

TERENCE
GOWER:
THE GOOD
NEIGHBOUR

AMERICAS
SOCIETY

EXHIBITIONS

TERENCE
GOWER:
THE GOOD
NEIGHBOUR

AMERICAS
SOCIETY

EXHIBITIONS

¡NUEVO!
INSTALACION

*Plafon de suspensión
*Lamparas Fluorecentes



**TERENCE
GOWER**

La Torre de los vientos. RUTA DE LA AMISTAD MEXICO 68
Sab. y Dom. de 16:00 a 20:00 hrs. hasta el 3 de Octubre

 **FONICA**



Ruta de la Amistad

In the 1970s my father had the habit of taking his vacations alone—a much-needed break from his wife and four children. One of his favorite escapes was to Mexico City and Zihuatanejo, Guerrero, still a fishing village with a few cabañas in the mid-'70s. Because of these trips our house was subtly altered by the artefacts he would bring back, carefully selected pottery, weaving, wooden kitchen implements, vinyl records (mariachi for the most part, I would play them over and over, curious about and confused by the strong emotions they would cause). Simple, functional objects that combined well with the natural surfaces of the modern house he had designed for the family. The artesanía my father brought back from Mexico was almost all practical, but also functioned as an early lesson in industrial design for the whole household. Later, I discovered many of the same pieces in the houses of Mexican intellectuals, artists, and designers from the same period, and now I recognize this as a universal preoccupation with handcrafted utilitarian objects in postwar modernism.

My father was careful to remember us with postcards, and a card I received when I was around ten years old probably changed my life forever. The photograph on the card was a (Guillermo Zamora?) photograph of the main library at UNAM, designed by Juan O'Gorman, Gustavo Saavedra, and Juan Martínez de Velasco, with other parts of the campus visible in the background. At that age, I was already devouring my father's architecture magazines when I had the opportunity to spend a few after-school hours at his architectural practice. I was already very familiar with Le Corbusier and CIAM urbanism, with the Bauhaus, and Brasilia (to name pretty much all of my childhood obsessions), but UNAM was entirely new to me. It was an exuberant, brave new world, somehow connected to the handcrafted yet sophisticated objects brought back from Mexico by my father. These were my own first impressions of Mexico.

CONTENTS

9	Foreword Susan Segal
13	A Canadian in Mexico Aimé Iglesias Lukin
31	Good Neighbors in the Backyard Julieta González
51	Partial Facsimile: Invoking Siqueiros
61	Works
122	Selected Exhibition History
128	Selected Bibliography
133	Author Biographies
135	Acknowledgments

FOREWORD

Americas Society is pleased to present *Terence Gower: The Good Neighbour*. The Canadian artist's engagement with Mexican art and architecture since the 1990s parallels the mission of Americas Society, which is to build and further connections within the hemisphere. This exhibition builds on Americas Society's decades of exhibiting Mexican art, design, and architecture in our galleries, from the 1970 exhibition of David Alfaro Siqueiros that Gower recalls with his new site-specific work, *Partial Facsimile*, to our 2018 collaboration with the Getty Research Institute, *The Metropolis in Latin America: 1830–1930*.

I am grateful to Aimé Iglesias Lukin, Director and Chief Curator of Visual Arts, who curated this exhibition and leads the gallery with exciting programming. I also thank Julieta González, a curator who has worked with Gower through the years, for lending her scholarship to this publication. I am thankful to Karen Marta for her editorial support of Americas Society's publications, Todd Bradway for his project management, and Garrick Gott for designing this series. Natalia Viera Salgado, Assistant Curator of Visual Arts, also deserves special recognition for her work on this exhibition and its programs.

The presentation of *Terence Gower: The Good Neighbour* is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council.

Additional support is provided by Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporáneo, the Consulate General of Canada in New York, and the Council for Canadian American Relations.

Americas Society acknowledges the generous support from the Arts of the Americas Circle members: Estrellita B. Brodsky; Virginia Cowles Schroth; Diana Fane; Galeria Almeida e Dale; Isabella Hutchinson; Carolina Jannicelli; Vivian Pfeiffer and Jeanette van Campenhout, Phillips; Gabriela Pérez Rocchietti; Erica Roberts; Sharon Schultz; Diana López and Herman Sifontes; and Edward J. Sullivan.

SUSAN SEGAL
PRESIDENT AND CEO, AS/COA

A CANADIAN IN MEXICO

Aimé Iglesias Lukin



First Contact, 2013 (video still)

In *First Contact*, a video from 2013, Terence Gower combines segments of an 8 mm film of a group of Canadian tourists visiting the recently inaugurated campus of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) in 1955. Gower received the reel from a friend in Vancouver who found it among the belongings of her grandmother, a tour guide in the 1950s and '60s. Noisily collaged by Gower into a dynamic but silent video, the buildings are as much the protagonists as the Northern visitors walking through the site. As the elegantly dressed tourists observe the pre-Hispanic-inspired modern facade of the Biblioteca Central de UNAM, designed by Juan O'Gorman with Gustavo María Saavedra and Juan Martínez de Velasco, the camera zooms in on the inhabitants of Tenochtitlan depicted in the mosaic scenes.¹ In Mexican modernism, architectural theory brought from Europe and the United States was combined with popular craft and indigenist aesthetics as a way to give the modern city an identity that looked to the future

but was rooted in the past. Another clip shows a marble statue of President Miguel Alemán Valdés, who oversaw the construction of the complex, erected parallel to a geometric modern building, the Torre de Rectoría (rectory tower), a protuberant volume with a mural by the radical revolutionary artist David Alfaro Siqueiros on the facade. These two vertical structures mark the evolution between classical and new Mexico, but, significantly, the statue of Alemán was destroyed by students in 1966—the students saw him as a symbol of an industrialization that only served the elite.ⁱⁱ

To explain the underlying tensions of the modernist project in Mexico, Gower uses Siqueiros's concept of *la sociedad* vs. *lo social* (society vs. the social) to describe the disparity between social projects and projects for high society in the architecture of the 1950s and '60s.ⁱⁱⁱ As with many of his works, he uses the modern buildings in *First Contact* to embody the optimistic view of developmentalism in Mexico, one that Gower subtly calls

into question through the frenetic editing of this appropriated film. The Canadian tourists in the video prefigure Gower's own role as an observer of this phenomenon, a process that started in his childhood, when his architect father sent him postcards during his trips to Mexico.^{iv}

The title of the exhibition refers to the economic policy established by Franklin D. Roosevelt to reshape the relationship between the United States and Latin America by ostensibly promoting Pan-American cooperation and trade over direct intervention. In his inaugural address on March 4, 1933, Roosevelt said, "In the field of world policy, I would dedicate this nation to the policy of the good neighbor, the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others."^v Sixty years later, in 1994, a year after Gower arrived in Mexico, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was finally in effect as an economic bloc comprising the United States, Mexico, and Canada.^{vi} Terence

Gower: *The Good Neighbour* acknowledges Gower's position as a Canadian in Mexico, as a witness, and as a participant in NAFTA's effect on Mexican culture.

Born in British Columbia, Canada, in 1965, Gower arrived in Mexico in 1993, living there full time for two years, then part time ever since. The artist has thus devoted a significant part of his practice to producing work in (and about) Mexico since the beginning of his career. Intervening in cultural categories of nationalism, Gower's position as an international agent does not imply an optimistic view of globalization, but, on the contrary, demonstrates the necessary messiness of any of these categories. This exhibition proposes a survey of Gower's relationship with Mexican culture through works created during the 1990s and 2000s, from the point of view that only a migrant body has: both outside and inside.

In these works Gower traces the history of Mexican modern architecture and its specific relation to the modernity that developed in

Mexico's bustling metropolis, the largest city in the Americas. México DF (as Mexico City was called), when Gower landed, was about to go through another enormous social and cultural transformation. NAFTA would force a swift entrance into neoliberalism that changed the country's economy but also created strong inequalities, with the city deindustrializing and becoming a center for financial and cultural trade.

The art scene experienced a strong internationalization in two parallel directions: on the one hand, an export of Mexican culture to the United States and Canada, through a series of governmental and private efforts to improve the country's image as part of the trade agreement (these efforts included *Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which celebrated the glory of Mexican culture from Pre-Columbian art to muralism);^{vii} and, on the other hand, a newly emerging underground scene of contemporary art in alternative spaces, with strong participation

by foreign artists such as Francis Alÿs, Santiago Sierra, Melanie Smith, and Gower himself. Not by chance, a common trait in the works of all of these artists was the city as a creative source. This scene, which Olivier Debrouse dubbed the “multinational Mexican underground,”^{viii} would rapidly project many of these artists—along with their Mexican colleagues—onto the 1990s global circuits of Neo-Conceptualism, positioning Mexican art internationally with a strength that had not been seen since muralism. These two phenomena were two faces of the same coin: the cultural diplomacy movement, which started with the Good Neighbor policy and then expanded during the postwar years, was, in the 1990s, revived with NAFTA and paralleled by an alternative contemporary art scene that would soon become institutionalized and reach the global art market.^{ix}

Through in-depth research and institutional critique, and often through irony and appropriation, Gower’s conceptualism has always been critical of the social conventions

around nationalism in culture and art. *Sombrero* (see pp. 62–63), the 2002 piece opening this show, reproduces in large scale a 1930s New Yorker cartoon using the commercial sign painting technique of *rotulos* (Mexican street signs): a fancy lady curating a museum or shop vitrine holds a Mexican sombrero while explaining, “I want to achieve the effect of a sombrero carelessly thrown down.” This *cuidado-descuidado* (careful-careless) effect somehow synthesizes what Gower saw in much of the modern craft mix he observed in the aesthetic of the Mexican postwar elites, as well as the stereotypical way in which the North sees Mexico.

Sombrero is one of several works that engages with promotional content such as billboards and signage, as a way to blur the line between private art spaces and public commercial imagery. By introducing a street advertisement for the quintessentially Mexican shampoo brand, Vanart, in an elegant art gallery, *Vanart I & II*, from 2000 (see pp. 114–15), address the strong class divisions

that structure Mexico City: *la sociedad* vs. *lo social*. In the same vein, ISSSSTE (1995, see pp. 118–19), explores institutional signage and logos, extending with an extra S the acronym of a government union with an absurdly long name, and commenting on the bureaucratic excesses of Mexican administrative structures during the seven-decade regime of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI).^x In *Instalación por Terence Gower* (1998, see pp. 116–17), Gower intervened in Gonzalo Fonseca's 1968 sculptural building *Torre de los vientos*, promoting his alteration of the inside of the building outside the site with a kitschy billboard.^{xi}

At the same time that it is thoughtful, Gower's work has a sense of humor that allows his conceptualism to be both playful and pleasurable. By imposing a large grayscale photograph of the patio of the private house of Luis Barragán over a large red mural in *El muro rojo (Barragán)*, from 2005 (see pp. 86–89), Gower highlights the irony that photographs

of Barragán's buildings were circulated in black-and-white journals, even though color and emotion were central to the architect's work. Gower sometimes describes his humor as “arch,” that is, “marked by a deliberate and often forced playfulness, irony, or impudence.”^{xii} It is impossible not to relate this sense of *arch* to its architectural counterpart when thinking of Gower's admiring but ironic observations of Mexican modern architecture, and how the arch itself is a design element that is all but lost in modern architectural grammar.

