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<http://www.philagrafika.org/gomez-and-gonzalez.html>

**Philagrafika presents *Doing Time | Depth of Surface*
Jan. 28 – Mar. 17, 2012 at Moore College of Art & Design**

*Exhibition explores urban archeology and past lives of historic Holmesburg Prison
First project since the successful Philagrafika 2010: The Graphic Unconscious*

PHILADELPHIA (Dec. 5, 2011) — **Philagrafika** has commissioned Spanish artists **Patricia Gómez Villaescusa** and **María Jesús González Fernández** to create [*Doing Time | Depth of Surface*](#), an exhibition exploring the architecture and stories of Philadelphia's historic **Holmesburg Prison**. Gómez and González have created large-format "printings" of drawings, paintings and graffiti left by former inmates on the walls of the prison, which opened in 1896, operating for nearly a century and being decommissioned in 1995. The exhibition gives a voice to the guards, employees and inmates who lived in the Northeast Philadelphia prison.

Doing Time | Depth of Surface will run from **January 28 – March 17, 2012** at **The Galleries at Moore College of Art & Design** in Philadelphia. The exhibition explores new trends in contemporary art and printmaking, pushing the boundaries of what constitutes "print." Philagrafika will also host related public programs, document and expand the project through its website and publish an exhibition catalogue.

The exhibition is Philagrafika's first since the presentation of ***Philagrafika 2010: The Graphic Unconscious***, the citywide, multiple-venue, international festival which redefined contemporary printmaking. With a mission to promote and sustain printmaking as a vital and valued art form, Philagrafika continues to build upon and reinforce the themes of innovation and collaboration that were first explored in the organization's 2010 festival. The commission of Gómez and González also continues support of international artists in interpreting Philadelphia's history.

The first phase of the project began with an extensive residency, during which the artists conducted research and onsite documentation of the project. The artists visited Holmesburg Prison where they utilized a unique method of monoprinting to transfer the history of the deteriorating prison's walls into prints, salvaging the outer surfaces of the prison cells. The exhibition at Moore will feature a surveillance-style video installation along with an audio installation, still photographs from the residency and the resulting monoprints – two full cell size and 150 smaller pieces – which serve as a physical archive of the prison cells and the lives of the prisoner's who lived in them.

Gómez and González work in a collaborative process grounded in an artistic practice similar to mural conservation. Utilizing a modified version of a conservation technique known as strappo, they work primarily to preserve the surfaces of buildings – the veritable “skin of architecture” – by detaching a wall’s surface layers. Using a layer of fabric and glue they remove the surface, in its entirety, in a process much like ripping a bandage off of skin. In fact Strappo, an Italian word, means to rip or tear. This process allows the artist’s to extract a tangible record of the site in its current state, preserving the expressions of identity, memory, apathy and desire of its former residents. Video of the process can be found on Vimeo at <http://vimeo.com/31812447>.

Exhibition curator **José Roca** first came across the work of Gómez and González while conducting research for *Philagrafika 2010: The Graphic Unconscious*, for which he served as Artistic Director, and felt that the complexities of their practice merited a significant project on its own. “Philagrafika is interested in looking at how print manifests itself in contemporary art,” says Roca. “There is truth to the common adage ‘if walls could talk’ in the sense of being the silent witnesses of what happens over time, which is physically and metaphorically imprinted in them.”

Gómez and González have explained their process saying, “The origin of our practice was an unexpected imprint when a piece of canvas detached from a wall. Instinctively, we thought of this as an act of printmaking, but with the intervention of different instruments and elements than we were using at the time. The matrix in our work became the walls; their surface (with several overlapping layers of paint, history and marks) is imprinted by time and vital experiences.”

Doing Time | Depth of Surface is Gómez and González's first exhibition in the U.S. The exhibition will be the fourth collaboration of this nature for the artists. Previous works include two installations of abandoned prisons, from 2008-2009, including Valencia’s Modelo Prison, and a prison in Palma shown in 2011 at the *Fundació Pilar i Joan Miró* in Mallorca, Spain.

Publication

The thirty-two-page *Depth of Surface* exhibition catalogue documents the artists’ residency at Holmesburg Prison and the resulting artworks. It chronicles the artists’ project with images of the cells, the prison, and artworks in progress; along with short essays and interviews with the artists. It will be available free to the public during the exhibition.

Schedule of Programs and Events

www.philagrafika.org
info@philagrafika.org

1616 Walnut Street, Suite 918
Philadelphia, PA 19103
t. 215.557.8433

Friday, January 27, 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Exhibition Opening Reception

Saturday, January 28 – Saturday, March 17

Exhibition: *Doing Time | Depth of Surface*

The Galleries at Moore College of Art & Design, 20th St. & The Parkway

Admission is free for all exhibitions and public programs.

