POMONA COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART
ANNOUNCES MAJOR EXHIBITION:
Prometheus 2017: Four Artists from Mexico Revisit Orozco

Aug. 29 – Dec. 16, 2017

CLAREMONT, Calif. — Pomona College Museum of Art is pleased to announce the opening of the exhibition, “Prometheus 2017: Four Artists from Mexico Revisit Orozco,” supported by grants from the Getty Foundation as part of Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA.

“Prometheus 2017” showcases José Clemente Orozco’s mural Prometheus (1930) on the Pomona College campus and examines the multiple ways his vision resonates with four artists working in Mexico today. Isa Carrillo, Adela Goldbard, Rita Ponce de León, and Naomi Rincón-Gallardo share Orozco’s interest in the relationships among history, justice, power, social protest, and storytelling, yet approach these topics from their own 21st-century sensibilities. These artists activate Orozco’s mural by reinvigorating Prometheus for a contemporary audience.

José Clemente Orozco (Zapotlán el Grande, Mexico, 1883), Prometheus, 1930, Fresco, 240 x 342 inches (610 x 869 cm), Pomona College, Claremont, CA. Photography © Fredrik Nilsen
“Prometheus 2017” opens to the public on Aug. 29 and runs through Dec. 16, 2017. The museum will host a series of special opening events starting on Thursday, Sept. 7 at 7 p.m. with a gallery talk by artist Isa Carrillo and art historian and catalog essayist Mary Coffey, followed by private palm reading sessions by Carrillo.

A public reception will be held on Saturday, Sept. 9, 2017 from 5 to 7 p.m. Prior to the reception, there will be a gallery talk at 4 p.m. by artist Rita Ponce de León and scholar and catalog essayist Daniel Garza Usabiaga.

Orozco’s Prometheus is the first mural painted in the U.S. by a Mexican muralist, and signifies the beginning of a complex decade of Mexican engagement with U.S. publics. For Pomona College President David Oxtoby, “Prometheus is an exemplar of the College’s historical commitment to art. The story of the mural’s realization reflects the dynamic exchange of ideas that continue to be a hallmark of the College’s liberal arts curriculum.”


Rita Ponce de León (Lima, Peru, 1982), David (exhibition view), 2013, Ink on wall, video and paper blocks with printed images, dimensions variable. Courtesy of Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros and the artist. Photo courtesy: José Jasso

Carrillo, Goldbard, Ponce de León, and Rincón-Gallardo utilize strategies of engaged historical or archival research, public intervention, or intimately scaled social practice to connect with their publics and advance social issues. The work of the four artists presented in “Prometheus 2017” aligns with Orozco’s complicated humanism; each artist addresses Orozco’s mural, person, and/or practice in distinct ways.

Carrillo’s parapsychological portrayal of Orozco uses the practice of esoteric arts such as astrology and graphology to intimately explore his life and work. Referencing acts of political violence in recent Mexican history, Goldbard creates videos of sculptures that she fabricates with local artisans then activates or destroys using pyrotechnics. She embraces the metaphor of fire as a tool of both creation and destruction. Ponce de León revisits the history and legacy of mural art as a tool to reconceptualize community building and public art practice. Collaborating with Pomona College students, Ponce de León’s project for the exhibition engages Prometheus through collective work sessions. Examining Greek mythology and historical dreams of utopia in
Mexico, Rincón-Gallardo links a personal narrative with an exploration of the themes that are at the heart of *Prometheus* and Orozco’s turn to myth.


Isa Carrillo, *Constelación naciente (Rising Constellation)* (3 of 3), 2015, Wood, paint, color pencil, 60 x 60 cm. Courtesy of the artist. Photo credit: Nancy Sepulveda.

**About the Exhibition**

The exhibition opens with a presentation of Orozco’s preparatory drawings for the mural drawn from the museum’s permanent collection. The exhibition dedicates a gallery to each of the contemporary artists, highlighting her connections to Orozco and the *Prometheus* mural. A timeline anchors elements of the exhibition with information on Orozco’s life and artwork, the *Prometheus* mural, Prometheus as a discursive figure, the history of Pomona College, and pertinent world events.

The exhibition is organized by Rebecca McGrew, Pomona College Museum of Art senior curator, with the assistance of the “Prometheus 2017” research team—Terri Geis, former Pomona College Museum of Art curator of academic programs; Mary K. Coffey, Dartmouth College professor of art history; Daniel Garza Usabiaga, artistic director of Zona Maco in Mexico City; Nidhi Gandhi and Ian Byers-Gamber, Pomona College Museum of Art curatorial assistants; and Benjamin Kersten, former Pomona College Museum of Art curatorial assistant.

