

# INTERVIEW WITH SOMA



## Eduardo Abaroa

Soma is a Mexican project integrated by three forms of cultural interaction in the context of Mexico City. The first part is a residency program that accepts artists from the rest of the Mexican Republic and other countries worldwide. We are focusing in Latin America, but we have had visitors from faraway places, like New Zealand. The residences are aimed at international artists, critics and curators. We have excellent spaces and in the case for artist we provide studio space where they can do their own work.

The residences serve as a method for broad cultural exchange with other countries. Our project is perhaps one of the most complete program of its kind in Mexico. We are beginning to collaborate with other programs in the world.

The second part is the educational program. Currently, in Mexico, there are no master programs for artists. We feel that there is a point in an artist's career, just after graduating from art schools, where we can contribute on their practice. Even if they decided to pursue a postgraduate course, we can focus to link what they really want to do. Thus, we are bringing Mexican artists who are many of them working in a high level internationally. Finding ways the can give a course here at Soma. In fact, many of them are already part of our group of collaborators. They propose people who can be interesting for residences, but also some of them are already beginning to teach.

For instance, this term we have Maria Los and the next term we have Mario Garcia giving courses freely designed by them. I think that is a mechanism that can work very well. We have a greater dynamism compared to other art schools in Mexico City, and we can very well complement the education of artists. Although, the educational program is not only focused on younger generation of artists, but also wants to reach people who are becoming interested in contemporary art now. Thus, we have talks and we are planning education courses of contemporary art.

The third part of Soma project is a continuous cycle of events called "Soma Tuesdays". All Tuesdays we will open our space for events such as: artists showing us their work, to propose a selection of films, to propose a reading, a performative event, action, etc. We want to make from "Soma Tuesdays" the usual event to come. As you can see, the space is very large and it is suitable for social interaction.

## Yoshua Okon

The project emerges from the need for interaction and dialogue. Most of the artists from Eduardo's and mine generation, we developed our own practice in a very different context. When we started to make art art, we also begin to create art spaces. At that moment there was a very strong sense of artistic or cultural community. There were spaces that, beyond the idea of the event, their role was cohesion contact with different actors. Awareness of what others where doing one at the time, there was more interaction. However, in he 2000s many of these places closed. We started to lose much of this sense of an artistic community. Everyone begins to work in a more isolated manner. At least that is my feeling. So, then the side of the "show" became much more prevalent than the side of the dialogue or discourse. Soma is among many things, the need for more interactions. As Eduardo said, for instance "Soma Tuesdays" is a very simple format but it gives you the opportunity to know what others are doing as well as creating dialogue between people. In this sense, Soma wants to create unity. "Soma Tuesdays" is interesting because not only decided to stick with artists, but it is also multidisciplinary. In the sense people from any discipline can join in, even though that most of the people now are artist and curators.