour with the most sophisticated of symbolic productions, stemming from the development of new technologies, unveils the fallacious nature of the homogenizing discourse about globalization.

What this entails is recognizing a new logic of economic, technological and human interconnections which express themselves in the dynamic relations between the local, the regional and the global and which, in the tradition of reflecting upon these realities began over 20 years ago, invites us to pay close attention to the singular nuances and contextual particularities which stem from involvement in and resistance to globalization. Thus, we are brought face to face with the many influences, tensions and re-formulations of the question of identity, repeatedly subjected to scrutiny by historiography, critiques and artists themselves. When it seemed we knew everything—or almost everything—about ourselves, new

internal and external relationships place us before the mirror once again, reminding us that identity is a process, bringing about its contamination and broadening our knowledge about what's different.

If we live in an era in which some of the distinctive characteristics of our regions and countries begin to suffer changes and even tend to become diluted through a complex process of integration, our work must become more visible, the expression of agents of change, the important and creative actors we are, not of subaltern or peripheral voices.

The 10th Biennial of Havana will address, on the one hand, the complexities of a real and active process of **integration** to the global order and, on the other, the capacity to **challenge** the homogenizing farce this process presupposes. In its treatment of these issues, the gathering will act as a kind of laboratory where trans-disciplinary, process-based and experimental works will converge, in the field of visual arts and other cultural manifestations.

The group of curators for this Biennial is made up by Margarita González, Nelson Herrera Ysla, José Manuel Noceda, Ibis Hernández Abascal, Margarita Sánchez Prieto, José Fernández Portal and Dannys Montes de Oca Moreda.

Organizing Committee
Tenth Biennial of Havana
Wilfredo Lam Contemporary Art Centre