

NEWS ALERT

Howl! Happening: an Arturo Vega Project
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HOWL! HAPPENING: An Arturo Vega Project Presents

BOB
RAUSCHENBERG
GALLERY at FSW

FLORIDA
SOUTHWESTERN
STATE COLLEGE

8099 COLLEGE PARKWAY SW, FT. MYERS FLORIDA 33919 T:239.489.9313

Empire: An Arturo Vega Retrospective

Bob Rauschenberg Gallery at FSW

November 4 – December 17, 2016



Opening Reception: Friday, November 4 from 6-8pm

Panel Discussion with special guests Carlo McCormick, Legs McNeil, Anthony Haden-Guest, and Adam Lehrer on Saturday, November 5 at 1pm

Fort Myers, FLORIDA: Florida SouthWestern State College is delighted to announce *Empire: An Arturo Vega Retrospective* at the Bob Rauschenberg Gallery (located on FSW's Lee County campus). Opening with a public reception on Friday, November 4th from 6-8pm, this ambitious survey runs through December 17th and will include guest lectures, performances

and a panel discussion exploring Arturo Vega's broader impact on popular culture and contextualizing his work as a visual artist. A collaboration with The Arturo Vega Foundation in NYC, *Empire: An Arturo Vega Retrospective* is the late Mexican-born artist's first solo U.S. museum retrospective and features photography, collage and a number of iconic canvases from the artist's *Supermarket* and *Silver Dollar* series (begun in the 1970s); his *Flags* and so-called "word paintings" from *Insults* and other series produced during the 1980s, '90s and aughts.

Escaping the repressive violence of an authoritarian regime under Mexico's "perfect dictatorship" in the late '60s, Arturo Vega made his way to New York City to study English, philosophy and photography at the New School for Social Research in the early 1970's. Having discovered Elvis as a child and later co-directing a touring production of The Who's "Tommy" at the National University in Mexico City, Vega understood the revolutionary and transformative power of music, theatre/performance and art. While working on his first painting series of supermarket signs, he befriended members of The Ramones, a rock & roll band that would soon play their first show (and would decades later be inducted into the Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame). Designing the Ramones' ubiquitous logo based on the Great Seal of the United States, painting backdrops for their stage and creating a lighting scheme loosely adapted from Albert Speer's *Lichtdom* to enhance their effect, Vega created visual imagery that defined the transgressive aesthetic of punk rock by co-opting and questioning symbols of power.

In numerous group shows since the 1970's, Vega's work has more recently been the subject of one-person exhibitions at CB's 313 Gallery/New York City (1992), Raleigh Studios/Miami Beach (Curated by Sandra Schulman in 1994), Galería OMR/México, D.F. (2011), Casa Redonda, Chihuahua/Mexico (2012) and at Howl! Happening in NYC in 2015 and 2016. As Vega once said: "Art connects to the eternal – demanding fast changes and a reckless appetite for truth, justice and a better way of life." *Empire: An Arturo Vega Retrospective* at the Bob Rauschenberg Gallery will draw parallels and explore interests shared by Arturo Vega and our gallery namesake. For Rauschenberg, "(Art was) a means to function thoroughly and passionately in a world that has a lot more to it than paint."

More about us: The Bob Rauschenberg Gallery was founded as The Gallery of Fine Art in 1979 on the Lee County campus of Florida SouthWestern State College/FSW (then Edison Community College). On June 4th 2004, the Gallery of Fine Art was renamed the Bob Rauschenberg Gallery to honor and commemorate our long time association and friendship with the artist. Over more than three decades until his death, the Gallery worked closely with Rauschenberg to present world premiere exhibitions including multiple installations of the *¼ Mile or Two Furlong Piece*. The artist insisted on naming the space the Bob Rauschenberg Gallery (versus the "Robert Rauschenberg Gallery") as it was consistent with the intimate, informal relationship he maintained with both our local Southwest Florida community and FSW.

These events are open to the public, free of charge.

**Gallery Hours: Monday - Friday 10 am - 4 pm and Saturday 11 am - 3 pm
Closed Sundays and Holidays**

Tel: (239) 489-9313

Web: www.RauschenbergGallery.com

[Visit the Gallery on Facebook!](#)

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6 East First Street (Between Bowery and 2nd Ave)
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Gallery Hours: Wed–Sun, 11 AM–6 PM

[About How! Happening](#)

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