

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO ANNOUNCES
OCTOPUS & OTHERS: ACTS OF COLLABORATION & POETICS
August 6 – November 15, 2026



Papo Colo, *Look Outside Your World* from the series *Photopoems*, 1979, from the portfolio *Photogenics: Photopoems / Acting as Behavior*, 1983. Duotone prints from the original monoprints. Collection of El Museo del Barrio, New York. Gift of the artist with additional support from "PROARTISTA: Sustaining the Work of Living Contemporary Artists," a fund from the Jacques and Natasha Gelman Trust, 2003. Photo by Jason Mandella.

PRESS KIT [here](#)

Press Preview: 10:00 AM on September 9, 2026. RSVP [here](#)

NEW YORK, NY, July 14, 2026 — El Museo del Barrio is pleased to present ***Octopus & Others: Acts of Collaboration & Poetics***, an exhibition inspired by a significant project from the museum's history by artist, poet, and Exit Art co-founder Papo Colo. **Opening August 6, 2026**, the show is anchored by a recent gift to El Museo's Permanent Collection of several panels from Colo's *Octopus: An Act of Sculpture* (1982). First staged in El Museo's courtyard in 1982, the piece consists of an accordion-style book sculpture. Presented at El Museo for the first time in more than four decades, *Octopus & Others* showcases the power of collaboration between artists and poets and artworks that embrace and subvert the book form and its function.

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"For more than five decades, El Museo del Barrio has championed artists who expand our understanding of art, identity, and community through bold experimentation and cultural exchange. *Octopus & Others: Acts of Collaboration & Poetics* reflects that enduring commitment by celebrating the power of collaboration, while reaffirming El Museo's role as a place where artists, writers, and audiences come together to imagine new possibilities." —**Patrick Charpenel, Executive Director, El Museo del Barrio**

Each "page" of *Octopus* was made onsite by an artist and/or poet from New York City's uptown and downtown scenes that Colo invited to contribute. The resulting participatory sculpture represented an anthology of the various currents in poetry and art of New York's artistic ecosystem of the early 1980s. Participants included writers and poets such as Nicholasa Mohr and Pedro Pietri, alongside artists Vito Acconci, Tehching Hsieh, and Juan Sánchez, among others. *Octopus* not only reflected Exit Art's interdisciplinary and multicultural ethos but also underscores El Museo's role within New York's alternative cultural network and its longstanding commitment to experimentation, innovation, and cultural exchange.

"We are grateful to Papo Colo for his generosity and continued engagement with El Museo del Barrio. By bringing this storied project into our Permanent Collection and presenting it for the first time in decades, we are able to build on *Octopus's* proposition through a dynamic interdisciplinary group of artists." —**Zuna Maza, Assistant Curator, El Museo del Barrio**

With *Octopus* Colo centered the collaborative gesture and the transformation of the book into sculpture. Taking this as a point of departure, *Octopus & Others* brings together cross-generational contributions of artists and poets that share its collaborative ethos. Furthermore, this grouping of collection works, archival materials, and select loans, showcases artistic practices that have embraced and reconsidered the book form in response to shared social, political, and environmental concerns.

The exhibition is curated by El Museo del Barrio's Assistant Curator, Zuna Maza.

Participating artists:

Vito Acconci
ADÁL
Rafael Aponte-Ledée
Diógenes Ballester
Mary K. Boncher
Rolando Briseño

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Roger Cabán
Norma E. Cantú
Esteban Chavez S.
Wilfredo Chiesa
Papo Colo
Jayne Cortez
Joey De Jesus
Marcos Dimas
Melvin Edwards
John Fekner
David Hammons
Tehching Hsieh
Komar & Melamid
Tomás López Ramírez
Mev Luna
Mariposa
Jesús Papoleto Meléndez
Amalia Mesa-Bains
Andrea Moccio
Nicholasa Mohr
Roberto Ortiz Meléndez
Pedro Pietri
Dolores Prida
Tania Niomi Ramirez
Héctor Rivera
Rodríguez Calero
Fernando Salicrup
Juan Sánchez
Marta Sánchez
Jorge Soto Sánchez
Nitza Tufiño
Rafael Tufiño
Regina Vater

SPONSORS

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Octopus & Others: Acts of Collaboration & Poetics and other programs at El Museo del Barrio are supported by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and the New York State Council on the arts with support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

ABOUT EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO

El Museo del Barrio is the nation's leading Latine and Latin American cultural institution. The Museum welcomes visitors of all backgrounds to discover the artistic landscape of these communities through its extensive Permanent Collection, varied exhibitions and publications, bilingual public programs, educational activities, festivals, and special events.

The Museum is located at 1230 Fifth Avenue at 104th Street in New York City. The Museum is open Thursdays through Sundays from 11:00am – 5:00pm. Pay-what you can. To connect with El Museo via social media, follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [X](#). For more information, please visit www.elmuseo.org.

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