Gower has explored *lo social*, as opposed to *la sociedad*, through his study of public architecture. In *Tlatelolcona*, from 2008 (see pp. 78–81), a series of corrugated cardboard boxes act as models for the apartment blocks of the Tlatelolco public housing project, developed by architect Mario Pani, which turned into a tragedy with the collapse of several buildings during the 1985 earthquake.^{xiii} Easy to reproduce into endless editions, the cardboard buildings aim to embody a successful version

of modern architecture's failed dream of an unlimited urban development for the masses. Gower is not simply interested in the architectural language of modernism, but also in the way it has manifested in art and culture. His ironic critique of art histories takes prominence in his *Sculpture Portraits* (2011, see pp. 102–5). Studying the heroic portraits of modern artists, he restaged them by posing with polystyrene prop sculptures, copying the affected poses of such artists as Brancusi in photographs with their works.

Gower's interest in institutional critique and museum display systems is a key component of his iconography and methodology. *Rope Piece* (1994, see pp. 120–21), the first work he showed in Mexico, started this inquiry, representing the sash cord structure used as a hanging support in the many museums located in protected historic buildings whose walls cannot be perforated. The installation of this show, consequently, does not present the works chronologically on the walls, like a traditional

mid-career retrospective. In line with his distrust of the art system and the prescribed role of the artist, Gower suggested we avoid revisiting his work through standard exhibition typology. Instead, in the spirit of institutional critique, and taking into account the artist's interest in museum display, most of the works in this exhibition are presented on a monumental table, overturning the traditional hierarchy between wall and vitrine, artwork and document, and resulting in a sort of Duchampian *Boîte-en-valise* proposal.^{xiv} Gower's practice has always blurred the boundaries between artwork and documentation, and, on this tabletop display, documentary photographs stand in for large-scale installations, monumental sculptures, and even works of architecture. While most of the works are placed on the table, which resembles an urban maquette of Gower's practice through the years, the exhibition also includes a series of wall installations that cover the span from Gower's arrival in Mexico—*Rope Piece* and *ISSSSTE*—to the piece *Not Free*

Association (Guitarras) (2016, see pp. 98–101), which addresses the artisanal guitar production of the *lauderos* in Mexico, in a homage to Duchamp’s 3 *Standard Stoppages* (1913–14).

For the third and final element of this exhibition, Gower has created a new installation, *Partial Facsimile* (see pp. 51–59), which reproduces, on the exhibition walls, a gray-scale phantom of Siqueiros’s 1970 late-career retrospective at what was then the Center for Inter-American Relations, and is now Americas Society. In transforming Siqueiros’s 1970 show into a single full-gallery wall installation, Gower is reinstating the figure of Siqueiros as a model for political art. In Gower’s *Embassy Case Studies Series* he considers Siqueiros’s political murals an important influence on his own recent installations that critique US Cold War foreign policy. In this gesture, the historiographical bridge between Mexican muralism and 1990s México DF art is made literal.

Mexico not only gave Gower a language but also a working methodology, teaching him to

see the “historical, not theoretical, emphasis on identifying forms that act as containers for the ideological meaning of the works of architecture under study,” and to understand how cultural diplomacy shapes the history of buildings and institutions.^{xv} *Terence Gower: The Good Neighbour* is thus not simply a study of Gower’s works in and about Mexico, but also an exploration of the country’s modern cultural history through works that recount and at the same time question the official national narratives of identity. In the trilateral system of cultural exchange proposed by NAFTA since the early 1990s, Gower’s diplomatic strategy seems to be that of a double agent—the good neighbor that observes, highlights, twists, and disarms the established logic behind the national identities at play.

ENDNOTES

- i. Juan O’Gorman, a leading modernist architect in Mexico, designed the building for the Biblioteca Central de la UNAM as well as the mosaics casing the facade. The northern wall covers pre-Hispanic history, while the southern wall encompasses colonial history.
- ii. The seven-meter statue by Ignacio Asúnsolo depicted President Miguel Alemán wearing rector’s robes. Alemán spearheaded efforts to modernize the country during his term, 1946–52, but was later panned for corruption. On the Mexican modernist project and its fractures, see Cristóbal Andrés Jácome, “Introducción,” in *Desafío a la estabilidad: procesos artísticos en México, 1952–1967*, ed. Rita Eder (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2012), 270–83.
- iii. On Gower’s relationship to Siqueiros, see page 51–59. The artists share the concept of *la sociedad vs. lo social*, as discussed in Alejandro Hernández Gálvez, “Architectures of Display: Conversation with Terence Gower,” *Arquine*, no. 88 (Summer 2019): 2–7.
- iv. See Gower’s autobiographical account on p. 5.
- v. Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor policy supposedly detached from direct military interference and replaced it with strong diplomatic and commercial relations through public and private agreements. Nevertheless, the United States provided support to authoritarian regimes during this period, including Anastasio Somoza’s regime in Nicaragua, Rafael Trujillo’s in the Dominican Republic, and Fulgencio Batista’s in Cuba.
- vi. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was negotiated by United States president George H. W. Bush, Mexican president Carlos Salinas de Gortari, and Canadian prime minister Brian Mulroney, and came into effect on January 1, 1994, establishing a trade bloc for the continent.
- vii. *Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries* included over 350 sculptures, paintings, and objects, with sections for Pre-Columbian Art, Viceregal Art, Nineteenth-Century Art, and Twentieth-Century Art. The exhibition substantially boosted the Frida Kahlo and Mexican art market boom of the 1990s and beyond.
- viii. Cuauhtemoc Medina, Alvaro Vazquez Mantecon, and Olivier Debroise, *La Era de la Discrepancia: Arte y Cultura Visual en Mexico, 1968–1997* (Mexico City: Turner/Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2007), 328. See also Kit Hammonds, “Spiral City,” *Aperture*, October 16, 2019, <https://aperture.org/editorial/mexico-city-spiral-city/>.
- ix. See Daniel Montero, *El cubo de Rubik. Arte mexicano en los años noventa* (Mexico City: RM+Jumex, 2013).
- x. The PRI held power in Mexico from 1929 to 2000, in what was described by Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa as a *dictablanda* or soft dictatorship.
- xi. Uruguayan-born Gonzalo Fonseca’s *Torre de los vientos* was one of a series of sculptures along Ruta de la Amistad that were built as part of a cultural program that ran parallel to the Mexico City Olympics in 1968. The tower was the only sculpture that could be entered as a building. For more on the Olympics architecture program in Mexico City, see Jennifer Josten, “International Circuits,” in *Mathias Goeritz: Modernist Art and Architecture in Cold War Mexico* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018), 228–76.
- xii. Merriam-Webster, s.v. “arch (n.),” accessed January 15, 2021, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/arch>.
- xiii. Built between 1960 and 1965, Tlatelolco was the second-largest housing project in North America after New York’s Co-op City, essentially functioning as a city within Mexico City. It suffered damage during the devastating earthquake on September 19, 1985, and deterioration has continued since then.
- xiv. The tabletop format is also a reference to Gower’s 1997 exhibition *Mal de Archivo* at Art Deposit, Mexico City, in which he showed small works on paper, studies, sketches, and multiples, in two antique vitrines.
- xv. Terence Gower, email message to author, December 28, 2020.

GOOD NEIGHBORS IN THE BACKYARD

Julieta González



Polytechnic, 2005 (video still)

The conflicting ideological positions behind Mexican modernist architecture and David Alfaro Siqueiros have shaped Canadian-born Terence Gower's long-standing connection to Mexico and the body of related works he has produced over the past two decades. This exhibition travels back and forth between these two references and the productive tensions that arise from their confrontation.

The fact that this exhibition is organized at Americas Society brings to mind many geopolitical associations, from the North American Free Trade Agreement to the many policies that have marked the relationships between the countries in the region, especially between Mexico and the United States, such as the Good Neighbor policy in the 1930s and the Alliance for Progress in the 1960s. And indeed, the history of Americas Society is intertwined with the historical coordinates that demarcate Gower's works in and around Mexico, as well as beyond, which revisit Cold War cultural diplomacy and the ideology of modernization.

THE ARCHIVE AS METHOD

In 1998, Gower exhibited his work at Art Deposit in Mexico City, an alternative space run by artists Stefan Brüggemann, Edgar Orlaineta, and Ulises Mora. Entitled *Mal de Archivo*, the exhibition featured an installation comprising two vitrines of ephemera, sketches, receipts, and notes. A meta-statement on conceptual art at a moment when the Mexico City cultural ecosystem was being revitalized by a series of artist-run and independent art spaces that provided an alternative to the stale discourse of official museums, which, for decades, had failed to show and collect the contemporary art being produced in Mexico, including the conceptually oriented works that had marked an important departure from the Generación de la Ruptura in the 1970s.ⁱ Coincidentally, I wrote a very brief text for this exhibition in 1997, in which I singled out a piece of paper from the archive which bore the inscription “desiccated and reconstituted,” which, at the time, seemed an apt metaphor for an archival

and metalinguistic art practice such as Gower’s. In retrospect, and contextualizing this exhibition in the historical moment it was presented, this show could be seen as part of the “reconstitution” of the conceptual narratives that had been left out of museum collections and exhibitions, what Olivier Debrouse and Cuauhtémoc Medina describe as “institutional amnesia” in their essay for the catalogue of the exhibition *La era de la discrepancia* (2007).ⁱⁱ

The vitrine filled with documents and ephemera has, since then, been a staple of Gower’s installations, which comment on history through subjective readings of real archives or the creation of fictional ones. In more recent years, these vitrine installations have featured the artist’s clinical dissections of historical buildings and building typologies presented largely as case studies, through scale models, documentation, and graphic and textual material. This particular retrospective at Americas Society of Gower’s works in and around Mexico is once again staged in a large

vitrine, which presents the work as an index of his relation to Mexico, a case study of his particular approach to the country's complex modern history, and a matrix for the ideas that inform many of his later works related to Mexico and beyond. The vitrine can also be read as a commentary on the archive's desiccation of history in the name of preservation, and the artist's reconstitution of it by selectively bringing to life aspects of the archive to weave an alternate and critical account.

RECONSTITUTING A DESICCATED MEXICAN MODERNITY

In the early to mid 2000s many artists throughout Latin America revisited their respective countries' modernities in an attempt to understand the failure of the modern project in the region. These works often cast a somewhat nostalgic gaze on an era characterized by the glamour of the international style in architecture and the optimistic yet unrealized dreams of progress and development that permeated

the images of modernization in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s. Gower's dissection of Mexican modernity focuses precisely on the optimism of this period and its translation into the iconography of modernist architecture, which circulated widely through print media, film, and television. The artist's wry sense of humor also belies this nostalgic gaze in order to enable an insight into the darker realities of the period in Mexico and Latin America, especially in his explorations of American interventionism in the region in other bodies of work.

Gower's particular dissection of Mexican modernism has been guided by the rift identified by David Alfaro Siqueiros in Mexican modernism as *la sociedad* vs. *lo social*, which, for Gower, denotes "the elites vs. the masses."ⁱⁱⁱ This rift not only defined two demarcated fields of action but also prompted a reflection on the double standards created by the art and culture system of value circulation.

These ideas were deployed in Gower's project for the Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil in 2007.