**About the Publication**

Supported by the Getty Foundation, *Prometheus 2017: Four Artists from Mexico Revisit Orozco* is edited by McGrew and Geis and presents substantial new scholarship connecting Mexican muralism with contemporary art practices. Three essays address different aspects of Orozco, *Prometheus*, and the connections between Los Angeles and Mexico. McGrew and Geis’s “Pandora Rising: José Clemente Orozco and Four Contemporary Women Artists from Mexico”
provides an overview of the exhibition themes and situates the four contemporary artists and Orozco within a theoretical framework anchored by current studies of Orozco, contemporary art strategies, social protest, and the work of philosopher Ivan Illich. Coffey’s “Putting Orozco’s Prometheus in Motion: Reframing Mural Art’s Meaning for Contemporary Art Practice” provides an interpretation of Orozco’s mural from the standpoint of contemporary debates over relational aesthetics, site specificity, and embodiment. Garza Usabiaga’s “Muralism’s Afterlife: Mural Practice and the Avant-Garde Legacy in Contemporary Art of Mexico” examines the mural as a form of public art, investing the form with a critical, social, and political posture that resonates with artists today. Designed by Kimberly Varella of Content Object Design Studio, the book also includes critical essays addressing the featured contemporary artists; a chronology exploring themes of Prometheus; and vibrant new reproductions. The catalogue is distributed by Getty Publications.

Exhibition Programming

Thursday, Sept. 7, 7-9 p.m.
Gallery talk with “Prometheus 2017” artist Isa Carrillo and art historian and catalog essayist Mary Coffey followed by palm reading sessions by Carrillo

Saturday, Sept. 9, 4-5 p.m.
Gallery talk with “Prometheus 2017” artist Rita Ponce de León and scholar and catalog essayist Daniel Garza Usabiaga

Thursday, Oct. 19, 7-9 p.m.
Film screening and performance by “Prometheus 2017” artist Naomi Rincón-Gallardo

Saturday, Nov. 18, 7-9 p.m.
Pyrotechnic performance by “Prometheus 2017” artist Adela Goldbard

About the Pomona College Museum of Art

The Museum collects, preserves, exhibits, and interprets works of art; and houses a substantial permanent collection as well as serving as a gallery of temporary exhibitions. Important holdings include the Kress Collection of 15th- and 16th-century Italian panel paintings; more than 5,000 examples of Pre-Columbian to 20th-century American Indian art and artifacts, including basketry, ceramics and beadwork; and a large collection of American and European prints, drawings and photographs, including works by Francisco de Goya, José Clemente Orozco, and Rico Lebrun.

Admission
All exhibitions and programs are free of charge and open to the public.

General Information
330 North College Avenue
Claremont, CA 91711
Tuesday through Sunday, 12-5 p.m., Closed Mondays
Art After Hours: Thursday, 5-11 p.m., Aug. 31 – Nov. 30, 2017

For more information, please call 909.621.8283 or visit www.pomona.edu/museum.
About Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA

Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA is a far-reaching and ambitious exploration of Latin American and Latino art in dialogue with Los Angeles taking place from September 2017 through January 2018. Led by the Getty, Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA is a collaboration of arts institutions across Southern California.

Through a series of thematically linked exhibitions and programs, Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA highlights different aspects of Latin American and Latino art from the ancient world to the present day. With topics such as luxury arts in the pre-Columbian Americas, 20th century Afro-Brazilian art, alternative spaces in Mexico City, and boundary-crossing practices of Latino artists, exhibitions range from monographic studies of individual artists to broad surveys that cut across numerous countries.

Supported by more than $16 million in grants from the Getty Foundation, Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA involves more than 70 cultural institutions from Los Angeles to Palm Springs, and from San Diego to Santa Barbara. Pacific Standard Time is an initiative of the Getty. The presenting sponsor is Bank of America.

About the Getty Foundation

The Getty Foundation fulfills the philanthropic mission of the Getty Trust by supporting individuals and institutions committed to advancing the greater understanding and preservation of the visual arts in Los Angeles and throughout the world. Through strategic grants initiatives, it strengthens art history as a global discipline, promotes the interdisciplinary practice of conservation, increases access to museum and archival collections, and develops current and future leaders in the visual arts. It carries out its work in collaboration with the other Getty Programs to ensure that they individually and collectively achieve maximum effect.

Since its inception in 1984, the Getty Foundation has developed, awarded, and monitored more than 7,000 grants in 180 countries on all seven continents. Among the Foundation’s most prominent initiatives was Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A., 1945–1980, the largest cultural collaboration ever undertaken in the region culminating in more than 60 related exhibitions on postwar art in Los Angeles that took place across Southern California in 2011–2012. Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA continues this effort.

Other Foundation initiatives include: Keeping It Modern, focused on the conservation of 20th century buildings around the world; the Panel Paintings Initiative, an effort to train the next generation of conservators of paintings on wood panels through treatment of some of the most important masterpieces in the history of Western art; the Online Scholarly Catalogue Initiative (OSCI), which helped museums face the challenges of digital publishing; and Connecting Art
Histories, which is bringing together scholars across national boundaries, especially from regions that face economic or political constraints.

In addition, the Foundation supports a variety of internships and professional development programs, including the Multicultural Undergraduate Internship program in Los Angeles. For further information about these and other grant programs, visit the Foundation’s website at www.getty.edu/foundation.