

# Argentine artist takes reptilian vision to NY

## Eduardo Navarro un-conceptualizes time with turtle walk through Central Park

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The New Museum's 2015 Triennial, *Surround Audience*, doesn't dwell on the past. It's a forward thinking, predictive amalgamation of young artists having their say about the growing authority of technology, and the way our lives are dictated and transformed by information overload. The show at 235 Bowery St, New York, plays on the fact that "we are enclosed by a more participatory world, one in which we are an all an audience watching each other" thanks to social media.

It's bold, gutsy, and walks a fine line between the obscure and complete arcane; Argentine artist Eduardo Navarro's submission tips the scales at the more incomprehensible end. The 35-year-old, one of 51 contributors from 25 nations, has turned his hand to "un-conceptualizing time" by convincing someone to sport a giant turtle suit and crawl across New York's Central Park. Navarro's axe to grind: an "oversynchronized society."

According to the New Museum, Navarro's *Timeless Alex* "departs from the conditions of experience determined by the human body to consider the phenomenological position of the turtle." Hanging on one of the space's stark walls among the other paintings, photographs, and sculptures forming the chockfull exhibition, the turtle's wrinkled skin sags eerily next to its giant bulbous shell like a prop from a swamp monster B movie. Dancer Jennifer Sullivan will be bringing it to life for a solitary performance on May 3.

"Adventurousness" is one adjective that repeatedly sidcars mention of the New Museum's curatorial programme. As Manhattan's only dedicated contemporary art museum, the



The giant turtle suit made by Eduardo Navarro for his *Timeless Alex* piece.

venue is an incubator for "new art and new ideas" and a good place to experiment. Navarro's reptilian vision is in fine company alongside the warped imaginings of the other creators.

*Surround Audience*'s curator Lauren Cornell said the Triennial is dedicated to emerging artists, most of whom were born in the 1980s: "Personally, I don't believe that generations are bracketed by age: the 'contemporary' is clearly a sphere composed of multiple time zones and differing social influences that create connections between artists, internationally, across their date of birth," she said. "At the same time, I didn't want to replicate the convention of

'rediscovering' older artists, who've already had careers, within this context."

Time and age have also occupied Navarro's cognition, which may be no surprise given he's one of the more senior artists exhibiting. *Timeless Alex* is the result of the artist's intrigue of the turtle's perception of time — he was stirred by the case of the seemingly ageless Lonesome George, the last living Pinta Island tortoise found in the Galápagos in 1971. It's how animals perceive time that fascinate the Argentine.

"Time is a human-centred approach to reality," Navarro told the *Herald*. "We live in a synchronized society and time has become a self-

imposed restriction. I'm interested in turtles because they live in the present, they cannot conceptualize the future or the past — meditation is similar. In my career, meditation is fundamental; it helps me stay connected with my imagination."

*Timeless Alex* is a continuation of a work Navarro created for the 2013 Mercosul Biennial in Brazil entitled *Horses Don't Lie*. He invited dancers to think like horses by adopting the "walking meditation" technique. The performers were encouraged to reach a mental and physical state that "enabled them to cancel language and to focus on the present." Inspired by Dr. Temple Grandin, an autism sufferer and professor of animal science

from the US, choreographers wore specially made horse heads and semi-mechanical devices influenced by equine anatomy.

"I read Grandin's book *Thinking in Pictures*, in which she describes how her incapacity for language only allows here to think in images. Animals think in pictures, so her capacity to understand animals allowed her to become a reference to understanding animal behaviour," Navarro said.

*Timeless Alex* will take a leisurely four hours to slink through Sheep's Meadow in Central Park — it will be "extremely slow." Those who think that watching a giant turtle edge tantalizingly across the city might be a little dull may be forgiven, but Navarro is not losing any sleep over this: "I have to be committed to my ideas and not worry about what people say. I'm fine with people finding *Timeless Alex* boring. Of course, I definitely don't think the performance is about making an audience board, it's about contemplation."

And silent reflection is all the Argentine is likely to harvest in New York. Apparently US born art-lovers don't do face-to-face feedback; they express themselves on Facebook or Twitter.

"Producing work in New York is very visual. I feel showing in Buenos Aires is a challenge because the art scene is so small and we all know each other. Everyone is committed to saying what they think, even if they are being very critical — I think this is great. In the US, people prefer to say what they think on social media. This is very new for me," he said.

### WHERE AND WHEN

New York — New Museum's 2015 Triennial: Eduardo Navarro's *Timeless Alex* exhibition runs until May 24. *Timeless Alex* special performance is scheduled for May 3.

## Spanish 'pop-up' Pompidou art centre opens in Málaga

MÁLAGA — France's Pompidou Centre brought dozens of its 20th and 21st century artwork to one of Spain's most popular coastlines, opening in the Andalusian port of Málaga the first of several international outposts.

The gallery will house works shipped from Paris including paintings and sculptures by Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, German surrealist Max Ernst and Irish-born painter Francis Bacon, as part of a "pop-up" museum that will last at least five years.

"(It) gives a fresh impetus to one of our original callings: providing access to the art of our time to as many people as possible," Alain Seban, the French

centre's president, said of the project, which should later be replicated elsewhere.

The *Cube* centre in the Mediterranean harbour will also host works by the city's most famous son, Pablo Picasso, in a two-and-a-half year display from the Pompidou collection.

Rotating temporary exhibits will be held in the museum, whose underground galleries and protruding glass cube are a far cry from the Pompidou's famed central Paris venue, where multi-coloured plumbing pipes, air conditioning ducts and escalators adorn its exterior.

Málaga, one of the gateways to the Costa del Sol whose beaches

draw millions of tourists every year, has been reinventing itself as a cultural hub, with dozens of museums and an annual film festival.

The city will pay one million euros a year to use the Pompidou name and borrow the art works.

On March 25, a collection of works from the Russian Museum in St. Petersburg also opened in Málaga. A hundred pieces from the 15th to the 20th centuries, from medieval gilded icons to works by famous Russian artists like Wassily Kandinsky and Marc Chagall, will be housed in a renovated former tobacco factory from the 1920s.

Reuters

## Police probe threat to BBC boss over Clarkson firing

LONDON — British police are investigating a death threat made to the head of the BBC after the broadcaster fired *Top Gear* host Jeremy Clarkson over an assault on a colleague. The *Mail on Sunday* newspaper ran photos of security guards outside the home of director-general Tony Hall.

The Metropolitan Police said detectives were "investigating an allegation of threats to kill" made in an email. No one has been arrested. The force did not name Hall but offered the statement when asked about him.

The BBC said it wouldn't comment on security matters, but carried the story in its news bulletins.

The broadcaster announced Wednesday that it wouldn't renew Clarkson's contract for *Top Gear*, one of the network's most popular shows. It said Clarkson had subjected pro-

ducer Oisin Tymon to a verbal tirade before hitting him.

When Clarkson was suspended after the incident, fans clamoured for his return, signing a petition which was delivered to the BBC in a tank. Prime Minister David Cameron called Clarkson a friend and a "huge talent."

Clarkson has often landed in trouble for remarks targeting — among others — Argentines, Mexicans, cyclists and former Prime Minister Gordon Brown. For fans, Clarkson's defiance of what is seen as political correctness is part of his appeal.

The *Guinness Book of World Records* has described *Top Gear* as the world's most widely watched factual programme. It broadcasts to 214 territories and has an estimated global audience of 350 million.

AP