For Immediate Release

Spaces without drama or surface is an illusion, but so is depth

February 16 – July 1, 2017
Opening Reception: Thursday, February 16, 6-8 PM
6PM: Talk by curators Wonne Ickx and Ruth Estévez

Chicago, IL (December 15, 2016) — The Graham Foundation is pleased to present *Spaces without drama or surface is an illusion, but so is depth*, an exhibition that examines the recent proliferation of collage in architectural representation in relationship to scenography and theatrical set design. Based on historical references such as nineteenth-century toy theaters, as well as twentieth-century models such as Aldo Rossi's *Little Scientific Theater*, and David Hockney's stage design for the *Magic Flute*, this project invites contemporary practitioners to rethink the ways in which architecture is created in relationship to theatricality and how it oscillates between reality and scenography to answer questions about space, depth, context, façade, and representation.

Featuring the work of architects Emilio Ambasz, baukuh, Gerardo Caballero, fala atelier, Marcelo Ferraz, Sam Jacob Studio, Johnston Marklee, Monadnock, MOS Architects, Norman Kelley, OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen, Cecilia Puga, Aldo Rossi, Taller de Arquitectura Mauricio Rocha + Gabriela Carrillo, Pezo Von Ellrichshausen; artists Pablo Bronstein, William Leavitt, Silke Otto-Knapp, Gabriel Sierra, Batia Suter; and dramaturg Jorge Palinhos; *Spaces without drama* investigates the similarities between theatrical stage sets and architectural scale models, highlighting the ways that each constructed landscape anticipates narratives and prompts the personal drama of speculation and the creation of fictions. In both cases, the resulting spatial experience is controlled and precisely framed with a fixed relation between observer and object—an architectural imaginary that is more graphic composition than spatial creation, more image than space. By superimposing fragments, forms and elements within a given stage set, the model of the theater allows the participants to rehearse the laws of artistic creation itself. As Aldo Rossi states about the theater in *A Scientific Autobiography*: "Inside it, nothing can be accidental, yet nothing can be permanently resolved either."

LIGA, Space for Architecture is an experimental exhibition-oriented platform in Mexico City that has focused its efforts on displaying emerging and influential Latin-American–based practices since its founding in 2011 by Carlos Bedoya, Ruth Estévez, Wonne Ickx, Victor Jaime, and Abel Perles. Following on the Graham Foundation's multi-year grant support of LIGA's program, *Spaces without drama* is the result of an invitation by the Graham to LIGA to develop an exhibition for the Foundation in Chicago. For this collaboration, LIGA founding directors Wonne Ickx and Ruth Estévez have developed a curated investigation into contemporary issues of spatial representation and performance and have taken the opportunity to expand their focus beyond Latin America to include practices from Europe and the United States.

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"Exhibitions are a vital site for the development of ideas and discourse in architecture, and LIGA is one of handful of experimental independent spaces in the world committed to making exhibitions that provide opportunities for architects to develop new work," notes Graham Foundation director Sarah Herda. "This exhibition brings together an amazing group of contemporary practitioners, and by using Aldo Rossi as a touchstone, also connects to significant ideas supported by the Graham over the course of its history." Aldo Rossi lectured at the Graham Foundation in 1979, just after developing the *Little Scientific Theater*, and in 1981, the Foundation gave a major grant to the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies for the Oppositions Books series published by MIT press, that brought Aldo Rossi's *The Architecture of the City* and *A Scientific Autobiography* to English language readers for the first time.

Spaces without drama uses the Graham Foundation's historic Madlener House galleries as a double stage—a staging of mise-en-scénes to present contemporary and historic photographs, models, and drawings, as well as newly commissioned projects including movies, installations, and performance. Significant pieces include rarely exhibited work by Aldo Rossi, from the collection of Frank Godlewski, as well as many new works by artists like Pablo Bronstein, Silke Otto-Knapp, William Leavitt, and Batia Suter and contributions by more than ten contemporary architecture offices from Europe, Latin America, and the United States. The exhibition will be accompanied by a pamphlet with contributions by the curators.

CONTRIBUTORS

Emilio Ambasz, baukuh, Pablo Bronstein, Gerardo Caballero, fala atelier, Marcelo Ferraz, Sam Jacob Studio, Johnston Marklee, Monadnock, MOS Architects, Norman Kelley, OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen, William Leavitt, Silke Otto-Knapp, Jorge Palinhos, Cecilia Puga, Aldo Rossi, Gabriel Sierra, Taller de Arquitectura Mauricio Rocha + Gabriela Carrillo, Batia Suter, and Pezo Von Ellrichshausen.

CURATORS

LIGA, Space for Architecture, is an independent initiative founded in Mexico City that promotes contemporary architecture through exhibitions, conferences, publications, and events, with a focus on Latin America. As a curatorial platform LIGA strives to expand the architectural discipline as a discursive practice, to experiment with exhibition and presentation formats, and to establish connections with other disciplines. LIGA was co-founded by Carlos Bedoya, Ruth Estévez, Wonne Ickx, Victor Jaime, and Abel Perles in 2011. Isabel Martínez Abascal joined LIGA as program director in in 2015.

