

# MESSAGE TO SALINAS

Elaine Byrne

21.01.11 - 19.02.11

Presenting work made during her recent residency in Mexico city at SOMA (summer 2010), Elaine Byrne's exhibition looks at the legacy of a disgraced ex president from the people's point of view. She invited Mexican people to send a personal message to Carlos Salinas, who moved to Dublin at the end of his term, either by video, facebook or e-mail.

Elected under controversial circumstances, Carlos Salinas de Gortari was president of Mexico from 1988 to 1994 and moved to Dublin under self-imposed exile in 1996. He left Mexico in fear of being charged with the murder of presidential candidate and rival, Luis Donaldo Colosio. A contentious figure in Mexico, Salinas has been blamed for many of the current economic difficulties with the rise of the drug trade and an increase in violent crime. Yet others credit him with important reforms such as privatisation resulting in the lowering of inflation and the lowering of national debt. Either way, Salinas has left deep traces in the collective conscience of the Mexican public. The complexity of his legacy and political landscape, alongside difficulties facing the people following the collapse of his popular social reform programme 'Solidarity', is examined in this work.

This project caused much interest in the Mexican press and media with Byrne doing many interviews in the national newspapers. Invited by Eduardo Abaroa, this work was recently exhibited at Art Basel Miami as part of the Conversations series. The book which accompanies the exhibition and contains all the e-mail responses has recently been selected as part of the Berlin Reading Room.

Elaine Byrne studied at the Frink School of Sculpture, Stoke on Trent, Dun Laoghaire College of Art and UCD. She had a solo exhibition at Leinster Gallery in 2006 called They Have Eyes and her work has also been included in many exhibitions and festivals such as Tulca Festival of Visual Arts in Galway. Future exhibitions include a solo show entitled 'The Irish King of Mexico' at Atrio Gallery in Mexico City. Her work is featured in private collections in Abu Dhabi, Austria, Ireland, New Zealand, Switzerland and UK amongst others.