

No. 101 | JUNE-AUGUST | 2016

ArtNexus

40years

Jesús Abad Colorado

Daros: Hans Michael Herzog

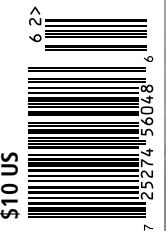
Matilde Pérez, Alfredo Ramírez

Juan Camilo Uribe, Fernell Franco

The Meta-Language of Art

Juan Fernando Herrán

José Antonio Hernández-Díez





Inseparable spatial structure, 2016. Fragments of rocks resulting from geotechnical surveys, tubular scaffolding and multidirectional clamps. All materials are provided from public works of urban mobility of the State of São Paulo, Brazil. Galeria Jaqueline Martins.

Daniel de Paula

Nominated artist from:

sp-arte



For the sixth year, EFG Bank and ArtNexus have organized an acquisition prize awarded to a Latin American artist who is nominated through a preselection process at ArtBO, Bogotá; ArtLima, Lima; SP-Arte, São Paulo; arteBA, Buenos Aires; and Ch.ACO, Santiago de Chile. The aim of the prize is to support the production of contemporary visual arts by emerging Latin American artists and to increase awareness of regional art fairs among collectors.

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Using Walls, Floors, and Ceilings: Beatriz Milhazes is made possible by the generous support of Wendy Fisher, Alexandra and Guy Halamish, and Toby Devan Lewis.

Roberto Burle Marx: Brazilian Modernist is made possible by Deutsche Bank, The Emanuel and Riane Gruss Charitable Foundation, an anonymous donation in memory of Curtis Herold, and the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts. Additional support is provided by the Leon Levy Foundation.

The Jewish Museum is under the auspices of The Jewish Theological Seminary.

Installation view of the exhibition *Using Walls, Floors, and Ceilings: Beatriz Milhazes*. The Jewish Museum, NY. Photo: David Heald



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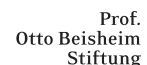


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ADRIANA MARMOREK: TRANSMUTATIONS

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Jesús Abad Colorado.

Footprint clashes between militia groups of guerrillas, paramilitary groups and the security forces during Operation Orion, Rio Atrato, Bojayá, Chocó. May 7, 2002. Photography. Courtesy Jesús Abad Colorado.

Like many Colombians, photographer Jesús Abad Colorado (Medellin, 1967) has experienced the violence in his native country directly. His own family suffered it, and the killing of his grandfather drove Abad Colorado to the realization that analyzing Colombia's history with regards to the issue of violence required to look for its roots in the distant past. His decision to study Social Communication and Journalism at Universidad de Antioquia helped him value the importance of images, and, as he puts it, to "attempt writing the history of the country through photography."

Without being a war correspondent, he gradually became a photo-reporter of Colombia's armed conflict, telling stories that preserve memory, since a central preoccupation in his work is the forestalling of oblivion by means of presenting the suffering of victims and breaking through the insensitivity that is often caused by the reiteration of violent events. This is why as a documentary photographer he has recorded different aspects of the conflict, gathering visual testimonies of situations generated by events like forced migrations, the atmosphere in afflicted communities, and the ways in which these communities are able to resist and recover after such experiences. Abad Colorado not only bears witness to disaster; he also reveals the resilience of those who have lived through it.

One noteworthy aspect of his photography is its lack of interest in the morbid spectacle that sometimes arises from the registering of violence; rather, he seeks to document situations that prompt thought about the implications of the conflict. As a member of the Historical Memory Group, he says: "I don't seek to provoke people into horror; I seek to have them reflect." Thus, the arrival of his work in the museum serves, in his view, "the purpose of interrogating a nation about its memory."

IVONNE PINI

(See article by Santiago Rueda, page 34)

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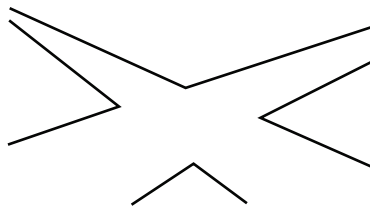
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«La mutación del arte en una sociedad materialista»

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AWARDS

CIFO Awards 2016

Miami, Florida

The Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation—CIFO—announced the winners of its fellowships for 2016. Among the 10 new fellows, 4 are Colombian: María Evéla Marmolejo received the CIFO Achievement Award in recognition of her outstanding career, while Jorge Julian Aristizábal, Carlos Castro and the collective formed by Fernando Pareja and Leidy Chávez won the mid-career award.

The Emerging Artist award went to Elena Damiani and Sandra Nakamura (Peru), Fidel García and Fabian Peña (Cuba), Oscar Farfán (Guatemala), and Felipe Meres (Brazil).

Next September 1st, CIFO will present an exhibition with the award-winning works, featuring a performance by María Evéla Marmolejo, *Conciencia dopada* (“Doped Consciousness”), where the artist explores issues of identity and collective consciousness. Marmolejo, who stopped producing art for nearly 28 years, reengaged her career in 2013; despite the long silence, her relevance and her contributions are undeniable, and

María Evéla Marmolejo. *Anónimo 1* (*Anonymous 1*), 1981. Plazoleta Centro Administrativo Municipal, Cali (CAM). Photographic record: Fabio Arango.



she is considered one of Latin America’s most politically radical artists of the 1980s.

Virginia Rota Ibero-American Photography Prize Nexofoto16

Madrid, Spain

The first edition of the Ibero-American Photography Prize Nexofoto16 was granted to Spanish artist Virginia Rota for her work titled *Saudade* (Nostalgia), a piece that dissects longing and loss. For Rota, *Saudade* is the remnant left by the certainty that that which was once home will never be again. The jury entrusted with selecting the winner was formed by: Javier Vallhonrat, Alejandro Castellote, Rosina Cazali, Iñaki Domingo, Diego Alonso, Isabel Lázaro, Luis Binimelis de Dios and José Martínez-Quintanilla.

The prize consists of a purse of 2,000 euros and several exhibitions, one at the Mondo Galería in Madrid—to be presented concurrently with *Photoespaña2016*—another at the Galería Art Deal Project in Barcelona, and a third one at the Ekho Gallery in Santiago, Chile.

Saudade is a project in which Virginia Rota addresses bitterness, grief, melancholy and sorrow. The Royal Spanish Academy (RAE) defines the term “*Saudade*” as loneliness, nostalgia, longing. But only those who have lost something important in their lives understand its true meaning. *Saudade* is the remnant left by the certainty that was once home has been lost forever. It means missing something with such intensity that it hurts. In this manner, Virginia Rota reveals through a series of photographs taken in her home the depreciation of something valuable when one already reached the top and now cannot find peace in which to rest.

Virginia Rota (Málaga, 1989) completed a degree in Psychology and a MA in Experimental

Filmmaking. She received the first *Malagecrea2015* and *Contemporarte2015* awards. She has exhibited her work as the Museo de Arte Moderno in Guatemala, the Galería Astarté (Madrid), IRJ (Logroño), Festival Incubarte 2015 (Valencia), and at the Galería La Casarosa (Málaga).

Carlos Cruz-Díez Trebbia Awards

Prague, Czech Republic

The Trebbia Awards Ceremony was held on March 13th at the Spanish Hall in Prague Castle, with the participation of Milos Zitman, President of the Czech Republic; Daniel Herman, the Czech Republic’s Minister of Culture; and Miro Smolák, director of the Trebbia Foundation. Among the award recipients in the Artistic Achievement category was Carlos Cruz Díez (Venezuela, 1923), who is considered one of the most important living artists of the Twentieth Century. The award was presented by Eileen Cooper, of the Royal Academy of Arts, London, and received on behalf of the artists, by Adriana Cruz, president of the Cruz Díez Foundation. Other recipients of the award in the same category included German-Slovak mime, choreographer, director, and professor Milan Sladek (1938) and the late Czech architect and designer Borek Šípek (1949-2016). The Trebbia Awards are also given in categories like Contributions to National Cultural Dialogue, Lifetime Achievement, and Support for Culture and the Arts.

Prior recipients include American photographer Annie Leibovitz; Jiri Srnc, the founder of Prague’s Black Theater; and Jose Antonio Abreu, founder of Venezuela’s National System of Children and Youth Orchestras and Choirs.

The Prague-based Trebbia Foundation established the awards in the year 2000 to provide a stimulus for culture and the arts.

Virginia Rota. From the series *Saudade*.



APPOINTMENT

Tanya Barson, Chief Curator and Pablo Martínez, Head of Programming of Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona MACBA

Barcelona, Spain

Last April 27th Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) formally announced the appointment of Tanya Barson and Pablo Martínez. Ferran Barenblit, Director of MACBA since October 2015, completes his team with the incorporation of Tanya Barson as Chief Curator and Pablo Martínez as Head of Programming. Tanya Barson, former Curator of International Art at Tate Modern, will be in charge of the Collection, Exhibitions and Publications departments. Pablo Martínez, former Head of Education and Public Activities at CA2 Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, will be in charge of the MACBA Study Centre, Programme of Independent Studies (PEI), Public Programmes and Education. They will join MACBA on 1 September 2016.

