

## Carlos Motta

### *Deviations*

April 21 – May 21, 2016

Opening Reception: Thursday, April 21, 6-8 pm

Catalog Available with Essay by David Getsy, Goldabelle McComb Finn Distinguished Professor of Art History at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago



**P•P•O•W** is pleased to announce *Deviations* a solo exhibition by Carlos Motta, the artist's first exhibition with the gallery. An internationally renowned artist whose work has been on view at notable museums and biennials around the world, this exhibition marks his first major gallery exhibition in New York. Motta is a multi-disciplinary artist who creates installations, films, photographs and sculptures that take as their subject political and historical events, which Motta explores from unexpected angles, proposing new readings and counter-narratives. Interested in gender, sexuality, and the way minority communities are represented, Motta has developed a practice that mines the past to offer a critical re-reading of the present. The exhibition at **P•P•O•W** will feature three works that span the arc of Motta's career from 1998-2015.

Among the works on view will be Motta's 2015 film *Deseos / رغبه بت (Desires)*, which features a trans-historical correspondence between two women – Martina, who lived in Colombia during the late colonial period of the early 19th century and was tried for being a 'hermaphrodite,' and Nour, a woman from Beirut during the late Ottoman Empire who marries her female lover's brother in an attempt to save her love. The film poetically exposes the ways in which the categories of gender and sexuality were dutifully constructed by scientific, legal, and religious discourses. *Deseos / رغبه بت* was co-written by Motta and Lebanese anthropologist Maya Mikdashi and commissioned and produced by Council (France) and co-produced by Hordaland Kunstsenter (Norway), Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (Argentina), Röda Sten Konsthall (Sweden), Galeria Filomena Soares (Portugal), Mor.Charpentier Galerie (France) and with further support from Ashkal Alwan (Lebanon), DICRÉAM (France) and the Göteborg International Biennial for Contemporary Art (Sweden).

The exhibition will also present the 2014 installation of sculptures *Towards a Homoerotic Historiography*, an astonishing representative of Motta's research on pre-Hispanic and colonial sexualities. The installation features 20 miniature gold-washed silver figures, all copies of sculptures created by indigenous groups in the Americas before the conquest. Displayed in museum-like vitrines, the pieces depict acts of homoerotic sex. The installation reflects on the ongoing censorship these objects have been subjected to by the social sciences and encourages a removal of the Christian values that have been imposed on them in order to reconsider of the role the body, desire, and pleasure may have played in ancient cultures.

Also on view will be a 1998 untitled series of photographic self-portraits, which feature Motta performing fictive characters for the camera in eerie, constructed landscapes. The images depict scenes where his body, sex, and gender are malleable props, transformed beyond recognition. In these early photographs – which have never been shown in a formal exhibition – Motta experiments with the representation of sexual alterity, the elasticity of identity, and the politics of difference, unknowingly anticipating the themes that he engages in his current practice.

In the words of David Getsy, who has contributed an essay to the exhibition's catalog, Motta's work "...is lyrical and ambitious, and he conjures historical characters that are complex in their agency and in their resistance to the systems of political and cultural power that sought to locate and control them. Motta creates moments of what one could call visionary identification."

**Carlos Motta** was born in Bogotá, Colombia in 1978 and currently lives and works in New York. His work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the New Museum, New York; MOMA/PS1, New York; Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; Tate Modern, London; Röda Sten Konsthall, Gothenburg; PinchukArtCentre, Kiev; and Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, México City. He has also been included in group exhibitions at: Guggenheim Museum, New York; SF MoMA, San Francisco; Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona; Witte de With, Rotterdam; Jeu de Paume, Paris; and Castello di Rivoli, Turin. Motta was also included in the X Lyon Biennale; X Gwangju Biennale; Gothenburg International Biennale of Contemporary Art; International Film Festival Rotterdam; and Toronto International Film Festival. Motta has several upcoming solo exhibitions including Mercer Union, Toronto (April 2016); Pérez Art Museum, Miami (July 2016); Hordaland Kunstsenter, Bergen (August 2016); and MALBA-Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (October 2016). Motta won the Main Prize – for the Pinchuk Foundation Future Generation Art Prize (2014), was named a Guggenheim Foundation Fellow (2008), and has received grants from Creative Capital (2012), Art Matters (2008) and Cisneros Fontanals Foundation (CIFO) (2006).