

**Press 09/23/2016**

**Fieldwork Marfa, an international program run by the School of Art of Nantes (France) with the University of Houston School of Art and Geneva School of Art and Design,**

**Launches Innovative New Projects in Marfa, Texas**

The School of Art of Nantes (France), with the University of Houston School of Art and Geneva School of Art and Design, have joined forces to develop an ambitious new program at the intersection of critical theory and contemporary art. Based in Marfa, Texas, Fieldwork Marfa aims to formalize an innovative, contemporary space for learning in visual arts and to provide a new context for artistic experimentation.

Merging humanities and the arts, this project is part of a renewed interest in spatial questions. Drawing on Marfa's minimalist legacy, facilities, and the multidisciplinary approach to education, Fieldwork: Marfa aims to provide a new generation of artists with the tools to intervene artistically outside the gallery space, taking into account their environment, while critically reflecting on complex contemporary landscapes. Projects currently underway include an Artist-in-Residence program and a joint Master's Degree in Fine Arts.

#### **From Nantes to Marfa**

Located on the Loire River on the Atlantic coast, Nantes is France's 6<sup>th</sup> largest city. It developed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as an industrial shipping port, but with the disappearance of the industrial activities in the late 1980's, spaces were left to be reinvented. This led Nantes to transform itself into an important cultural hub, well known for its public art program, its music and its performing arts scene. The success of the "Estuary" Biennale, named after the "Estuary" of the Loire between Nantes and Saint-Nazaire, is born from the combination of performing arts, temporary art and architectural projects in public spaces around the city. Nantes offers numerous permanent public art installations by Daniel Buren, François Morellet, Atelier Van Lieshout, Jenny Holzer' artwork conceived for Jean Nouvel's Palais de Justice – a hallmark of Nantes' identity.

Similarly, Marfa, a small town in rural Texas, was transformed into an international hub for contemporary artists and artisans with the arrival of minimalist artist Donald Judd in the 1970's. It's vast desert landscape offers space to exhibit and store large scale works.

#### **Artist-in-Residence Program**

The recent acquisition of 20 acres of land by a group of French art collectors and supporters of the School of Fine Arts of Nantes on Antelope Hill Road in Marfa, TX will allow the launch of a new artist-in-residence program. It will aim to provide a new experimental territory for artistic activities and research as well as a complete and coherent learning experience for students in the visual arts.

#### **A Joint Practice and Research-based Master in Fine Arts**

Fieldwork Marfa is also developing a joint practice and research-based Master in Fine Arts. The degree will offer practice and research-based training to a new generation of artists who will be able to intervene artistically outside the gallery space, taking into account their urban or rural environment and to critically reflect on contemporary complex landscapes or situations through an array of disciplines and cultural perspectives.

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