

• FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE •

Cristobal Gracia: ***Fragments***
July 10 – August 8, 2015

Opening Reception: Friday, July 10, 6-9 pm
Free and open to the public / Artist in Attendance

David B. Smith Gallery is proud to present Mexico City based artist Cristobal Gracia, in conjunction with his 2015 Biennial Ambassadorship, for his first solo project at the gallery titled *Fragments*. Gracia will exhibit a new sculpture alongside new paintings made during his residency in Denver. During his residency, the artist continued his interest in monuments, specifically Herbert Bayer's The Articulated Wall. Bayer's iconic monument exists in Mexico City and Denver. Originally designed for the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City, another version of the monument was later built in Denver in 1985. The sculpture in Mexico was part of the Route of Friendship, a sculptural corridor that had the political and propagandistic idea of giving an international perception of Mexico as a peaceful, modern and progressive country, while the sculpture in Denver became the main logo of the Denver Design District.

Gracia's paintings included in *Fragments*, are based on The Articulated Wall and the illusion of movement and shape in the monument. Each painting starts with a photo of a different fragment of the sculpture(s) taken a different time of the day, since the movement of the sun and the shadow play was a critical element for Bayer. These works are meant to function like sculpture and paintings; a way of making an abstraction of the sculpture and dismantling this iconic monument. The Denver sculpture's nickname, "the French Fry Stack" also comes into play here, as Gracia uses ketchup and Valentina (a popular hot sauce in Mexico) as pigment on the paintings. Gracia initially conceived of using Valentina hot sauce after discovering that the ubiquitous sauce is used to clean public sculptures in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. Imagining this process as a physical image of the sculptures bleeding, Gracia highlights the violent history of the Mexican Government in dealing with social problems. Like the crumbling façade of Denver's Articulated Wall, these paintings are visceral and far from pristine and can be seen a metaphor for how art functions in a public domain and how both Mexico and Denver have responded to Bayer's work over decades.



About Cristobal Gracia

Cristobal Gracia (b. 1987) lives and works in Mexico City. His work has been shown in group and solo exhibitions in Mexico, the U.S., and Europe. Gracia is the cofounder of the TEP (taller de exposiciones potenciales / workshop of potential exhibitions) and co director of Bikini Wax, an independent platform of production, discussion, and exhibition of contemporary art in Mexico City. He is a current recipient of Arte Actual, BBVA Bancomer – MACG grant. In 2012 Gracia was an artist-in-residence at VIR Via Farini (Milan, Italy). In 2015 he has been undertaking an artist residency at ArtPlant, Biennial Ambassadors Program, in Denver, Colorado.

About David B. Smith Gallery

David B. Smith Gallery is committed to presenting intelligent and culturally relevant exhibitions in its Denver location, featuring the region's most important emerging talent alongside internationally recognized artists. Through its curatorial program, participation in art fairs, and extensive media coverage in publications such as *Art in America* and *ARTnews*, David B. Smith Gallery has cultivated a strong regional, national and international collector audience. *The New York Times* hailed the gallery as offering "an exciting contrast of cutting edge works." The gallery also maintains an active publishing division, which produces exhibition catalogues and editions.