

**Indianapolis Museum of Art Announces Partnership with USA Gymnastics and USA Track & Field for 54th La Biennale di Venezia in 2011**

***Gymnasts and runners to perform as part of three newly commissioned works for the U.S. Pavilion exhibition "Gloria"***

***Olympic Gold medalist Dan O'Brien and Silver medalist Chellsie Memmel to perform during Biennale Vernissage***

**INDIANAPOLIS, IN**, March 3, 2011 – The Indianapolis Museum of Art and Allora & Calzadilla have announced that they will be partnering with national athletic organizations USA Gymnastics and USA Track & Field on three newly commissioned sculptures for the U.S. Pavilion exhibition *Gloria* at the 54th La Biennale di Venezia. The pieces—"Body in Flight (Delta)," "Body in Flight (American)," and "Track and Field"—will incorporate performances by professional gymnasts and runners. Olympic gold medalist Dan O'Brien (Decathlon, 1996), Olympic silver medalist Chellsie Memmel (Women's Gymnastics Team, 2008), and U.S. All-Around champion David Durante (Men's Gymnastics, 2007) will perform at the pavilion during the vernissage (June 1-3, 2011). The installations will mark the first time that athletes have performed as part of the U.S. Pavilion.

*Gloria* will feature six new commissions by Allora & Calzadilla conceived partly in response to the pavilion site. Combining performance, sculpture, video, and sound elements, the works will draw on competitive enterprises such as the Olympic Games, international commerce, the military industrial complex, and even the Biennale itself, to explore the concepts of competition and nationalism. The works playfully combine installation and performance art to create artistic experiments that explore the nature of physical, visual, and audible sensory experiences.

"Body in Flight (Delta)" and "Body in Flight (American)" are realistically painted wooden scale reproductions of the latest industrial designs for business class seats found on U.S. commercial airlines. The sculptures will replace the wooden balance beam and pommel horse, creating a unique apparatus for gymnastics and dance performances. Throughout the duration of the exhibition, gymnasts and dancers will perform routines developed by Allora & Calzadilla that creatively utilize the seats' form, scale, and function through the rubric of classical gymnastics and dance.

"Track and Field," which will be installed in front of the U.S. pavilion, will feature a massive, overturned military tank that has been repurposed by superimposing a functional treadmill above its right track. Runners will run on the treadmill at regularly scheduled intervals throughout the exhibition.

"These performative sculptures will use poetic shock and unexpected juxtaposition to raise questions about the relationship between the human body and art, militarism, commerce, sports, and international identity," said Lisa Freiman, Senior Curator and Chair of the IMA's Department of Contemporary Art and Commissioner of the U.S. Pavilion at the 2011 La Biennale di Venezia.

The title *Gloria*, which translates from Italian and Spanish to Glory, points to the pomp and splendor of the national pavilions format in Venice. *Gloria* references military, religious, spiritual, Olympic, economic, and cultural grandeur, as well as the female name itself, and the numerous pop songs that it has inspired.

"We are interested in contamination, profanation, and paradox. We want the material nature of things and the embodied nature of sense to be paramount," said Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla.

"USA Gymnastics is pleased to have the opportunity to work with an accomplished group of artists to internationally showcase the beauty and artistry of the sport of gymnastics," said Steve Penny, president of USA Gymnastics. "We are honored to partner with the Indianapolis Museum of Art and have the opportunity to be a part of this prestigious exhibit."

"USA Track & Field is honored to be part of this innovative exhibit," said Stephanie Hightower, President and Chairman of the Board of USA Track & Field. "Combining the beauty of our sport and the excellence of the two artists in this installation is an exciting and ambitious endeavor. We are proud to be involved."

### **About Allora & Calzadilla**

Working together since 1995, Jennifer Allora (b. 1974, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) and Guillermo Calzadilla (b. 1971, Havana, Cuba) are a collaborative that lives and works in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Allora & Calzadilla create works that blend sculpture, photography, performance, sound, and video. Their work has been featured in solo exhibitions internationally, including MoMA, New York (2010), Kunstmuseum Krefeld, Museum Haus Esters, Krefeld, (2009), Haus der Kunst in München, Germany (2008), Serpentine Gallery and Whitechapel Art Gallery in London (2007), Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam (2008), Kunsthalle Zürich in Zürich, Switzerland (2007), National Museum of Art in Oslo, Norway (2009), and the Renaissance Society in Chicago (2007).

