

# The Wolfe Institute

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*The Ethyle R. Wolfe Institute for the Humanities,  
in cooperation with the Department of Television and Radio,  
presents a screening and discussion*

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## Vertical Slum



*Vertical Slum* (2015), a 50-minute video documentary, explores how architecture reflects ideology. It uses the Confinanzas Tower, also known as the Torre David, in Caracas, Venezuela, as a case study of the huge social, economic and political changes during the past three decades of Venezuelan history. The building reflects the transformation from the extreme free market policies imposed by the International Monetary Fund in 1989 to the so-called 21st century socialism of the Hugo Chavez government.

The building of the tower was conceived and begun during the economic boom of the early 1990s but left only 60% finished when the financial crisis hit in 1994 and the structure was abandoned for a number of years. In 2008 the Confinanzas Tower was given a new life when it was transformed by housing-hungry low-income families into their own highly organized community.

*Vertical Slum* documents the history of the last 30 years through the building of the Confinanzas Tower from its early planning till its transformation into a vibrant social project and its dismantling and new abandonment. In the early months of 2015 the government moved the more than 5000 inhabitants out and once again left the tower empty.

**Irene Sosa** has been a professor at the Departments of Television and Radio and the Puerto Rican and Latino Studies since 1999. A graduate of the MFA Film and Television program at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University, she also holds a Licenciatura degree in mass communication from the Universidad Central de Venezuela. Sosa is a Fulbright Scholar who has been the recipient of various grants and awards, including: an Individual Artist's Fellowship from the New York Foundation for the Arts; a fellowship from The Andrea Frank Foundation; an Individual Artist grant from the New York State Council for the Arts; five PSC-CUNY Research Awards; a Brooklyn College Creative Achievement Award; and two Claire and Leonard Tow Faculty Research Travel Fellowships. Her previous work *Shopping to Belong* (2007) explores the search for cultural citizenship in the Latino community through consumerism. Learn more about her work at [www.irenesosa.com](http://www.irenesosa.com)

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**Tuesday, October 20, 2015**

**3:40 to 4:55 p.m.**

**Woody Tanger Auditorium  
Brooklyn College Library**

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