



Vega Retrospective Brings A Vibrant Slate of Programming

March 23, 2017

by Dylan Hoffmann

“Empire: An Arturo Vega Retrospective” is making its way to New York City after it debuted at [Bob Rauschenberg Gallery](#) in Fort Myers, FL. On display at [Howl! Happening Gallery](#) in the East Village, the retrospective of Arturo Vega’s artwork, the famed punk artist icon responsible for the [Ramones’](#) logo, will showcase his photos, collages, and paintings. Vega was unable to present his artwork during his life due to his active role as the Ramones’ art and stage illumination director for the band’s entire history. The show in NYC is a streamlined version of the larger exhibition and presents additional works from Amsterdam that have never been publicly seen in New York City, according to the gallery.

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“Silver Dollar collage” by Arturo Vega. Courtesy of Howl! Arts.

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Vega’s work bears a distinct influence from the Pop Art that emerged out of the late 60s and the street art that bloomed in popularity in the punk scene in the late 70s. Though taking into consideration Vega’s status as an immigrant from Mexico City, his artwork can be seen as a heightening of the banal supermarket ads, American currency, and the city slang he was exposed to upon his arrival to New York. In essence, an outsider’s perspective on a new world and a new culture.

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“Life Isn’t Tragic” by Arturo Vega. Courtesy of Howl! Arts.

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Supplementing the traveling exhibition, The Howl! Team will be presenting a variety of lectures and panel discussions from critics, curators, and lifelong friends of the artist, demonstrating how Vega’s upbringing in a culturally and politically turbulent Mexico City shaped the conceptual framework presented in his pieces.



“Empire” by Arturo Vega. Courtesy of Howl! Arts.

“Empire” will hold its opening reception on Thursday, March 23, kicking off a stream of events beginning with a presentation on Vega’s art and his life with the Ramones on Friday, March 24 at 7 p.m. by two of his closest friends, arts writer and curator Sandra Schulman and Ramones tour manager Monte A. Melnick. Schulman wrote about her time spent with Vega during his Ramones year in connection with a presentation of his art in “Hey! Ho! Let’s Go: Ramones and the Birth of Punk” at the [Queens Museum](#) for Hamptons Art Hub. Click [here](#) to read the story.



Empire by Arturo Vega. Courtesy of Howl! Arts.

“Empire: An Arturo Vega Retrospective” is will run until Thursday, April 20 with a closing party and a screening of Amon Focus’ “Arturo Vega, The Last Interview, 2013,” an interview that was filmed one month before Vega’s passing and features his reminiscence on his life, his youth, his influences, and his immigration to New York City.

BASIC FACTS: “Empire: An Arturo Vega Retrospective” will be presented at Howl! Happening Gallery, 6 East 1st Street, NYC 10003. www.howlarts.org. For a detailed list of events, click [here](#).

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