Ferran Barenblit, Director of MACBA, in agreement with the Committee of Experts, has praised Tanya Barson for 'her intellectual ambition, her longstanding experience at Tate Modern, one of the most important museums in the world, where she contributed to the development and presentation of the Collection; and her exhaustive knowledge of postwar art, with particular interest in non-hegemonic narratives in the transition between modernity and contemporaneity'. In the words of Barenblit: 'With these new appointments, together with MACBA's team, the Museum will be ready to face the challenges ahead with a programme of excellence and rigour, and further explore its relation to the public and its international projection.'

Tanya Barson joined the Tate in 1997. Since 2007 she has been Curator of International Art at Tate Modern. Previously she was Curator of Exhibitions and the Collection at Tate Liverpool (2004–7). She has curated solo exhibitions such as Mira Schendel (2013), Helio Oiticica (2007), Frida Kahlo (2005) and Assume Vivid Astro Focus (2005). Among the group exhibitions she has curated are *Inverting the Map: Latin American Art from the Tate Collection* (2006) and the Turner Prize (2001). She has developed new formats of collaboration between Tate and Latin American organizations, projects such as Sala Siqueiros in Mexico City, MALI in Lima and TEOR/ÉTICA in San José de Costa Rica. She is currently preparing one of the inaugural exhibitions for the opening of Tate Modern's new building in July, dedicated to Georgia O'Keeffe.

Rodrigo Moura Associate Curator Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP)

São Paulo, Brazil

Brazilian curator, editor, and art critic Rodrigo Moura, who had served as artistic director of the Instituto Inhotim (Coleção Bernardo Paz) for the last three years, has been appointed associate curator in the area of Brazilian art of the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP), which is currently under the artistic directorship of Adriano Pedrosa.

Moura has already been presented with three MASP projects scheduled for the second semester of this year: an exhibition by Cândido Portinari, another by São Paulo-based painter Agostinho Batista de Freitas, and a seminar on indigenous art.

As artistic director of the Instituto Inhotim, one of his major projects was the 2015 creation of a pavilion dedicated to the work of photographer Claudia Andujar

which included over four hundred photographs, taken between 1970 and 2010, centered on the Yanomami indigenous community located in the Brazilian Amazon.

Before his appointment as artistic director of the Coleção Osklen Inhotim Moura served as deputy director of Arts and Cultural Programs of the Instituto Inhotim (Minas Gerais, Brazil), where he had an important role in the acquisition of works by artists like Artur Barrio, Ernesto Neto, Iran do Espírito Santo, Jorge Macchi, and Víctor Grippo, among others.

During the development of the collection of Inhotim, Moura also gave priority to the acquisition of works by younger artists like Alexandre da Cunha, Marcellus L. and Mateo López. He was entrusted with the curatorship of the pavilion of artist Miguel Rio-Blanco, inaugurated in 2010, and the execution of site-specific projects by artists Jorge Macchi and Rivane Neuenschwander, inaugurated in 2009. Moura was assistant curator (2001-2003) and curator (2004-2006) of the Museu de Arte da Pampulha, in Belo Horizonte, where he organized solo exhibitions by Damián Ortega, Ernesto Neto, Renata Lucas, José Bento, and Fernanda Gomes, among others.

Rodrigo Moura also coordinated Bolsa Pampulha, a grant program for young artists. He

Tanya Barson. Photo by Olivia Hemingway ©Tate Photography.



Rodrigo Moura. Associate curator of Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP).

JULIO LARRAZ



JUNE 18TH - OCTOBER 23RD 2016

CONTINI

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participated as curator of the EFG ArtNexus Latin American Art Award and is a contributor of ArtNexus magazine. He also writes critical texts on art for periodicals, magazines, catalogs and books.

Marta Mestre Curator at Inhotim

Belo Horizonte, Brazil

Portuguese curator Marta Mestre will become the new curator of the Institución Inhotim, a collection belonging to Bernardo Paz, in Belo Horizonte (Brazil).

Last year, Mestre served as curator at the Museo de Arte Moderno in Rio de Janeiro. She is well-known for her research and exhibitions of emerging artists at that museum. The 35-year-old curator will take over the artistic director post, replacing curator Rodrigo Moura. From Belo Horizonte, Mestre will be in contact with curators Allan Schwartzman, in New York, and Jochen Voltz, in São Paulo; both part of the institution's curatorial team.

According to the local press, the institution is undergoing a crisis produced by the fall in the price of iron. About this, Mester affirmed in an interview with the *Folha de São Paulo* that: "Although it is a delicate moment, we will confront the crisis with a very capable team."

Yana Peel and Hans Ulrich Obrist at Serpentine Galleries

London, United Kingdom

The Art Newspaper has revealed in recent news the appointment of Hong Kong-based philanthropist and entrepreneur Yana Peel as chief executive of the Serpentine Galleries in London. The high-profile institution's trustees took the unprecedented decision to choose a fellow trustee to fill the new position, formerly occupied for 25 years by Julia Peyton-Jones, who put the institution on the international map.

Hans Ulrich Obrist, who has been at the Serpentine since 2006, will work in partnership with Peel as co-director of exhibitions and programmes. He will take on the new role of artistic director.

Hans Ulrich Obrist says in a statement published in the *Art Newspaper*: "I am looking forward to working in partnership with Yana Peel and embarking on an exciting new chapter in the history of the Serpentine. I am totally committed to continuing to make the Serpentine the place where artists most want to work and to be able to present our programme in ever new formats and to wider audiences."

Peel was born in St Petersburg and studied in Montreal and London. She began her career at Goldman Sachs and later co-founded the philanthropic organization the Outset Contemporary Art Fund in 2003. In 2009, she co-founded Intelligence Squared Asia, an offshoot of the high-profile company that organizes debates and discussions. She sits on numerous boards, including the Tate Executive Council, the British Fashion Council and the V-A-C Foundation Moscow, and is co-chair of the Hong Kong-based contemporary art space Para Site.

The Serpentine has also announced the appointment of two new trustees: the London-based artist Lynette Yiadom-Boakye and Mike Sherwood, the vice-chairman of Goldman Sachs.

DONATION

The Getty Foundation Grants \$8.45 Million Dollars in Donations for Pacific Standard Time Exhibitions

Southern California

On March 30, the Getty Foundation announced the granting of \$8.45 million dollars in donations for exhibitions to 43 organizations in Southern California that participate in the Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA, a regional exploration of Latin American and Latino art that begins in September of 2017 and ends in January of 2018. These grants are in addition to the \$5.5 million dollars in donations that have already been given to participating institutions for planning and research.

Art organizations from Santa Barbara to San Diego and from Los Angeles to Palm Springs will present exhibition and programs that underscore various aspects of Latin American and Latino art from antiquity to the present day. The Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA is an initiative that has been under development for more than three years. Hundreds of curators and academics have been involved in the research of several themes that will help shape the coming exhibitions, programs, and events.

According to James Cuno, president and CEO of the Paul Getty Trust, "Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA will offer new insight

Marta Mestre. Curator at Inhotim. Bernardo Paz Collection.



Hans Ulrich Obrist and Yana Peel at Serpentine Galleries. Photo: Kate Berry.



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into vital and vibrant traditions in Latin American and Latino art through a series of exhibitions and thematic programs in Southern California.” Cuno added that “The Getty Foundation grants have made it possible for participating institutions to create a dynamic program of exhibitions. Using the collaborative approach that characterized the first Pacific Standard Time initiative, Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA involves visual and performing arts organizations in partnership with colleagues and institutions across Latin America—an extensive network that is alive with discoveries.”

According to Deborah Marrow, director of the Getty Foundation, “All of Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA’s exhibitions are grounded in significant original research carried out by teams of curators—including scholars, artists, and critics—in the United States, Latin America, and Europe,” and added, “The fruits of their collaborative research will be evident in the resulting exhibitions. The exhibitions will also leave a lasting legacy of scholarship through numerous catalogues and other publications. The Getty Foundation is proud to support all of this work.”

Getty also announced that Bank of America will be a sponsoring partner. “We are proud to be part of this exciting project which is going to help people better understand the extraordinary contribu-

tions of Latin American artists to the culture and consciousness of the Southland,” said Janet Lamkin, California State President for Bank of America.

The Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA exhibitions will range from shows focused on a single artist, such as the exhibition by Chicano artist Carlos Almaraz at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), or the exhibition of works by Brazilian artist Valeska Soares at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art (SBMA), to broad group exhibition surveys. Examples of the latter include exhibitions at the Laguna Art Museum about the unique fusion of Mexican and American culture in California during the 19th and early 20th centuries, a show on South American kinetic art of the 1960s at the Palm Springs Art Museum, and the Hammer Museum’s survey titled “Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960-1985.”

Other exhibitions include “Golden Kingdoms: Luxury and Legacy in the Ancient Americas” at the J. Paul Getty Museum; “Memories of Underdevelopment,” a collaboration between the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, the Museo Jumex in Mexico City, and the Museo de Arte Lima; and “Axe Bahia: The Power of Art in an Afro-Brazilian Metropolis” at UCLA’s Fowler Museum.

Film, performing arts, and literature will also play an important role in Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA, given that the Library Foundation of Los Angeles, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, UCLA Film and Television Archive, and Los Angeles Filmforum will also be receiving grants. Other participations by performing arts organizations, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Music Center, are still in development.

