



Guillermo R. Gudino, *Infinite Longing*, 2013.  
Digital print on styrene, wood, fluorescent lamp  
and rock. 100 x 112 x 35 inches. Source of  
image: NASA. Image courtesy the artist.

In *Shadow Puppets: Traces of New Documentary Practices*, curators Stephanie Dowda and Jill Frank present a collection of still and moving images that depict the see-saw between seeing and believing. These are moments when an individual's visual perception creates friction between presence and the known but unseen. Each artist unearths photography's indexical quality, exposing the often-convoluted distinction between presumption and visual evidence. Examining the processes of interpretation, the exhibition combines works that are exercises in unlearning and deprogramming visual cues.

In Guillermo Gudiño's *Infinite Longing*, the work's physicality treads between picture and sculpture, here and beyond. As an investigation into the physical, optical, and metaphorical limits of the horizon, *Infinite Longing* articulates how an image can stand in for an event but never entirely reaches resolution.

Optically, the three-dimensional object presents the conundrum its title suggests. From a distance, *Infinite Longing* successfully channels the visual experience of that sliver of light we understand to be the horizon. From afar the image itself triggers whatever mental images and associations we have. The horizon, however, inevitably becomes more elusive on approach. Iterating a viewer's visual cues because of the "natural" inclination to come close to an artwork, the action also performs the desire to attempt to reach the unattainable physical point.

As the physical distance between the viewer and the object shrinks, the elements of the construction become more apparent. The horizon is plainly constructed within a thin wooden frame by two sheets of styrene

separated by a lit fluorescent tube. While the top sheet appears to be unaltered, the bottom is printed with an image of a vast barren landscape. Their difference reinforces the landscape as an object and not a window into space.



Guillermo R. Gudino, *Infinite Longing*, 2013. Digital print on styrene, wood, fluorescent lamp and rock. 100 x 112 x 35 inches. Source of image: NASA. Image courtesy the artist.

Through that approach, however, we learn that the photograph's origin is actually Mars, taken by the rover roaming the planet. As such it is both a familiar yet foreign landscape, depicting a place that we can grasp conceptually but not physically, and one we cannot see with the naked eye but now have access to remotely.

These shifts in perspective are what W.J.T Mitchell calls “multistable” images. Like the Necker cube or the “the Duck-Rabbit,” *Infinite Longing* generates similar liminal or threshold-type experiences that say as much about the subjectivity of the observer as the picture itself.

Before the exhibition's opening, I was able to sit down with the Gudiño and discuss the potential for exploring a physical phenomenon imbued with so many other meanings.

**BURNAWAY:** Let's start from the beginning, where does the photo come from?

**Guillermo Gudiño:** The photo, as it says on the label—the source of the image is from NASA. It's a photo of Mars. It's from the Curiosity rover. It's a new image from November.

**BA:** That just blew my mind. Because when you come to it, especially because it's the first image you see when you walk into the exhibition, the first thing I tried to do was associate where I've seen this kind of landscape before. I'm from the West [so] I thought to myself, “I've seen this kind of image.” I've been reading James Turrell who writes about Nevada, and again, I thought, “I've seen this kind of image.” It is something that slowly unveils itself to you. From a distance—I didn't read the label—you can imagine the vantage point of where the photographer is standing. So then to learn that it's an image from Mars ....

**GG:** Nobody was standing there in this case. There were no [photographic] decisions in terms of framing even. That's why I picked that one. These images that are taken from Mars come from a very small camera, just two megapixels. For example, this image is actually 90 or 100 photos. They send them from Mars to here,

one by one, and here they stitch them together. So it's this panorama with a weird shape that, if you put them together as a rectangle, it will have these strange black shapes where it wasn't filled in completely. And from this bigger image, I decided which fragments to use for the piece. It's same thing you do when you have a continuous image that you photograph. You fragment and select it, and that's what you use. If I had the chance to go there, this is the image that I would have taken. So if they are giving me the option to choose from this amazing, almost complete panorama, then I am also questioning the authorship or the property of the image at the same time.

**BA:** One of the things it starts to trouble is the idea of the photographer capturing an event, capturing a place because you are really constructing how the horizon is being *re-presented*, and it's not necessarily to recreate it an authentic way. Because who knows what it would feel like up there? It could be completely warped.

