



For immediate release

STOP // LOOK // LISTEN

Spencer-commissioned artists Janet Davidson-Hues & María Velasco create installation that offers offbeat signage and audio tours in museum

Public Opening Reception: Thursday, August 30, 5:30 PM

MEDIA CONTACT

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PROMOTIONAL IMAGES AVAILABLE

Lawrence, KS—Commissioned by the Spencer Museum of Art, artists **María Velasco** and **Janet Davidson-Hues** have created an unusual "way-finding system" for the museum that will debut at a public opening reception Thursday, August 30, at 5:30 PM.

Inspired by images from the SMA collection and common traffic signage, their works outside the museum announce "Warning: Art Approaching," while MP3 audio tours inside offer offbeat looks at the collection, encouraging visitors to slow down and, as the title suggests, stop, look, and listen. To listen to the audio tours online and/or download and synch the tours to your own player, please visit: <http://www.spencerart.ku.edu/exhibitions/stoplooklisten/>

This project is co-sponsored by the [KU School of Fine Arts](#), [Department of Art](#), and [KU Parking & Transit](#).

The outside signage consists of fabricated yellow metal signs with iconographic black images inspired by artworks existing in the Spencer collection. The signs, placed in the parking lot behind the museum, seem familiar yet provide an opportunity for unexpected experiences for visitors.

The inside component is a self-guided audio tour of certain paintings and art objects, identified as part of the audio tour by a symbol or iconographic sign at their site. Participating patrons can either visit the Spencer website and synch the tour's MP3 files to their own iPod-type listening device, or borrow a player from the museum when they visit (a limited number are available). The tour eschews the traditional, historical information found in many such endeavors, instead offering mischievous, insightful, or ambiguous comments, unanticipated words and sounds, contributed by a variety of voices.

By creating a playful way-finding system both inside and out, and providing an unpredictable audio tour, the artists intend to create a system for people to move through a space that feels unique. Chance encounters with familiar signs, symbols and sounds will provide viewers with an enhanced museum experience. Ideally, viewers will be intrigued by the signs in the parking lot, drawn into the museum out of curiosity, and engaged by the visual and auditory experiences that are available to them inside.

In addition to their collaboration on *Stop Look Listen* for the Spencer, Maria Velasco and Janet Davidson-Hues have worked together on other projects over the past 5 years. Initially they performed together with women's performance art group, *a.k.a.* They also worked together on an Internet 2 project, titled *Disrupting Pharaoh's Dream: Unmasking the Mother*, which linked KU and NYU in real time, both locations broadcasting simultaneously and interacting with each other. In September of 2005, they participated in an International Installation Festival, *Vogelfrei* 6, in Darmstadt, Germany where they installed their *Step-by-Step Ascension to Paradise* in the garden of a private residence—a work comprising banners of contemporary imagery that reinterpreted the Biblical story of Adam and Eve's temptation and fall from grace.

Programming

8.30

Reception: *Stop // Look // Listen*

Artists Velasco and Davidson-Hues will talk about the project. Refreshments and entertainment.
Central Court & Galleries / 5:30 - 7:30 PM

10.30

Lecture: Artists Janet Davidson-Hues and María Velasco on *Stop Look and Listen* / 7 PM / *Stop Look and Listen* is a Spencer-commissioned installation by Davidson-Hues and Velasco / 7 PM /

KU Edwards Campus Auditorium, 12600 Quivira Road, Overland Park, KS / Lecture made possible by a grant from the Richard J. Stern Foundation for the Arts

Artist Biographies

Janet Davidson-Hues

Janet Davidson-Hues focuses on language, image, object, movement, and sound to create mixed media paintings and installations as well as performances and videos. Davidson-Hues, MFA graduate from the University of Kansas and former Assistant Professor of Art at Indiana State University, has exhibited her work nationally in more than 75 exhibitions including 10 solo shows, 25 invitational exhibitions, and 40 group shows. She is currently showing her new book work at the Anton Gallery in Pacific Grove, Calif., and the Sherry Leedy Gallery of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, Mo., and in addition to the collaboration with artist Maria Velasco for the Spencer Museum, *Stop Look Listen*, Davidson-Hues is working with artist Barbara Haum on a video/internet project titled, *54 Weeks: Text in Time*.

Davidson-Hues has performed solo and in collaboration with a women's performance group, *a.k.a.*, in many major U.S. cities such as New York, Boston, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Chicago, Los Angeles. The group received a grant from the Franklin Furnace Fund for Performance Art, New York. On an international level, she has participated in various installations, performances, video screenings, exhibitions, and lectures in such cities as: Darmstadt, Germany; Venice; Tel Aviv; Shanghai; and Beijing.

María Velasco

María Velasco was born and raised in Madrid, Spain. She received her Bachelors Degree in Painting from the Universidad Complutense of Madrid in 1989, and her Master of Fine Arts in New Genre from the University of California at Santa Barbara in 1993. In the fall of 1995, she began her appointment at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kan., where she currently works as an Associate Professor of Fine Arts.

Velasco actively exhibits her work both nationally and internationally, in university and private museums, and contemporary art venues such as The Soap Factory in Minneapolis, Minn., the Contemporary Arts Forum in Santa Barbara, Calif., the ARC gallery in Chicago, the Paula Cooper gallery in New York City. She has exhibited her work in Spain, Mexico, Argentina, Paraguay and Germany. Her work has been featured in *Art In America* and *Sculpture Magazine* and is driven by installation and site-specific approaches. In 2004, she was commissioned to do a public art piece for Avenue of the Arts, in Kansas City, MO. She has received numerous awards and grants and

was the first student in art to obtain a grant through the Madrid-California Education Abroad program. Ms. Velasco has been awarded a prestigious artist residency at SculptureSpace in NY for the summer 2007.

Velasco's other professional activities include independent curatorships, discussion panels, and leading workshops for artists nationally and abroad. More information about the artist is available on her website: www.mariavelascostudio.com

Spencer Museum of Art

The University of Kansas

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Lawrence 66045-7500

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Also find the Spencer...

- On the Web: www.spencerart.ku.edu
- E-mail: spencerart@ku.edu

Gallery hours

Tues., Wed., Fri., & Saturday 10 AM—5 PM

Thurs. 10 AM—9 PM

Sun. Noon—5 PM

Closed Monday

Museum Shop closes 30 minutes before the galleries close.

- Free parking in Lot 91 after 5 PM on weekdays and all day weekends, excepting home football games.
- Parking garage adjacent to Kansas Union is \$1 per hour weekdays, free on Saturdays and Sundays (but unavailable on home football games).