

# The New York Times

---

ART & DESIGN | ART IN REVIEW

## MARIO GARCIA TORRES: ‘Cover Letter’

By KAREN ROSENBERG APRIL 28, 2011

*45 Orchard Street (between Hester and Grand Streets), Lower East Side*

*Through May 8*

Can a museum be transient? The conceptual artist Mario Garcia Torres poses that question in this clever pop-up show, the first in a series of roving exhibitions organized by Rose Lord, director of Marian Goodman; and Mari Spirito, director of 303 Gallery.

His two projects, both slide projections, could be taken as artist proposals, job applications, travelogues or documentaries. “Cover Letter” details a message sent, in slide form, to the **Kunsthalle Bern**. In it Mr. Garcia Torres suggests himself for the job of museum director. His argument is circular, but ultimately persuasive — and it’s sweetened by coy images of him arranging flowers.

Offering more food for thought is the slide projection “What Doesn’t Kill You Makes You Stronger,” from 2007. It concerns a not-quite-realized project by the artist **Martin Kippenberger**, an effort to establish a modern art museum on the low-key Greek island of Syros in the early 1990s.

As Mr. Garcia Torres describes it, Mr. Kippenberger succeeded, briefly, in founding a sort of colony of German contemporary artists; Cosima von Bonin and Michael Krebber were among those who exhibited at MoMAS, or the Museum of

painting floors and playing museum guard. The concept petered out after Mr. Kippenberger's death; the site is now a wastewater treatment plant.

Visiting the island, Mr. Garcia Torres tries to pick up where Mr. Kippenberger left off. But Syros, for all its history, remains an unlikely modern-art destination, home to “locals, a few lost souls, or domestic tourists,” as Mr. Garcia-Torres characterizes it.

The point, though, isn't to build another Guggenheim; it's to create an artist-run museum, activated “by the unexpected actions of the small group congregating in it, and the rumors they provoked.” As our museums inflate, expand and franchise, that's a powerful thought.

A version of this review appears in print on April 29, 2011, on Page C29 of the New York edition with the headline: Mario Garcia Torres: 'Cover Letter'.