**GG:** Exactly, they are all ideas in the end. And that's part of what I'm trying to say here. Even your experience of a place like that would be an idea of the experience of the place. I am just proposing a materialization of my idea on what a horizon is, and what a horizon in Mars could be. So it's like your idea against my idea, and the scene out there would still be that. So they are all constructions, all projections. What I am doing here is just showing how I am trying to shape the idea. It is somewhere between the idea and the fact because it's material ... containing elements that you would see in a restaurant.

**BA:** Do you think these images of Mars that we are seeing for the first time are getting us closer or farther from the idea of Mars?

**GG:** In some ways it just makes me feel more conscious of how that place changes with the different inputs I receive. I don't know where my previous ideas of Mars came from—was it my idea or from someone else?—or whether I got it from books or other pictures. So as more pieces of information reshape my idea, they make me aware of how my ideas of this place are continuously changing, and I have no way of verifying whether my idea is closer or farther from being correct or true.

For me that's very interesting because that also happens here, even with your bedroom or with very familiar places. But we tend to think of them as fixed, as if they have a solid foundation that allows you to verify facts, or that they have to stay stable. I think this is where I get a lot of my motivation to work with these kinds of images. Since the reference is so loose and so far away from us, it has a lot of potential to work with the relationship between the actual place and the representation of the place—trying to mix it and test the flexibility of the connection between the two.





Guillermo R. Gudino, *Infinite Longing*, 2013. Digital print on styrene, wood, fluorescent lamp and rock. 100 x 112 x 35 inches. Source of image: NASA. Image courtesy the artist.

**BA:** What strikes me about this work is how transparent it is. You see the frame. You see the rock that props it up. At what point did working with a concept of a horizon make you want to create an installation?

**GG:** I don't know if it was as conscious as that—switching between an image and installation. My thinking about photography for a while has become much more material and objective. And this comes from my reading and theory—I started consider any image as an object. For example, they all have a width even if it's on an iPod. One thing that fascinates me about photography is how much people buy what the photograph is trying to sell—so much so that you don't see the photograph anymore you just see what it is trying to propose. So in many of my projects, I try to think about how we can look at a photograph and the object at the same time to become more aware of how we look.

**BA:** Do you find that working through an idea like the horizon is formal? Is it about perception, or does it go deeper in terms of why it has struck a chord with you?

**GG:** In many different ways, I started reading in terms of philosophy what a horizon means, or what it can represent. From a psychological point of view, what does it mean when we say casually “expand your horizon.” Or also from a physical point of view, what does it mean that, from here right now we can point to where the horizon is, and how do we feel bounded from that? But I also started reading scientific explanations that talked about how the horizon works. I am trying to get closer to the idea without constraining the possibilities of where it takes me.

**BA:** The landscape in general has been able to visualize the unknown, powerful, and overwhelming. As I think about your work, I think about how it taps into the unknown and how it feels like it's getting closer, in a way that is specific to outer space, but also intimate.

**GG:** The unknown is always going to be there. Even if we get to Mars there will still be a horizon. So what does it mean? Even though there is the temptation, we can't get to the horizon even if we try. It's just going to go farther away. It's going to remain. Even if we try to know everything, because that's what we think we do

the best .... If we know it, then we can control it, as if you could get rid of the unknown. Like trying to reach the horizon—it's as simple as that. The work is like a reminder that the unknown is always present in our lives, so where do you position yourself?

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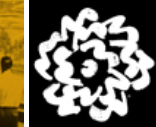
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GALLERY: AARON ROTHMAN, MARISA BAUMGARTNER, GUILLERMO GUDIÑO &amp; DAN HOLDSWORTH

## Landscape Photography: New Visions

This August, Places is featuring a five-part series on currents in landscape photography. This first installment focuses on The Idea of Landscape. For later installments, see [Image, Object, Experience](#); [Our Invisible Presence](#); [Natural Artifice, Artificial Nature](#); and [Everyday Spaces, Natural Places](#).

Dan Holdsworth, "Yosemite, C3." From *Transmission: New Remote Earth Views*, 2012.

