

PHOTO, MEDIA AND DIGITAL ART

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For Immediate Release (April 11, 2008)

ROSÂNGELA RENNÓ MEMORIALIZES THE DEATH OF THE TRADITIONAL PHOTO

(Toronto) – Inspired by the corporate decision to stop the manufacture of photographic paper, acclaimed Brazilian artist **Rosângela Rennó** mourns the death of traditional photography in her most recent project. **Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art** is proud to present *The Last Photograph*, curated by **Elizabeth Matheson**, in its North American premiere. An essay by **Cuauhtémoc Medina** in *Prefix Photo 17* accompanies the exhibition.

The Last Photograph consists of a series of photographs of Rio de Janeiro's iconic Christ the Redeemer statue on Corcovado hill alongside the cameras that were used to take them. Rennó's project brought together practitioners of diverse photographic orientations in order to comment on the mechanical processes involved in traditional photography, processes eliminated in the shift to digital photography.

Rennó's choice of photographic subject challenges the edict of the archdiocese of Rio, which claims copyright over the public statue. Giving to each photographer a camera from her collection, Rennó commissioned all forty-two photographers to shoot the statue and the surrounding neighbourhood. The results include black-and-white as well as colour images, and range from landscapes to portraits. Rennó then permanently fogged the lenses of the cameras and mounted each of them beside the photograph it had produced. These diptychs constitute an elegant lament for the extinct processes of traditional photography.

The uniqueness of each photographer's vision is thus evocatively linked to the materials used to realize it; in an age in which the term "photography" has come to mean the mere transmission of electronic data, each diptych memorializes a soon-to-be obsolete technology. It is fitting that the demise of photography should be so poignantly elegized in the country that gave birth to the term "photography."

In the words of curator Elizabeth Matheson, "*A Última Foto (The Last Photograph)* introduces an original and speculative approach to photography and presents Rosângela Rennó and her contemporaries as some of the most radical photographers working today."

An opening reception for *The Last Photograph* will be held on **Thursday, May 1, 2008 from 7 to 10 pm** at **Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art**, located at **401 Richmond Street West, Suite 124**. The reception will be preceded with an **artist/curator walk through at 6:30 PM**. The exhibition is part of **Contact 2008** and continues until June 7.

The reception for *The Last Photograph* coincides with the release of *Prefix Photo 17*, which addresses the artistic, philosophical and political implications of the decline of traditional photography and the rise of digital imaging. Cuauhtémoc Medina's elegiac essay, "**A Beautiful Death: On Rosângela Rennó's Última Foto**," is featured in this issue of *Prefix Photo*. Medina is Associate Curator of Latin American Art at the Tate Modern in London.

The work of Rosângela Rennó appeared courtesy of the artist, Galeria Vermelho (São Paulo) and the collections of Jones Bergamin, Estrellita Brodsky, Nilo Cecco, Luiz Augusto Teixeira de Freitas, Renata Fadel, Esther Faingold, Eliana Finkelstein and Cândido Pessoa, Paulo Herkenhoff Marcio Lobão, Jorge G. Mora, Andrea and José Olympio Pereira, Ricardo and Susana Steinbruch, and José Luiz and Ana Paula Vilela Viana. Prefix acknowledges the support of its Supporting Sponsors C.J. Graphics and Steam Whistle Brewing; its Official Catering Sponsor, à la Carte Kitchen; and its Official Hotel Sponsor, Sutton Place Hotel. Prefix also acknowledges the assistance of the Toronto Arts Council.

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About the Artist

Rosângela Rennó is a visual artist and has a Ph.D. in Arts from the School of Communications and Arts at the Universidade de São Paulo. She has participated in the 22nd and the 24th São Paulo Bienals, the 45th and 50th Venice Biennales, and the 2nd Berlin Biennial. She has had one-person shows at the Appel Foundation in Amsterdam, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, the Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil in Rio de Janeiro, the Casa de América in Madrid, the Passage du Désir at the *Festival d'Automne* in Paris, and the Museu de Arte Moderna Aloisio Magalhães in Recife. Her published books include *Apagamentos* and *O Arquivo Universal e outros arquivos*.

About the Curator

Elizabeth Matheson is an independent curator and writer of Canadian and international contemporary art and culture. Since 2000, she has been a lecturer at the University of Saskatchewan. She has organized many group exhibitions in galleries, art centres, historical buildings and outdoor spaces. Elizabeth's recent curatorial projects include *Back Talk: Protest and Humour* (2006), *Familiar but Foreign* (2007) and she is currently researching transnational migration including the publication of a recent essay on Betsabeé Romero (Mexico). Recently, she was the key organizer of Missing and Taken: A Symposium, an international event with Academy Award nominee Lourdes Portillo that initiated dialogue among diverse communities including artists, writers, filmmakers, activists and families to converse and exchange information about the systemic tragedy of missing women in Canada and Mexico. She lives and works in Saskatoon and Regina.

About Prefix

Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art is a public art gallery and arts publishing house in Toronto. A registered charitable organization, Prefix fosters the appreciation and understanding of contemporary photographic, media and digital art. Gallery hours are 12 to 5 pm, Wednesday through Saturday.

For further information, print-ready images, or to schedule an interview with the artist and/or curator, please contact:

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