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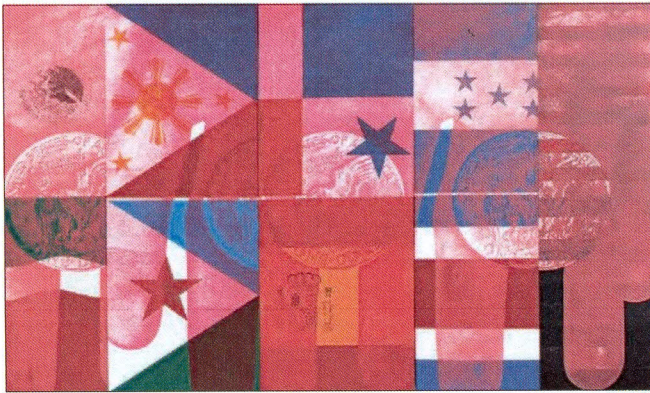
THE RIVER WEEKLY NEWS

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From the Beaches to the River District downtown Fort Myers.

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Empire by Arturo Vega

photo courtesy FSW

Vega Retrospective At Rauschenberg Gallery

The exhibit Empire: An Arturo Vega Retrospective will open with a public reception on Friday, November 4 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Bob Rauschenberg Gallery at Florida SouthWestern State College (FSW).

The show, held at the FSW's Lee County campus, runs through December 17 and includes guest lectures, performances and a panel discussion exploring Vega's broader impact on popular culture and contextualizing his work as a visual artist.

The panel discussion with guests Carlo McCormick, Legs McNeil, Anthony Haden-Guest and Adam Lehrer is scheduled for Saturday, November 5 at 1 p.m.

A collaboration with The Arturo Vega Foundation in New York City, Empire: An

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Vega Retrospective

Arturo Vega Retrospective is the late Mexican-born artist's first solo U.S. museum retrospective, and features photography, collage and a number of iconic carvases from the artist's Supermarket and Silver Dollar series (began in the 1970s); his *Flags* and so-called "word paintings" from *Insults*; and other series produced during the 1980s, 1990s and aughts.

Escaping the repressive violence of an authoritarian regime under Mexico's "perfect dictatorship" in the late '60s, Vega made his way to New York City to study English, philosophy and photography at the New School for Social Research in the early 1970s. Having discovered Elvis Presley as a child and later co-directing a touring production of *The Who's Tommy* at the National University in Mexico City, Vega understood the revolutionary and transformative power of music, theater/performance and art. While working on his first painting series of supermarket signs, he befriended members of *The Ramones*, a rock/punk band that

would soon play their first show, and would later be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Designing *The Ramones'* logo based on the Great Seal of the United States, painting backdrops for their stage and creating a lighting scheme loosely adapted from Albert Speer's *Lichtdom* to enhance their effect, Vega created visual imagery that defined the transgressive aesthetic of punk rock by co-opting and questioning symbols of power.

In numerous group shows since the 1970s, Vega's work has more recently been the subject of one-person exhibitions at CB's 313 Gallery in New York City (1992); Raleigh Studios in Miami Beach (1994); Galeria OMR in Mexico, DF (2011); Casa Redonda in Chihuahua, Mexico (2012); and at *Howl! Happening* in New York City in 2015 and 2016.

The reception and panel discussion are both open to the public and free of charge. Gallery hours are Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. The gallery, located at 8099 College Parkway in Fort Myers, is closed Sundays and holidays. For more information, call 489-9313 or visit RauschenbergGallery.com.