On a clear autumn afternoon last year, on a flight between two cities in the American West, I had a spectacular view of [Yosemite Valley](#). Even from an altitude of 30,000 feet, the famous landscape — [Half Dome](#)! — was instantly recognizable. And more: it seemed to me to have a particular and unsettling power. This was not a new sensation. Years earlier, on a rock-climbing trip, I remember feeling profoundly moved but also oddly dislocated, as my real-time, personal experience of the park merged with memories of iconic photographs by such celebrated artists as Ansel Adams, Carleton Watkins, Eadweard Muybridge, Edward Weston, and countless anonymous postcard and calendar views. Photographer Mark Klett has argued that this [sheer density of imagery](#) makes Yosemite at least as much a cultural as a natural site. (Indeed, the National Park Service's "[Scenic Vista Management Plan](#)" involves cutting trees and clearing vegetation to recreate the historic vistas captured in those early photographs.) What is true of Yosemite is also true of landscape in general: the tension between the image of a place and the place itself— a tension shaped by photographic practice of the last 150 years — is at the heart of a conflicted relationship with the land we use and inhabit.

The seminal work of [Ansel Adams](#) has had enormous influence on attitudes about nature and landscape. From the start of his career in the 1930s until his death in 1984, Adams took thousands of photographs in the American West in which he constructs a vision of landscape as a wilderness untouched, *unmarred*, by human habitation. Although animated by a passionate love for the natural world — Adams considered himself a conservationist as well as photographer — his work is riddled with contradictions. He took pains to exclude traces of human presence from his images, and even a cursory study of his technique reveals the photographs to be highly stylized and artfully manipulated. Unfortunately, one consequence of Adams's carefully framed and distanced views is to reinforce a dualism deep in the American grain: the idea that the natural and the human are separate worlds. Nature is a wilderness to visit, not an environment to inhabit.

Work of subsequent generations has challenged Adams's legacy. The flight on which I

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## ABOUT THE SLIDESHOW

Works by Dan Holdsworth, Guillermo Gudiño and Marisa Baumgartner representing new directions in landscape photography. [View Slideshow >>](#)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Aaron Rothman's photographs, video and installation artwork explore perceptual experience of space in both natural and built environments. [More Bio >>](#)

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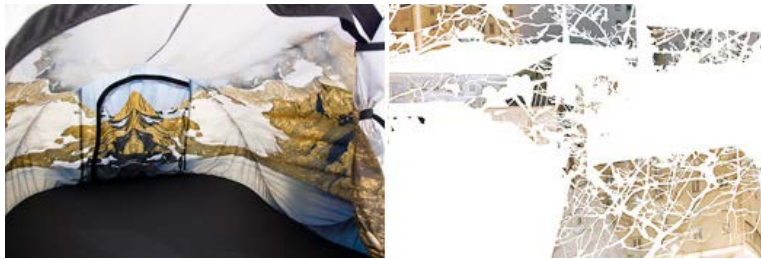
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revealed in that view of Yosemite was taking me from Reno, Nevada, to my home in Phoenix, Arizona; I'd been in Reno to attend a conference sponsored by the Art + Environment Program at the Nevada Museum of Art, and to see the companion exhibition, *The Altered Landscape: Photographs of a Changing Environment*. The NMA show followed trends established by the now legendary 1975 exhibition *New Topographics: Photographs of a Man-Altered Landscape*, curated by William Jenkins at the George Eastman House in Rochester, New York, which examined both the desolation and the unexpected beauty of built environments like industrial parks and strip malls, rejecting the idea, or ideal, of nature as untouched. Comprising works from the 1970s through today, *The Altered Landscape* placed *New Topographics* artists such as Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz and Joe Deal alongside younger practitioners, like Edward Burtynsky, Chris Jordan, Richard Misrach and Subhankar Banerjee, who have taken as their subject the effects of human activity on the land. While the work in the exhibition varied widely in its politics and aesthetics, some of the more recent work, focusing on our alterations and abuses of the environment, seemed to me to imply an irreconcilable divide between the human and natural worlds — an apparent return to the dualism of the Ansel Adams tradition.

It is a long journey from the majestic tectonics of Ansel Adams's "Moon and Half Dome" to the domestic scene of Robert Adams's "Newly Completed Tract House, Colorado Springs, 1968" to the polluted landscapes of Edward Burtynsky's "SOCAR Oil Fields #6, Baku, Azerbaijan, 2006." So where do we go from here?



Left: Guillermo Gudiño, "Forever Yours," 2011. [Courtesy of M+B Gallery, Los Angeles]. Right: Marisa Baumgartner, detail from "Visible City (Facades II)," 2005.

