



**The Davidoff Art Initiative announces
four artists, a curator, and an art critic
for the 2017 Davidoff International Art Residency**

**In collaboration with
The Altos de Chavón School of Design
in the Dominican Republic**

January 23 – April 3, 2017

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Studios for the Davidoff International Art Residency at Altos de Chavón
School of Design, La Romana, Dominican Republic. © 2016 Alfredo Esteban

Basel, Switzerland, September 27, 2016 — The Davidoff Art Initiative, in collaboration with The Altos de Chavón School of Design, is pleased to announce a significant expansion of the Davidoff International Art Residency now in its third consecutive year.

In the 2017 edition, **four international artists and one curator will be joined by an art critic**, emphasizing the Residency's enduring commitment to supporting talent across all creative mediums, as well as to a strong cultural exchange that transcends borders. The **Davidoff International Art Residency** will take place at Altos de Chavón in La Romana, Dominican Republic, from **January 23 to April 3, 2017**.

The participating artists in 2017 are: **Babak Golkar** (b. 1977, United States/Vancouver); **Nastasia Meyrat** (b. 1991, Switzerland/Lausanne); **Claire Trotignon** (b. 1983, France/Paris); and **Yan Xing** (b. 1986, China/Beijing and Los Angeles). The artists will be joined by art writer **Cristina Sanchez-Kozyreva** (b. 1976, Dominican Republic/Hong Kong) and curator **Maria Inés Rodríguez** (b. 1968, Colombia/Bordeaux).

Each participant will draw from their unique strengths, artistic concerns, and creative backgrounds to actively engage with the social and cultural fabric of the Dominican Republic through their respective practices. In addition to pursuing their own work, the participants will have many opportunities to connect with the Dominican cultural community and the other residents of Altos de Chavón.

An artist working across a variety of visual media, **Babak Golkar** plans to engage local creatives with the institution's students in discussions on alternative economic models, with the goal of initiating a collaborative narrative toward community contribution alongside a representative manufactured object. **Nastasia Meyrat** will expand upon a relational artwork she began in Haiti that utilizes open space to explore notions of Utopia. Continuing her investigation into the mutability of space and time via collage techniques, **Claire Trotignon**, while involving local craftspeople in printing the result, will create a scale replica of the village of Altos de Chavón, which was built in 1976, recreating a Mediterranean style of European village of the 16th century. In another site-specific work for the school, **Yan Xing** plans to develop a locally grounded project that explores “island myths” and storytelling around an intersubjective and border-bridging visualized literary discourse. Curator **Maria Inés Rodríguez** will immerse herself within and showcase local creative ventures via a cross-Caribbean online platform, while **Cristina Sanchez-Kozyreva**, the residency’s inaugural writer, seeks to facilitate a hybrid platform for local artists to engage with textual media and interpret concepts around a common geography.

“In just three short years, the Davidoff International Art Residency has brought artists and curators from all over the world to the Dominican Republic, fostering a rich exchange of culture and practice,” commented **Hans-Kristian Hoejsgaard, CEO Oettinger Davidoff AG**. “This year, we redouble our commitment by welcoming our first writer. We are proud to support the newly expanded possibilities for collaboration and inspiration between our residents, the staff and students at Altos de Chavón, and the broader cultural community of the Dominican Republic.”

The nominators for the 2017 Davidoff International Art Residency Program were: **Simon Castets**, director of the Swiss Institute, New York; **Aaron Cézár**, founding director of Delfina Foundation, London; **Amanda Coulson**, co-founder/artistic director of the VOLTA art fairs in New York/Basel and director of the National Gallery of the Bahamas, Nassau; **Mareike Dittmer**, associate publisher of Frieze Magazine; **Pablo Helguera**, director of adult and academic programs in the Department of Education at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; **Irene Hofmann**, the Director and Chief Curator of SITE Santa Fe; and **Philip Tinari**, director of the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing.

About the 2017 Residents

Babak Golkar's (b. 1977, Berkeley, United States) visual practice is derived primarily from a conceptual engagement with a variety of subjects — economic models, historical shortcomings, cultural misreadings — that point to the human condition. Following a childhood in Tehran, Golkar moved to Vancouver, obtaining a BFA in Visual Arts from Emily Carr Institute in 2003, with a focus in ceramics, and an MFA from the University of British Columbia in 2006. He has exhibited in Canada, the Middle East, and worldwide, including recent solo exhibitions: *The Return Project*, Third Line Gallery (Dubai) and *Of Labour, Of Dirt, Sazmanab* (Tehran) in 2014; and *The Exchange Project (La Collection Imaginaire)*, INCA/Institute for New Connotative Action (Seattle) in 2016; and group exhibitions *Common Grounds*, Museum Villa Stuck (Munich, curated by Verena Hein) in 2015; and *Mass Individualism*, Ab/Anbar (Tehran, curated by Azadeh Zaferani) in 2016.

