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- 1 Cuauhtémoc Medina is a Mexico-based internationally renowned art curator, critic and historian. In 2019, he was named as curator of the 12th Shanghai Biennale, one of the major art events in China. As the main topic of the Biennale, Medina selected the notion of “Proregress” as a word made of the condensation of progress and regress as the re-interpretation of conservatism and transformation in contemporary culture. This topic was uniting and actual for the participating artists, as most of them are based in Latin America or China, where tradition meets innovation.

- 2 Since his work as a co-curator of the 2009 Manifesta Biennial's edition *The Deep of the Modern* in Genk (Belgium), Medina's curatorial strategy aims to juxtapose these two concepts. He contributed to the reconsideration of the notion of the "global South" that became prominent in the scholarship of the last decade, as he made his impact on bringing Mexico to the global art field. In his attempt to contest conventional views on progress and tradition, Medina breaks the cultural homogeneity of major international biennales to allow for a number of previously marginalized perspectives to take a central place. An alumnus of the University of Essex PhD programme in History and Theory of Art, he was the first associate curator of Latin American art collection at the Tate Modern in 2002-2008. His appointment coincided with the rise of Tate's interest in the expansion of the collection of Latin American art. Medina also collaborated with the Latin American Acquisitions Committee of Tate to support the purchasing of works of art in this area.

- 3 Medina currently works as a chief curator at the University Museum of Contemporary Art (MUAC) in Mexico City. His curatorial approach has an intercultural scope as he changed the orientation of the MUAC from modern art displays to an extensive focus on international contemporary art. He has brought to Mexico popular artists and architects, such as Zaha Hadid, Anish Kapoor, and Yves Klein. His interests in art are of global scale, as they extend from East to West, from North to South. In his long and fruitful career, he has collaborated with a constellation of prominent international and Latin American artists, such as Hito Steyerl, Andrea Fraser, and Teresa Margolles, including his curating of the project *The Faith Moves Mountains* by Francis Alÿs in 2001. Together with a group of volunteers, Alÿs then moved the dune in Lima (Peru) by several inches using shovels: "The next day, no one could recognize that the huge sand dune had been moved."¹ Contrary to the metaphor proposed by Alÿs's project, Medina's efforts are highly visible. One of the standpoint exhibitions, co-curated by Medina with Olivier Debrouse, was *La Era de la Discrepancia* [The Age of Discrepancies] that was presented at the Museum of Sciences and Art (MUCA) in Mexico City in 2008.² This exhibition gathered innovative research on Mexican art of the second half of the 20th century and set up the general interest in the independent artistic practices of the 1970s in Mexico – from giving the first extensive account of the famous Salón Independiente 68 to Los Grupos movement. As most of Medina's exhibitions, it relied on the rare archival material currently held at the MUAC's Arkheia archive.

- 4 Medina's curatorial approach is a direct reflection of his art critical position. As an art critic, he extensively publishes inside Mexico, though many of his texts are not translated to English. He was a member of Curare Art Critics' Space in 1991-1997 and he formed part of an independent art critics' group Teratoma AC in 2001-2009. His recent books include an anthology of his critical texts *Abuso mutuo: Ensayos e intervenciones sobre arte postmexicano, 1992-2013* (2017).³ He shows there how Mexican art transgressed geographical borders and entered into an exchange with global tendencies in the latest decades. Another important publication is *Estética y emancipación. Fantasma, fetiche, fantasmagoría* (2014) co-coordinated with Mariana Botey, as an edited collection of essays that gathered texts from Suely Rolnik, Luis Camnitzer, and Nelly Richard, among others.⁴ This book focuses on what emancipation has in common with liberation, how it contests post-colonial legacies in Latin America, and which is the place of the modernization rhetoric and globalization processes. Throughout his career, Medina

plays an important role as an advocate for Mexican artists on the international art scene and the mediator of cultural exchange inside Latin America and globally.

NOTES

1. Alÿs, Francis. "When Faith Moves Mountains", accessed at <http://francisalys.com/when-faith-moves-mountains/> on 19 March 2019
2. *La Era de la Discrepancia: Arte y Cultura Visual en Mexico, 1968-1997 / The Age of Discrepancies: Art and Visual Culture in Mexico, 1968-1997* (ed. by Olivier Debrouse), Mexico City: UNAM, 2006.
3. Medina, Cuauhtémoc. *Abuso mutuo: Ensayos e intervenciones sobre arte postmexicano, 1992-2013*, Mexico City: Editorial RM, 2017
4. *Estética y emancipación. Fantasma, fetiche, fantasmagoría*, (ed. by Mariana Botey, Cuauhtémoc Medina), Mexico City: Siglo XXI Editores, 2014