Invited by the director to make a reading of the museum's collection, Gower focused on this paradox and the way it particularly played out in the material production of one of the country's most significant modern avant-gardes: the muralist painters. Fervently affiliated to the ideology of communism in the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution, these artists produced a singular output of mural paintings for public institutions, syndicates, ministries, government agencies, cultural centers, etc. Some of these artists favored the Trotskyist ideal, whereas others leaned toward Stalinism. Siqueiros took his Stalinist affiliations to the extreme by leading an armed attack on Trotsky's home, which failed to kill him but injured Trotsky's infant grandson, who has lived to tell the story every year at the memorial service held for Trotsky at what is now the Leon Trotsky Museum. But aside from his particular preferences, Siqueiros, like many others of his generation, had a double practice, one that enabled him to make a handsome living

by painting medium- or large-format paintings for the wealthy elite. While it was difficult for the often site-specific murals to be commodified, small, medium, and even large-size transportable paintings were able to circulate comfortably in the art market, and were fit to be displayed in homes.^{iv}

For the show, entitled *Prácticas públicas / Vidas privadas* (2006, see pp. 106–7), Gower constructed his reading of this paradox through the collection's works (all easel paintings) by creating a display that recalled the well-appointed homes and corporate offices of the elites during the 1950s and '60s, through the incorporation of emblematic elements of tropical modernist architecture such as a lattice wall and sleek, sophisticated modernist furniture to create different domestic and work ambiances to showcase the work. To accompany this carefully staged rumination on the private life of these artworks made for the bourgeoisie, Gower commissioned a gray-scale flattened replica of Siqueiros's mural

Retrato de la burguesía (1939), a violent depiction of the exploitation of the masses by the elites in power. Created for the stairwell of the Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas, the mural's center is occupied by the deadly money-making machine of capitalism, war, and imperialist expansion, which spews gold coins and is powered by the electrical transmission towers that loom above. Strategies of displacement and defamiliarization, as well as a careful mise-en-scène, would also become working methods in later works in which Gower seeks to critique certain power structures.^v

While he was working on the Carrillo Gil exhibition, Gower produced *Ciudad Moderna* (2006, see pp. 66-67), a work in which he edited the 1966 Mexican film *Despedida de casada*, reducing it to the scenes in which modernist architecture is featured—the houses of Francisco Artigas in the new urban development of El Pedregal, and the condominiums in Avenida Reforma by Mario Pani, among others—in order to place the work at the service

of his observations on the double standard that also operated in architecture, where architects worked both on public and social interest projects while building and designing ultramodern luxury residences for the wealthy.

Polytechnic (2005, see pp. 68-69), however, takes on the guise of a documentary of the period, which dissects the Instituto Politécnico Nacional building in a neutral way that highlights the international style of its architecture, and, rather than locating it in a specific geographical context, situates it in the “land of the modern,” a homogenized global space that speaks the lingua franca of the international style. *Polytechnic* is also host to ideas that relate to the social dimension of the modernist project, and the work alludes to the fact that Hannes Meyer was in charge of the polytechnic's urban planning department and the merging of Mexican functionalism with the utopia of a welfare state embedded in postrevolutionary Mexican political ideals. No other architecture was as emblematic of

this drive as the international style that prevailed in the major mid-century social housing projects, such as the CUPA (Centro Urbano Miguel Alemán), Tlatelolco Complex, and Multifamiliar Juárez (all designed by Pani, the Multifamiliar Juárez in collaboration with Salvador Ortega). To add a grisly note to the double standard identified by Gower, both Tlatelolco and the Multifamiliar Juárez were badly damaged in the 1985 earthquake, while few, if any, of the luxury high-rises and condominiums designed by Pani suffered significant damage.

GOOD NEIGHBORS IN THE BACKYARD: THE CASE STUDIES

Through this initial interest in Mexican modern architecture, Gower has extended his gaze to chart the spread of the modernist credo throughout the Third World. The Cold War provided the stage for the battle of architectural and aesthetic idioms throughout the Latin Americas, one that confronted the sleek

language of abstraction with the different forms of figuration, ranging from nationalist realism to indigenist revivals. The clash between the languages of geometric abstraction and socialist realism that drove Russian Constructivists to their deaths and into exile in gulags was translated to other latitudes. The United States, through its Good Neighbor policy and its Alliance for Progress, promoted the “international style” of abstraction, with its clean, streamlined, and seemingly self-referential aesthetic. Both geometric abstraction and international-style architecture became the emblem of Latin America’s path toward progress. The ideology of modernization crystallized in the new capital of Brazil, Brasília, built from zero in the then deserted plains in the center of the country, but also in the building of university campuses (called cities in Caracas and Mexico) such as the one for the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) and the Universidad Central de Venezuela (UCV), among many other cases.

In the past decade Gower has turned toward a new interest within his dissection of the spread of the modernist credo and the role cultural diplomacy plays in it, in works such as the *Embassy Case Studies*, which, although not included in the present exhibition, can be considered as a direct consequence of his researches into Mexican modernism. His reflection on cultural diplomacy during the Cold War inevitably brings to mind Nelson Rockefeller, one of the minds behind the hemispheric policies of the United States, starting as early as the end of World War II. Scholar Jean Franco wrote a fascinating account, *The Decline and Fall of the Lettered City*,^{vi} that follows the intertwinements resulting from the promotion—by the CIA—of the “international style” of modernism as the lingua franca that would unite the Americas in order to halt the spread of communism in the region.

The Cold War redefined the geopolitical world order after World War II. Both East and West began a race to extend the reach of

their ideological dominion toward countries in the peripheries, which were then engaging in their own decolonization struggles. In 1956, the Bandung Conference united many of the peripheral underdeveloped nations, former colonies, in one bloc that aimed to have autonomy from the East and West divisions of the United States and the Soviet Union: the Third World was born. Latin American countries, although independent since the dawn of the nineteenth century, found themselves, by virtue of their dependency and underdevelopment, cast into the Third World. The unequal reach of the developmentalist policies implemented in the 1950s had sown the seeds of discontent and was increasingly regarded as a form of corporate neocolonialism. The Cuban Revolution further galvanized the divisions and the spread of a rhetoric that called for autonomy from US imperialism. In 1969 Nelson Rockefeller wrote an extensive report that cited the failures of the Good Neighbor policy and the more recent Alliance for Progress as factors in the spread of

communism in the hemisphere.^{vii} The approach he implemented to suppress the emergence of a leftist revolution was through the massive dissemination of information and cultural diplomacy. Architecture played a role too, as the diplomatic efforts in these Third World countries were set against the backdrops of gleaming modernist buildings—a host of new embassies that spoke the language of the international style.

The “architectural” case studies of the embassies in Baghdad, Havana, and Saigon (to which Gower has added a more recent project on Victor Gruen’s proposed designs for the urban redevelopment of Tehran before the Islamic Revolution deposed the Shah of Iran in 1979) all index the spread of modernization as ideology as part of the US Cold War agenda. Their *mise-en-scène* relies on the vitrine presenting the “dessicated” documents of these histories alongside “reconstituted” fragments of the architecture of the respective embassies. A ceiling, the detail of a lattice, a

balcony—disembodied architectural elements transformed into sculptural pieces that seem impervious to the scenes of violence and unrest that surrounded these buildings in conflictive historical events.

These works not only bear the trace of the lessons learned from Gower’s careful dissection of Mexican modernity but are also an important reference given the particular context of this exhibition—namely, the beacon of hemispheric cultural diplomacy that Americas Society represents, from its foundation at the height of the Cold War to the present. This exhibition might in itself be considered a case study, as well as the field of study from which Gower radiates his diverse interests toward other latitudes, with Mexico as the site for experimentation that affords him insights into the mechanisms of cultural, political, and economic interventionism and how they have shaped the globalized world we live in today. Interestingly, the vitrine retrospective of his works in Mexico is framed within the spectral presence of Siqueiros. Gower has

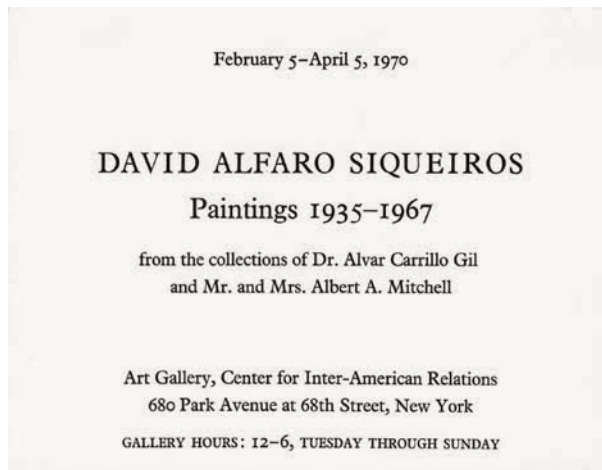
replicated the artist's 1970 exhibition at CIAR exactly, creating a faded trompe l'oeil mural that envelops the gallery and contains his explorations of Cold War modernity in Mexico, as faded as the virulence of Siqueiros's militant discourse was, by the time he had this exhibition at a Rockefeller-funded institution, of all places, four years before his death. The exhibition, in fact, featured works born out of his depoliticized private and commercial practice, easel paintings of horses, female nudes, still lifes featuring exotic tropical fruit, as well as *Intertrópico*, the painting that Gower framed in a bourgeois setting for his show at the Carrillo Gil in 2007.

Gower's desiccation of his Mexico works, formally and materially, speaks the international language of modernism. However, it is contained in the spectral reconstitution of the ardent muralist's works intended for the private sphere. *The Good Neighbour* synthesizes the tensions between public and private that have informed—and continue to inform—Terence Gower's understanding of Mexican modernity.

ENDNOTES

- i. Generación de la Ruptura describes the generation of artists who broke from the by then officialized narrative of Mexican muralism, which had dominated Mexican art and culture since the 1920s. In 1956 a young José Luis Cuevas wrote a manifesto denouncing the cultural monopoly of muralism, "La Cortina de Nopal" (The Cactus Curtain), which initiated the rupture. Beginning in the late sixties, a turn toward conceptually oriented practices and the emergence of Los Grupos in the seventies marked yet another shift from the visual and material languages favored by the artists of La Ruptura.
- ii. Olivier Debrouse and Cuauhtémoc Medina, "Genealogía de una exposición," in *La era de la discrepancia. Arte y cultura visual en México 1968–1997* (Mexico City: Turner/Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2007), 19.
- iii. Terence Gower, email message to author, December 24, 2020.
- iv. Despite the difficulties posed, the cash-strapped San Francisco Art Institute recently considered selling its site-specific Diego Rivera mural, *The Making of a Fresco Showing the Building of a City* (1931), valued at \$50 million.
- v. The flattened grayscale rendition of the mural is an interesting experiment in defamiliarization. The original mural is a strident cacophony of belligerent forms and colors inside a rather narrow stairwell. Siqueiros had wanted to engulf the spectator in these images, in the manner of a cinematic experience. Gower's staid gray mural seems to be domesticated for the eyes of the bourgeois occupants of his imaginary spaces.
- vi. Jean Franco, *The Decline and Fall of the Lettered City: Latin America in the Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).
- vii. Nelson A. Rockefeller, *The Rockefeller Report on the Americas: The Official Report of a United States Presidential Mission for the Western Hemisphere* (Chicago, IL: Quadrangle Books, 1969).