Nastasia Meyrat (b. 1991, Lausanne, Switzerland) manifests an interdisciplinary approach to engage dialogue around cultural interconnectivity, social identity, and utopian possibilities. She received a BFA with honours

from HEAD Geneva University of Art and Design, in 2013 and a Masters in 2015. Meyrat was a resident at the 4th Ghetto Biennale in Port-au-Prince (Haiti), where she developed a cultural exchange project alongside her anthropologist sister. She was selected for the New HEADS – BNP Paribas Foundation Art Awards prize in 2015, concurrent with the group exhibition *GET OUT*, curated by Latifa Echakhch. Recent exhibitions include *Contributing to the shrinking in the dwelling*, Zabriskie Point, Geneva in 2015; and *Always Let Your Conscience Be Your Guide*, Urgent Paradise (Lausanne) in 2016.

Claire Trotignon (b. 1983, Paris, France) questions classical tropes and notions of reality by deconstructing architectonic space. She received a degree in visual arts with special mention from l'École supérieure des beaux-arts de Tours (Tours, FR) in 2006 and a postgraduate diploma with special mention in 2008. Trotignon has exhibited extensively throughout France, including recently: *Kit Peak et Eteignez s'il vous plaît*, two installations at Centre Pompidou Metz in 2013; *City or not city*, Bordeaux (curated by Pascal Bouchaille), and *Polarités*, CAC le Shed (Rouen, with Dominique Blais) in 2016.

Yan Xing (b. 1986, Chongqing, China) engages with geography and exoticism across various mediums in his research-driven approach to postmodernism and post-colonialism. He graduated from Sichuan Fine Arts Institute (Chongqing) in 2009 with a BFA and a focus on oil painting, and he lives and works between Beijing and Los Angeles. Yan Xing was a finalist in the Future Generations Art Prize, Pinchuk Art Centre (Kiev) in 2012 and was awarded the Best Young Artist Award, Chinese Contemporary Art Award (Beijing) that same year. He has exhibited throughout China, Europe, and the United States, including the Moscow International Biennale for Young Art (2012), the Shenzhen Sculpture Biennale (2012), and the Future Generation Art Prize at the 55th Venice Biennale (2013). Recent solo exhibitions and performances include *Performance of a Massacre*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; *Nuit et brouillard*, Galerie Urs Meile, Lucerne; and a survey *Yan Xing* at Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, Michigan State University (East Lansing), all in 2016.

Maria Inés Rodríguez (b. 1968, Colombia) is a curator based in Bordeaux, France. She has been the Director of the CAPC – Museum of Contemporary Art in Bordeaux since February 2014. Preceding her appointment, she led the artistic program of the Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo (MUAC) in Mexico City, and she was the Chief Curator at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León (MUSAC), a leading collecting institution in Spain. Rodríguez studied Fine Arts at the *Universidad de Los Andes* (Bogotá) and received a postgraduate degree at the École Supérieure d'Art Visuel in Geneva. Parallel to her curatorial work, Rodríguez has organized public lectures and exhibitions around topics of printed matter and architecture, and she formed Tropical Papers editions, dedicated to contemporary cultural creation in the Caribbean since its founding in 2005.

Cristina Sanchez-Kozyreva (b. 1976, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic) is an art critic, journalist, and entrepreneur based in Hong Kong. She co-founded *Pipeline* in Hong Kong in 2011 and is the contemporary art magazine's editor-in-chief. Sanchez-Kozyreva received her Master's in International Relations and Affairs from Université Paris Descartes. As a curator, she created the participatory public art installation *Sense Your Way* in Beijing's Chaoyang district, while working in several Hong Kong galleries. She contributes regularly to various arts publications in Asia, Europe, and the United States, including *Frieze*, *Hyperallergic*, and *Artforum*.

About The Altos de Chavón School of Design, Casa de Campo, La Romana, Dominican Republic

The Altos de Chavón School of Design is an educational institution with global impact, and a pioneer in the teaching of art and design in the Dominican Republic. Founded in 1983 to meet the growing commercial and industrial demands of the Dominican Republic, and affiliated with Parsons School of Design, a Division of New York City's venerable and internationally renowned New School University since its foundation, the school offers long- and short-format university-level programs in communication design, fashion design, fine arts, illustration, digital design, interior design, photography, film production, and architecture. For more information, please visit altosdechavon.edu.do.

About the Davidoff Art Initiative

The Davidoff Art Initiative supports contemporary art and artists in the Caribbean, strengthens art organizations, and fosters cultural engagement between the Caribbean and the rest of the world. It brings opportunity and visibility to the art and culture of the wider Caribbean region, including the Dominican Republic, where much of Davidoff's production and many of the employees are based, and extending the company's long-standing commitment to artistry, craftsmanship, community and quality. The Davidoff Art Initiative's four global program areas are: Art Residency, Art Dialogues, Art Grants, and Art Editions. For more information, please visit davidoffartinitiative.com.

About Oettinger Davidoff AG

Oettinger Davidoff AG with sales of over CHF 600 million and 3,500 employees around the world, traces its roots back to 1875 and remains family owned to this day, with two distinctly different businesses: one that is focused on FMCG distribution in the Swiss market and one dedicated to the core business of producing, marketing and retailing premium branded cigars, tobacco products and accessories. The premium branded cigar business includes Davidoff, AVO, Camacho, Cusano, Griffin's, Private Stock, Zino and Zino Platinum. Oettinger Davidoff AG is anchored in a strong "crop-to-shop" philosophy, having pursued a vertical integration from the tobacco fields in the Dominican Republic, Honduras and Nicaragua to the worldwide network of over 70 Davidoff Flagship Stores. For more information, please visit oettingerdavidoff.com.

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