

BAL HARBOUR

Bal Harbour announces winner of the first "Unscripted" public art program Destination provides South Florida artist with global platform

Bal Harbour, Fla. – July 18, 2012

Created to support and challenge the artistic talents in South Florida, the "Unscripted" project is the first of an ongoing series of commissions geared toward providing artists with a new platform to create an ambitious project and contribute to the growth of Bal Harbour as a creative destination. Due to the quality and ambition of two of the final proposals submitted this summer, Bal Harbour decided to pursue an additional commission for Spring 2013. Sculptor, installation and video artist Christy Gast will be featured as the second "Unscripted" commissioned artist.

George Sánchez-Calderón's winning public art project, entitled "Pax Americana," draws inspiration from Bal Harbour Village's history, by reflecting upon the iconography that has collectively defined the archetype of "the American Dream." Positioned in front of the new St. Regis Bal Harbour Resort, where the Americana Hotel previously stood, Sánchez-Calderón will create a six-foot tall, stainless steel letter installation of the word "Americana," in reference to this historical site. Many important political events and national conventions were held at the notorious hotel designed by Morris Lapidus, which over the years hosted Presidents Kennedy, Nixon, Johnson, Reagan and Clinton—an apt reference leading up to this year's presidential election.

As his second installation, entitled "Levittown House," Sánchez-Calderón will build a recreation of a Levittown-style house on Bal Harbour's Founder circle. Bal Harbour Village was one of the first planned communities in South Florida, as a quiet residential neighborhood with former World War Two army barracks. Bal Harbour was incorporated in 1946, just a year before Levittown, and both communities were developed in response to the United States' post-war housing needs. For Sánchez-Calderón, the Levittown house symbolizes the prototype of post-war America, which forever changed the American urban and suburban landscape.

The "Unscripted" public art commission is spearheaded by curator Claire Breukel, who has served on various art-related boards and has curated exhibitions in South Africa, New York, Miami, Vienna and El Salvador. To reach the final decision, she consulted with contemporary art and public art experts including Yvonne Force Villareal, President and Co-Founder of the Art Production Fund; Solita Mishaan, a Bal Harbour resident, collector and member of the International Council for TATE London; and celebrated artists Hernan Bas and Hank Willis Thomas.

"George's project feeds into the history of the space, bringing the context of the past into the present and also connects to current topics of nationality, immigration, contemporary aspiration and belonging, which is pertinent leading up to a national election," says curator Claire Breukel. "People in transit can see the 'Americana' sign and the 'Levittown House' and reference it to what it means to live in the United States."

Sánchez-Calderón is best known for his large-scale art projects that involve architecture and address our modern condition. He has a BFA in Painting from Florida International University and an MFA in Painting and Printmaking from The Rhode Island School of Design. His solo exhibitions include 2011 "Family of Man" at the Carlos & Rosa de la Cruz Collection in Miami, "In God We Trust" at Zieher Smith Gallery in New York as well as a number of ambitious public interventions in Miami and New York. His work is collected by the Museum of Contemporary Art in Miami, the Miami Art Museum, the Oscar B. Cintas Foundation and the Marty Margulies collection, among others.

This project will be supplemented with public programming including art chats, meet-and-greets, artist presentations, studio visits and more. "Unscripted," is an ongoing Bal Harbour creative program that will support public art projects with commissions throughout the year, aiming to provide meaningful opportunities to artists, celebrate creativity, and enhance the tourism experience.