PARTIAL FACSIMILE:
INVOKING SIQUEIROS



Invitation card for *David Alfaro Siqueiros: Paintings 1935-1967*
at the Center for Inter-American Relations, 1970

For this new installation, Terence Gower restages the exhibition *David Alfaro Siqueiros: Paintings 1935-1967*, which took place at the Center for Inter-American Relations (now Americas Society) in 1970.¹ In Gower's invocation fifty years later, Siqueiros's paintings reappear in faded black-and-white reproductions placed in their exact original positions, irrespective of the changes that have been made to the space. By calling on Siqueiros, Gower contextualizes his own work in a history of Mexican modernism and cultural diplomacy.

Gower has been fascinated by the work of Siqueiros, for him a model of the political artist, throughout his career. He has previously created two large installations on the work and legacy of the artist, each commissioned by an institution that has had a role in the documentation and dissemination of Siqueiros's work. In 2001, Gower was invited to present a project at the Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros (SAPS), which occupies the house that the muralist left to the state as a home for his archive and an

exhibition space for contemporary art. Gower presented the installation *La estrategia* (2001, see pp. 108–9), an institutional critique consisting of a series of murals with organizational charts that reveal the institutional structure of SAPS, color coded according to the palette of Siqueiros's oeuvre. In 2007, Gower was invited to intervene in the collection of the Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, whose holdings were assembled by Siqueiros's most important private collector. Gower's proposal inverted the rules of museum display: he created a bourgeois interior, in which he installed Siqueiros's 1946 painting *Intertrópicos*, juxtaposed with a full-size grayscale reproduction of Siqueiros's mural *Retrato de la burguesía*—painted in 1939–40 at the Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas en la Ciudad de México—highlighting the contrast between Siqueiros's public and private practices (see pp. 106–7). The painting *Intertrópicos* was, in turn, part of the CIAR exhibition in 1970, and is represented in *Partial Facsimile*, which also uses the strategy of black-and-white reproduction.

Siqueiros produced many murals for public buildings in Mexico and abroad, and firmly established his work as a public practice. Presented during the lifetime of the artist, *David Alfaro Siqueiros: Paintings 1935–1967* opened on February 5, 1970, and included thirty-three easel paintings from the private collections of Dr. Alvar Carrillo Gil and Mr. and Mrs. Albert A. Mitchell. Stanton L. Catlin, the curator of the exhibition and director of the CIAR, opens his catalogue essay by explaining that, for Siqueiros, easel paintings “could be individually owned, and thus removed from public appreciation, [becoming] a matter of private property, and thus Bourgeois and Anti-revolutionary.”ⁱⁱ Over the years, however, Siqueiros produced many easel works which he discussed through the dichotomy of *la sociedad* vs. *lo social*.ⁱⁱⁱ Gower claims this binary as central to his own exploration of Mexican modernism and the tension between the architectural modernization of public spaces and that of private homes for the Mexican elites.^{iv}



Documentation of *David Alfaro Siqueiros: Paintings 1935–1967* at the Center for Inter-American Relations, 1970

In *Partial Facsimile*, Siqueiros's easel paintings reappear from the past, giving a context and a tension to Gower's own works, which are presented on top of or around them. Gower's reproduction of the exhibition takes an indexical approach, repeating the original works from the show like photochemical afterimages, and as documents of this key moment in inter-American cultural relations. In line with Gower's long interest in institutional critique, the reappearance brings the visitor's attention to the history of Americas Society, at the same time as it proposes a conceptual and poetic context for Gower's research on Mexican modernism. Perhaps the installation can simply be read as a personal homage by Gower to the Mexican *grande*, with the gallery walls themselves speaking out in memory of this earlier exhibition.

ENDNOTES

- i. The Center for Inter-American Relations, now Americas Society, was founded in 1967 by David Rockefeller to foster a democratic hemispheric dialogue.
- ii. Stanton L. Catlin, *David Alfaro Siqueiros: Paintings 1935–1967* (New York: Center for Inter-American Relations, 1970), 7.
- iii. See David A. Siqueiros, "Sobre arte social y arte de sociedad," in *No hay más ruta que la nuestra: importancia nacional e internacional de la pintura mexicana moderna, el primer brote de reforma profunda en las artes plásticas del mundo contemporáneo* (Mexico City: Talleres gráficos núm. 1 de la S. E. P., 1945), 69; and *Siqueiros*, directed by Manuel González Casanova (Mexico City, 1969), 17 min.
- iv. Alejandro Hernández Gálvez, "Architectures of Display: Conversation with Terence Gower," *Arquine*, no. 88 (Summer 2019): 2–7.

WORKS

SOMBRERO



This work comments on the display strategy in which objects are arranged to look random, but are actually carefully arranged. It consists of a large *rótulo* executed by a Mexico City sign painter that is installed “carelessly,” leaning against the gallery the wall. The painting reproduces a *New Yorker* cartoon from the 1930s.

Sombrero, 2002. Enamel on wood panel, 96 1/4 x 72 x 2 inches (244 x 183 x 5 cm)

FIRST CONTACT



Gower used footage from an 8 mm film that had been left to a friend by her grandmother, a former tour guide. The footage shows a group of elegantly dressed Canadian tourists visiting the just-completed UNAM campus in Mexico City at a time when the nascent Mexican tourist industry promoted “Pyramids by day, cocktails by night.” Gower edited the video to a dance music soundtrack, although playback is silent.

First Contact, 2013. Digital video, 2:26

CIUDAD MODERNA



Gower used the popular 1966 film *Despedida de casada* as source material to document the contemporary city. His video comprises a composite of clips from the film, occasionally dissolving into perspective renderings or pristine black-and-white stills akin to illustrations from an architectural monograph. The printed stills are shown alongside the video, demonstrating the documentary potential of narrative film.

Ciudad Moderna, 2004. Digital video, 6:20; eleven Piezo pigment print stills [three on view], each 11 ⁷/₈ × 15 ³/₄ inches (30 × 40 cm)

POLYTECHNIC



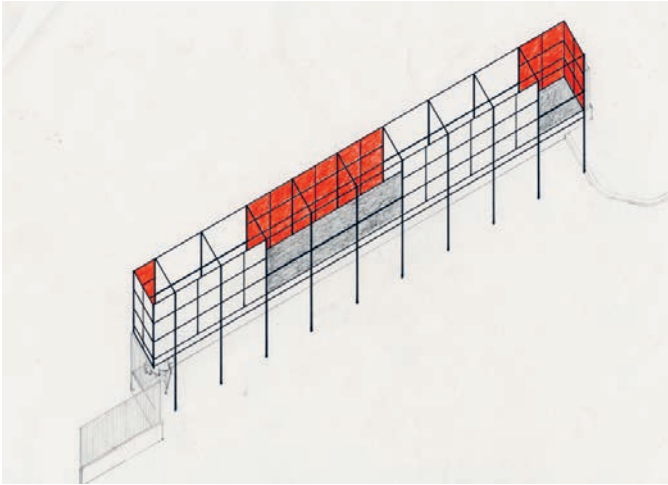
Gower composed this video using photographs of Mexico's Instituto Politécnico Nacional taken upon its completion in 1963. He animates the still images using zooms and pans, creating a tour of the campus in its just-completed state. A narrator offers technical data on its construction, but no mention is made of the campus's location, highlighting the universalist aspirations of its architect and planners.

Polytechnic, 2005. Digital video, 8:20

BICYCLE PAVILION

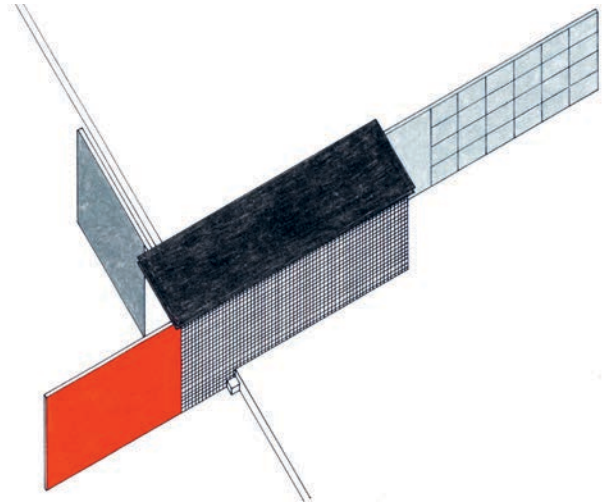


This pavilion is an interface between the Jumex factory and the company's art collection, exploring architecture's relationship with function and display. The structure includes a mirador offering views of the factory compound on the outskirts of Mexico City as well as a bike shed for factory employee use. It was commissioned by the Colección/Fundación Jumex.



Bicycle Pavilion, 2002. Steel, glass, vinyl, and enamel, $189 \times 708 \frac{3}{4} \times 70 \frac{7}{8}$ inches ($480 \times 1800 \times 180$ cm). [on view: model, drawing, photographs, *Display Architecture: Terence Gower Pavilions* (Trieste/Berlin: Navado Press, 2008), $21 \frac{1}{4} \times 41$ inches (64×104 cm) overall]

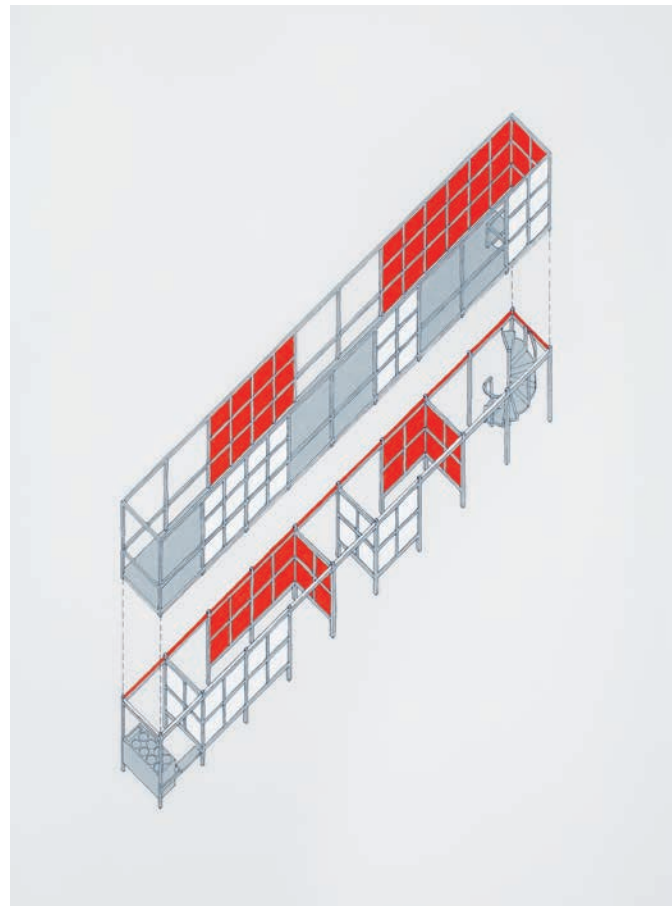
PROJECTION PAVILION



With the pavilion's radiating walls, Gower references Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's 1929 Barcelona Pavilion, but "tropicalizes" the structure with bright colors, a photo-mural, video projection, and brise-soleil. The pavilion was a deliberate intervention in the premodern architecture of the Laboratorio Arte Alameda, a former convent built in 1596, where it was exhibited as part of *Ciudad Moderna* in 2005.

