

# e-flux

## José Lerma: La Bella Crisis

May 2014

e-flux



### José Lerma: La Bella Crisis

In *La Bella Crisis*, Puerto Rican artist José Lerma revisits MOCAD's history by transforming the museum's main gallery, once an auto showroom, into a series of booths like those typically found at international art fairs, where art is routinely displayed and sold to the public. Lerma's installation, created specifically for this site using found materials, paintings, and personal artifacts, will evolve over the period of a month with the artist laboring in the gallery every day to create an ever-changing still life and socio-political portrait.

Visitors are encouraged to speak with Lerma while he uses the gallery as an artist studio and to return on June 13 to see the finished piece, which addresses issues concerning labor and comments upon the effects of transient economic models, the authenticity of simple objects, and the beauty of impermanence.

Born in Spain, raised in Puerto Rico, and now living in New York and Chicago, Lerma is best known for producing playful, intricately rendered portraits of long lost historical figures. In recent years, Lerma has expanded his painting practice to include repurposing nontraditional materials such as reflective fabric, plastics, and industrial carpet. Lerma incorporates found objects such as electric keyboards, patio light

fixtures, and military parachutes. In dialogue with changing artistic practices over the past decade, Lerma explores various uses of materials for his paintings while considering the medium's relationship to history.

Support for José Lerma: *La Bella Crisis* partially provided by Kavi Gupta CHICAGO|BERLIN and Andrea Rosen Gallery. José Lerma: *La Bella Crisis* is organized by MOCAD. It is curated by Elysia Borowy-Reeder, Executive Director of MOCAD and coordinated at MOCAD by Exhibitions Coordinator Zeb Smith.