About Pacific Standard Time:

Pacific Standard Time is an unprecedented partnership between art institutions across Southern California, each of

them presenting thematically connected exhibitions and programs conceived to celebrate the cultural history of the region.

NEW SPACE

Luciana Brito

São Paulo, Brazil

After 15 years with its space at Vila Olímpia, São Paulo, Luciana Brito Galeria relocates to a house designed by architect Rino Levi with landscaping by Burle Marx, at Jardim Europa neighborhood in São Paulo.

More than a mere relocation, the change represents a new phase for the gallery’s program. The white cube model of its current exhibition space is left behind to give room to a new project in which the modernist architecture heritage and urbanist issues are integrated to the contemporary visual production, in a search for new ways to perceive and show art, recovering modern precepts of integration between art and life. Rino Levi’s architecture simultaneously shelters Luciana Brito Galeria’s collection and integrates it, becoming a work of art in permanent exhibition.

The modernist house is located at Av. Nove de Julho, Jardim Europa district: the Castor Delgado Perez Residence, a project by architect Rino Levi (São Paulo, SP, 1901 – Lençóis, BA, 1965) with landscape design by Burle Marx (São Paulo, SP, 1909 – Rio de Janeiro, RJ, 1994). Listed as a cultural heritage, the building can’t suffer any structural changes. As the Castor Delgado Perez Residence will be a central element of the gallery’s new phase, the new space will also include a library about Rino Levi, where books, publications and sorted documents about the architect and the house will be available for free consultation.

Alexander and Bonin

New York, NY

Alexander and Bonin will move to 47 Walker Street in TriBeCa this summer. The new exhibition space will occupy two floors and

Luciana Brito Gallery.





Antonio Ruiz "El Corzo", *Títeres* (detalle), 1933. Colección FEMSA

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over 7,000 square feet of space redesigned by New York-based architects Bade Stageberg Cox. 47 Walker Street was recently home to Performa's 2015 Biennial Hub.

Alexander and Bonin opened in SoHo in 1995 and moved to their current three-story Chelsea space in 1997, joining a handful of galleries sparsely located throughout the area before the neighborhood's overwhelming rise in exhibition spaces.

"We are excited to take advantage of a larger space to introduce varied programming and exhibit our artists' work on a more ambitious scale," says partner Ted Bonin. "The high ceilinged space, in a classic cast iron building, provides a variety of exhibition spaces for our current roster and for projects with new artists.

The first floor galleries will incorporate natural light and the lower level will house a designated space allocated to video, sound work, and performance," adds partner Carolyn Alexander.

Alexander and Bonin will open its doors at 47 Walker Street in the summer of 2016. In the meantime, the gallery will continue to participate in national and international art fairs while working from a temporary space at 265 Canal Street, a few blocks from their new location.

Jacob Karpio Gallery Bogotá, Colombia

With the title of Re-Conquista ("Re-Conquest"), Jacob Karpio

has officially opened the doors of his new space in the San Felipe neighborhood of Bogotá. The intention is to offer a partial view of a renowned gallery, seeking to conquer at the same time a city of particular effervescence in the context of Latin America's cultural life. Carpio launches his re-conquest with the work of well-established artists, as well as some new figures, after having taken his first steps in the business in Colombia in the 1980s. His legacy of conquest and re-conquest expands even further when he proposes the collaboration of IKProjects (Ilan Karpio), who will exhibit two proposals, one by Flavio Samelo (Brazil) and one by Colectivo Doma, Argentina.

Lyle O. Reitzel Gallery New York, NY

Lyle O Reitzel, Gallery, established in Santo Domingo in 1995, announces the opening of a new branch in New York City, located at 139 Eldridge St., in Manhattan's Lower East Side, a few blocks

from the New Museum and in an area populated by over 200 galleries specializing in international art.

LOR NY will open on June 8, 2016 with Tales From the Caribbean Nights, the first solo exhibition in New York of works by Dominican artist José Garcia Cordero, who lives and works between Paris and Cabarete.

With over 20 years of operation in the international scene from its locations in Santo Domingo and, between 2005 and 2010 in Miami, Lyle O. Reitzel has participated in prestigious contemporary art fairs and organized dozens of exhibitions in museums, galleries, and institutions across the world, with a select roster of artists of such caliber as Luis Cruz Azaceta, Edouard Duval Carrié, García Cordero, Ignacio Iturria, José Bedia, Scherezade García, Hulda Guzmán, Gerard Ellis, Gustavo Acosta, Raúl Recio, Milton Becerra, Victor Rodriguez, and Gustavo Peña, among others.

ANNIVERSARY

The Museum of Latin American Art celebrates its 20th Anniversary

Los Angeles, California

The Museum of Latin American Art (MOLAA) is celebrating 20 years dedicated to modern and contemporary Latin American art. The festivities include MOLAA at Twenty: 1996–2016, the largest, most comprehensive exhibition of MOLAA's Permanent Collection ever presented.

MOLAA at Twenty: 1996–2016, curated by Edward Hayes, visually traces the evolution and growth of the Museum's collection, beginning with works from Founder Dr. Robert Gumbiner's

Jacob Karpio Galeria.



Galeria Lyle O. Reitzel.



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personal collection of modern and contemporary Latin American art and integrating acquisitions made over the past two decades. MOLAA at Twenty: 1996–2016, drawn from over 1,600 works of art from more than 20 countries, will fill the Museum's galleries through the end of the year with a rotation of the artwork planned in July. The exhibition is divided into areas that showcase the breadth and depth of MOLAA's collection and include: Mexico, Geometric Abstraction, Modern Masters, Contemporary Cuba, Printmaking, Contemporary Photography and New Directions.

Select artists on view in MOLAA at Twenty through July include: Alexandre Arrechea, Leonora Carrington, Carlos Cruz-Diez, Dr. Atl, Roberto Fabelo, León Ferrari, Carlos Garaicoa, Ramiro Gómez Jr., Osvaldo Guayasamin, José Gurvich, Judith Hernández, Wifredo Lam, Rodolfo Morales, Alejandro Otero, Esterio Segura, Jesús Rafael Soto, Rufino Tamayo, Francisco Toledo, Joaquín Torres-García and Patssi Valdez.

MOLAA founder, Dr. Robert Gumbiner (1923–2009), was introduced to and became enamored with modern and contemporary Latin American art through humanitarian visits to Mexico, Central and South America.

OBITUARY

Marisol Escobar

1930-2016

With Marisol Escobar ("Marisol"), who died on April 30th, we have lost one of the most singular and iconic sculptors of the Twentieth Century. A Venezuelan born in Paris, she had ties to the South American nation not only thanks to her father's heritage, but also for her having lived in Caracas as a child, after the death of her mother in 1941. At the same time, her work was the object of warm and sustained acclaim in the Venezuelan cultural scene, which proudly incorporated her as one of the country's most important artists.

Escobar's education was vast and richly varied. She studied at such prestigious institutions as the *École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts* and the *Académie Julian*, both in Paris and the Art Student League and the New School for Social Research, in New York City.

In the 1950s, Escobar began to develop her unique personal style by creating small terracotta figures arranged in boxes. Her long career as an exhibited artist began in those years at the Leo Castelli Gallery. Settling in New York in the 1960s, she was linked to the artists of the Pop Art movement due to the direct style of her works, which addressed the human figure via carved and painted wood blocks with various objects attached. Escobar's inclusion in *Art of Assemblage*, a 1961 exhibition at MoMA, inducted her into the New York scene and the international art circuit.

Later, figures in Escobar's work became more abstract and geometric, and her compositions found inspiration in totems. Escobar's independent, ironic disposition drove her to combine diverse materials, techniques, and objects, and to turn assemblage into a language perfectly adjusted to her expressive intent. Her works began to be characterized not only by such complex multiplicity, but also by their unique spatial arrangements and the satirical tone with which they engaged their subject matter.

In 1968, Escobar represented Venezuela at the 34th Venice Biennale, and during the early 1970s she was featured in important group shows in the UK, Japan, France, Germany, Italy, and the United States.

Escobar's first solo exhibition in Venezuela was presented at Estudio Actual gallery in 1973. Over the course of that decade, she created important public-art works in Caracas, as well as her *La reina Isabel* ("Queen Elizabeth") for the city's Museo de Arte Contemporáneo. In the 1980s she

continued to engage her recurrent themes of portraits—a vast series that included significant figures of international politics, art, and culture—and family groups.

In 1984 she received Venezuela's National Fine Arts Award, and the following year the New York City Art Commission's Excellence in Drawing award.

Several exhibitions of her work were presented in subsequent years; some highlights among them are her shows at the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston (1977), the Smithsonian Institute (Washington, D.C., 1991), a traveling exhibition organized by New York's Marlborough Gallery (which went to several museums in Japan in 1995), and the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo in Caracas (1996).

Marisol Escobar was able to express classical subjects from a novel perspective that captured and communicated the multifarious, complex visuality of the contemporary world. This is why her images have such a deep impact on our sensibility. Escobar possessed an exceptional sense of synthesis for figurative volumes and for the arrangement of masses in space, and, at the same time, of details as powerful containers of meaning. Those were the bases of her mastery in the creation of a deeply personal, unique body of work where the enigmatic, the ironic, and the imaginative combine in order to imbue that which is contingent with the enduring power of the eternal.

