

In October 1986 Dr. C. Everett Koop released his study "The Surgeon General's Report on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome" without official clearance from the White House. In the months prior to the International AIDS Conference slated for May 1987 on the nations capitol, the Senate unanimously passed a resolution calling on the President to appoint a national AIDS commission, which he did. On the eve of the conference, President Reagan broke his silence of over five years and spoke the word AIDS publicly for the first time in his Presidency at a fundraising dinner for AmFAR. By this point in his Administration, 36,058 Americans had been diagnosed with the disease, and 20,849 had died of it; by early 1987 the United States was the only major western industrialized nation that had not introduced a coordinated AIDS education campaign to thwart its early progress.

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I first met Félix in 1986. We were introduced by our mutual friend artist Richard Armijo, proprietor of Embargo Books, Ltd. Located on Rivington Street in Mahhattan. I was organizing "Corporate Crime / Malicious Mischief" and went to see Félix at his studio apartment on Grove Street in the Village. I was immediately impressed with the order and tidiness of his space, and we sat on Félix's bed to view various works that were in progress. We ate fresh pastries that Félix had bought from a nearby bakery on Christopher Street and enjoyed several cups of his super-strength Cuban coffee as we explored ideas for my forthcoming project for Installation Gallery in San Diego. Félix was working as a waiter at the time, and I was hanging out in San Francisco working independently as a curator. During that first meeting, a special bond of kinship emerged that would remain with us thru the years to come. Soon after, I became a regular recipient of postcards + snapshots + handwritten notes from Félix, *recuerdos* detailing moments from his and Ross' life in Canada, New York and elsewhere on the planet.

During the Spring of 1987, as I approached early deadlines for publication of the catalog, I was able to visit Manhattan several times and work out a final checklist for the show. Jane Bauman and I were designing the catalog and we decided to place this work --Félix's timepiece entitled "1987"-- next to the introduction. The work made direct reference to the zeitgeist of those times, but we were not prepared for the shock of synchronicity later that year when the stock market crashed a couple of weeks prior to the San Diego opening of 'Corporate Crime / Malicious Mischief' in the Fall of 1987. I think it was then that I came to see this visionary quality in Félix's work: early evidence of elements of a poetic yet psychic subversiveness and a cool burning rage that would remain at the core of his artistic output thru the remainder of his powerfully prolific yet short-lived life.

This piece has always been a favorite of mine. It was first shown in "Corporate Crime / Malicious Mischief" at Installation Gallery here in San Diego, from November 14 thru December 19, 1987. I am elated that many more individuals shall now be able to view it and perhaps be made aware of its place in history as Félix's life story is articulated in some detail thru the voices of those who knew him during the era of Act-Up and the activist Eighties when he first came on the scene.

**Armando Rascón**  
San Francisco, California

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**FÉLIX GONZÁLEZ-TORRES**

*1987, 1987. Photostat, 8 x 10"*

**xicano**

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**From:** "Stephanie Hanor" <shanor@mcasd.org>  
**To:** <armando@xicano.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 09, 2004 12:18 PM  
**Subject:** F. Gonzalez-Torres

Hi Armando,

I hope you are doing well. We are working on a project for our La Jolla galleries where we will be highlighting a work from the permanent collection and asking people to write a response to the piece. I'd love to have the Felix Gonzalez-Torres piece that you gave us be the first piece that we show as part of this series called Point of View. Your knowledge of the artist, the story of the exhibition of the work, and the meaning of the piece would be very interesting to share with our viewers, and I was wondering if you would be willing to write a short label for the work?

I'm thinking about 200 words or so, and we can pay you a modest honorarium. Unfortunately, I'm on a bit of a tight schedule, and if you are interested in the project, would love to get something from you in a week. Let me know if you are interested and if the time schedule works for you or not.

Thanks so much for your consideration.

Best,

Stephanie

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