Over the course of five thematically linked features which will appear this month on Places, I'll explore the work of various contemporary practitioners who are enlarging the field, seeking to move beyond the lines so clearly drawn between those who sought to portray the unspoiled beauty of nature and those who've documented its alteration by humans. The most vigorous new directions today, it seems to me, embrace a less polarized, more fluid understanding of the intertwined relationship between the natural and the artificial.

#### PLAY SLIDESHOW ➡

In this first feature, I want to examine the view from above — landscape as an idea — through the work of three photographers.

Dan Holdsworth is a UK-based photographer whose images isolate essential parts of particular landscapes and point toward something beyond their literal subject — suggesting a gap between the physical world and our mental experience of it. In his most recent series, *Transmission*, Holdsworth has created images of iconic Western American landscapes — Yosemite, the Grand Canyon, Mount St. Helens, etc. — using topographical data from the U.S. Geological Survey. In collaboration with geologist Stuart Dunning, Holdsworth translated data from laser and radar scans of the earth's surface into a virtual 3D model; from this he has chosen views to output as (almost but not quite) photographic prints. Holdsworth has also displayed, alongside the images, a sculptural mass of more than 6,000 sheets of A3 paper, each packed with lists of numbers that represent the data. The result is a portrait of landscape as pure idea.

Guillermo Gudiño, an artist based in Mexico City, works in a similarly cerebral mode, creating images that work witty variations on our expectations of context. In "Forever Yours," for instance, Gudiño has printed the image of a picturesque mountain vista on the inside of a camping tent — you get the sought-after view without needing to leave the shelter of your tent (or the comfort of a gallery). Are we truly seeking an experience of wilderness, he seems to be asking, or have we already carried that experience with us, along with our gear? In other images, Gudiño literally rips out chunks of landscape photographs — showing just enough to give us a sense of a certain kind of place, but not enough to feel oriented in any specific location — and then mounts these ripped-out chunks to mirrors. The effect is, to say the least, disorienting.

Like Holdsworth and Gudiño, Marisa Baumgartner, a young photographer who lives in New York City, also explores our ongoing difficulty in relating, or reconciling, the urban to the natural. In *Visible Cities*, Baumgartner selectively removes from her images of cities those "landscape" features that could be interpreted as "negative space" or ground components

#### RELATED POSTS

##### Landscape Photography: New Visions, Part 5

On Places, the fifth installment in a month-long series, curated by Aaron Rothman, on currents in landscape photography.

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##### Kampground, America

On Places, a slideshow drawn from a visual survey of all KOA campgrounds in the United States.



## **Ground Floor**

August 19 – November 11, 2012

## **Exhibition Reception**

Sunday, September 23, 3-5 pm

**Galleries 1, 2, Cleve Carney Gallery  
and the Jackman Goldwasser  
Catwalk Gallery**

## **Gallery Hours:**

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Sunday: 12pm – 5pm



Casilda Sánchez, still from *Quisiera ser tan alta como la luna (I)* (I wish I was as tall as the moon), 2012, 5 channel HD video, 10 min loop

## **Hyde Park Art Center announces top young talent to be featured in *Ground Floor* exhibition**

**Chicago (July 2012)** – Hyde Park Art Center is proud to announce the artists selected for inclusion in the 2012 *Ground Floor* exhibition: **Jeremy Bolen, Guillermo R. Gudiño, Julie Renée Jones, Tony Lewis, Andrew Lopez, Eric May, Rachel Niffenegger, Josh Reames, Casilda Sánchez, Neal Vandenberg, and Shane Ward.** The exhibition, which opens August 19, introduces Chicago to new talent to watch, spotlighting the most promising artists who have recently emerged from Chicago's top level MFA programs. The Art Center will host a free public reception for these talented up-and-coming artists on Sunday, September 23 from 3-5 pm.

A survey exhibition of fresh art that brings together work by Chicago's most promising emerging talent, *Ground Floor* acts as a biennial best-of show that challenges and transforms Chicago's existing artscape. *Ground Floor*, so named because it fills the entire lower level of the Art Center—over 10,000 square feet of gallery space—gives young artists a major public venue in one of Chicago's premiere exhibition spaces, delivers a diverse audience via one of the most trusted authorities on great art in the city, and provides a crucial springboard into the professional art world following completion of the MFA. At the same time, *Ground Floor* offers the arts community a consistent yet dynamic destination where they are introduced to artists whose work demands to be seen and supported.