Katherine Chacón

Cornelis Zitman

1926-2016

Cornelis Zitman, the Dutch-born Venezuelan sculptor, passed away in Caracas last January 10th, at the age of 89. He leaves behind an important legacy for the art of the region. Zitman's career took place mainly in Venezuela, where he moved at 21 after graduating

Marisol Escobar.
Photo: Ana Luisa Figueredo.





30 años

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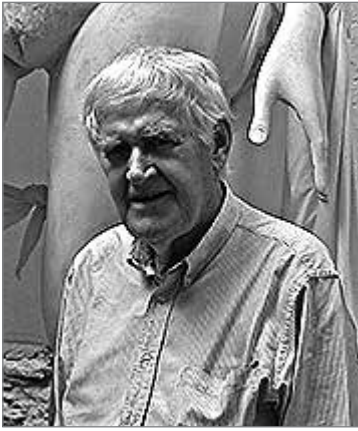
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Cornelis Zitman.
Photo: Carlos Germán Rojas.

from the Fine Arts Academy in The Hague. After refusing military service as a conscientious objector opposed to his country's policies in Indonesia, he reached Venezuela in a Swedish oil tanker. He worked as a designer and, later, as the director of a furniture-making concern. Zitman's work was exhibited for the first time in 1958, at Caracas' Galeria de Arte Contemporáneo.

In conversation in 1980, Zitman told me this: "I think I am not a typical artist. I am the opposite of a bohemian dreamer. I do dream, but in a very serious way. I am a practical-minded person who has worked in industry and in academia, and has had numerous experiences where I felt I was capable of achieving positive things. I came back from all that somewhat disillusioned, but regained the feeling through sculpture. I think sculpture embraced me. It is my refuge."

Although Zitman's most intensive education in The Netherlands had been in drawing and painting, when confronted with the ethnic diversity of the Americas, he grew passionate about sculpture. In 1961, he traveled back to The Netherlands to study foundry techniques; in 1964 he worked at Pieter Starreveldt's workshop, before returning for good to Venezuela.

In 1971 Zitman exhibited for the first time at the Dina Vierny Gallery in Paris, and in subsequent years his work was seen in Venezuela, France, Switzerland, The Netherlands, the United States, and Japan. Among other honors, he won the National Sculpture Prize at the Visual Arts Salon in Caracas (1951); the Budapest Sculpture Biennial Prize (1971); and the Jakone Museum's Kotaro Takamura Grand Prize in Japan (1982). In 2005 he was inducted into The Order of the Netherlands Lion.

Zitman tells us that he arrived at his Paris exhibition after spending a few days in Amsterdam, and upon entering

the gallery he was impressed by suddenly seeing his own sculptures with European eyes. He talks of an "Amsterdam Zitman" who reemerged for a moment when he visited his Dutch family; in Paris he saw, thanks to the distance thus gained, what was close and natural to the "Venezuela Zitman." "I found an immense density in that gallery: the sculptures had weight," he says. "What I liked best was the fact that it wasn't modern art, but something more ethnographic, like those forms that reach us from Africa or those pre-Columbian forms you find in dimly-lit, mystery-filled shops."

An admirer of Renaissance Italian sculpture and of Dutch painting, Zitman was a sculptor of rotund shapes and a draftsman of lithe figures. When he drew, he liked to erase, blur, and very carefully retrace. He wanted for "everything to develop full of light, and for shadows, if there were any, to always be transparent."

Of his sculptures, Marta Traba once said that they belonged "to the tribe of Zitman." "I liked that," commented the artist. "It is like a territory inhabited by people of different sizes... but the small ones are not really small, just farther away, and the large ones are inside or very near."

Zitman lived to the end in the company of his tribe, in his home in Sorocaima, a former tobacco-drying facility he transformed—with his wife, Vera Roos—into a refuge for his family, his art, and his visiting friends. It was there that Marcel Marceau made Zitman's portrait and Lindsay Kemp danced with the masks of Zitman's sculptures. For them, Zitman's home-workshop was also a stage.

María Elena Ramos

Carlos Alberto González

1952-2016

Carlos Alberto González died after heart surgery. He was one of my best friends, we shared the

passion for art and Art Deco, he stimulated and supported ArtNexus, I feel a great responsibility for his legacy.

The Art Deco Museum was one of his most renowned projects, which he established in Las Nieves neighborhood in down town Bogotá. It holds an important collection of furniture, objects, drawings, and paintings he collected over the years. He was a studios of the era, the influence of Art Deco around the world, and an expert on the Colombian style known as Deco-criollo.

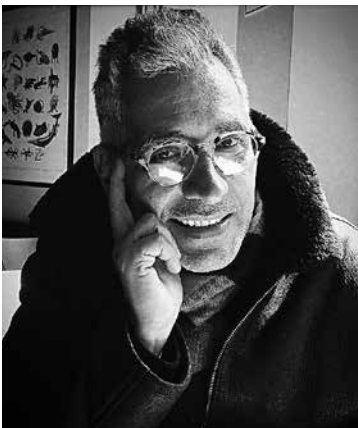
Among the many projects that arose Carlos Alberto González's passion was Arte 19 Gallery, which he opened next to the Bogotá Modern Art Museum. He presented the work of young and notable artists like Nadin Ospina, Luis Roldán, Oswaldo Macía, and Mario Opazo, among others. Although the gallery eventually closed, González remained connected to the art world, producing exhibitions such as Art Deco at the Bogotá Museum of Modern Art, or of Art Nouveau at the ArtNexus Foundation Space, as well as solo shows by Erika Diettes and Germán Arubla.

He decided to take a sabbatical in Sevilla (Colombia), in a house he had outfitted with furniture and objects in the Art Nouveau, Art Deco, of the 1950s and 1960s, where he offered gatherings, concerts and exhibitions for his friends and the city's public which he left as a legacy to the Fundacion Casa de la Cultura as a Museum. During that time he enjoyed his farm in Gualanday, Tolima where he had arranged for the planting of a native-tree forest.

His presence will be greatly missed for his excellent character, generosity, his philosophy of life: serene and cheerful, his commitment to the arts, Bogotá and Sevilla, and the great affection for his friends.

Celia Sredni de Birbragher

Carlos Alberto González.
Photo: Erika Diettes.



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Alirio Oramas

1924-2016

Alirio Oramas, a key figure in Venezuelan art of the second half of the Twentieth Century, died on January 3rd. Oramas leaves behind the fruits of an extensive and prolific career as an artist, teacher, and active member of workshops, groups, and projects that had significant resonance in art sphere. Alirio Oramas was born in Caracas on August 30, 1924. He studied painting at the Escuela de Artes Plásticas in his native city and attended La Grande Chaumière academy and the Abstract Art Studio in Paris; in the French capital he also studied art, archeology and museology at Louvre school, the Musée de L'homme, and the Musée National des Arts et Traditions Populaires. Later he worked as a restorer at the Museo de Barcelona (Spain), and in 1956 his work was exhibited at Galería Caralt in the Catalan city, alongside Canogar and Tàpies.

In a spirited avant-garde vein, Oramas took part in the foundation of the Taller Libre de Arte in Caracas, an essential platform for the emergence of new languages in Venezuelan art and a catalyst for the confluence of cubism, abstraction, and figurative modes. Most of the artists who would later come together in Paris as Los Disidentes—Oramas joined the group from Caracas in 1950—participated in the Taller. A year later, he received the National Arts Award for Cometas y Papagayos (“Kites and Parrots”), which evokes Oramas’ childhood games in the streets of La Pastora. Between 1955 and 1957, Oramas participated in the arts-integration project in Caracas’ University City, helmed by architect Carlos Raúl Villanueva, with five murals focused on color progression. Starting in 1964, he joined the faculty of the Cristóbal Rojas Art School, contributing to the education of younger generations of artists; in 1965 he established the Talleres

Periféricos de Arte del Inciba, the El León de Oro Workshop, and, later, the expansionist movement (with Omar Carreño). In 1974, working with Lucila de Oramas, he established the Armando Reverón Museum (Macuto, State of Vargas), which he directed until 1977, significantly raising the presence of Reverón’s work with his efforts.

Alirio Oramas is known primarily as a representative of Venezuelan abstract art, yet we find in his oeuvre a variety of aesthetic languages exploring figurative expression, informalism, performance, and installation, lesser known aspects of his production that reveal an irreverent attitude, a distaste for creative stasis, and a sustained inner quest. He will be remembered as a keen researcher and one of the first Venezuelan artists to experiment with non-conventional forms. Oramas, who won the Arturo Michelena Prize in two consecutive years (1966 and 67), was a profound explorer of color in the pictorial plane, a deconstructor of the essence of form, and his fertile career situates him as a reference point in the development of modern art and modern cultural identity in Venezuela.

Leyla Dunia

Rafael Squirru

1925-2016

Rafael Squirru, a one-of-a-kind character, was a decisive figure in the formation of Latin America’s artistic and cultural field. Although he graduated as a lawyer from the University of Edinburgh in 1948, he never practiced that profession. His life was devoted to consolidating a sustainable, profound philosophy of art.

