



Press Release – 10th October 2012

For immediate release

Colombiage celebrates its 5th anniversary with Santiago Gamboa, one of Colombia's most distinctive literary voices

"In the last five years, Colombiage has helped many talented artists find their voice on the international stage while bringing audiences closer together in a celebration of intercultural exchange, talent and diversity. It is an honour to celebrate our five-year trajectory in the presence of Santiago Gamboa, one of the most inventive voices in Colombian literature; and we look forward to coming up with new, original ways of nurturing talent while doing what we do best – bringing people together!" **Landa Acevedo-Scott, Co-founder & Artistic Director at Colombiage**

As Colombiage gets ready to celebrate its fifth anniversary this Autumn, we are delighted to announce that **Santiago Gamboa**, one of Colombia's most distinctive literary voices, will be joining us to mark the occasion on the **25th October**. Since its inception in 2007, Colombiage has been celebrating the work of some of the best Colombian writers, musicians and filmmakers; and given how important literature has been to our cause – building bridges and facilitating dialogues between Colombia and the UK – we couldn't think of a better way to embark on the next five years of our journey.

On this special evening, we will also be celebrating the UK publication of Santiago Gamboa's latest novel **NECROPOLIS** (his first to be translated in English) by **Europa Editions**. In *Necropolis* – regarded by many as his most ambitious novel yet - Gamboa displays the talent and inventiveness that have earned him a reputation as one of the leading figures in his generation of Latin American authors; and we are honoured to welcome him, Faber author **Stav Sherez** and translator **Howard Curtis** in a conversation about *Necropolis*, a masterful literary noir. **Siobhan Murphy**, Arts Editor at the **Metro** recently wrote about *Necropolis* "Gamboa's wildly inventive book is full of literary ironies and tricksiness, characters declaiming on grand

themes and unfettered sex and violence. Reminiscent of Roberto Bolaño, Gamboa here creates a platform for bravura storytelling.”

The Colombiage team will also be making a very special announcement that evening, so do stay tuned with the latest information and updates on www.colombiage.com

Date: 25 October 2012

Time: 7.30pm

Place: Piano House / 9 Brighton Terrace / London SW9 8DJ

Booking: please note that access to this event is **by invitation only**. We have a limited number of complimentary tickets available to the public, which will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Those interested in attending are encouraged to send an email to info@colombiage.com expressing their interest.

Notes to editors

- We would be delighted if you could join us on the 25th October. If you are interested in a press pass, please email us at press@colombiage.com
- A Spanish version of the press release is also available on request.

For press enquiries please contact:

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About Colombiage

Colombiage is Europe’s most influential celebration of contemporary Colombian arts and culture. Launched in November 2007, Colombiage was born out of the need to give our talented writers, musicians and filmmakers a meaningful voice on the international stage. Since it’s inception, Colombiage has:

- Created a forward-thinking platform for intercultural exchange between Colombia and the UK.
- Premiered the work of over 100 Colombian writers, musicians and filmmakers in London.
- Worked with internationally renowned artists including Manu Chao.
- Engaged and entertained over 20,000 people over four festivals, numerous events and one-off concerts.
- Developed an unrivalled programme of events and activities spanning music, theatre, dance, film, literature, visual arts and current affairs.
- Worked with some of the UK’s landmark cultural centres, including the Southbank Centre, the Barbican Centre, the RichMix, the Roundhouse and the Riverside Studios.
- Consolidated solid partnerships with some of the most dynamic movers and shakers in the cultural landscape including the Hay Festival, the BBC, and Como No!

About the panelists

Santiago Gamboa

Santiago Gamboa was born in Bogotá, Colombia. His debut novel, *Páginas de vuelta* (1995), established him as one of the most innovative voices in Colombian literature. He has since published seven novels and two collections of short stories. His journalism appears regularly in *El Tiempo* (Colombia) and *Cromos*, and he is a

regular contributor to *Radio France International*. Previously Colombia's cultural attaché in New Delhi, he currently lives in Rome. He is the winner of the 2009 *La Otra Orilla Literary Award*.

Stav Sherez

Stav Sherez lives in London and is the author of *The Devil's Playground* (Penguin, 2004), which was shortlisted for the *CWA John Creasey Dagger*, *The Black Monastery* (Faber, 2009) and *A Dark Redemption* (Faber, 2012). He was previously a music journalist and has also written for *The Daily Telegraph* among others. He is currently the literary editor of the *Catholic Herald*.

Howard Curtis

Howard Curtis has translated more than sixty books from Italian, French and Spanish. Apart from Santiago Gamboa's *Necropolis*, his translations from Spanish include works by Luis Sepúlveda and Francisco Coloane. Howard Curtis's translation of *Solea*, the final book in Jean-Claude Izzo's Marseilles trilogy, was shortlisted for the *French-American and Florence Gould Translation Prize* in 2008.

About Necropolis

"Gamboa is one of the most interesting Latin American writers... [and *Necropolis*] is his most ambitious novel yet." — *La Nación*

"Gamboa is, along with García Márquez, the most important Colombian writer." — *Manuel Vázquez Montalbán*

"[With *Necropolis*] Gamboa proves once again that perhaps no other contemporary Colombian author more perfectly captures the rhythm of storytelling...A formidable writer who deserves hearty praise for uniquely lively, lucid and passionate prose." — *El Espectador (Colombia)*

"[*Necropolis* exhibits a] magnificent use of language, accomplishing the difficult task of bringing so many different voices to life whilst making each one authentic and unique." — *La Otra Orilla Jury*

"I operate according to Julio Cortázar's maxim: funny is not the opposite of serious, but the opposite of boring." — *Santiago Gamboa*

An unnamed author is invited to the International Congress of Biography and Memory in Jerusalem. Surprised and flattered, he accepts only to find the event a most unusual affair. In the conference rooms of a luxury hotel, he listens to a series of extraordinary life stories: the saga of a chess-playing duo, the tale of an Italian porn star with liberal affectations, the drama of a Colombian industrialist who has been waging a longstanding battle with local paramilitaries, and many more. But it is José Maturana—evangelical pastor, recovering drug addict, ex-con—with his captivating story of redemption at the hands of a charismatic tattooed messiah from Miami, who fascinates the author more than any other. Hours after his stirring presentation to a rapt audience, Maturana is found dead in his hotel room. At first it seems likely that he has taken his own life, but there are a few loose ends that don't support the suicide hypothesis. The narrator, moved by Maturana's life story to discover the truth about his death, will lead an investigation that turns the entire plot of this chimerical novel on its end.