Projection Pavilion, 2005. Wood, drywall, concrete block, furniture, carpet, paint, and digital photo-mural, 787 $\frac{3}{8}$ \times 236 $\frac{1}{4}$ \times 110 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches (2000 \times 600 \times 280 cm) [on view: model, drawing, color photographs, *Ciudad Moderna: Terence Gower Video Works* (Mexico City: Turner/A&R Press, 2006), 37 $\frac{1}{2}$ \times 48 \times 14 inches (95 \times 122 \times 36 cm) overall]

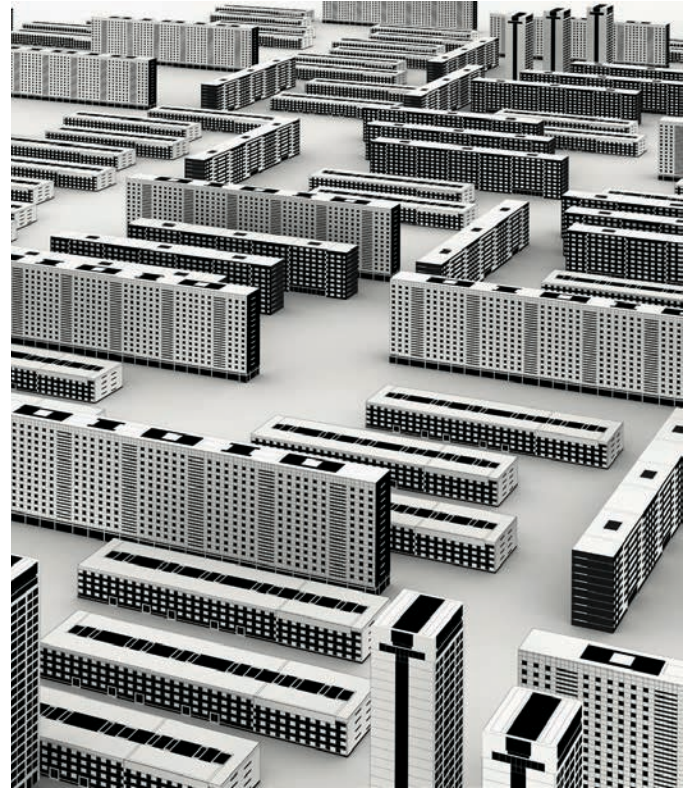
SPEC. PAVILIONS



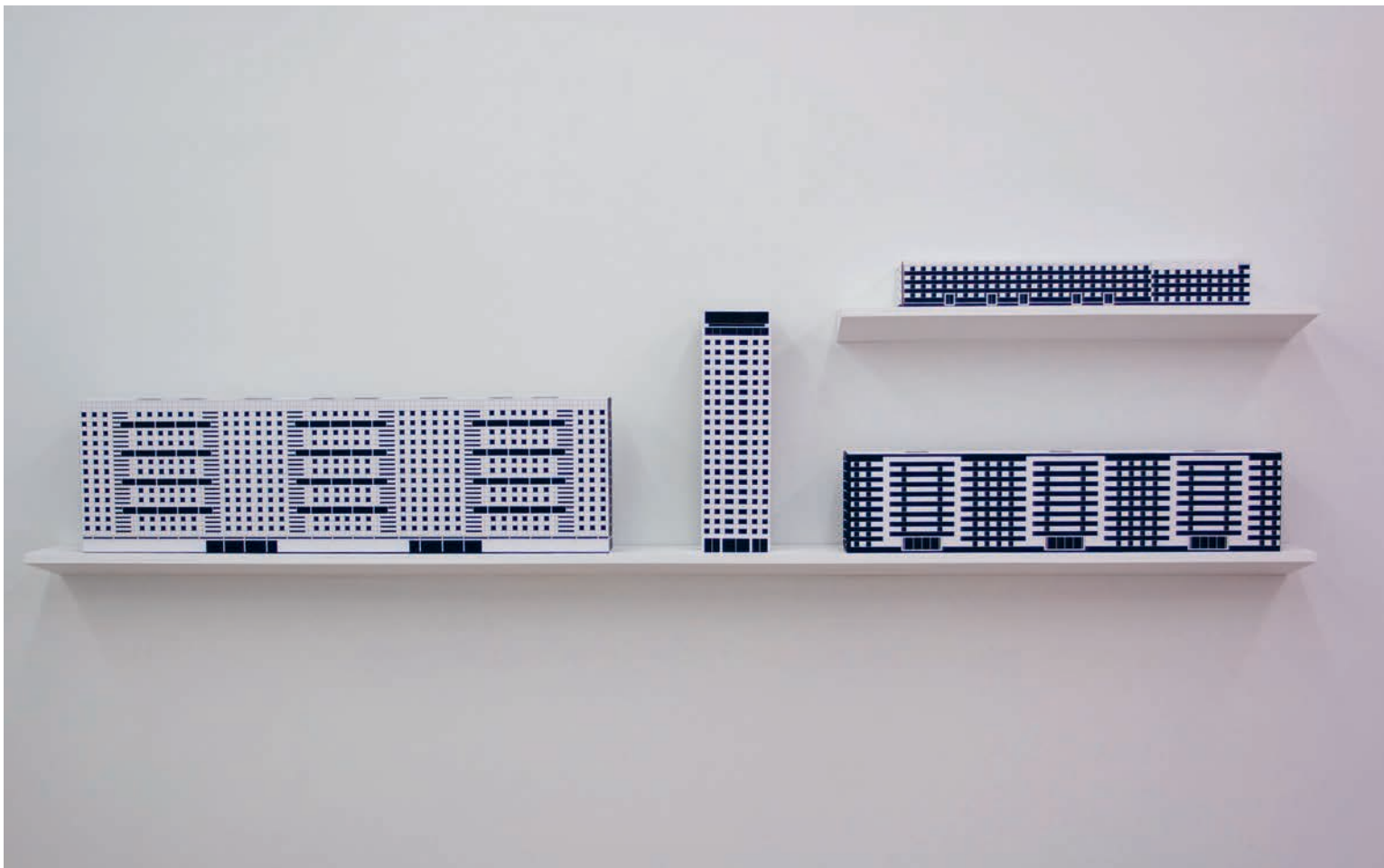
With these variations on the artist's *Bicycle Pavilion*, Gower retains the second-level mirador of the original but redesigns the lower level. The area used for bicycle storage in the original is reassigned to a new function related to the gaze: an art gallery, a surveillance module, and a site for gay cruising.

Spec. Pavilions, 2003. Three drawings, ink and wax pencil on Mylar, each 23 ³/₈ × 17 ³/₄ inches (60 × 45 cm)

TLATELOLCONA

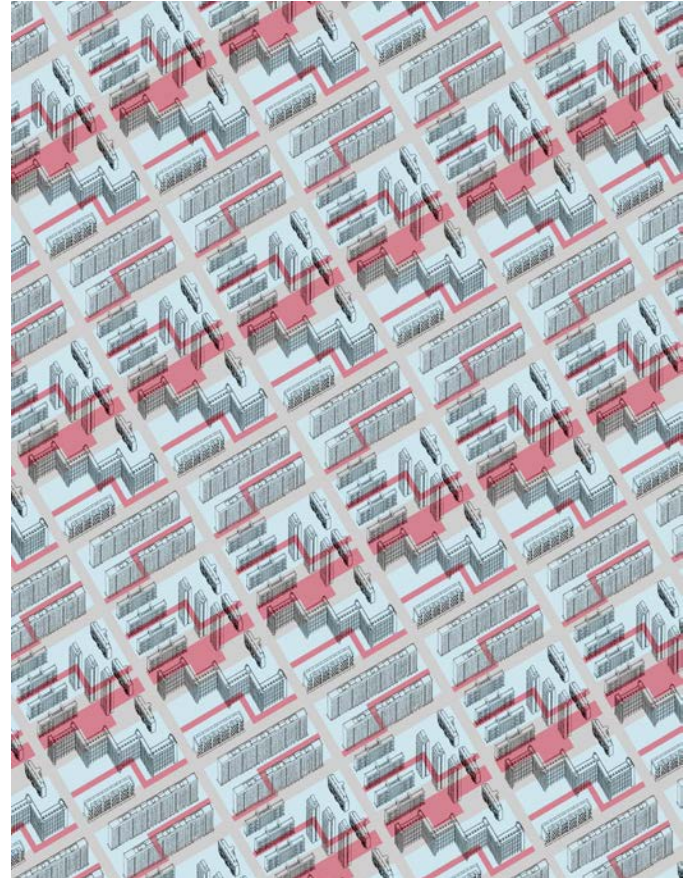


This piece's four custom corrugated boxes are printed with the original facade designs of Mexico City's Tlatelolco housing complex, now lost under post-earthquake damage and buttressing from 1985. Part of Gower's large body of work on modern architecture in Mexico, the boxes can be reproduced indefinitely—as shown in an accompanying print—demonstrating the symbolic scale of mass housing from the 1950s and '60s.



Tlatelolcona, 2008. Digital print, $26\frac{3}{4} \times 22\frac{7}{8}$ inches (68 × 58 cm),
four custom-milled cardboard boxes: $14\frac{7}{8} \times 6\frac{1}{4} \times 30$ inches
(9.5 × 15.9 × 76.2 cm), $8\frac{1}{2} \times 4 \times 37\frac{3}{4}$ inches (21.6 × 10.2 × 95.9 cm),
21 × 5 × 6 inches (53.3 × 12.7 × 15.2 cm), and $13\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2} \times 47\frac{1}{4}$ inches
(34.3 × 8.9 × 120 cm)

GRAND ENSEMBLE (PANI)



Gower based the pattern of the wallpaper and endpapers on buildings from Mario Pani's Mexico City housing projects—Miguel Aleman, Juárez, Tlatelolco, and Santa Fe. He drew the designs freehand so they seem to share the same endless ground, resulting in wallpaper akin to a uniform and universal social housing solution that can be rolled out and applied at any scale. The project was commissioned by Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey for its 2014 Mario Pani survey.



Grand Ensemble (Pani), 2013-14 (in collaboration with Vincent Schneider). Wallpaper, book endpapers, and essay [on view: wallpaper sample, installation photograph, *Mario Pani: Arquitectura en proceso* (2013), 31 ½ × 35 ½ inches (80 × 90 cm) overall]

EL MURO ROJO (BARRAGÁN)

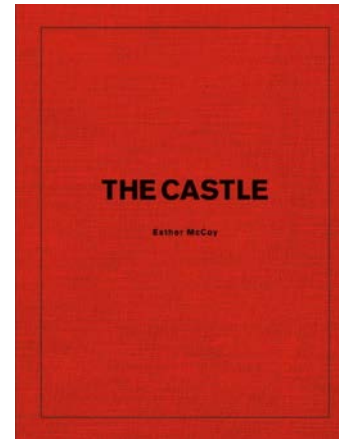


Luis Barragán's work was widely published in architectural journals in the 1950s and '60s, but rarely in color, despite the vibrancy of his buildings. Gower juxtaposes the tonal and planar reading of a black-and-white photograph of the roof patio of Casa Barragán with the "emotional" encounter with color that the architect promoted.