In 1956, Squirru founded the Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires without an actual site, nor a collection, and under the poetic alias of “phantom museum”. Before settling in its Teatro San Martín location, the itinerant

museum temporarily occupied galleries, exhibition spaces, the Botanical Gardens, a remodeled garage, and even the ship Yapeyú, which visited twenty-two cities. Such was their commitment to the project that Squirru and his collaborators donated their salaries in order to acquire the collection’s first works. With rare enthusiasm and daring, they organized nodal exhibitions that contributed to the public ascent of many Latin American artists of the first rank. Kemble wrote to Squirru in 1981: “Well, I want you to know that I will never forget how much you have done to support unknown artists (I among them, of course), even when it meant general disapproval and the sarcasm of the supposed experts.”

During President Arturo Frondizi’s administration, Squirru was named Director of Cultural Relations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1960). It was thanks to his efforts that Alicia Penalba’s sculptures traveled to the São Paulo Biennial and Antonio Berni’s prints to the Venice Biennale, where they won first prize.

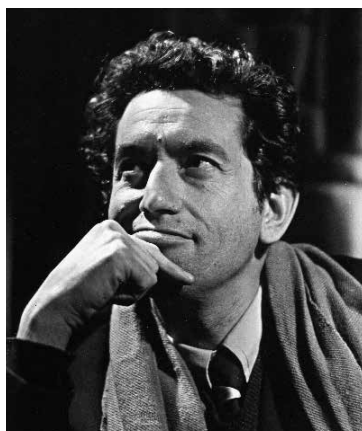
As Cultural Affairs Director at the Organization of American States (OAS), located in Washington, D.C., he achieved impressive results in the promotion of Latin American culture in the global stage (1963-1970). The journal *Americas*, edited by Guillermo de Zéndegui, was one of the instruments used by Squirru to promote the work of unknown Latin American and US artists, even rediscovering the work of forgotten figures like Edward Hopper. Squirru also validated the work of writers like Cortázar, who thanked him in a 1964 letter for having recommended Rayuela as “required reading”. Squirru understood culture and its promotion as a sustained exercise in admiration and celebration, with complete independence of an artist’s ideology.

One event that speaks of his impartiality was his recommendation to include in the State University of New York’s Anthology of Latin

Alirio Oramas. Photo: Sandro Oramas.



Rafael Squirru. Photo: Rómulo Aguerre. Courtesy: Editorial El Elefante Blanco.



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American Poetry the work of Cuban writers Guillén, Lezama Lima, and Fernández Retamar. This gained him the admiration of anti-Castro exiles and also of those Cubans who saw the OAS as an arm of American imperialism.

Returning to Argentina, Squirru focused on forging the complex network of connections and linkages that give shape to the cultural field. An exceptional orator, he lectured in his country and abroad; like a nomad of culture, he traveled to different provinces in a truck specially conditioned to carry a traveling exhibition. There are famous anecdotes about his nighttime lectures in public squares, which some people attended in their pajamas. Squirru

was a contributing writer for the La Nación newspaper for more than twenty years; his articles, which appeared regularly through 1994, were compiled and published in five books. He wrote innumerable introductions for art exhibitions as well as several books of poetry and prose. He published essays and translated Shakespeare. The essential corpus of Squirru's work includes more than fifty publications. In 1985 he launched the "Conversations with Artists" cycle at the Argentine Council of Foreign Relations, interviewing artists of the greatest relevance live on stage.

A successful person, Emerson said, is one who leaves the world a little better after a job well done.

In that sense, it can be said that Squirru achieved in his field every possible success, thanks to his lucid outlook, his commitment to culture, and his valuable work with the community.

Agustina Bazterrica

ERRATAS

In the edition of ArtNexus 100/146 Art in Colombia: Tania Candiani's work is titled: Batteries bricklayer. Installing batteries cement manufacturing blue indigo (Page 114).

In the space of Y Gallery in the exhibition galleries Guide May 6 to June 12 is a collective, whose curators are not Meyken Barreto and Omar Lopez.



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Image: Jesse Fernandez, Fidel Castro, Cuba, 1959

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*Desplazamiento por masacre de campesinos (Displacement by slaughter of peasants). Abibe Mountains, San Jose de Apartado, Antioquia, 2005. Photography. **

Today we've got some; tomorrow, we don't know

Jesús Abad Colorado

Photography, and War

Trained as a journalist at Universidad de Antioquia, incensed and shielded only by his camera, Abad Colorado launched himself not into an abyss but into the eye of the storm, in search of a direct, authentic encounter with the actors and protagonists of the conflict.

About war we have the valiant testimony of those who lived it. Robert Capa's *Slightly Out of Focus*, a summary of the great photographer's dangerous adventures in various WWII fronts, is a key example of war as experienced by a photographer. It is a fact that for over 100 years no armed conflict has gone unphotographed. The worst news, the images of the harshest suffering, still reach us via this medium. Unfailingly, war images speak of loss and absence. Who was there? What triggered such evil, such fury? What dam burst for such violence to explode? What inner darkness takes us, generation after generation, to perform war's bloody ritual? What thin line separates reason from madness? What will to destroy are we operating under? And, ultimately, how do matter, intelligence, and technology reach this state of affairs?

War photography includes many unforgettable images and many forgotten photographers, who in most cases risked their lives in the laudable attempt

to bear witness to the events. Jesús Abad Coronado is part of that history. The son of a family displaced by war, he grew up in Medellín during the city's period of greatest cultural blooming. It was the 1970s and Medellín celebrated the various editions of its International Biennial, established its Museum of Modern Art, and held its First Non-Objectual Art Colloquium and Exhibition, while the journal *Re-vista del arte y la arquitectura en América Latina* was in circulation. It was also the period of a brief honeymoon between Antioquia society and the emerging entrepreneurs of the cocaine business.

Those years also saw the first group of female photographers employed by *El Mundo* newspaper: Gloria Elena Monsalve, Rosita Coronel, Liliana Estrada, and Luz Elena Castro. And, obviously, great photographers of national stature were also active at the time in Medellín: Benjamín de la Calle, Melitón Rodríguez, Gabriel Carvajal, León Ruiz, and Rodrigo Moya; the latter continued his career in Mexico and, paradoxically, is renowned as a Mexican photographer. Finally, this was also the

Medellín where important conceptual artists took up photography as their medium: Jorge Ortiz and Luis Fernando Valencia.

As the 1980s marched on, violence spilled in Antioquia and Colombia as a whole, and Medellín became its epicenter, the city of no future. Paramilitary squads connected to law enforcement agencies, urban militias deployed by various guerrilla organizations, "social-cleansing" groups, child-age hitmen, and a motley assortment of *narcos* fought for control of the city, turning Medellín into a terrifying theater of operations and its political leaders, journalists, judicial authorities, and—especially—human-rights advocates into the easiest of preys.

Colorado, Trained as a journalist at Universidad de Antioquia, incensed and shielded only by his camera, Abad Colorado launched himself not into an abyss but into the eye of the storm, in search of a direct, authentic encounter with the actors and protagonists of the conflict.

As a student, Jesús Abad Colorado shot portraits of Bernardo Jaramillo Ossa and Carlos Pizarro, leftist candidates as-

Escuela Pedro J. Gómez. Clashes of urban guerrilla militias, paramilitary groups and members of the public forces. Comuna 13, Medellín. November 2002. Photography. *





*Integrante del Bloque Catatumbo de las AUC (Member of the Catatumbo Bloc of the AUC). Tibú, Norte de Santander. December 2004. Photography.**

*Entrenamiento de tropas paramilitares de las AUC (Training AUC paramilitary troops). Tierralta, Córdoba. 2004. Photography.**

*Huellas del bombardeo de la Operación Génesis (Traces of the bombing of Operation Genesis). Río Sucio, Chocó. May 1997. Photography.**



Eduardo Salazar asesinado por paramilitares de las AUC junto con trece personas más (Eduardo Salazar killed by AUC paramilitaries along with thirteen others). San Carlos, Antioquia. October 5, 1998. Photography. *

sassinated in the dismal 1990 electoral campaign. Almost immediately afterwards, when he worked for Medellín's *El Colombiano* daily, he was there photographing the war theater, alongside such great reporters as Zoraida Díaz, Juan Carlos Sierra, León Darío Peláez, Julio Linares, Donaldo Zuluaga, Stephen Ferry, and Henry Agudelo.

Progressively, Colorado gained recognition as an artist, one of the few "pure" photographers whose work has been accepted into the local art circuit, something that has been denied a long list of practitioners with just a handful of exceptions: Nereo López, Hernán Díaz, Abdu Eljaiek, and above all Fernell Franco.

Colorado's work has been the subject of critical treatment by authors like, among others, Andrés Gaitán, Efrén Giraldo, and Jacobo Cardona. His war landscapes may have been the key for this recognition. Desolate and mysterious images of burnt forests; large, unreal holes on the ground left by the armed forces' bombing campaigns; columns of black smoke and petro-

leum spilling into rivers, the consequence of guerrilla attacks on pipelines: images that describe the unredeemable tragedy of this war and equal in their temperature, emotion, density, and poeticism the works of artists who have also engaged the conflict using photography, like Erika Diettes, Libia Posada, Camilo Restrepo, and Juan Manuel Echavarría, among others.