Ruth Estévez (b. 1977. Bilbao, Spain) is a writer, curator and set designer based in Los Angeles, where she is currently the director and curator of REDCAT/CalArts Gallery. Between 2007 and 2011, Estévez served as the chief curator at the Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, Mexico City, where she organized exhibitions of Mark Manders, Fernando Ortega, Guy Ben-Ner, among others. In 2011 Estévez cofounded LIGA, Space for Architecture in Mexico City, an exhibition platform dedicated to experimentation in the field of architecture and urbanism. Her current work at REDCAT has brought to Los Angeles artists like Javier Téllez, Pablo Bronstein, Allora & Calzadilla, Pedro Barateiro, and Quinn Latimer, as well as such group exhibitions as *Agency. Assembly: Before and After the Split second recorded* (2015) and *Small Museum for the American Metaphor* (2014) co-curated with Kersten Geers. She has written for numerous exhibition

catalogues and art publications and has independently organized exhibitions in Spain, France, Belgium, and the United States, as well as in Mexico.

Wonne Ickx founded PRODUCTORA in Mexico City, together with Abel Perles, Carlos Bedoya, and Victor Jaime in 2006. PRODUCTORA was awarded the Architectural League Prize in 2007 and the Emerging Voices Competition in 2013. In 2016 the studio received the Mies Crown Hall Americas Prize for Emerging Architects from the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) College of Architecture. Among the office's many publications, the monographs published by Arquine in 2010 and 2G in 2014 summarize the work over this intense period of production. Ickx teaches at several universities in Mexico City, as well as the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), IIT, and Harvard. He is one of the founding directors of LIGA, Space for Architecture.

RELATED EVENTS

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Additional events will be announced throughout the run of the show. For more information about upcoming events, visit: www.grahamfoundation.org/public_events

ABOUT THE GRAHAM FOUNDATION

Founded in 1956, the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts fosters the development and exchange of diverse and challenging ideas about architecture and its role in the arts, culture, and society. The Graham realizes this vision through making project-based grants to individuals and organizations and producing exhibitions, events, and publications.

THE MADLENER HOUSE

Since 1963, the Graham Foundation has been located in the Madlener House, a turn-of-the-century Prairie-style mansion, designed by Richard E. Schmidt and Hugh M. Gardner (1901–02) and renovated by prominent modern architect Daniel Brenner. The 9,000 square-foot historic home now hosts galleries, a bookstore, an outdoor collection of architectural fragments, an extensive non-lending library of grantee publications, and a ballroom where the foundation hosts a robust schedule of public programs.

BOOKSHOP

The Graham Foundation's bookshop, designed by Ania Jaworska, offers a selection of new, historically significant, and hard-to-find publications on architecture, art, and design, many of which have been supported by grants from the Graham Foundation.

GALLERY HOURS AND VISITOR INFORMATION

Admission to the galleries and bookshop are free and open to the public Wednesday through Saturday, 11 AM–6 PM. Group tours are available by request.

ACCESSIBILITY

The second floor galleries and third floor ballroom where events are held are only accessible by stairs. The first floor galleries and bookshop are accessible via outdoor lift. Please call ahead to make arrangements.
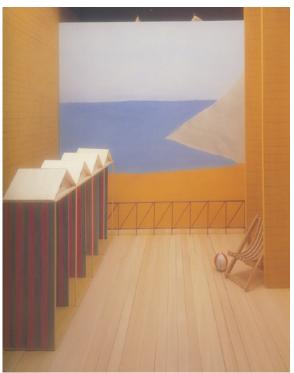

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High-resolution digital images are available on the press section of our website;
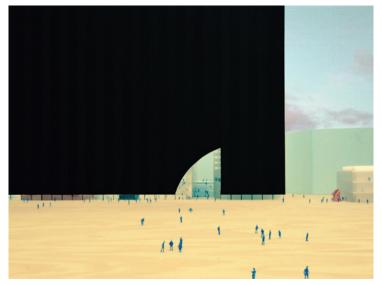email Ellen Alderman for the press login or additional information. Press tours welcome by appointment.

Images (top left) Aldo Rossi, *Teatrino Scientifico*, 1978. Courtesy of the Fondazione Rossi; (top right) Aldo Rossi, *Teatrino Scientifico, Scena con cabine*, 1978; (bottom) Batia Suter, *Sketch*, 2017. Courtesy of the artist.

Images (top left) baukuh with Yellow Office and Stefano Graziani, *Model at Palazzo Reale*, Milan, 2012. Photo: Stefano Graziani; (top right) fala atelier, *Building with Three Apartments*, digital collage, Oporto, Portugal, 2015. (bottom left) Emilio Ambasz, *Residence au Lac, Lugano,* Switzerland, 1983. Photo courtesy Estudio Ambasz; (bottom right) OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen with 51N4E*, Competition Design for NCCA National Center for Contemporary Arts*, Moscow, 2013.