

MSU BROAD

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 18, 2019



MSU Broad Presents Traveling Exhibition, *Never Spoken Again: Rogue Stories of Science and Collections*

East Lansing, MI – On a desk in the private study of the Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin, an old taxidermy-mounted parrot guards a small library and a vast yet obsolete ornithology collection. An excited young scientist reads aloud a script concerning the origins of the desiccated animal for the purpose of entertaining a group of visitors: it may have been the last “speaker” of a dead Indigenous language from colonial Venezuela, or a German prince’s precious gift to the naturalist Alexander von Humboldt. It is not clear which of these versions, if any, might be true.

The Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University (MSU Broad) is pleased to present *Never Spoken Again: Rogue Stories of Science and Collections*, on view from Jan. 25–Aug. 23, 2020, with an opening reception on Friday, Jan. 24 at 6pm. Curated by David Ayala-Alfonso, this traveling exhibition reflects on the birth of modern collections, the institutions that sustain them, and their contingent origin stories. Revealing a universe of erasures, violence, and chance occurrences, the exhibition considers how such collections produce knowledge and perpetuate historical narratives. To do so, it brings together an international roster of artists whose works critically examine material culture, iconography, and political ecologies.

The MSU Broad presentation responds to the specific context of the university as a top-tier research institution, a site for public education, and a store of artistic, cultural, and historical knowledge. The traveling exhibition thus includes works from different Michigan State University

collections. Campus collections are key access points for many students within their focus disciplines, and *Never Spoken Again* prompts a reexamination of these holdings and their educational potential.

The artists in the exhibition make use of the languages of museum display and ethnography to uncover stories of colonial exploitation, myths, fake currencies, war games, and the slow violence of systematic racism—all historical underpinnings of modern collections. They examine not only collected objects and the systems of distribution that facilitate their circulation, but also the subjects of study they trade in. Their work thus encourages us to consider our own agency in documenting and reimagining our histories and futures, alike.

Exhibition tour has been organized by **Independent Curators International (ICI)**.

Artists: Morehshin Allahyari, Maria Thereza Alves, François Bucher, Giuseppe Campuzano, Alia Farid, Sofia de Grenade, Laura Huertas Millán, Duane Linklater, Ulrik López, Erkan Öznur, David Peña Lopera, Michael Rakowitz, Beatriz Santiago Muñoz, Reyes Santiago Rojas, Daniel R. Small, and Felipe Steinberg.

Never Spoken Again: Rogue Stories of Science and Collections is a traveling exhibition curated by David Ayala-Alfonso and produced by Independent Curators International (ICI). It is the result of a new series of programs, pioneered with the support of the Hartfield Foundation, aimed at providing opportunities to alumni of ICI's Curatorial Intensive as they move through the stages of their career, and reflecting ICI's commitment to fostering and championing new curatorial voices who will shape the future of the field. *Never Spoken Again* is made possible with the generous support of ICI's Board of Trustees and International Forum. Support for this project at the MSU Broad comes from the Eli and Edythe Broad endowed exhibitions fund.

ICI



HARTFIELD
FOUNDATION

About the Curator

David Ayala-Alfonso is a Colombian Curator, Artist, and Researcher working between Bogotá and London. He is part of the editorial teams of *Journal of Visual Culture*, *Cultural Anthropology* and *emergencia*. Ayala-Alfonso has been Curator in Residence and Academic Coordinator at FLORA ars+natura in Bogotá, and lectured in different art schools in the US and Colombia. He has published books and articles on interface theory, Latin American art history, artist-run spaces, performance studies, visual studies, urban sociology, anthropology of education and artistic interventions in the public realm. He is also an occasional collaborator for different academic publications as a writer and a translator. Recent work as a curator and as part of the art collective Grupo 0,29 has been featured at Museos de Arte at Banco de la República in Bogotá, South London Gallery, the David Rockefeller Center at Harvard University, the BMW Guggenheim Lab, Concordia University in Montreal, Columbia College in Chicago, and Centro Cultural La Moneda in Santiago. He has been awarded

the Fulbright Grant, the AICAD post-graduate Teaching Fellowship, the ICI-Dedalus Award for Curatorial Research and the Early-concept Grant for Exploratory Research at SAIC. Ayala-Alfonso holds a MA in Visual and Critical Studies from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a Specialization in Art Education from the National University of Colombia, and is preparing publications on critical heritage, and art in the public realm to be released in 2019.

About ICI

Independent Curators International (ICI) produces exhibitions, events, publications, research and training opportunities for curators and diverse audiences around the world. Established in 1975 and headquartered in New York, ICI is a hub that connects emerging and established curators, artists, and art spaces, forging international networks and generating new forms of collaborations. ICI provides access to the people and practices that are key to current developments in the field, inspiring fresh ways of seeing and contextualizing contemporary art.

The Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University (MSU Broad) is a dynamic contemporary art museum that serves as both a teaching institution and a cultural hub for East Lansing and the region. Opened on November 10, 2012, the museum was designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Zaha Hadid and named in honor of Eli and Edythe Broad, longtime supporters of the university who provided the lead gift of \$28 million. In 2017, the MSU Broad was awarded \$1 million from MSU Federal Credit Union in support of the Art Lab, an expansion across Grand River Avenue that provides increased access to and research of the permanent collection.

Michigan State University has been working to advance the common good in uncommon ways for more than 150 years. One of the top research universities in the world, MSU focuses its vast resources on creating solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges, while providing life-changing opportunities to a diverse and inclusive academic community through more than 200 programs of study in 17 degree-granting colleges.

Image: Laura Huertas Millán, *Journey to a Land Otherwise Known*, (still), Film. © Le Fresnoy – Laura Huertas Millán.

###

Media Contact:
Morgan Butts
Director of Communications
(517) 884-3909
buttsmor@msu.edu
broadmuseum.msu.edu