El muro rojo (Barragán), 2005. C-print mounted on wood panel, red wall; overall dimensions variable.

THE CASTLE



Gower conceived this work as an artist's project for the Smithsonian's *Archives of American Art Journal*, based on research in the Esther McCoy Papers. McCoy was a great supporter of the modern movement in Mexico and reacted strongly when a central figure of the movement, Francisco Artigas, built a Renaissance-style castle as his private home, as referenced in Gower's title. This vitrine version of *The Castle* was created for an exhibition at Museo Jumex in 2017.

The Castle, 2017. Sepia-toned digital print, 11 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches (30 × 40 cm), *Archives of American Art Journal*, 11 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches (30 × 40 cm), clothbound book with embossed cover, 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ × $\frac{5}{8}$ inches (20 × 14 × 1.5 cm)

MANIFIESTO



Will Orzo was invited to compose a melody set to a selection of texts from Mathias Goeritz's 1952 *Manifiesto de la arquitectura emocional*. Rachel Sharples performed the song live at Museo Experimental El Eco, after which, the recording was played back for the duration of the exhibition, in the museum's otherwise empty galleries. A studio recording was used for the LP, pressed in an edition of 100.

Manifiesto, 2015 (in collaboration with Rachel Sharples). LP, 25:16, in silkscreened cover, 12 ¼ × 12 ¼ × ⅜ inches (31 × 31.2 × 0.8 cm)

ART IN LATIN AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE



Gower based this series on plates from Paul F. Damaz's book *Art in Latin American Architecture* (New York: Reinhold, 1963). He overpainted each photographed sculpture, flattening its form. This intervention fights photographic perspective but also lends a new materiality to the depicted works.



Art in Latin American Architecture, 2012. Fifteen digital photographs [three on view] with enamel paint, each 47 1/4 x 9 inches (30 x 23 cm)

NOT FREE ASSOCIATION (GUITARRAS)

These wall sculptures are composed of layered wood veneers rather than solid wood, each a virtuoso work by one of Mexico City's best *lauderos* (stringed instrument makers). Produced for the exhibition *Free Association* at LABOR, these sculptures are designed to be taken off the wall and handled like guitars.





Not Free Association (Guitarras), 2016. Seven wood wall sculptures, each approx. $59 \times 7\frac{1}{8} \times 3$ inches ($150 \times 18 \times 7.5$ cm)

SCULPTURE PORTRAITS



This project began with a study of heroic portraits of modern artists, a form pioneered by Brancusi in the many studio self-portraits he created in the early twentieth century. Gower recreates artists' poses using a group of *Sculpture-Props* fabricated in polymer-coated polystyrene especially for the project. An accompanying poster establishes a taxonomy of the standard poses Gower encountered in his research.



Sculpture Portraits, 2011. Five silver gelatin prints [three on view], each 8 × 10 inches (20.3 × 25.4 cm)

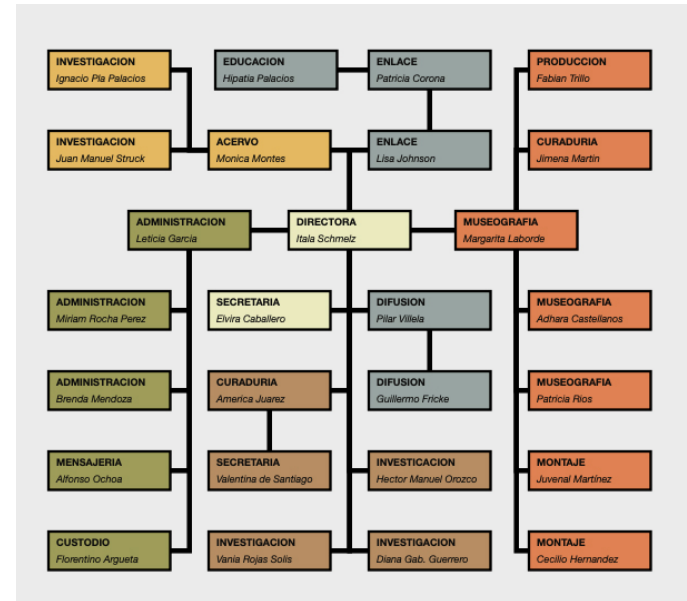
PRÁCTICAS PÚBLICAS / VIDAS PRIVADAS



This project on Mexican modern art was a counterpoint to Gower's research on modern architecture completed for the 2005 exhibition *Ciudad Moderna* in Mexico City. As a mise-en-scène for his hanging of the collection, Gower intervened in the Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil's building—designed by Augusto H. Álvarez in 1974—using wood paneling, concrete lattices, furniture, and vitrines to simulate domestic and institutional interiors. David Alfaro Siqueiros's mural *Retrato de la burguesía* (1939) is reproduced in black and white and hung next to easel paintings by Siqueiros from the collection.

Prácticas públicas / Vidas privadas, 2007. Framed Siqueiros painting, credenza, lamps, chairs, concrete brise-soleil, painted reproduction of Siqueiros mural, steel-and-wood desk, swivel chair, and standing ashtray [on view: three color photographs, exhibition pamphlet, 19 ¼ x 29 ½ inches (49 x 75 cm) overall]

LA ESTRATEGIA



For a temporary installation at Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, Gower employed a color palette derived from Siqueiros works on view in adjacent spaces. The diagrams chart the organizational structure introduced by the institution's incoming director, Itala Schmelz, in 2001, continuing Gower's work from the 1990s that addressed institutional structure and aesthetics.

La estrategia, 2001. Four painted murals: *Estrategia*, *Medios*, *Calendario*, *Equipo*. Acrylic paint and adhesive vinyl. Study for *Equipo* [on view: color photograph, 11 ⁷/₈ × 15 ³/₄ inches (30 × 40 cm)]

CERTIFICADO

TERENCE GOWER
CERTIFICADO DE VALOR

NOMBRE DE ARTISTA Terence Gower	
DESCRIPCION DE LA OBRA	
TITULO The Certificate	FECHA 9-09-1998
MATERIALES papel	MEDIDAS 15 x 23 cms.
LUGAR DE EXPOSICION Expoarte Guadalajara 1998	PAIS DE FABRICACION México
VALOR \$ 30.00	

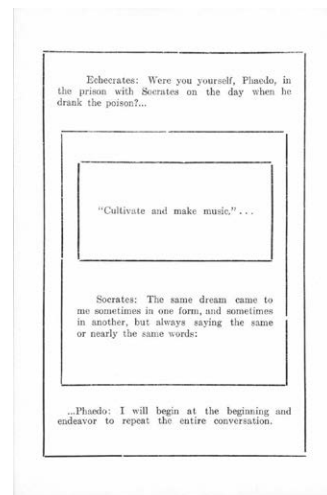
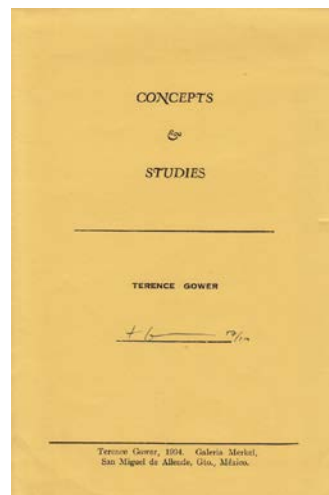
DECLARACION:	
<p>La información contenida en este documento es verdadera y exacta. El firmante se compromete a notificar por escrito a todas las personas a quienes entregue el presente certificado, de cualquier cambio que pudiera afectar la exactitud o valor del mismo. Este certificado se compone de <u>1</u> hojas, incluyendo todos sus anexos.</p>	
FIRMA AUTORIZADA <i>Laurie De Chiara</i>	
FECHA 9-09-1998	NOMBRE Laurie De Chiara
PUESTO Directora	EMPRESA De Chiara/Stewart Gallery

CERT. NO.
054

Certificado consists solely of the certificate of its own exchange value, clearly indicated on the form. This work is typical of Gower's "bureaucratic" works from Mexico City in the 1990s and was printed at a traditional establishment in the city's Centro Historico. The piece was designed to be sold by a New York gallery at a Guadalajara art fair.

Certificado, 1998. Offset print on paper and envelope, unlimited edition, 6 x 9 inches (15.3 x 22.9 cm) overall

CONCEPTS AND STUDIES



Each sheet in *Concepts and Studies* is printed with an idea for an artwork or exhibition that could be executed by anyone. The letterpress edition was produced by a local Guanajuato printer specializing in flyers for small-town bullfights.

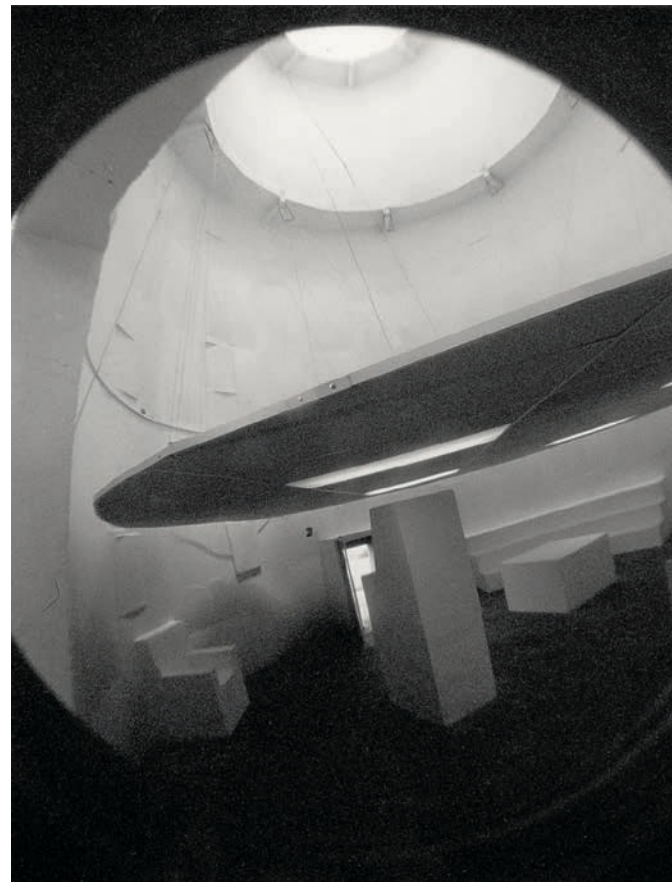
Concepts and Studies, 1994. Letterpress print on manila envelope and paper, edition of 100, 9 × 6 inches (22.9 × 15.3 cm)



The artist places a billboard for Vanart shampoo, a popular household product in Mexico, in the exclusive space of an art gallery to comment on the demographics of the Mexico City art scene. A miniature of the same billboard, shown installed atop a model of the gallery building, proposes taking its consumerist message to the public in the street.

Vanart I & II, 2000. Laminated digital mural print in aluminum frame, 96 × 144 inches (244 × 366 cm) [on view: billboard model, color photograph, 12 × 12 ½ × 35 inches (30.5 × 32 × 89 cm) overall]

INSTALACIÓN POR TERENCE GOWER



A dropped ceiling dissects the conical volume of Gonzalo Fonseca's 1968 sculpture *Torre de los Vientos*, built for the cultural program of the Mexico City Olympics. Below is a pristine, low-ceilinged, fluorescent-lit room containing Fonseca's original built-in furniture. Above, the tower's oculus illuminates the normally hidden upper surface of the cheap, industrial ceiling.

