

The Department of Art and the Latin American, Caribbean, and Latina/o Studies Program Present:

Ruben Yepes Munoz

Affecting the Conflict: Art, Film, and War in Colombia



Wednesday, March 29, 1:00-2:00 PM, Peabody Auditorium

For nearly 60 years, Colombia was in the grip of a harrowing internal armed conflict. By the time the peace treaty between FARC—the largest of the country’s guerrilla groups—and the government was signed in 2016, nearly 17% of the population had been a direct victim of the war (according to UNICEF). While the conflict ravaged the countryside, it was, for the most part, experienced as a distant event in the main cities, where citizens mostly new about it through the media.

Visual artists have referred to the conflict since its beginning in the late 1950s. However, how they approach it has changed throughout the years. While in the early stages of the conflict, the explicit representation and denunciation of violence and human suffering was the norm, later, artists resorted to less explicit aesthetic strategies. In this lecture, I will address this shift toward an implicit mediation of the conflict and what that means in the context of the main cities, where most of the art in question has been produced and exhibited. A key focus will be on its capacity to affect Colombian urbanites, thereby bridging the distance between them and the predominantly rural conflict.

Ruben Yepes Munoz is an Assistant Professor of Art History at Georgia College. He received his PhD from the University of Rochester in 2017. His dissertation, which addresses the mediation of the Colombian armed conflict in visual art and film, was published in 2018. Current research focuses on the art produced in Latin America in response to the Covid-19 crisis and the genealogy of Latin American Visual Studies.

Ruben is the author of three books: *Afectando el conflicto: Mediaciones de la guerra colombiana en el arte y el cine contemporáneo* (2018), *María José Arjona: Lo que puede un cuerpo* (2015) and *La política del arte: Cuatro casos de arte contemporáneo en Colombia* (2012). He is also the author of a number of peer-reviewed articles and book chapters published in Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Mexico, and the United States.

Ruben has received several important fellowships, grants and awards, including the National Prize for Scholarly Essay in Art History (2017, Colombia), a Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship (2016), a Grant for Research on Colombian Art from the Colombian Ministry of Culture (2015) and a Fulbright Scholarship (2012).