



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Tuesday, February 11, 2020

**DESERT X ANNOUNCES**

**APPOINTMENT OF CESAR GARCIA-ALVAREZ AS CO-CURATOR**

**THIRD EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SITE-SPECIFIC ART EXHIBITION IN THE COACHELLA VALLEY TO OPEN FEBRUARY 6–APRIL 11, 2021**

**NEVILLE WAKEFIELD RETURNS AS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**



Desert X 2021 Co-curator César García-Alvarez. Photo by Ryan Orange, courtesy Desert X

Palm Springs, Calif., – Desert X Board of Directors announced today the appointment of César García-Alvarez as co-curator of Desert X in the Coachella Valley opening February 6–April 11, 2021. García-Alvarez joins returning Artistic Director Neville Wakefield for the third edition of the international art exhibition that will activate California's desert landscape through site-responsive installations by renowned international contemporary artists.

Born in Mexico and based in LA, García-Alvarez is the founder and current executive and artistic director of The Mistake Room (TMR), an international non-profit contemporary art space in LA. Prior to founding TMR García-Alvarez held the position of Associate Director and Senior Curator of LAXART (2007-2012). He was also one of the curators of *Made in L.A.* 2012, the first iteration of the Hammer Museum's LA Biennial, and from 2012-2013 served as the US Commissioner for the 13th International Cairo Biennial in Egypt.

"I applaud our Board's appointment of César as co-curator of Desert X 2021. He will be a great addition to the team and together with Neville they will create a fresh approach to the exhibition", commented Desert X Executive Director Jenny Gil. "On recent trips to the Coachella Valley, César has already met with a number of community leaders and has developed an original point of view on what the exhibition's curatorial remit could be, including an important extension of our public and educational programs."

"Desert X has been an honor to work on and an extraordinary journey into the unknown with some of the most significant artists working today. The overwhelming response to the exhibition's first two editions, and the lure of the desert and its endless possibilities continue to inspire me," said Desert X Artistic Director, Neville Wakefield. "I am excited to welcome César as co-curator, and confident that the curatorial acumen that he brings along with a deep involvement and understanding at both local and international levels will be instrumental in shaping and developing new voices and outlooks for 2021."

"I am thrilled to be joining Neville and the team at Desert X as co-curator of the 2021 edition. The Coachella Valley is a vibrant and complex locale of layered histories forged by a multitude of communities. I look forward to spending time in the region working closely with artists, local residents, and other stakeholders in order to put together an exhibition that considers the desert not just as an ecology but also as a home, a border, and an idea. My hope is that this iteration of Desert X can shed light on a set of lived experiences that are shared across geographies and cultures."

Desert X was founded in 2017 to connect desert communities and cultures through contemporary art. Under the leadership of Executive Director Jenny Gil, the Desert X team has been bolstered with the recent appointment of Director of Development Jeremy E. Steinke.

The exhibition, which is free and open to all, has garnered international critical and popular acclaim for site-specific artworks and installations by some of today's most recognized international contemporary artists. For its second edition in 2019, the exhibition attracted a diverse and multi-generational audience of local, national and international visitors who made site visits totaling more than 400,000. Desert X continues to engage millions across social and digital media channels and has received multiple awards for its extensive education and community programs and partnerships, which have enrolled hundreds of local and national volunteers, docents, educators, and students.

To get involved and support Desert X as a benefactor or sponsor, please contact Director of Development, Jeremy E. Steinke, [jeremy@desertx.org](mailto:jeremy@desertx.org)

### **About Desert X**

Desert X is produced by the Desert Biennial, a 501(c)3 charitable organization, conceived to produce recurring international contemporary art exhibitions that activate desert locations through site-specific installations by acclaimed international artists. Its guiding purposes and principles include presenting public exhibitions of art that respond meaningfully to the conditions of desert locations, the environment and the indigenous communities; promoting cultural exchange and education programs that foster dialogue and understanding among cultures and communities about shared artistic, historical, and societal issues; and providing an accessible platform for artists from around the world to address ecological, cultural, spiritual, and other existential themes. <https://www.desertx.org/>

### **About Neville Wakefield**

Neville Wakefield is a modern curator interested in exploring the ways in which art behaves outside of institutional contexts. This interest led him to co-found Elevation1049, a site-specific biennial in Gstaad, Switzerland, while his role as artistic director of Desert X has been instrumental in shaping the recurring exhibition that attracted over 400,000 visitors to the Coachella Valley region of Southern California. With Saudi curators Raneem Farsi and Aya Alireza he is co-curator of Desert X AIUla 2020, a site-specific exhibition of international artists, taking place in AIUla, northwest Saudi Arabia, home to the country's first UNESCO World Heritage Site, Hegra. As senior curatorial advisor for PS1 MoMA and curator of Frieze Projects, he gained a reputation for challenging the conditions that shape art in both commercial and non-commercial contexts. He has worked extensively with international institutions, including the Schaulager

Switzerland, where he curated the Matthew Barney retrospective Prayer Sheet with the Wound and the Nail.

### **About César García-Alvarez**

César García-Alvarez is the Founder and current Executive & Artistic Director of The Mistake Room (TMR)—LA's international non-profit contemporary art space. At TMR García-Alvarez has organized projects and exhibitions with Oscar Murillo, Korakrit Arunanondchai, Ed Clark, Vivian Suter, Diana Thater, Mandy el-Sayegh, Thomas Hirschhorn, Henry Taylor, Christopher Myers, Eduardo Sarabia, Tuan Andrew Nguyen, and Serge Attukwei Clottey amongst others. Most recently he organized *Where The Sea Remembers*, one of the first US exhibitions devoted solely to contemporary art from Vietnam. He is currently working on a group exhibition slated for Fall 2020 titled *Wetlines*, that will survey the state of Latinx art in the United States. Prior to founding TMR García-Alvarez was Associate Director and Senior Curator of LAXART (2007-2012). He was one of the curators of Made in L.A. 2012, the first iteration of the Hammer Museum's LA Biennial, and from 2012-2013 served as the US Commissioner for the 13th International Cairo Biennial in Egypt. García-Alvarez has organized a host of other notable exhibitions at institutions locally, nationally, and internationally including, amongst others the mid-career survey of Eduardo Sarabia at Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara, Mexico (2014); the US premier of Egyptian artist Wael Shawky's Cabaret Crusades, Hammer Museum (2013); the re-staging of Mark di Suvero's *Artist Tower of Protest*, Pacific Standard Time Performance and Public Art Festival, Los Angeles (2012); and the mid-career survey of Tijuana-based artist Marcos Ramirez ERRE, Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, Mexico City (with Kevin Power, 2011). García-Alvarez's recent books include monographs on artists Eduardo Sarabia and Brenna Youngblood. He is currently at work on an edited volume titled *The Anthology of Errors* which documents the history and work of TMR's first five years. He lives and works between Los Angeles, CA and Guadalajara, Mexico.

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