Instalación por Terence Gower, 1998. Dropped ceiling, aluminum structure, acoustic panels, recessed fluorescent lights, and wires, 287 3/8 inches (730 cm) diameter [on view: billboard model, two black-and-white installation photographs, 12 x 29 1/2 x 14 3/4 inches (30.5 x 75.3 x 37.4 cm) overall]

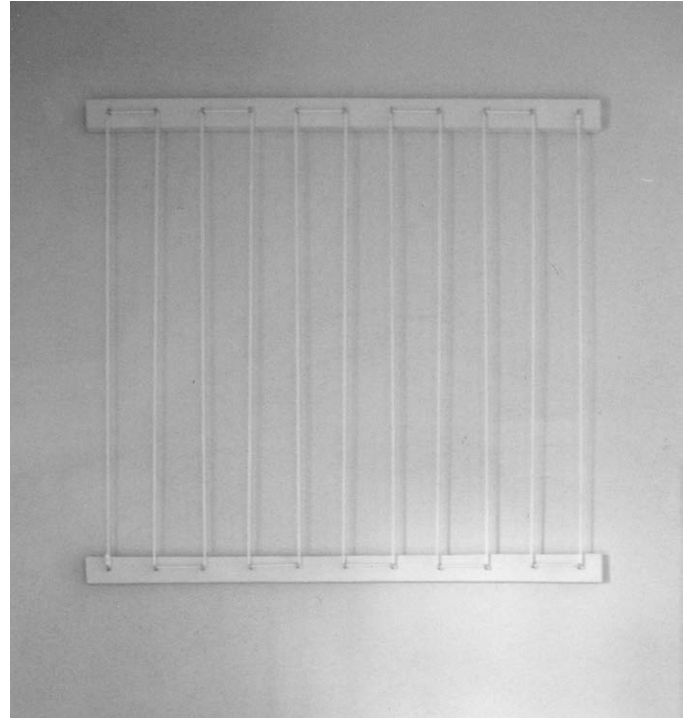
ISSSSTE



This work comments on the government bureaucracy set up by Mexico's Institutional Revolutionary Party. The handmade typeface of the ISSSSTE (Instituto de Seguridad y Servicios Sociales de los Trabajadores del Estado), since redesigned, is an artifact of an earlier quasi-socialist era. Gower exaggerates the triple letter, rare in a government acronym, with the addition of a fourth S.

ISSSSTE, 1995. Stenciled acrylic paint on wall, 23 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 118 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches (60 × 300 cm)

ROPE PIECE



This is one of the first works Gower produced in Mexico, part of his ongoing study of museum display structures. The installation is based on a system used to preserve the walls in some provincial museums. Instead of directly mounting artworks on the wall, they are pinned to a length of sash cord, which is threaded through eye hooks screwed into boards that run along the wall.

Rope Piece, 1994. Sash cord, eye hooks, and wood, $47\frac{1}{4} \times 47\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{5}{8}$ inches (120 × 120 × 4 cm) overall

SELECTED EXHIBITION HISTORY

- 2020 *Ciudad Moderna*, Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois (solo exhibition)
In the Beginning: Media Art and History, Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, DC
- 2019 *From a Rockefeller Fan to a Khrushchev Follower*, XIII Bienal de la Habana: Colaterales, Havana, Cuba
- 2018 *Havana Case Study*, LABOR, Mexico City, Mexico (solo exhibition)
Imagined Borders: 12th Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, Korea
- 2017 *Havana Case Study*, Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois (solo exhibition)
Condemned to Be Modern, Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA, Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, Los Angeles, California
Reflections on Place & Culture: Downey, Gower, Kluge, Memorial Art Gallery, Rochester, New York
Pasajeros: Esther McCoy, Museo Jumex, Mexico City, Mexico
4,543 billion. The matter of matter, CAPC musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, Bordeaux, France
- 2016 *Havana Case Study*, Simon Preston Gallery, New York, New York (solo exhibition)
Free Association, LABOR, Mexico City, Mexico (solo exhibition)
Six Formes, Lycée international, Saint-Genis-Pouilly, France (public commission)

- 2015 *Manifiesto*, El Eco, Mexico City, Mexico (solo exhibition)
Art in the Age of Asymmetrical Warfare, Witte de With, Rotterdam, Netherlands
Rideaux/blinds, Institut d'Art Contemporain de Villeurbanne, Lyon, France
- 2014 *Baghdad Case Study*, LABOR, Mexico City, Mexico (solo exhibition)
Grand Ensemble: Mario Pani, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey, Monterrey, Mexico (museum commission)
The Colour of Capital, Stedelijk Museum SMBA, Amsterdam, Netherlands (video program)
SuperPuesto, a pavilion for the exhibition *Beyond the Supersquare*, Bronx Museum of the Arts, Bronx, New York (museum commission)
Modern/Moderna: Amie Siegel and Terence Gower, Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
Nonument, Museu d'Arte Contemporani de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain
Teatro del Mundo, Museo Tamayo, Mexico City, Mexico
- 2013 *Tensta Museum: Reports from New Sweden*, Tensta Konsthall, Stockholm, Sweden
- 2012 *Ottagono*, LABOR, Mexico City, and Careyes Art Space, Careyes, Mexico (solo exhibition)
Display Nature, Gävle Konstcentrum, Gävle, Sweden (solo exhibition)
Workshop Pavilion, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León, León, Spain (museum commission)
Le Silo: *Ciudad Moderna*, Auditorium de l'INA, Paris,

- France (video program)
Builders: The Canadian Biennial, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada
Architektur und Ideologie, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, Germany
- 2011 *SPANS: Photographs from the Esther McCoy Papers*, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Lawrence A. Fleischman Gallery, Washington, DC (curatorial project)
The Long Take, Audain Gallery, Vancouver, Canada
- 2010 *Les lendemains d'hier*, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montréal, Canada (video program)
- 2009 *Gets Under the Skin*, Storefront for Art & Architecture, New York, New York (video program)
Colección Terence Gower, Buenos Aires International Biennial of Architecture, Buenos Aires, Argentina (video program)
The Curve Is Ruinous, Grazer Kunstverein, Graz, Austria (video program)
 VII Mercosul Biennial, Porto Alegre, Brazil
After Architecture, Centro de Arte Santa Monica, Barcelona, Spain
- 2008 *Directions: Terence Gower, Public Spirit*, Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, DC (solo exhibition)
New Utopias, Galerie M+R Fricke, Berlin, Germany (solo exhibition)
Better Living, Galerie Rotor, Gothenburg, Sweden (solo exhibition)
Modern Shorts, New Museum, New York, New York, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, California, and

- Rotterdam Architecture Film Festival, Rotterdam, Netherlands (curatorial project)
Try Again, Fail Again, Fail Better, Mücsarnok, Budapest, Hungary
Tlatelolco and the localized negotiation of future imaginaries, New Museum, New York, New York
Building Pictures, Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago, Illinois
Painting the Glass House, Yale School of Architecture Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut
- 2007 *Gower-Stracke*, Fundación Telefónica, Buenos Aires, Argentina (video program)
Elephant Cemetery, Artists Space, New York, New York
Façades, Krannert Art Museum, Champaign, Illinois
- 2006 *Ciudad Moderna*, Storefront for Art and Architecture, New York, New York (solo exhibition)
Prácticas públicas / Vidas privadas, Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, Mexico City, Mexico (curatorial project)
Eigenheim, Kunstverein Göttingen, Göttingen, Germany
- 2005 *Ciudad Moderna*, Laboratorio Arte Alameda, Mexico City, Mexico (solo exhibition)
Cine y Casi Cine, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, and Espai d'Art Contemporani de Castelló, Castelló, Spain (video program)
América Tropical, Centre Culturel du Mexique, Paris, France
was wäre wenn . . ., Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst,

- Leipzig, Germany
- 2004 *The Red Wall*, Queens Museum, Queens, New York
(museum commission)
Made in Mexico, Institute of Contemporary Art,
Boston, Massachusetts, and Hammer Museum,
Los Angeles, California
- 2003 *Pabellon Cuba*, VIII Havana Biennial, Havana, Cuba
Stretch, Power Plant, Toronto, Canada
- 2002 *Exhibición*, Galería HR, Mexico City, Mexico (solo
exhibition)
El Pabellón de bicicletas, a permanent pavilion pre-
sented in Thisplay, Colección Jumex, Mexico City,
Mexico (private commission)
- 2001 *La estrategia*, Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, Mexico
City, Mexico (solo project)
- 2000 *Pasaje Iturbide*, Museo de la Ciudad de México,
Mexico City, Mexico (curatorial project)
Greater New York, MoMA PS1, Long Island City,
New York
Promo, Galería de Arte Mexicano, Mexico City,
Mexico
- 1999 *La Formula* (with Magdalena Jitrik), Centro Cultural
Recoleta, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- 1998 *Mal de Archivo*, Art Deposit, Mexico City, Mexico
(solo exhibition)
- 1997 *The Conceptual Trend*, El Museo del Barrio, New York,
New York (curatorial project)
- 1996 *Video Faz*, Art&Idea, Mexico City, and Museo
Regional de Guadalajara, Guadalajara, Mexico
(curatorial project)

- 1995 *Tendencies: New Art from Mexico City*, San Francisco
Art Institute, San Francisco, California, and
Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver, Canada
(curatorial project)
No soy puto, private apartment, Mexico City, Mexico
(curatorial project)
IX Mostra da Gravura, Curitiba, Brazil
Chronologies, Temistocles 44, Mexico City, Mexico
- 1994 *Esto es un . . .*, Museo Universitario del Chopo, Mexico
City, Mexico (solo exhibition)
Terence Gower / Francis Alÿs, Curare, Mexico City,
Mexico