Equally celebrated for their cultural depth, other images by Abad Colorado explore the obsessive presence of charms, amulets, an sacred images of the combatants (from any side), which are carefully tended to, venerated, and carried on different parts of the body. In these images, Abad Colorado underscores questions about the role so often played by religion in war and armed conflict, a subject also of studies by María Victoria Uribe, films by Víctor Gaviria, Fernando Vallejo's novel *Our Lady of the Assassins*, and José Alejandro Restrepo's *Habeas corpus*.

In Colorado's case, unlike some of the writers and artists mentioned above, what we have is the version of someone who

witnessed the war directly. Jesús Abad Colorado is not a photographer of the decisive instant and he does not report on battles; his photography happens *after*, in a way. His attitude toward his subject is measured, meditative, and respectful; he moves closer only when he is sure he won't invade their privacy, attempting to establish a relationship of reciprocity and communication before taking his shot. His approach is direct and intended to accompany his subjects, offering them a possibility of constructing their own memories via the photographer's camera. What his is after is the possibility of confronting tragedy, the will to disarticulate a necessary tendency towards destructiveness that can nevertheless be tamped down with images in order to generate a new potential for life.

Yet in Colorado's images we also find destroyed schools with bullet-riddled boards; funeral ceremonies in villages whose inhabitants avoid participating, lest they be seen as collaborators; people fleeing with their few belongings tied to



Catorce militares murieron en emboscada de las FARC (Fourteen soldiers were killed in FARC ambush). Carolina del Principe, Antioquia. September 2, 1993. Photography. *

their backs; brave human-rights advocates and peasant leaders; police and military personnel patrolling civilian areas or watchfully barricaded; teenage guerrillas carrying heavy weapons that almost exceed them in size. I'd like to highlight one specific image: a paramilitary training exercise in Tierralta, Córdoba, in 2004. Jesús Abad Colorado shoots it from above and we can see, besides the flimsiness of the uniforms—rubber boots and tennis shoes—a strange mascot, a jaguar, a wild animal captured and subjected to abuse. A symbol of power and war in Mesoamerican societies, and also a potent metaphor of war's disciplinary brutality, transformed into a weapon to threaten, intimidate, and torture others. The image, with the feline's almost unbelievable docility, reveals the true nature of a war that unfolds in the cities and jungles of one of the world's most biodiverse countries: it destroys men, women, animals, and landscapes.

Another important set of images is devoted to peasant marches, be it impromptu protests or actions organized to confront the conflict's actors (including the State), or the cruel exodus caused by the armed groups that expel people from the land. Essentially, Colorado has been a defender of the life of country peoples,

peasant communities, afro-descendant and indigenous groups, and very few individuals know the country at war as deeply as he does—a photographer who is, in the end, also a human-rights advocate.

In 2014, María Victoria Mahecha and Gloria Samper, the directors of *Paralelo 10*, were able to publish *Jesús Abad Colorado. Mirar de la vida profunda*, a retrospective of the photographer's work featuring essays by Carolina Ponce de León. Sorely needed in a country that has seen not a single day of peace, this book summarizes a 25-year career covering the war, especially in rural areas. *Mirar de la vida profunda* came to complement Stephen Ferry's exhibition and book *Violentología, un manual del conflicto colombiano*, a brave effort on the part of a photographer who has devoted a good part of his life to Colombia.

In *Jesús Abad Colorado. Mirar de la vida profunda*, Ponce de León mentions the importance of Colorado's images and the uses they have been given, as witnesses of war articulated to his efforts as an activist: "Abad Colorado's photographs have different social uses: justice tribunals, the media, and investigative reports, along with their appearances in books, conferences, and exhibition galleries. Some of his photographs are forensic in character

and are reserved for the investigation and archives of memory (...). The systematic work of reconstructing, preserving, and expanding memory is for him 'a commitment to dignity, the present, and the future.' This effort is challenged by the continuation of the conflict while peace negotiations between the government and the FARC guerrilla remain under way in Havana without reaching an accord."

In an interview with Alvaro Sierra Restrepo also featured in the book, Jesús Abad Colorado offers these reflections about his work:

"It is not a matter of keeping one's distance, but of looking at things from a non-military point of view, and understanding the suffering of the victims. This helps us gain the equilibrium necessary in order not to go mad or give up, and allows us to continue thinking about life and hope in the midst of such barbarity. Always supporting a peace process. For me, that means life. For there not to be any more victims, dead soldiers, child fighters. For us to understand the tragedy we have experienced but are incapable of beholding."

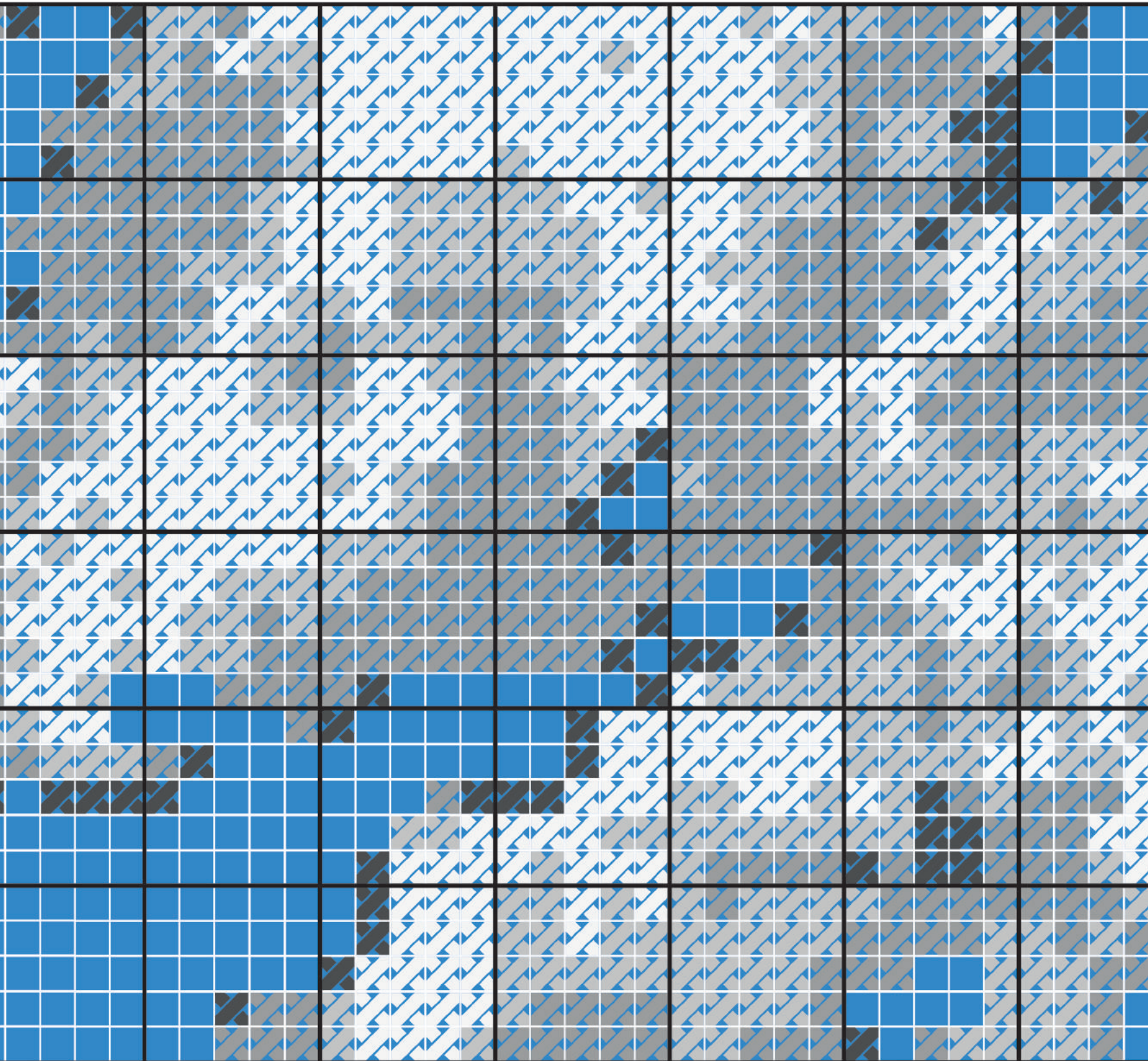
* Photos courtesy of Jesús Abad Colorado.

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Daros

Hans Michael Herzog

Hans Michael Herzog.



INTERVIEW
CELIA SREDNI DE BIRBRAGHER

CELIA: What motivated Daros to begin a Latin American art collection? When was the project conceived?

HANS MICHAEL: I met for the first time with some people from the group and also with Ruth Schmidheiny in 1999. It was that year that they had the idea to launch a collection of contemporary art from Latin American countries.

