

FIESTA

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FotoSeptiembre:

Annual Month-long Festival of Photography-based Art

BY JEANETTE MCNAMEE

Landscapes, city streets, conjunto music, love and betrayal are just some of the varied subjects captured in photographic images on exhibit throughout September during FotoSeptiembre USA.

The 17th annual event will feature photography and photography-based art by several hundred area, national and international artists at some 50 venues in San Antonio and the Hill Country.

"This is an eclectic and inclusive festival, providing a forum for both beginners and established artists to show their work," says Michael Mehl, FotoSeptiembre director.

Venues will include the Blue Star Contemporary Art Center, Conjunto Heritage Taller, Instituto Cultural de Mexico, Rendon Photography and Fine Art, San Antonio Central Library, San Antonio Museum of Art, Southwest School of Art, St. Mary's University, University of the Incarnate Word, the University of Texas at San Antonio Loop 1604 campus, Villa Finale



Above: Cheng-Chang Wu's "Vision of Taiwan" will be on display at Instituto Cultural de Mexico beginning Sept. 3. Below: 2010 Opening Reception at Say Sí. Left: Taiwanese artist Isa Ho's "Fairy Tales."

Visitor Center and the Witte Museum. Galleries in Boerne, Bulverde and Spring Branch also will take part in the festival.

The Witte Museum's festival exhibit will celebrate its 85th

anniversary with historic photographs that showcase how the Witte has grown and changed with the community since 1926. "Witte Through Time: 85 Years and Still Growing" opens Sept. 16.

Over the years, FotoSeptiembre has gradually evolved into an event in which women are the predominant participants, both as exhibiting artists (about 60 percent this year) and as organizers/presenters.

"We feel that this gives us an even more unique standing among festivals worldwide," Mehl says. "We don't know if this is a global trend or if



it mostly applies to us. The fact is, we think this is a very good thing. We are like the mother-earth of festivals."

The festival partnered with the City of San Antonio Office of Cultural Affairs to include a series of exhibits by contemporary Taiwanese artists. For more details, go to sacoordinates.com/taiwan.

"We used to think of our festival in San Antonio almost exclusively in North-South terms, as a cultural link to Mexico and Latin America, which it still is. But more and more FotoSeptiembre has become a link to East and West, Asia and Europe, resulting in an emphasis on more experimental approaches to the photographic arts," says Mehl.



Above: "Witte Through Time: 85 Years and Still Growing" will open Sept. 16 at the Witte Museum. Right: Laura McPhee's "River of No Return" will go on exhibit Sept. 1 at Southwest School of Art.



During the festival, the UTSA Photography Department will host the 2011 Society for Photographic Education South Central Regional Conference, which will include exhibits and lectures at

UTSA at Loop 1604, UTSA Satellite Space and the San Antonio Library. In conjunction with the conference, the Southwest School of Art will hold a series of exhibits and lectures.

- Due to the popularity of FotoSeptiembre and limited venues for exhibits, there is a waiting list of two to three years for artists wishing to exhibit during the festival.
- A full schedule of this year's festival exhibits is at fotoseptiembreusa.com.
- For more information, email info@fotoseptiembreusa.com.

"The Southwest School of Art has been one of our most active partners and supporters throughout the years of the festival," Mehl says.