

SITE SANTA FE PRESENTS *DIRECT ACTION*

MEXICAN ARTIST PEDRO REYES EXPLORES SOCIAL ACTIVISM & NUCLEAR POWER THROUGH SCULPTURE IN A NEW SOLO EXHIBITION

Opening Celebration: Friday, February 3, 2023, 5:00 - 9:00 PM



"*DIRECT ACTION* invites visitors to reimagine the legacy and impact of the human race, and how we define responsibility, respect, and freedom through Reyes' social approach to art." – curator, Brandee Caoba

(Santa Fe, NM, December 15, 2022) – SITE Santa Fe presents *DIRECT ACTION*, a new solo exhibition by Pedro Reyes, from February 3 through May 8, 2023. Nodding at forms of protest in which individuals use their own power to achieve political and social aims rather than appealing to authorities, this expansive exhibition explores art-as-activism through a selection of sculptures, prints, performance, and a newly commissioned video work.

Pedro Reyes is celebrated for his large-scale immersive sculptural projects addressing current social and political issues. Over the course of his career, Reyes has developed and designed projects that propose playful solutions to social problems through a variety of media and an open invitation for community engagement. The history of architecture and craft, as well as the intersection of art and political action, are recurring themes of his work.

"Sculpture is about changing the shape of a material, and in social sculpture, the materials are the ideas and relationships of a community. The show is called *DIRECT ACTION* because it is a participatory process, and the subject of disarmament across the exhibition inevitably leads to the history of nuclear warfare and uranium mining, which has been a constant struggle in the history of New Mexico," says artist Pedro Reyes.

Central to the exhibition is *Palas por Pistolas* (2008), a series born from the artist's work in Culiacán, Mexico, transforming guns into shovels, which were then used to plant over 5,000 trees. Reyes has stated of this project, "This ritual has a purpose of showing how an agent of death can become an agent of life."

Utilizing a similar premise, Reyes' *Disarm* (2013) is a series of musical instruments constructed from over 6,700 donated firearms. *DIRECT ACTION* also includes collaborative projects with other creators in the collective undertaking called Artists Against the Bomb.

Building on the artist's ongoing Anti-Nuclear campaign launched in 2020, SITE Santa Fe commissioned Reyes' new site-specific video *This is how it ends* (2022-23), featuring New Mexico voices addressing the subject of nuclear colonialism.

This exhibition is also activated by *pUN: The People's United Nations*, an experimental conference in which ordinary citizens act as delegates from each of the UN countries and try to apply techniques and resources from social psychology, theater, art, and conflict resolution to geopolitics.

An audio guide will accompany the exhibition, featuring Pedro Reyes speaking about select works in *DIRECT ACTION*. Versions will be available in English, Spanish, and ASL.

*DIRECT ACTION* is curated by Brandee Caoba.

*DIRECT ACTION* opens Friday, February 3, 2023, from 5:00 - 9:00 p.m. with a musical performance at 7:00 pm by East L.A.'s psychedelic cumbia-punk ensemble, Tropa Magica.

A full schedule of public programs (such as pop-up concerts, tree plantings, and artist/panel talks) will take place throughout the run of the exhibition. Event details will be updated at [sitesantafe.org](http://sitesantafe.org).



### About Pedro Reyes

Pedro Reyes (Mexico City, 1972) studied architecture but considers himself a sculptor. His works integrate elements of theater, psychology, and activism and take a variety of forms, including penetrable sculptures as well as puppet productions. He is the recipient of the U.S. State Department Medal for the Arts, a Ford Foundation Fellow, and was commissioned by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists together with ICAN, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, winners of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize, to raise awareness of the growing risk of nuclear conflict.



### Thank you

Support for *DIRECT ACTION* is generously provided by the SITE Santa Fe Board of Directors, the SITE Santa Fe Annual Exhibition Fund, and Mary Cardas and Les Edelberg.

Additional funding is provided by the City of Santa Fe Arts and Culture Department and the 1% Lodgers' Tax.

### Image Credit

Pedro Reyes, *Amendment*, 2022, Volcanic Stone, ©Pedro Reyes, Photography: Fiona Tommasi  
Pedro Reyes, *Disarm (Violin 2)*, 2012, Destroyed weapons, metal parts, string, ©Pedro Reyes, Courtesy Lisson Gallery

### About SITE Santa Fe

Guided by artists, rooted in New Mexico, SITE Santa Fe celebrates contemporary creative expression. SITE Santa Fe aspires to be a community resource for creativity and learning and an internationally recognized destination for art and artists.

Founded in 1995 to establish the first international contemporary art biennial in the United States, SITE Santa Fe is a non-collecting art institution committed to supporting new developments in contemporary art, encouraging artistic exploration, and expanding traditional museum experiences. Since its launch, SITE Santa Fe has presented 11 international biennials, more than 100 contemporary art exhibitions, and works by hundreds of emerging and established artists from around the world and right here in New Mexico. SITE Santa Fe also presents a wide range of public and educational programs that include conversations with artists and curators, performances, film screenings, concerts, hands-on workshops, and collaborations with dozens of local schools and community organizations.

VISUALS AVAILABLE

*FURTHER INFORMATION ON SITE SANTA FE CAN BE FOUND AT [SITESANTAFE.ORG](http://SITESANTAFE.ORG)*

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