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arriola, Magalí. "New Voices: How the work of a younger generation of artists reflects Mexico's social problems." *Frieze*, no. 180 (June–August 2016): 22.
- Barliant, Claire. "Terence Gower." *Artforum*. May 2006. <https://www.artforum.com/picks/terence-gower-11082>.
- Barreiro, Javier. "La Ciudad Moderna y su representacion." *Arquine*, no. 32 (2005): 12–13.
- Bello, Milagros. "De Colecciones a Coleccionistas: La Colección Jumex." *Arte al Día*, no. 94 (2002). http://www.arteldia.com/Printed-Edition/94_Diciembre_2002/La_Coleccion_Jumex
- Benassini Jacob, Oscar. "Baghdad Case Study: Terence Gower." *Caín* (May/June 2014), 29–32.
- Bjone, Christian. *Almost Nothing: 100 Artists Comment on the Work of Mies van der Rohe*. Zurich: Park Books, 2019.
- Buckley, Craig, and Itala Schmeltz. *Ciudad Moderna: Terence Gower Video Works*. Mexico City: Turner/A&R Press, 2006.
- Cano, Juan Carlos. "La Ciudad Moderna de Terence Gower." *Letras Libres*, no. 82 (October 2005): 94.
- Cordero, Patricia. "Atrapan a Gower edificios del DF." *Reforma*, July 14, 2005.
- . "Demitifica Gower a 'héroes' del arte." *Reforma*, March 28, 2006.
- Cuevas, Tatiana. "Ciudad Moderna: Entrevista con Terence Gower." *Código*, no. 29 (October/November 2005): 28–30.
- . "Terence Gower." *W Art: Arte Contemporânea*, no. 7 (January 2006): 58–61.
- Del Conde, Teresa. "Prácticas públicas / vidas privadas." *La Jornada*, May 16, 2006.
- Diaz, Abraham. "Exhibit offers new meaning to the words 'Made in Mexico.'" *Los Angeles Times*, May 21, 2004.
- Draper, Jessica. "Artists Inspired by Mexico City." *Suitcase Magazine*, March 21, 2016. <https://suitcasemag.com/articles/mexico-city-artists>.
- Gennochio, Benjamin. "In the Spirit of Modernist Ideals." *New York Times*, April 6, 2008.
- Gómez Haro, Germaine. "La colección Jumex tercera version." *Jornada Semanal*, November 24, 2002.
- González, Julieta. "Desiccated & Reconstituted." Exhibition text. Art Deposit, Mexico City, January 1998.
- González Rosas, Blanca. "Aristócratas y plebeyos." *Proceso*, July 29, 2001.
- González Rosas, Gloria. "Del establishment al cutting edge." *Proceso*, April 16, 2000.
- Gopnik, Blake. "Terence Gower Finds a Use for Modernism." *ArtNet News*, October 29, 2014. <https://news.artnet.com/exhibitions/terence-gower-finds-a-use-for-modernism-147600>.
- Gower, Terence. "The Castle." *Archives of American Art Journal* 46, no. 3–4 (Winter 2007–8): 66–75.
- . "Grand Ensemble: Pani." In Mario Pani: *Arquitectura en proceso*, edited by Pablo Landa, 152–53 and endpapers. Monterrey: Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey, 2014.
- . *Havana Case Study*. Chicago, IL: Neubauer

- Collegium, University of Chicago, 2017.
- . “Orden!” *Domus Mexico*, no. 2 (September 2012): 20–22.
- . “Spec. Pavilion II.” In *Architectural Inventions*, edited by Matt Bua and Maximilian Goldfarb. London: Laurence King, 2012.
- Gower, Terence, and Mónica de la Torre. *Appendices, Illustrations & Notes*. Los Angeles, CA: Smart Art Press, 1999.
- Herda, Sarah, Itala Schmelz, and Terence Gower. *Terence Gower’s Ciudad Moderna*. New York: Storefront for Art and Architecture, 2006.
- Hernández Gálvez, Alejandro. “Architectures of Display: Conversation with Terence Gower.” *Arquine*, no. 88 (Summer 2019): 2–7.
- Hill, Lizzy. “Terence Gower: Juxtaposing Modernism and the Shadow Economy.” *National Art Gallery Magazine* (Ottawa), September 29, 2014.
- Jay, Daniela. “Pasajeros: Esther McCoy.” *Arquine*, no. 79 2017.
- Johnson, Ken. “Mexican Conceptualists.” *New York Times*, February 20, 2004.
- Jusidman, Yishai. “Chronologies.” *Artforum* 33, no. 9 (May 1995): 198.
- . “Corte y Concepción.” *Reforma*, January 28, 1998.
- Kleinman, Adam. “Terence Gower’s Baghdad Case Study.” *Art Agenda*, April 21, 2014. <https://www.art-agenda.com/features/235805/terence-gower-s-baghdad-case-study>.
- Kuennen, Joel. “A Period of (Economic) Optimism: Terence Gower // Havana Case Study.” *The Seen*, September 12, 2017. <https://theseenjournal.org/terence-gower/>.
- Markus, David. “Reviews: Terence Gower.” *Art in America*, January 27, 2017. <https://www.artnews.com/art-in-america/aia-reviews/terence-gower-62298/>.
- Mateos-Vega, Mónica. “La capital del país tuvo la oportunidad de ser una urbe ordenada, y la perdió.” *La Jornada*, September 15, 2008.
- McQuaid, Cate. “Cosmopolitan complexity is the territory staked out by ICA exhibit with a Mexican theme.” *Boston Globe*, January 23, 2004.
- Minera, María. “Vidrios rotos: La toma de El Eco.” *Código*, January 16, 2018.
- Nava, José. “En los cincuenta, México era un sueño arquitectónico: Gower.” *El Financiero*, June 20, 2005.
- Obrist, Hans Ulrich, and Pedro Reyes, eds. *The Air is Blue*, 88–91. Milan: Mousse Publishing, 2017.
- Puente, Moises, Michel Blancsubé, and Terence Gower. *Display Architecture: Terence Gower Pavilions*. Trieste/Berlin: Navado Press, 2007.
- Resende Santos, Marina. “Terence Gower’s Ciudad Moderna Sketches a Vision of Modern Life in Mexico.” *New City Art* (Chicago), March 9, 2020. <https://art.newcity.com/2020/03/09/terence-gowers-ciudad-moderna-sketches-a-vision-of-modern-life-in-mexico/>.
- Reyes, Pedro. “Artists on Artists: Terence Gower.” *Bomb Magazine*, no. 118 (Winter 2012). <https://bombmagazine.org/articles/terence-gower/>.
- Reyes Palma, Francisco. “Lo mejor de la década.” *Código*, July 17, 2012.

- Schmelz, Itala. *America Tropical*, 57–67. Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, 2006.
- Schmidt-Colinet, Lisa, Alex Schmoeger, Eugenio Valdés Figueroa, and Florian Zeyfang, eds. *Pabellón Cuba: 4D – 4Dimensions, 4Decades*. Berlin: b_books, 2008.
- Scott Fox, Lorna. “Contracting Art: Terence Gower.” *Revista Poliester* (December 1995)
- . “La Sensualidad de las Ideas.” *Reforma*, September 16, 1994.
- Sosa, Ernesto. “Promo.” *Art Nexus*, no. 37 (August–October 2000).
- Torre, Mónica de la. “Hecho en México.” *Código* (June 2004).
- Valencia, Natalia. “Terence Gower: Natalia Valencia and Terence Gower Discuss Abstraction and the Architectural Hangover.” *Terremoto*, no. 5 (Winter 2016): 34–41.
- Vicario, Gilbert. *Made in Mexico*, 46–50. Boston, MA: Institute of Contemporary Art, 2004.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Aimé Iglesias Lukin is the Director and Chief Curator of Visual Arts at Americas Society. Born in Argentina, she studied at the Universidad de Buenos Aires and, in 2011, moved to New York, where she completed her MA at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. She is currently finishing her doctoral dissertation, “This Must Be the Place: Latin American Artists in New York: 1965–1975,” at Rutgers University. She has worked at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and Fundación Proa, Buenos Aires, among other institutions.

Julieta González is an independent curator and researcher who works at the intersection of anthropology, cybernetics, architecture, design, and the visual arts. More recently she has developed research and exhibitions addressing underdevelopment and decolonial aesthetics in Latin America. She has worked as a curator at Tate Modern, Museo Tamayo, Bronx Museum of the Arts, and Museu de Arte de São Paulo.

CREDITS

Unless otherwise noted, all works by Terence Gower are reproduced courtesy of the artist.

All works by David Alfaro Siqueiros are reproduced courtesy of Colección Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil/INBAL/Secretaría de Cultura D.R. Reproduction authorized by the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura, 2021.

pp. 2–3: Photo: Rafael Ortega.

p. 52: Courtesy of Americas Society archives.

pp. 56–57: Courtesy of Americas Society archives. Photos: Charles Uht.

p. 63: Photo: Amanda Holmes.

p. 71: Photo: Francisco Kochen.

p. 73: Courtesy of Colección/Fundación Jumex, Mexico City. Photo: Jorge del Olmo.

p. 75: Photo: Magdalena Franco.

p. 77: Courtesy of LABOR, Mexico City, and the artist.

pp. 79–81: Courtesy of LABOR, Mexico City, and the artist.

pp. 87–89: Courtesy of Simon Preston Gallery, New York. Photo: Bill Orcutt.

p. 91: Courtesy of LABOR, Mexico City, and the artist.

pp. 99–101: Courtesy of LABOR, Mexico City, and the artist.

p. 107: Photos: Jorge del Olmo.

p. 115: Photo: Amanda Holmes.

p. 117: Photo: Rafael Ortega.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Francis Álys; Simon Cole; Tatiana Cuevas Guevara; Pamela Echeverría, LABOR, Mexico City; Rubén Gallo; Julieta González; Stephen Gross; Adam Kleinman; Edith Martínez; Dolores Martínez Orralde; Marc Mayer; Marisa Newman; Anuar Pacheco; Rodrigo Peñafiel; Simon Preston; Luis Edher Rosales Güitron; Ana Alicia Rosas Rivera; Javier Téllez; Leila Voight.

The presentation of *Terence Gower: The Good Neighbour* is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council.

Additional support is provided by Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporáneo, the Consulate General of Canada in New York, and the Council for Canadian American Relations. In-kind support is provided by LABOR, Mexico City.

Americas Society acknowledges the generous support from the Arts of the Americas Circle members: Estrellita B. Brodsky; Virginia Cowles Schroth; Diana Fane; Galeria Almeida e Dale; Isabella Hutchinson; Carolina Jannicelli; Vivian Pfeiffer and Jeanette van Campenhout, Phillips; Gabriela Pérez Rocchietti; Erica Roberts; Sharon Schultz; Diana López and Herman Sifontes; and Edward J. Sullivan.

NYC Cultural
Affairs

✱ FUNDACIÓN JUMEX
ARTE CONTEMPORÁNEO

Canada

COUNCIL FOR
CANADIAN
AMERICAN
RELATIONS

LABOR

Arts
of the
Americas
Circle

Terence Gower: The Good Neighbour

Curated by Aimé Iglesias Lukin

May 12–July 17, 2021

Americas Society
680 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10065
www.as-coa.org/visual-arts

Founder: David Rockefeller †
Chairman: Andrés Gluski
President and CEO: Susan L. Segal
Treasurer: George B. Weiksner
Vice President, Public Policy Programs and Corporate Relations: Ragnhild Melzi

Exhibition

Director and Chief Curator of Visual Arts: Aimé Iglesias Lukin
Assistant Curator: Natalia Viera Salgado
Programs Assistant: Alessandra Medina
Gallery Attendants: Andrea Coronil and Alessandra Medina
Head Preparator and Fabricator: Cein Watson
Installation: John Peery and Kevin Swenson

Publication

Visual Arts exhibition series editors: Aimé Iglesias Lukin and Karen Marta
Associate editor: Diana Flatto
Project manager: Todd Bradway
Copy editor: Miles Champion
Designer: Garrick Gott

Printed and bound by Graphicom, Vicenza, Italy

Printed on Magno Natural 120 gsm
Typeset in Basis Grotesque and Dorian

Publication © 2021, Americas Society
All texts © 2021, the authors
All artworks © 2021, the artists

ISBN 978-1-879128-48-4
Library of Congress Control Number: 2021931250

Printed in Italy

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be produced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher. The publisher gratefully acknowledges permission granted to reproduce the copyrighted materials in this book. Every effort has been made to contact copyright holders and to obtain their permission for the use of copyrighted material. The publisher apologizes for any errors or omissions and would be grateful if notified of any corrections that should be incorporated in future reprints or editions of this publication.

AS/AMERICAS
SOCIETY