The collaborative pair has also been included in group exhibitions at the Princeton University Art Museum (2010), 24th & 29th Bienal de São Paulo (1998/2010), Astrup Fearnley Museet for Moderne Kunst, Oslo, (2009), Prospect1 New Orleans (2008), 16th Biennale of Sydney (2008), "8e & 9e Biennale de Lyon (2005/2007), 10th International Istanbul Biennial (2007), Whitney Biennial (2006); Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art in Oslo, Norway (2009); the Musée d'Art Moderne de La Ville de Paris/Arc (2004) and the Centre Pompidou in Paris; The New Museum in New York (2008); and Barbican (2008) and Tate Modern Galleries (2003) in London among others.

Allora received a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Richmond in Virginia (1996) and a Master of Science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (2003) and was a fellow at the Whitney Museum of American Art Independent Study Program. Calzadilla received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Escuela de Artes Plásticas, San Juan, Puerto Rico (1996) and a Master of Fine Arts from Bard College (2003).

### **About USA Gymnastics**

Based in Indianapolis, USA Gymnastics is the national governing body for gymnastics in the United States. Its mission is to encourage participation and the pursuit of excellence in the sport. Its disciplines include men's and women's artistic gymnastics, rhythmic gymnastics, trampoline and tumbling, acrobatic gymnastics, and group gymnastics. For more information, log on to [www.usagym.org](http://www.usagym.org).

### **About USA Track & Field**

USA Track & Field (USATF) is the National Governing Body for track & field, long-distance running and race walking in the United States. USATF encompasses the world's oldest organized sports, the world's number one Track & Field team, the most-watched events at the Olympics, the number one high school and junior high school participatory sport, and more than 30 million adult runners in the United States. For more information, log on to [www.usatf.org](http://www.usatf.org)

### **About La Biennale di Venezia**

La Biennale di Venezia has for over a century been one of the most prestigious cultural institutions in the world. Since its founding in 1895, it has promoted contemporary culture, new ideas, and artistic trends through major international exhibitions. The 54th International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale will take place June 4 – November 27, 2011, and is directed by the art historian and critic Bice Curiger. *To obtain media credentials for the June 1, 2, 3 vernissage and for other information about La Biennale, please visit [www.labiennale.org](http://www.labiennale.org)*

### **About the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs**

The U.S. Pavilion is organized by the Indianapolis Museum of Art and is presented by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State, which supports and manages the official United States participation at selected international exhibitions.

### **About the Indianapolis Museum of Art**

Encompassing 152 acres of gardens and grounds, the Indianapolis Museum of Art is among the 10 largest encyclopedic art museums in the United States, and features significant collections of African, American, Asian, European, and contemporary art, as well as a newly established collection of design arts. The IMA offers visitors an expansive view of arts and culture through its collection of more than 54,000 works of art that span 5,000 years of history from across the world's continents. The collections include paintings, sculpture, furniture and design objects, prints, drawings, and photographs, as well as textiles and costumes.

Additionally, art, design, and nature are featured at 100 Acres: The Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park and Oldfields–Lilly House & Gardens, an historic Country Place Era estate on the IMA grounds. Beyond the Indianapolis campus, in 2011 the IMA will open to the public the recently acquired landmark Miller House and Garden in Columbus, Indiana. One of the country's most highly regarded examples of mid-century Modernist residences, the Miller House was designed by Eero Saarinen with interiors by Alexander Girard and landscape design by Daniel Urban Kiley.

Recognizing the IMA's positive impact on its community, the Museum was named a 2009 National Medal for Museum and Library Services – the nation's highest honor for museums and libraries. The IMA's commitment to free general admission, programming for schools and teachers, environmental leadership and online initiatives were among cited community contributions in the Museum's selection for the award.

In conjunction with the biennale, the IMA will be publishing a catalogue documenting Allora & Calzadilla's exhibition in the U.S. Pavilion. The catalogue will include essays by exhibition curator, U.S. Commissioner Lisa Freiman, and art historians Carrie Lambert-Beatty and Yates McKee. The essays will explore the themes addressed in *Gloria* and place Allora & Calzadilla's works within a larger art historical and social context. The catalogue will also include a plates section displaying images of the works as they are installed in Venice and activated through audience interaction as well as documentation of performances by professional athletes affiliated with USA Gymnastics and USA Track & Field.

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