

# **Strange Democracy**

## An Evening with Spoken Word Brujo Guillermo Gómez-Peña

Monday, 17 October 2011, 18h  
University Theatre, Nieuwe Doelenstr. 16,  
1012 CP Amsterdam

ADMISSION FREE!



In his new solo-performances, post-Mexican writer and performance artist Gómez-Peña reflects on the post-9/11 era, the current "border wars" and articulates the formidable challenges facing Obama.

To this effect, the "border artist extraordinaire" uses acid Chicano humor, hybrid literary genres, multilingualism, and activist theory as subversive strategies. Shifting between languages and personae, "Gómez-Peña bombards audiences with his infamous border savvy techno-ideology, ethno-poetics and radical aesthetics." In this journey to the geographical and psychological outposts of Chicanismo, Gómez-Peña also reflects on identity, race, sexuality, pop culture, current politics and the impact of new technologies in the post-911 era. He also denounces the anti-immigration hysteria and assaults the demonized construction of the US/Mexican border—a literal and symbolic zone lined with Minute Men, rising nativism, three-ply fences, globalization, and transnational identities.

Gómez-Peña continues "to develop multi-centric narratives and performative poetics from a border perspective," creating what critics have termed at different times "Chicano cyber-punk performances" and "ethno-techno art." During these performances cultural

borders move to the center while the alleged mainstream is pushed to the margins and treated as exotic and unfamiliar, placing the audience members in the position of "foreigners" or "minorities in his performance country.

Gómez-Peña has spent many years developing his unique solo style, "a combination of embodied poetry, performance-activism and theatricalizations of postcolonial theory." In his ten books, as in his live performances, digital art, videos and photo-performances, he pushes the boundaries still further, exploring what's left for artists to do in a repressive global culture of censorship, paranoid nationalism and what he terms "the mainstream bizarre." Gómez-Peña examines where this leaves the critical practice of artists who aim to make tactical, performative interventions into our notions of race, culture and sexuality.

Among other recognitions, Gómez-Peña has received the Prix de la Parole at the International Theatre Festival of the Americas (1989), the New York Bessie Award (1989), a MacArthur Fellowship (1991), an American Book Award (1997) and a Lifetime Achievement Award (Taos Talking Pictures Film Festival, 2000). Gómez-Peña was also named Senior Fellow of the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics NYU (2010), a title awarded to scholars, artists, and activists whose work exemplifies the highest achievement in the field of performance and politics. He has been a regular commentator for NPR's *All Things Considered* and *Latino USA*, a contributing editor for *The Drama Review* (NYU-MIT) and has authored 8 books. Gómez-Peña has two forthcoming publications for 2011:

*Conversations Across Borders* (Seagull Press) and *Radical Performance Pedagogy: Exercises for Rebel Artists and Border Crossers* (co-authored with Roberto Sifuentes (Routledge)

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