Honestly, it was never clear who was the first to come up with the idea. Perhaps it was something that evolved gradually. Ruth and her husband proposed it, since they had inherited the other collection, Daros. Stefan was setting up the Avina Foundation, Ruth had her country estate—she still has it, near Buenos Aires—and

they both had an appreciation for Latin America. I gave them the concept and it matched their ideas. That's why they asked me to begin my work for the collection on January 1, 2000.

In my head, how the collection was to be built was already clear; I already understood by then the value of building something like that, at that scale. To me, it was clear how it was to function. I had a precise vision. It was a test to figure out what we would be able to accomplish together, and I remember well the committee's first talks, where they proposed a 10-year horizon for building the collection. They wanted to see how it would evolve, because there was nothing at that point.

CELIA: You had a clear idea of what you wanted, or what you felt you needed to do. What was it?

HANS MICHAEL: It was to collect high-quality works, by artists I would select. Before getting started, I already had a pretty precise idea of what was relevant in the art world and what didn't seem to be; I began by traveling, listening, and gathering much more first-hand information. Of course, I read *ArtNexus* and more, I was never entirely convinced by purely academic texts, neither then nor now; what convinced me was the direct impact of art and artists.

As a matter of fact, I am now revisiting all this, because I want to write about these years with Daros. The people in the Latin American art world I met in 2000 were impressive. I traveled like crazy but always with a clear purpose, and several ideas about the future of the collection took shape then. Also, setting up a location in a Latin American city to exhibit Latin American art was always an essential, basic need for me, and I talked about it with Ruth from the start: we were going to rent or buy a building. You surely remember this, the situation sixteen years ago was entirely different, nobody knew almost anything about their immediate neighbors, much less about others a little farther away, and it was worse in Europe. That is why there was an urgency to create a platform in Latin America. And at the same time we established the Daros Exhibitions galleries in Zurich, which we occupied since 2002; the first exhibition there was titled

La Mirada ("The Gaze"), and it was about photography in Latin America.

The entire process of acquisitions for the collection went faster than we had planned, but always at a healthy, prudent, and thoughtful pace, without haste.

CELIA: You presented many exhibitions over the years. When you made an acquisition, were you already thinking about the exhibition, or did the exhibitions result from what you had acquired?

HANS MICHAEL: Both. Of course the exhibitions resulted from our acquisitions: we only exhibited works from the collection. But when I acquired a work of art, I always imagined it in an exhibition context, that was crucial and basic, and it always worked that way. I thought of the collection as the basis for many future exhibitions, and I always imagined the art in that function, how it would be displayed in different places and contexts. That was a key idea.

CELIA: An interesting concept in the way you collected was that you didn't collect *everything*. How many artists are we talking about? How many works? Do you know more or less the size of the collection?

HANS MICHAEL: The collection stopped making acquisitions two years ago. We have incorporated 120 artists with 1,250 works, give or take.

We were able to collect the work of several artists in depth; in other cases, the number of works is smaller, but they are

representative works. Each case is different. And, of course, in some instances we were too late, and that is why a number of artists are not in the collection.

CELIA: What can you tell us about the process of choosing Rio and purchasing that house, which took many years to renovate?

HANS MICHAEL: At first I was thinking about an exhibition space in Havana, and we began to work towards that in 2001. We even reached Fidel Castro's antechamber, with everything approved by the Ministry of Culture. But in 2003 it all fell apart for political reasons, and immediately we went looking for a different place. I thought it a good idea to look in Brazil, in Rio de Janeiro. It was a long process involving many trips, many stays, with Ruth visiting different neighborhoods in the city.

We considered every option and after a two-year search we found this magnificent, splendid, large house: the future Casa Daros, well located in the Botafogo neighborhood, and they bought it. The purchase process lasted for a year, which is quick for Brazil. We began renovations, working from the start with the local authorities to preserve the building, which has landmark status, and this took several years. Things are not always easy, and, as we know, even old houses have their own dynamic. But in the end everything worked out pretty well.

CELIA: How long was Casa Daros open?

One of the exhibition rooms. Casa Daros, Rio De Janeiro.





Aerial view Casa Daros, Rio de Janeiro.

HANS MICHAEL: Two years and three quarters.

Thankfully, we had already worked with the Casa Daros team, with Eugenio Valdés, before the inauguration in March of 2013. We brought many people together, had meetings between Brazilian and Latin American artists, and organized several lectures and events in Rio de Janeiro. They organized a mega-spectacle, the first International Congress on Art and Functional Illiteracy, involving people from all over the world. So, when Casa Daros opened its doors, there was great interest in the Brazilian side, even though they already knew how we worked, who we were. Casa Daros had been working in the city for almost three years as an institution with constant activities.

CELIA: What do you think caused the closing, after such a large collection had been amassed and the building was finally in working order?

HANS MICHAEL: I don't have an easy answer, because nobody understands it to this day. It seems absurd, and it is, to ground the Jumbo Jet just as it is taking off, after so much effort and so much investment, and after so short a time. Especially considering what Ruth Schmidheiny had told the Brazilian public in 2013, that the continuity of Casa Daros was guaranteed because it was financed for at least ten to twelve years. That wasn't the case, as we have seen.

All I can gather is that Ruth, and I am speaking very personally here, lost the passion and interest she had. Perhaps also because we were no longer traveling together as we had done before, exploring new territories, meeting new people, new artists. The only way this project could have worked is if we were both in agreement, and that agreement melted into the air, like smoke.

With my colleague Eugenio Valdés we developed already in 2004 an initial content plan for a future Casa Daros, on the basis of programmatic educational ideas, how we wanted to manage the institution, etc. We presented it several times to the Daros Latinoamérica committee. Today I think nobody there read the project in depth. You know? In the thick of the process, you keep moving forward, they say "okay" and you keep it rolling, but my feeling is that they were never truly interested. Our idea was to promote Latin American art, and much more. We wanted to present it, critique it, and debate it, not always seeking consensus, and to have interesting, real-life impacts. They did listen to us, but I believe they never understood our ideas. Perhaps one day they had a meeting and said, okay, we have invested this much (which could not have been a surprise, because budgets were always tightly controlled), and became afraid of a shifting future or didn't want to take responsibility for it. This closing

was an abdication of cultural and social responsibilities that, I think, they never understood or saw. They were unable or unwilling to appreciate the cultural and political import the project had acquired. Perhaps they were only looking at the numbers and noticed that those numbers were never going to be in the black. It was evident, and we had talked about it, that nobody would reap financial profits from this. What a few years before had seemed clear and natural didn't work for them anymore, and something scared them deeply. It seems they had almost forgotten the cultural implications. Ruth often talked about philanthropy and such... but the philanthropy went with the wind.

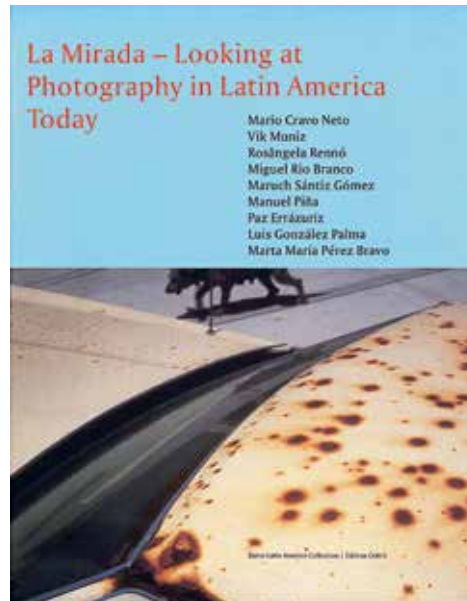
CELIA: What do you think will happen with the collection?

HANS MICHAEL: Personally, I think that one day, I don't know when, it will be sold. International interest in the collection will diminish due to its lack of visibility. Why keep such a large collection, the maintenance of which costs a fortune, and for what?

CELIA: Have you spoken with Ruth about the collection?

HANS MICHAEL: I talked to her and proposed a plan for the future diffusion and distribution of the collection. It seems they aren't ready for that yet.

CELIA: It is strange for it to be stopped so suddenly, isn't it? But, at any rate, I think they did important work and



Exhibition catalog *La mirada* (The look).

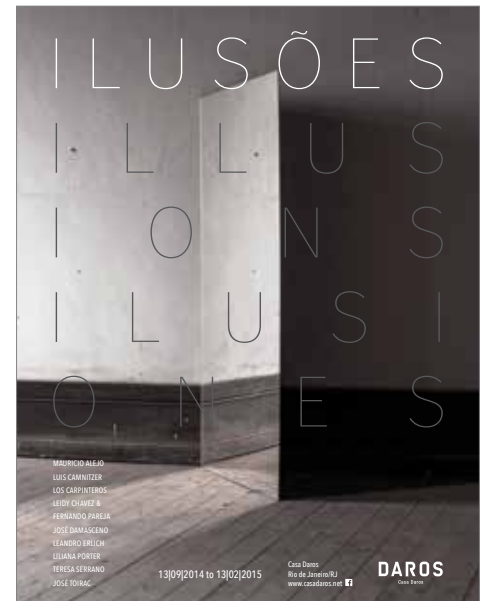


Image exhibition *Ilusões*.

brought back many names that were falling into oblivion. You did not come from the Latin American art world, you came from other areas?

