


## THOMAS DANE GALLERY

Courtney Kasianowicz, 'Global Impact', *Boston*, 20 March, 2014  
[http://www.boston.com/lifestyle/house/blog/dne/2014/03/global\\_impact.html](http://www.boston.com/lifestyle/house/blog/dne/2014/03/global_impact.html)



The screenshot shows a web page from Boston.com. At the top, there is a search bar and a navigation menu with categories like HOME, TODAY'S GLOBE, NEWS, YOUR TOWN, BUSINESS, SPORTS, LIFESTYLE, A&E, and THIN. Below the navigation is a large banner for 'DESIGN NEW ENGLAND' with a blue house icon. The article title is 'Global Impact' with a sub-headline 'March 20, 2014 02:15 PM'. There are social media sharing buttons for Tweet (0) and E-mail. The main image is a photograph of a sculpture titled 'O Tempo Oco (The Empty Time)' by Ernesto Neto, which consists of a large, light-colored, draped fabric structure hanging from the ceiling with several vertical rods and small spheres hanging from it. Below the image is a caption: 'O Tempo Oco (The Empty Time), 2004, by Ernesto Neto of Brazil is a sculpture that hangs from the ceiling, utilizing polypropylene balls, sand, and tulle. Courtesy of Galeria Fortes Vilaça/SP and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York.' The author is listed as 'By Courtney Kasianowicz'.

The Museum of Fine Arts in Boston is mounting its first exhibition dedicated to contemporary Latin American Art. *Permission To Be Global/Prácticas Globales*, which opened this week in the Henry and Lois Foster Gallery in the Linde Family Wing for Contemporary Art, draws on the collection of Ella Fontanals-Cisneros, founder of Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, a non-

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profit organization in Miami that supports contemporary artists. It debuts more than 60 pieces by 46 artists, including emerging talent from some of the world's most oppressive countries, including Columbia, Cuba, and Peru.

The art is complex, layered with meaning, and, according to Jen Mergel, the MFA's Beal Family Senior Curator of Contemporary Art, who worked on the show with assistant curator Liz Munsell, it explores what it means to be "global." Says Mergel, "It is an ideal. It is not a reality in our globalized world."



*Durante o Cominho Vertical (During the Vertical Walk)*, 2005, by José Damasceno of Brazil, extends phonebook cutouts floor to ceiling. Courtesy of the artist and the Ella Fontanals-Cisneros Collection.

11 DUKE STREET, ST JAMES'S, LONDON SW1Y 6BN

TEL +44 (0)20 7925 2505 FAX +44 (0)20 7925 2506 [info@thomasdane.com](mailto:info@thomasdane.com)

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The exhibit is segmented into four categories with precisely descriptive names — Occupied Geometries, Borders Redefined, Power Parodied, and Absence Accumulated.

In Occupied Geometries, Ernesto Neto's installation of *O Tempo Oco (The Empty Time)* dangles from the ceiling. This arrangement of sand and polypropylene balls inside tulle is meant to evoke the weight and presence of the human body. In the Absence Accumulated section, another compelling installation involves footprint-shaped cutouts from phone books stacked vertically from floor to ceiling. The piece by José Damasceno juxtaposes the readily accessible basic information about people (names, addresses, phone numbers) against inaccuracy and the unknowable (who has moved or died?).

Then, there's the tiny, but no less provocative work of Cuba's Wilfredo Prieto: a simple dried pea on which he inked tiny red continents. Set on a large white wall in Power Parodied, it sends a message about the larger world from a Cuban perspective. Nearby, a diorama-like sculpture of mixed media by Argentina's Sergio Vega sums up its message in the title, *A Structural Study of Poverty*. In it, a large oppressive potato, onion, and garlic each sit atop a crumbling shanty as broadcasters peek inside.

Parody is often a successful route for artists to take because, as Mergel explains, it "undercuts power" while still getting the point across. In *Productivismo (Productivism)*, an oil painting by Cuba's Rene Francisco Rodríguez and Eduardo Ponjuán González, a figure of a man is reminiscent of Russian political images of stoking the coals to fuel the economy. But instead of a shovel, he wields a paintbrush, which extends off the canvas. The artists, Mergel says, "were addressing the question of 'how can a visual artist be a productive member of society.'"

With globalization and all its meanings considered, Borders Redefined is the more intimate and graceful portion of the show. It illustrates how Latin American artists view frames, surfaces, and borders in both their artwork and creative lives. Two mirrors by Valeska Soares are in a corner with a passage from Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* etched backwards in one mirror, so a viewer must look at the reflection to read it. Waltercio Caldas's *Prisma*, made of polished metal alloy, is geometric and elegant, with a quote from the artist: "I think negative space is the biggest space. What we don't see is a great material."

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*Permission to be Global* also marks the MFA's foray into performance art. Cuba's Lazaro Saavedra plans to perform in a coffin (yes, a funny way to give birth to the department) April 30. At the end of June, Guatemalan artist Regina Jose Galindo is collaborating with the museum on a performance to place in a public space in Boston. Stay tuned for the details.