*Ground Floor* is the brainchild of art world luminary **Dawoud Bey**, who together with **Sze Lin Pang, Jason Salavon**, and other members of the Art Center's Exhibitions Committee selects *Ground Floor* artists based on recommendations by local faculty, artists, and curators. Exhibiting artists in the 2012 *Ground Floor* exhibition hail from a broad range of schools that offer graduate level fine art degrees, including the University of Chicago, the University of Illinois at Chicago, Northwestern University, Columbia College, and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

*Ground Floor* will be on view August 19 to November 11, 2012 at the Hyde Park Art Center, 5020 South Cornell Avenue, Chicago, IL, 60615; 773.324.5520 and [www.hydeparkart.org](http://www.hydeparkart.org). Exhibitions are always free and open to the public.

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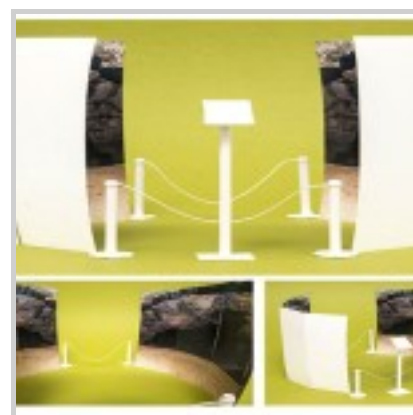
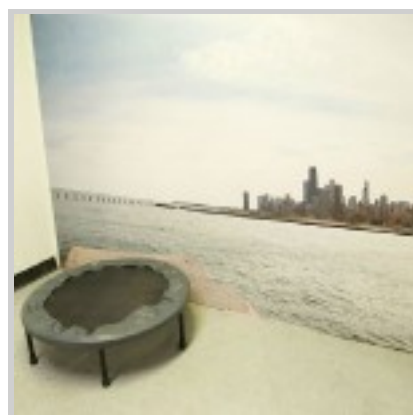
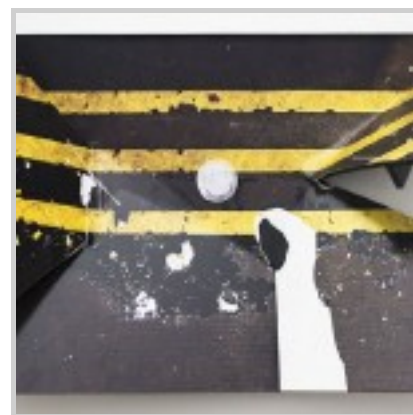
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**ADONAY BERMÚDEZ / Guillermo R. Gudiño**



### Guillermo R. Gudiño por Adonay Bermúdez

(Re)construir límites, pero también desdoblarlos, romperlos, imaginarlos o ponerlos en duda. **Guillermo R. Gudiño** (México, 1981) se centra en ese intento de dar significado a esos límites recurriendo a la propia experiencia. Pero las posibilidades se multiplican y/o se flexibilizan y nos obligamos a nosotros mismos a controlar la situación, a dominarla y llevarla al terreno que nos es cercano. Pero muchas de estas nuevas acepciones que aplicamos son meros espejismos, imposturas que nos aportan cierta estabilidad. Es irreal.

Hablar de la obra de **Gudiño** es hacerlo de turismo, de territorio y de experiencia, pero también es hablar de objeto. *Mi pensamiento acerca de la fotografía por un tiempo se ha vuelto mucho más material y objetivo. Y esto viene de mi lectura y teoría, empecé a considerar cualquier imagen como un objeto (\*1).* La experiencia convertida en un objeto, articulando nuevos significados con una fuerte presencia social y cultural y provocando que estos nuevos registros desencadenen luchas internas en el propio espectador. El objeto como representación, como *merchandising* artístico.

Pero **Gudiño** no es únicamente creador de objetos, también ejerce la función de consumidor de los mismos. Sabiendo de antemano que dichos objetos son ficticios (volvemos al concepto de espejismo) es, cuanto menos, curioso que él mismo los consuma con total credulidad. Así lo atestiguan piezas como “Jump Lake Michigan” (2010) donde sitúa un saltador junto a una gran fotografía del lago en cuestión para que el público (donde él mismo se encuentra) salte y se fotografíe, generando así una imagen irreal. No hay que olvidar las postales de Acapulco en “Acapulco Anywhere” (2010) o “Forever yours” (2011), donde despliega una caseta de campaña con el interior forrado de una panorámica del Monte Fitz Roy (Patagonia, Argentina), para que puedas acampar imaginando que estás allí, aunque no hayas salido de tu casa.