Gallery hours: Monday – Friday, 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. and Saturday 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

To contact The Galleries: (215) 965-4027 or www.thegalleriesatmoore.org

Saturday, January 28, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Artist and Curator Brunch, Exhibition Walkthrough & Tour

11 a.m. – brunch reception at The Galleries at Moore

11:30 a.m. – artist and curator exhibition walkthrough

1 p.m. – special tour at Eastern State Penitentiary relating to *Doing Time | Depth of Surface*

Docent Led Exhibition Tours

Saturdays 12-12:30p.m. & 1-1:30 p.m. from February 4 – March 17

Philagrafika docents will lead a 30-minute tour of the exhibition *Doing Time / Depth of Surface*, highlighting stories from the artists' residency at Holmesburg Prison, while providing anecdotes and background on the creation of the artworks. The docents will relate *Depth of Surface*, Gomez + Gonzalez' first U.S. exhibition, to contemporary printmaking and provide insight on the artists' practice of printing architectural spaces. Tours meet at 12 pm in foyer outside Goldie Paley Gallery. Free and open to the public.

Additional panel discussions and other public programs will be announced. Visit

www.philagrafika.org for updates. To contact Philagrafika, call (215) 557-8433.

The *Doing Time / Depth of Surface* artist residency and exhibition at Moore College of Art & Design is a project of Philagrafika. *Doing Time / Depth of Surface* has been supported by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage through the Philadelphia Exhibitions Initiative and in collaboration with SPANISH CULTURAL ACTION, AC/E. Exhibition support was provided by the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional project support was provided by the Haverford Hurford Humanities Center Internship Program and Crane Arts.



About the Artists

María Jesús González Fernández & Patricia Gómez Villaescusa were both born in 1978 in Valencia, Spain, where they still work. Their artistic partnership began while the artists were working towards Fine Arts degrees from the *Facultad de Bellas Artes de Valencia* in 2002. Their

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work has been exhibited in numerous solo and group shows in Spain. They have won a number of grants and awards including, among others: the photography prize for *El Cultural* (2010), and first prize at *Generación 2008 Caja Madrid Art Grants and Awards* (2009), and a *Generación 2007* artist grant (2007). Collections that house their work include Caja Madrid, DA 2 DOMUS ARTIUM Salamanca, the Polytechnic University of Valencia, the University of Sevilla, Caja Catilla-La Mancha, Bancaja, and El Mundo. *Doing Time* is González and Gómez' first project in the United States.

About Holmesburg Prison

Holmesburg Prison is located on Torresdale Avenue in Northeast Philadelphia. The prison opened in 1896 and was used continuously for almost 100 years until it was closed in 1995. Similar in design to Eastern State Penitentiary, the structure is characterized by a central hub from which cellblocks extend out. It was a maximum-security prison with high brick walls that surround the seventeen-acre compound. Originally made up of 6 cellblocks containing 450 cells, with the intention of keeping inmates in solitary confinement, it boasted modern plumbing, incandescent lighting and forced air ventilation and heating. For the past sixteen years the site has been used only for police testing and training programs. The films *Up Close & Personal* (1996), *Animal Factory* (2000) and *Law-Abiding Citizen* (2009) have filmed scenes on location in Holmesburg Prison, and in 2000 photographer Thomas Roma documented the derelict state of Holmesburg with the book *In Prison Air*.

About Moore College of Art & Design

Moore College of Art & Design educates students for careers in art and design. Founded in 1848, Moore is the nation's first and only women's art college. Moore's student-focused environment and professionally active faculty form a dynamic community in the heart of Philadelphia's cultural district. The College offers nine bachelor of fine arts degrees for women. Coeducational graduate programs were launched in summer, 2009. In addition, Moore provides many valuable opportunities in the arts through The Galleries at Moore, continuing education programs for professional adults, the 85-year-old acclaimed Young Artists Workshop for girls and boys grades 1-12, The Art Shop and the Sculpture Park. For more information, visit www.moore.edu.

About Philagrafika

Philagrafika, formerly known as the Philadelphia Print Collaborative, was founded in 2000 in recognition of a growing convergence in Philadelphia of artists, educators, curators, non-profit arts organizations, galleries, print workshops and museums that needed a central organizing body for cooperative initiatives. Philagrafika builds upon the Philadelphia region's rich printmaking history and abundant artistic resources to enhance the city's presence as an international center for innovative printmaking.

In 2010, the organization produced its first quadrennial event, *Philagrafika 2010: The Graphic Unconscious*, a collaborative, citywide event celebrating print in contemporary art and showcasing internationally acclaimed and locally recognized artists.

Philagrafika's mission is to promote and sustain printmaking as a vital and valued art form by providing artistic, programmatic and administrative leadership for large-scale, cooperative initiatives with broad public exposure. They do this through an international contemporary art festival, an annual invitational portfolio and special projects. Their programs have been designed to present new curatorial and critical models for printmaking – models in which the medium is presented as an integral component of current artistic practice.

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