

New Exhibit at UC San Diego Uses Sensors, Art to Highlight Hazards of Anti-Personnel Land Mines

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Doug Ramsey

Starting April 16, students walking into the engineering courtyard off Warren Mall on the University of California, San Diego campus will encounter something scary: whole areas of grassy space cordoned off with yellow-and-black hazard tape and signs bearing the inscription, "Danger - Minefield - Do Not Proceed," in English, Spanish, French, Arabic, Chinese, Hindi and other languages.

It's part of an indoor-outdoor art exhibition called the *Anti-Personnel Mines Project*, by Carlos Trilnick, which opens to the public on April 16 in the gallery@calit2, part of the UC San Diego division of the California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology (Calit2). The launch coincides with a panel discussion and reception the same day, from 5-8 p.m.

Trilnick, an Argentine media artist and activist, calls attention to the insidious nature of land mines, which continue to take lives, often of civilians, long after an open conflict has ended.

"This work attempts to create awareness and activism in public opinion around this danger, which disproportionately affects civilian populations such as war refugees, children, women and the rural poor," said Trilnick, a professor at the University of Buenos Aires and former visiting professor at UC San Diego in 2008. "[At UCSD] it caught my attention that the campus is located on former military land which could have had mines, that there are still military arms manufacturers along the La Jolla-San Diego corridor, and that there is a continual roar overhead from military aircraft coming and going. These scenes were on top of the fact that the United States has not signed the Ottawa Treaty that bans the manufacturing, destruction of stockpiles and de-activation of anti-personnel mines, so it made me think that presenting this project in this context would shed light and provoke thought."

The landscape portion of the exhibit will be on view for one week starting April 16, while the interactive gallery installation runs through June 10 in the venue on the first floor of Atkinson Hall. For this show, the gallery@calit2 has installed artificial turf to simulate a field - and hide the location of sensors that are stand-ins for land mines. When a visitor accidentally steps on a sensor, it detonates the sound of an explosion, and a motion-controlled video projector activates a series of visual sequences on the gallery walls. The visual sequences show the effects of anti-personnel mines on people through images, statistical data, maps and conceptual phrases alluding to the need for efforts to end the use of land mines.

Said Trilnick: "The areas that produce interactivity in the system of sensors are fleeting and vary from moment to moment, so the spectator cannot identify the precise location of the next 'mine'. This adds to the uncertainty, the unexpected and perhaps the horror."

Since 1980, Trilnick has been one of the pioneers of video art in Latin America, and his works - ranging from video installations and multimedia art to photography and online projects - have been exhibited extensively in Europe, Latin America and the U.S., including the Museum of Modern Art in New York. He is a senior professor in the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Urban Development at the University of Buenos Aires. In addition to

UC San Diego, Trilnick is also a Visiting Professor at universities in Colombia and Ecuador. Trilnick co-directs the Media Laboratory at the Talpiot Institute of Buenos Aires (a primary and secondary school), and coordinates the audio-visual media program "Vale la Pena," which curates programs of a broad range of contemporary work that engages social issues across the arts.

In a companion catalog to be published in Spanish and English by Calit2, Trilnick notes that, "While there are more than 110 million mines deployed and ready to explode in 64 countries, another 100 million are currently in storage. Around 100 corporations in 15 countries produce 50,000 mines *every week*. That means five new mines every minute become a threat against peace on our planet."

"Carlos Trilnick is an artist with a conscience who has the uncanny ability to get a visceral response from the viewer to the underlying condition exposed by the artist," said UC San Diego visual arts professor Ricardo Dominguez, co-chair of the committee that oversees the gallery@calit2. "At a time when land-mine explosions worldwide continue to result in roughly 2,000 deaths and more than 800 mutilations *every month*, this art work makes an important artistic as well as political contribution."

The exhibition calls attention to the 42 countries that have not yet signed the 1999 Ottawa Treaty to prohibit the use or manufacture of anti-personnel mines, including the world's largest countries: China, India, Russia and the United States. U.S.-based Claymore, Inc. remains the world's largest maker of land mines.

The gallery@calit2 reflects the nexus of innovation implicit in Calit2's vision, and aims to advance our understanding and appreciation of the dynamic interplay among art, science and technology. Calit2 is a partnership between UC San Diego and UC Irvine that is organized around cross-disciplinary projects on the future of telecommunications, information technology, new media arts and other technologies that will transform a range of applications important to the California economy and citizens' quality of life.

New Exhibition: "Anti-Personnel Mines Project" By Carlos Trilnick

Panel Discussion* April 16, 4-5pm Calit2 Auditorium, Atkinson Hall, UCSD

Gallery Reception* April 16, 5-7pm Lobby, Atkinson Hall, UCSD * *Note: Panel discussion and gallery reception open to the public; RSVP requested to Trish Stone, Gallery Coordinator, tstone@ucsd.edu or (858) 336-6456.*

Exhibition Interactive Installation: April 16-June 10, 2009 Monday-Friday, 11am-5pm* gallery@calit2 Atkinson Hall University of California, San Diego 9500 Gilman Drive, La Jolla, CA 92093 Map & Directions: <http://atkinsonhall.calit2.net/directions/> <http://gallery.calit2.net> <http://www.calit2.net>

* *[Note: Closed May 25 in observance of Memorial Day]*

Landscape Installation: April 16-23, 2009 Thursday-Thursday, All Day Engineering Courtyard, off Warren Mall, UCSD

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