

MacArturos/Pláticas



Amalia Mesa-Bains, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Sandra Cisneros, and Maria Varela.

Thursday, October 21, 6–8 pm

[Join the livestream at Lumpen.tv](https://lumpen.tv)

This virtual broadcast features a series of artist talks from Amalia Mesa-Bains, Sandra Cisneros, Maria Varela, and Guillermo Gómez-Peña.

Presented in conjunction with *Toward Common Cause*, these

conversations or *pláticas* engage in a variety of topics including, the arts, community transformation, cultural performance, and political history.

FREE, open to all. Tune in to [Lumpen.tv](https://www.lumpen.tv) for the livestream, presented by *Toward Common Cause* media partner [Public Media Institute](#).

This event is co-presented by the [National Museum of Mexican Art](#) and the [Smart Museum of Art](#) at the University of Chicago in collaboration with the MacArturos, a self-organized collective of MacArthur Fellows who have since 1995 presented cultural and intellectual events in Latino regional communities.

Program video

About

Dr. [Amalia Mesa-Bains](#) is an internationally renowned artist, scholar, and curator. Throughout her career, Mesa-Bains has expanded understandings of Latina/o artists' references to spiritual practices and vernacular traditions through her altar installations, articles and exhibitions. In 1992 she was awarded a Distinguished Fellowship from the MacArthur Foundation. Her work has been shown at institutions that include: the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art at Phillip Morris, and the New Museum, as well as

international venues in Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Ireland, Sweden, England, France and Spain. As a cultural critic she has co-authored along with Bell Hooks, *Homegrown: Engaged Cultural Criticism*. Mesa-Bains founded and directed the Visual and Public Art department at California State University at Monterey Bay where she was Professor Emerita. Mesa-Bains community work includes board of trustee positions with the Mexican Museum in San Francisco and advisory boards for the Galeria de la Raza, and the Social Public Resource Center in Los Angeles.

Sandra Cisneros is a poet, short story writer, novelist, essayist, performer, and artist whose work explores the lives of the working-class. Her numerous awards include NEA fellowships in both poetry and fiction, the Texas Medal of the Arts, a MacArthur Fellowship, several honorary doctorates and national and international book awards, including Chicago's Fifth Star Award, the PEN Center USA Literary Award, and the National Medal of the Arts award presented to her by President Obama in 2016. She received the Ford Foundation's Art of Change Fellowship, was recognized among The Frederick Douglass 200, and won the PEN/Nabokov Award for international literature. In addition to her writing, Cisneros has fostered the careers of many aspiring and emerging writers through two non-profits she founded: the Macondo Foundation and the Alfredo Cisneros del Moral Foundation. She is also the organizer of Los MacArturos, Latino MacArthur fellows who are community activists.

Related video

[A Room of Her Own: Una Ofrenda for My Mother](#)

Courtesy of the National Museum of Mexican Art

Maria Varela is a community organizer, a photographer, a teacher, a writer, and principal of the Rural Resources Group, an organization in the Albuquerque area that helps rural communities develop sustainable economies and environments. Since 1962, Varela has been assisting indigenous leaders in their efforts to develop economic opportunity and protect cultural heritage within African-American, Native-American, and Mexican-American rural communities. She was instrumental in establishing a wool-growers cooperative, for example, that included a weaving and spinning enterprise, training in small business development, and cultural reaffirmation. Her approach is to create and enable nonprofit organizations and viable enterprises to build upon and add to existing local resources. She was awarded the MacArthur fellowship in 1990.

Related video

Resistance through my lens

Courtesy of the National Museum of Mexican Art

Born in Mexico City, he moved to the US in 1978, and since 1995, Guillermo Gómez-Peña's three homes have been San Francisco, Mexico City and the "road." His performance work and 21 books have contributed to the debates on cultural, generational, and gender diversity, border culture and North-South relations. His artwork has been presented at over one thousand venues across the US, Canada, Latin America, Europe, Russia, South Africa and Australia. A MacArthur Fellow, USA Artists Fellow, and a Bessie, Guggenheim, and

American Book Award winner, he is a regular contributor to newspapers and magazines in the US, Mexico, and Europe and a contributing editor to *The Drama Review* (NYU-MIT), the *Performance Art Week Journal* of the Venice Biennale, and *emisférica*, the publication of the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics (NYU).

Attend

MacArturos/Pláticas

October 21, 2021 6:00-8:00pm

Contact

[773.702.0200](tel:773.702.0200)

smart-museum@uchicago.edu

Related Artists

[Guillermo Gómez-Peña](#)

[Amalia Mesa-Bains](#)

Related Partners

[Smart Museum of Art](#)

[National Museum of Mexican Art](#)

[Weinberg/Newton Gallery](#)