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VICTOR CARTAGENA – ANATOMY OF LA MENTIRA: RED NOSES
MAY 11 – JULY 1, 2006

Stephen Cohen Gallery announces the exhibition of “**Anatomy of La Mentira: Red Noses**,” a provocative mixed media collection by printmaker **Victor Cartagena** examining the culture of lies. The exhibition will run from **May 11 to July 1, 2006**, and will open with a **reception for the artist on May 11 from 7:00 - 9:00p.m.**

In “**Anatomy of La Mentira: Red Noses**” the internationally known, Salvadoran-born artist continues to explore current social and political trends. Cartagena’s past work has tackled issues such as the immigrant experience, consumer culture, homelessness, and material waste while dealing head-on with themes of exile, identity, perception, and the use of power. In a time when lies are thrown carelessly about causing human suffering and complicity, “**Anatomy of La Mentira: Red Noses**,” is a direct response to the effects of lying no matter how large or small the infraction. Cartagena sketches profiles of men’s faces, simple in their detail, but powerful in their stoicism. Conical red noses placed over the characters’ real noses expose the emboldened, straight faces for their lies. These images, varied in their sense of grandeur, yet united by their red noses, define the commonality of lying – each of us lies regardless of stature or position. Cartagena’s subjects, determined to protect their lies, appear oblivious to their scarlet brands asking the audience to question the nature, intention, and consequences of lying.

Born in El Salvador, Cartagena relocated to the United States and has been creating art in the San Francisco Bay-Area since the late 1980s. Originally recognized as a printmaker, Cartagena’s artistic palette has branched out to include sculpture, audio and video installations, and more recently, set-design. His work has been reviewed in several publications including “Artweek,” and he has been nominated for and awarded multiple grants, fellowships, and awards, among them a San Francisco Cultural Equity Grant (2005), the “Visions from the New California” grant (2004), a month-long residency at 18th Street Arts Complex in Santa Monica (2004), a grant from the Peter S. Reed Foundation (2004), and a Rockefeller grant (2002).

For over a decade, Cartagena’s work has appeared in numerous galleries, museums, and private collections worldwide. He has participated in both solo and group shows throughout the San Francisco Bay-Area, in New York, Philadelphia, Honolulu, and all over California, including Los Angeles. Internationally, Cartagena has exhibited in Mexico, Japan, El Salvador, Belarus, Ecuador and Greece. He has served as Artist-in-Residence at ZEUM, Southern Exposure, and SF Art Commission’s WritersCorps. He is also on the faculty at Arrowsmith Academy and teaches at Berkeley’s New Age Academy. Cartagena collaborates with Ampersand International Arts and Brown Bag Gallery in San Francisco, CA.

“**Anatomy of La Mentira: Red Noses**” along with new works by Victor Cartagena will exhibit at the Stephen Cohen Gallery, located at 7358 Beverly Boulevard in Los Angeles. The gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., and by appointment.

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