

SCHOOL OF THE
ARTS
— 2014 SPRING CALENDAR —

ARTS
365

Erika Harrsch
2014 Artist
in Residence

Photo by Hiroki Sakamoto



University of Nevada, Reno

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ERIKA HARRSCH



"Body Maps" by Erika Harrsch

NEW YORK ARTIST ERIKA HARRSCH'S multimedia work reflects her life experiences by connecting art, science, technology and social studies into interactive and poetic experiences, which expand the meaning of art itself.

She began her journey as a painter and stretched the scope of her practice by experimenting with photography, video, animation and interactive installations.

"I didn't see any limitations," Harrsch said. "It was a way of expanding my own language as an artist."

She was born in Mexico City and lived across the world to broaden her perspectives and engage other artists. She finally settled in New York in 2001 where her creativity really blossomed.

Her works explore the intimate aspects of the human condition. It has expressed itself in her fascinating artwork with butterflies, connecting their delicate nature with social commentary. The butterfly is a metaphor to address matters of identity, gender, nationality, migration and the relationship of human beings upon their own nature and fragility.

She creates a vast artistic landscape when she blends the borders of her profession and geographical lines.

"I'm a big researcher, in terms of what I create," she said. "... I always like to research whatever project that I'm touching and sustain the ideas and concepts either within a scientific background or psychological background. Always creating parallel realities that could represent us, human beings, in relationship to the world we live in."

Harrsch is the 2014 School of the Arts Visiting Artist in Residence on the University of Nevada, Reno campus. She will be spending the spring semester sharing her talent with

students, faculty and the Reno-Sparks community.

During her residency, Harrsch will be co-teaching an "Art in Public Spaces" class with professor Joseph DeLappe.

"I have the opportunity to be able to share the experience with students about what it is to jump from being an artist that was formed as a painter and move into creating more interdisciplinary projects," she said, "to think really out of the box and create things that are apparently unimaginable and therefore making them happen."

The public is invited to meet Harrsch during her lecture at 5:30 p.m. Feb. 6 at the Wells Fargo Auditorium in the Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center. She will discuss her journey to becoming a multimedia artist and her current works with musicians.

Harrsch also will perform a special evening concert on April 8 at Nightingale Concert Hall in Church Fine Arts. In collaboration with composer Paola Prestini and cellist Jeffrey Zeigler, they will present "Body Maps," a multimedia work scored for soprano, cello and electronics. The event also will include select cello pieces performed by Zeigler and a discussion about their new collaborative work, "Room 35" that features her invention of the Erika Harrsch LEDCello.

An on-campus studio space will allow Harrsch to continue her current projects. Some of her works will be on display in the Artspace gallery in downtown Reno. The exhibit will be open from April 3 to May 30.

The School of the Arts is committed to bringing outside artists to campus with several different programs, including the Visiting Artist in Residence. It devotes \$20,000 a year to the residency. The funding rotates annually among each of the school's three departments — art, music, and theatre and dance.

"The artist in residence program is an invaluable part of our school's educational and outreach effort," said Larry Engstrom, Interim Director of the School of the Arts. "Having Erika Harrsch for an entire semester provides our students with an opportunity to learn so much more from her than if we brought her in as a guest artist for just one show. The four-month residency allows ample time for students to delve deeply into Ms. Harrsch's artistic approach and perspective. Such interaction can be life changing. And let's not forget that the entire Northern Nevada community will also benefit from several opportunities to interact with her."