**Guillermo R. Gudiño** no hace más que evidenciar la artificialidad en la que vivimos. Por ello, no es de extrañar que se invente no sólo objetos, sino también los propios territorios. Un ejemplo claro es “Acapulco Anywhere” (2010), nombrado anteriormente. Durante un viaje que el artista realizó por carretera desde Los Ángeles a Chicago, documentó el deseo de estar en Acapulco, uno de los principales

destinos turísticos de México. Ante la evidente imposibilidad de verse allí, decidió recrear escenas estereotipadas como turísticas y se fotografió en ellas, convirtiéndolas en postales que luego envió a amigos y parientes relatándoles quiméricas experiencias en Acapulco. Otra pieza en la misma línea es “Infinite Longing” (2013), en ella Gudiño muestra una panorámica de Marte realizada con un rover y la expone como si el paisaje fuera cualquier zona desértica del norte de México, buscando un vínculo emocional con el espectador, aunque la realidad está alejada por un par de millones de kilómetros. Otra referencia es “Islas” (2012) donde el artista se ha inventado islas que ha creado tras rasgar fotografías de naturaleza con las que el público se va a sentir emparentado rápidamente. O, incluso, con “Viaje a Fiji” (2014) donde intenta deleitarse con una idílica estampa de palmeras y arena blanca con sonido de fondo, aunque en este caso queda clara su incapacidad de conseguirlo.

*Nunca hemos estado en ese lugar realmente, sino en la proyección de ese lugar. ¿No es más fácil para ese turista superfluo recurrir al Photoshop y colocarse sobre el fondo de la foto que predispone el recorrido, sentado en casa, cómodo, sin siquiera los pequeños sobresaltos que impone el viaje, incluso programado?* (\*2). Algo similar le pasa a **Guillermo R. Gudiño**. En su caso, ante la rémora de estar en esos lugares que tanto desea, engendra escenografías y las erige de la manera más fidedigna. Con todos estos (auto)engaños intenta confundir al espectador, hacerlo dudar entre lo real y lo imaginado (e, incluso, con lo posible).

¿Y dónde están los límites?

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**Guillermo R. Gudiño** (México, 1981) es un artista graduado de maestría en arte por The School of the Art Institute of Chicago en 2011. Sus estudios fueron apoyados por la beca FulbrightGarcía Robles y la Beca para Estudios en el Extranjero del FONCA. Cursó la Licenciatura en Artes Visuales en la ENAPUNAM, donde también realizó un diplomado en Realización Cinematográfica. Ha tenido cuatro exhibiciones individuales y varias colectivas en Nueva York, Los Ángeles, México DF, Londres y Chicago, entre otras. Su trabajo ha sido seleccionado dos veces para el Encuentro Nacional de Arte Joven en México y fue elegido para representar a The School of the Art Institute of Chicago en la feria de arte Verge Art Fair Miami. En el verano del 2012 Terra Foundation for American Art le otorgó una beca para hacer una residencia artística en Francia. Su obra más reciente abarca diversos medios, incluyendo fotografía, escultura, vídeo, instalación y performance. Desplazando funciones, actividades o sitios, su trabajo es una reflexión sobre la validez de aquello que aceptamos como una experiencia legítima.

<http://guillermogudino.com/>

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**Adonay Bermúdez** (Lanzarote, España. 1985) es comisario independiente. De entre sus proyectos cabe destacar “Turismo Efímero. El diálogo iberoamericano” en la Universidade da Madeira, en el Centro Cultural Pachano dentro del 5º Festival de Creación Visual Vfff14 de Ambato (Ecuador), en Addaya Centre d’Art Contemporani (Mallorca, España), en Flacso (Quito, Ecuador) y en la Galería Anomalía (México DF); “Gula” en TEA Tenerife Espacio de las Artes (España), en el Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Quito (Ecuador) y en Gran Canaria Espacio Digital (España) o “Asphyxia” en Hardy Tree Gallery (Londres, Reino Unido). Además, es director del Festival Internacional de Videoarte “Entre islas” con proyecciones en museos y centros de arte de España, Portugal, Italia, Nicaragua, Ecuador o Haití, director de la Convocatoria PEJAC (Promoción Exterior de Jóvenes Artistas Canarios) y autor del libro “Los Dictadores (el poder subversivo del arte)”.

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