

Exhibition Explores the Enduring Legacy of Colonization in the Americas

Dispossessions in the Americas: The Extraction of Bodies, Land, and Heritage from La Conquista to the Present

On View at Wrightwood 659

April 17 – July 18, 2026

CHICAGO, IL, March 4, 2026— “Dispossession”—the deprivation of land, culture, language, or all three—has been a defining condition across the Americas, initiated by European colonialism. The exhibition ***Dispossessions in the Americas: The Extraction of Bodies, Land, and Heritage from La Conquista to the Present*** brings together more than 40 works by 36 contemporary artists from across Latin America whose creative output broadly seeks to critique and unsettle the long-standing politics of dispossession. Featuring photographs, videos, installations, performances, sculptures, and paintings, all produced between 1960 and 2025, the exhibition examines the enduring legacies of colonialism, showing how dispossession continues to shape Indigenous, Afro-descendant, Queer, and Trans communities. *Dispossessions in the Americas* opens Friday, April 17, 2026, at Wrightwood 659 in Chicago.



Felipe Baeza, *Ahuehuete*, 2018

The exhibition is curated by Jonathan D. Katz, Professor of Practice, History of Art and Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies, University of Pennsylvania (and curator of the recent blockbuster *The First Homosexuals*), and independent curator Eduardo Carrera. *Dispossessions in the Americas: The Extraction of Bodies, Land, and Heritage from La Conquista to the Present* is presented by Alphawood Exhibitions.

Professor Katz notes, “Dispossession—the European colonial theft of land, culture, and human beings in the Americas—is not merely a historical fact. It remains arguably the defining condition of much of Latin America.” Professor Katz continues, “*Dispossessions in the Americas* takes this historical context as starting point, marshalling activist artists whose work defies the Colonial values and institutions that have systematically overwritten the priorities of Indigenous, Latinx, and Afro-descendants, as well as women and Queer/Trans people.”

Co-curator Carrera added, “*Dispossessions in the Americas* examines how the dynamics of loss and resistance shape the structures of power inherited from colonialism. The artists in the exhibition reconfigure memory, assert belonging, and create new ways of relating to history and territory by exploring the hybridization of body, territory, spirituality, and ecology. They become the mediators of physical and symbolic spaces that challenge colonial hierarchies.”



Saskia Calderón, *Lunas que no ví*, 2020



Karina Aguilera Skvirsky,
Monumento al pasado para el futuro, Sol, 2024

From 2021 to 2024, 12 Latin American museums across 10 countries worked with local curators to present exhibitions as part of *Dispossessions in the Americas*, a transdisciplinary project combining research, teaching, and community engagement, led by the University of Pennsylvania under the support of the Mellon Foundation. The Wrightwood 659 exhibition is the final cumulative presentation of works from these exhibitions and includes bilingual text in English and Spanish.

Organized around three themes—Territory, Body, and Cultural Heritage—the exhibition explores how contemporary artists transform the substance and symbols of colonial power into practices of environmental care and embodied liberation. These works also present a new—and more accurate—relation to history, no longer told from the colonist’s perspective. They reveal hybrid connections among territory, gender, and ecology, with artists shaping interactions between bodies and the environment to rethink memory, identity, and relationships to the land.

Dispossessions in the Americas will be accompanied by an off-site video art cycle, exploring how video art confronts the enmeshed histories of colonialism, ecological disruption, migration, and gendered resistance. Located just a few blocks from Wrightwood 659 at the Lincoln Park Presbyterian Church, this video cycle extends the exhibition beyond the gallery walls. On a bi-weekly schedule, beginning April 24, the program will run on Friday and Saturday afternoons. The purchase of a Wrightwood 659 exhibition ticket is necessary for admission. Artists in the video program include Las Nietas de Nono, Coco Fusco, Carolina Caycedo, Zahy Guajajara, Neyen Pailamilla, Arisleyda Dilone, Rio Parana, and Luiz Roque.

Featured exhibition artists include: Karina Aguilera Skvirsky, Archivo de la Memoria Trans, Carlos Arias, Felipe Baeza, Tania Bruguera, Saskia Calderón, Seba Calfuqueo, Javier Cardona Otero, Colectivo Ayllu, Colectivo Tawna, Wilson Díaz, Frau Diamanda / Héctor Acuña, Augusto Falconi, Regina José Galindo, Ani Ganzala, Frank Gaudlitz, Camilo Godoy, Thomas Locke Hobbs, Rember Yahuarcani, Deborah Anzinger, Madorilyn Crawford, Miguel Ángel Rojas, Lizette Nin, Ana Mendieta, Joiri Minaya, Lulu Molinares, Laryssa Machada, Cinthia Marcelle, Carlos Martiel, Purita Pelayo, Kiván Quiñones, Tania Bruguera, Deborah Thomas, Gihan Tubbeh, Javi Vargas Sotomayor, Antonio Wong Rengifo, and Luis Fernando Zapata.



Miguel Ángel Rojas, *Me llaman Trinity y Nevada Smith*, 1972

Also on View at Wrightwood 659: *Martin Wong: Chinatown USA*

Martin Wong: Chinatown USA is the first US monographic museum exhibition since 2017 of the Chinese American artist Martin Wong (1946-1999) who died at the age of 53 from an AIDS-related illness. Featuring more than 60 paintings, sculptures, drawings, and photographs by the prolific artist, the exhibition traces the development of the work of the queer painter and poet, highlighting Wong's connection with the art and culture of Asia, in particular through his collecting of pre-modern Asian art and his travels to Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Turkey, as well as his explorations of Chinatown in New York and San Francisco from 1970 throughout the 1990s. Organized by Yasufumi Nakamori, independent curator, with Ashley Janke, Assistant Curator, Wrightwood 659, the exhibition is presented by Halsted A&A Foundation.

About Wrightwood 659

Wrightwood 659 hosts exhibitions on socially engaged art and architecture, on issues facing LGBTQ+ communities, and on Asian art and architecture. Located in Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood in a building transformed by Pritzker Prize winner Tadao Ando, Wrightwood 659 encourages visitors to engage with pressing issues of our time in an intimate and beautiful space. For additional information, please visit wrightwood659.org.

About Alphawood Exhibitions

Alphawood Exhibitions is an affiliate of Alphawood Foundation, a Chicago-based, private grantmaking foundation working for an equitable, just, and humane society.

Hours of Operation and Tickets

Wrightwood 659 is open Fridays 12 noon-7 pm; Saturdays 10 am-5 pm. Tickets for both exhibitions opening April 17, 2026, go on sale March 19. Admission is \$20 and is available online only at <https://tickets.wrightwood659.org/events>. Please note, admission is by advance ticket only. Walk-ups are not permitted.

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Images

Felipe Baeza, *Ahuehuate*, 2018. Ink, graphite, twine, glitter, egg tempera, and cut paper on paper. 59 1/4 x 44 in. The Lumpkin-Bocuzzi Family Collection. © Felipe Baeza. Courtesy Maureen Paley, London; kurimanzutto, Mexico City/New York.

Saskia Calderón, *Lunas que no vi*, 2020. Performance video. 3 minutes. Courtesy of the artist.

Karina Aguilera Skvirsky, *Monumento al pasado para el futuro, Sol*, 2024. Hand-cut collage, alpaca, archival inkjet prints. 56 x 37.5 in (142.25 x 95.25 cm). Courtesy of RGR Gallery and the Artist.

Miguel Ángel Rojas, *Me llaman Trinity y Nevada Smith*, 1972. Graphite pencil on paper. 98 x 69.5 cm. Collection of Michael Sodomick.