

MEDIA CONTACTAbby Margulies | abbymargulies@gmail.comLindsay Wright | lindsaywright@cca.edu**CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts announces touring exhibition *Viaje a la luna (A trip to the moon)*****Exhibition explores lost film by Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca, bringing it to life through a dialogue between contemporary artists and historic artworks**

Images: (Left) Emilio Amero, Photogram (star pattern), ca. 1932. Vintage silver print on paper on mount, 9 3/4 x 7 3/4 in. Collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, museum purchase through the Luisita L. and Franz H. Denghausen Endowment. (Right) Alvaro Urbano, Granada Granada (installation view), Travesía Cuatro, Guadalajara, MX. Image courtesy of Álvaro Urbano and Travesía Cuatro. Photo: Agustín Arce.

San Francisco, CA (Monday, May 12)—CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts is pleased to announce *Viaje a la luna (A trip to the moon)*, an exhibition inspired by the only screenplay ever written by the renowned Spanish poet **Federico García Lorca**. Curated by Diego Villalobos (Wattis Institute) and Rodrigo Ortiz Monasterio (independent curator and CCA alumni, Mexico City), the exhibition will be on view from June 12 through October 11, 2025, before traveling to **Centro Federico García Lorca in Granada** beginning October 30.

Lorca was one of the most influential Spanish poets of the 20th century and a leading member of the artistic vanguard, pushing Surrealism to the foreground through avant-garde poetry, theater, and drawing. *Viaje a la luna* takes the form of an unfolding work of speculative fiction,

centered around this screenplay, which started filming in Mexico in 1932, but was halted when Lorca was killed in Spain by Franco's army. The film was later lost in a studio fire in Mexico City, and the only traces that remain are a handful of photographs taken on set. Bringing together historic and contemporary works and commissioned artworks by artists from around the world, the exhibition pieces together Lorca's personal history and film script, and addresses the central question: **What would the film have been like had it been fully realized?**

"The exhibition will take visitors on a mysterious journey, unearthing the lost film and establishing a dialogue between Lorca's personal history and the screenplay," said **curator Diego Villabos**. "It will elucidate how art, for Lorca, was a refuge and a place to forge an identity, a distressed search for love as a way to indirectly express his homosexuality and politics. At a time when politics are having a heightened impact on the arts, delving into an artist's coded exploration of identity in conversation with contemporary artists feels ever more relevant."

Federico García Lorca and a film lost to time

A son of a wealthy landowner, Lorca grew up in rural Andalusia, on the outskirts of Granada, a region with a rich history and presence of Gypsy, Roma, and Arabic communities. Working at a time when Fascism was on the rise, Lorca – who was both gay and a leftist – often used his work as an opportunity to tell stories that drew on vivid metaphors and imagery to express his identity and give voice to marginalized communities. In the late-1920s, Lorca moved to New York and became exposed to the Harlem Renaissance, where he met influential writers like Nella Larsen, Langston Hughes—who would eventually translate some of Lorca's works into English—and the Mexican painter and filmmaker Emilio Amero, who became a close friend and confidante.

In a single feverish night Lorca drafted his first and only screenplay, and convinced Amero to turn the work into a film. By 1932, Amero began filming Lorca's script – a surrealist vision divided into 72 loosely connected short scenes that were mystical, romantic, and violent. But the film, which evoked themes of both societal repression and persecution, told through a series of characters who don't feel comfortable in their own skin, never came to fruition as Lorca was murdered by Franco's Nationalist army in 1936 and production halted. The film reel was eventually lost in a fire in Mexico City and faded into obscurity, another unfinished project, and an enigma in history. Today, the only remnants of the screenplay are the script itself and a handful of photographs taken during production.

***Viaje a la Luna* comes to Life through the eyes of contemporary artists**

Viaje a la Luna seeks to bring the film to life through works by Lorca, Amero, and a number of contemporary artists, reconstructing elements of the forgotten story, and reflecting on the thematic throughlines of the screenplay that continue to resonate today, including personal expression during a time of repression, the impact of technology, and art as a refuge in the face of oppression. **The artists included in the exhibition are: Emilio Amero, Diane Arbus, Lola**

Álvarez Bravo, Manuel Álvarez Bravo, Nina Canell, Marc Camille Chaimowicz, Ajit Chauhan, Tania Pérez Córdova, Federico García Lorca, Rosalind Nashashibi, Francesco Pedraglio, Álvaro Urbano, and Danh Vo.

Among the works on view will be a series of haunting drawings by Lorca, created while he was in New York; digitally scanned negatives by Lola Álvarez Bravo taken on the set of *Viaje a la Luna*; photograms by Amaro done in New York around the same time period as Lorca wrote the script; and other works by these artists that stitch together narratives of Mexican life at the time Lorca was working, situating the work historically and bringing to life elements of the film lost to time.

Alongside these historical works, Lorca's identity and personal history come to light through creative reflections by an international roster of contemporary artists. Álvaro Urbano will present a sculptural work commissioned for the exhibition that recreates a silhouette of Lorca's balcony in Granada and meditates on his execution. Also on view will be a text work by Danh Võ made for a festival in Seville based on a line of Lorca's poetry, which commemorates both Lorca's execution and the death of a bullfighter; a meditative film work by Rosalind Nashashibi that takes as its departure point thematic throughlines of Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Shobies' Story*, which has echoes of Lorca's film, including her own exploration of non-nuclear family structures and communal forms of living; and a sculptural work by Nina Canell that poetically considers the impact of technology on our everyday lives — a question relevant to Lorca, working as Fascism rose to the fore and technology became a tool for warfare.

Through these works, the exhibition explores the negotiation between the past and present—between an unfinished artwork and the political climate that saw its making and incompleteness, and through the parallels in Lorca's world and our own: Lorca's caught between the Spanish Civil War, the Great Depression, the rise of Fascism in the West, and the proliferation of Internationalist movements across the globe; and ours, marked by extreme political polarization, censorship, and rampant social inequalities. The exhibition operates within the context of a world in transition, where the featured artists present artworks that are poetic and idiosyncratic, and reflect a volatile political landscape. In a way, *Viaje a la Luna* and its incompleteness—a permanently unresolved project—reflects the ongoing political struggle between right and left-wing ideologies and the cultural conditions that propel them.

The exhibition opening reception on Thursday, June 12, from 6 to 8 pm, will include a reading by Tania Pérez Córdova and a performance by Francesco Pedraglio. A curatorial talk will take place on Friday, June 13, at 11 am. Spanish language tours will be offered throughout the exhibition run as well.

About CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts

Founded in 1907, California College of the Arts (CCA) educates students to shape culture and society through art, architecture, design, and writing in the vibrant San Francisco Bay Area.

CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, founded in 1998 as part of the college, is a nonprofit exhibition venue and research institute focused on contemporary art and ideas. The Wattis commissions and showcases new work by emerging and established artists from around the world. Additionally, an entire year is dedicated to explore the work of a single artist or idea, informing public programs and publications.

The new Wattis galleries and gardens space are part of CCA's expanded campus designed by world-renowned architecture firm Studio Gang and completed this fall 2024. The newly expanded campus adds 82,300 square feet of space to teach, make, and present art in a continuous indoor-outdoor environment.

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts presents

Viaje a la Luna

June 12 – October 11, 2025

Location: 145 Hooper Street, San Francisco

Gallery hours: Wednesday–Saturday, noon–6 pm; closed Sunday to Tuesday

Admission: Free and open to the public

Information: wattis.org or 415-355-9670

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