HANS MICHAEL: I came from Art History. I studied Classical and Egyptian Archaeology and Art history. My Ph.D. was on a medieval subject, Thirteenth-Century Byzantium, which is closely connected to Latin American art [laughs]. But over time I came closer and closer to the present, to the Twentieth Century and to contemporary art, because that interested me more than anything else in the history of art; so, I educated myself and did my museum exhibitions in Germany for a decade. In the early 1990s, I discovered Latin America and worked with the CAAM in Las Palmas (Canary islands) and with people like Orlando Britto and the Zaya brothers, already deeply interested in Africa and also Latin America. They were the first to tell me about contemporary Latin American art, and I was very much interested. I was bored with shuttling between New York, Germany, and Europe and finding always the same things. When I discovered this Latin American world, I educated myself, traveled as much as possible, and then, when Ruth, the committee, and I came together (the committee they had in that period, which was somewhat different), we all fitted well into this project. It was still somewhat opaque, somewhat

undefined, just a vague concept, but I already had a clear idea, because I already understood enough to know that it would be a miracle harvest. The time when I started to travel and to listen to people was glorious, deeply satisfying. It was beautiful, everybody talked to me and educated me with a generosity I had never encountered before in my life, and I understood that here we had all this art nobody was dealing with seriously, or very few people were, and it was like a dream. Ten years later the situation was entirely different, but at the beginning it was an ever more beautiful and rich quest that took us everywhere. Everybody I was able to meet and the information I gathered, I had all kinds of little pieces of paper with notes from my trips. I visited many important artists once, twice, three or four times, establishing a relationship, because I always wanted to gain a better understanding of the artists and their work, or of what remained of their oeuvre, and this can take years, because each artist is organized in a different way. You must also adapt your approach each time and make it specific, with great concentration.

CELIA: Did you travel to every country in the region?

HANS MICHAEL: Yes, except for the Guyanas and Bolivia. I don't know why, they were always on the agenda, it's a pity. I knew Bolivia in the 1980s, but not as I was

doing this work. Three or four times I had it programmed but every time something happened and I wasn't able to go.

CELIA: Looking back, I am sure that for you it was very rewarding to discover this world. As you say, they opened their doors and their hearts to you, but you also opened your heart to Latin America.

HANS MICHAEL: Yes, I did open my heart. That's what I was missing in these dry relationships we sustain, as I mentioned, between the United States and Europe. There one doesn't have many true friendships, nor are there that many good discussions about what is happening in an exhibition or in the art world in general. My travels in Latin America were deeply rewarding. I flew around like a bee, always carrying information like a bee carries pollen, especially at the beginning; today people travel much more than back then. For instance, bringing information about the Cuban art scene to Brazil or Argentina, because they didn't know and still don't know a lot about what happens in Cuba. And it is the same in Mexico; it is almost a separate world, and Mexicans are not all that interested in what happens in Chile or Peru. It was beautiful because I was able to tell stories of what I had seen in different places, and people listened, it was a very lively exchange of events and ideas, of everything, and that was awesome.

CELIA SREDNI DE BIRBRAGHER
ArtNexus Editor and Publisher.



JAIME SABARTES

Untitled, 1975.

Juan Camilo Uribe

Popular Images and the Art of the Possible

EFRÉN GIRALDO

The work of Juan Camilo Uribe forms a most singular corpus in Colombian art of the second half of the Twentieth Century. It confronts the procedural, imaginative, and mental dimension of the aesthetic event, and, more specifically, the many negotiations to which art and images are subjected in the cultural realm. Uribe was an artist who considered cultural objects and, through a thorough analysis, arrived at the conviction that they constitute a form of thinking, a privileged path into the understanding of taste, institutions, and traditions. Supported on playful, ironic, and humorous components, his work was able to reflect about key issues for Colombian society. His production is a definite precursor of attitudes that today have a well-secured presence in the arts.

Yet, while it is true that such preoccupations are found in the work of a significant number of artists belonging to the generation that moved from the modern to the contemporary in Colombia (Álvaro Barrios, Beatriz González, Antonio Caro, Bernardo Salcedo), Juan Camilo Uribe's exercise transcends a mere delectation with the burlesque placement of popular elements in a work of art and seeks to produce formulations with real aesthetic and critical potential. The richness of his work resides, on the one hand, in his skilful articulation of the image with the ideological context that activates it, and, on the other, in his search for utopian possibilities for the artistic project, which at that point became one of the dominant formats for the production of art in Colombia. Both aspects are the result, perhaps, of the crisis of the work of

art as object, which had its most radical expressions during the 1960s.

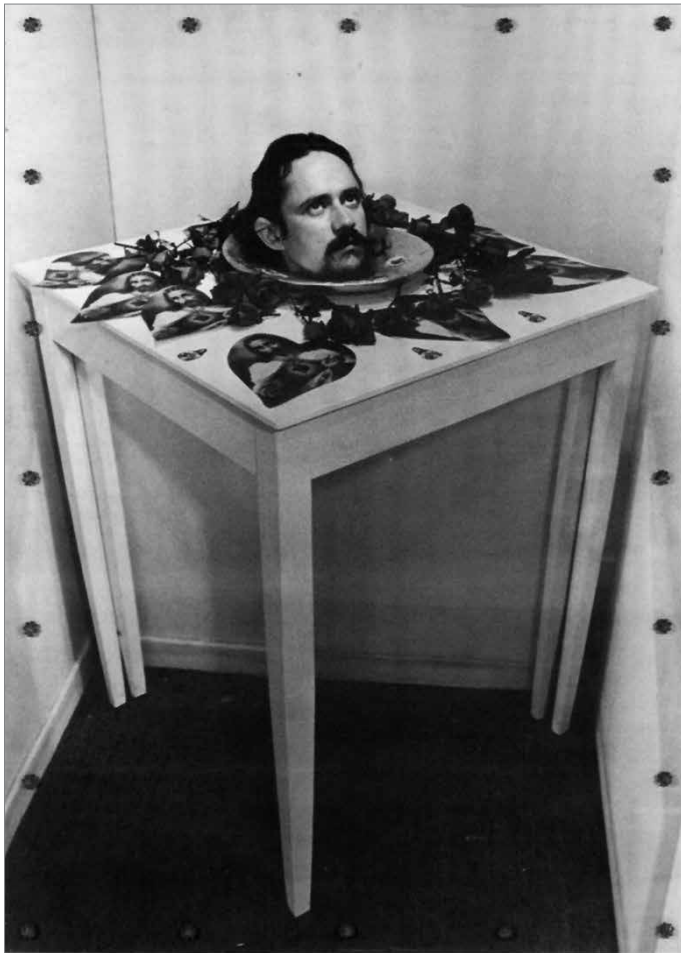
For a contemporary audience, such quests appear as already overcome. The question for the image's ideological undercurrents is already standard. But for Uribe and his contemporaries it had the character of a revelation: they were operating within a culture accustomed to live unthinkingly with its symbols. Iconoclasm, it is worth remembering, is always contextual, as Marta Traba noted when she attributed Uribe's ironic disposition to the conservatism of Antioquia society and Luis Caballero's eroticism to Bogotá's urbanity. On the other hand, in an era like ours—used to the way in which projects and complex speculations are known before their execution, thanks to sketches, digital drawings, and attachments submitted to events and invitations—it'd be easy to overlook the value of Uribe's projects. The truth is that all evidence signals the inaugural nature of his interest in the imaginary, the speculative, and the utopian, at least in Colombia. Undoubtedly, the importance of projection and speculation, at times to the discredit of the finished work, is an important vector in Uribe's oeuvre, and it is there where his most important and less recognized contributions lie.

Juan Camilo Uribe was born in Medellín in 1945 and died in 2005. Despite being a self-taught artist, he won several distinctions, among them a mention in the 3rd Coltejer Biennial and awards at the Jorge Tadeo Lozano University's National independent Salon and the Regional Arts Salon. He represented the country at the São Paulo Biennial, exhibited regularly over thirty years, and was a frequent presence

in group shows in Colombia and abroad. We still don't have a good monographic exploration of a career, Uribe's, that is essential to any map of conceptualist and Pop-Art developments in Colombia, something that would surely contribute to our understanding of the peculiarities of Colombian art in the context of Latin America's early contemporary period. We do have, however, the retrospective exhibition *Juan Camilo Uribe. Arte con sentido común* ("Juan Camilo Uribe. Common Sense Art", presented at Banco de la República in 2007 and curated by Alberto Sierra, which paid tribute to a body of work that, despite including several of the representational strategies of its era, sustained distinctive features that make it particularly memorable. As is the case with other artists, Uribe's work possesses a style, an aesthetic, combined with a critical and humorous attitude.

Despite the validation attained in exhibitions and awards, it must be remembered that proposals such as Uribe's were not received at the time as enduring or relevant artistic gestures. At first, critics connected his work with an interest in mass popular culture and the erasure of borders between "high" and "low" taste that, at a global scale, was being expressed in a new art of the image. These affiliations always made explicit the derivative, epigonic condition of Uribe and his contemporaries. Research has shown that in countries like Colombia, the approach to mass-popular images include elements that transcend the mere thematic association with the repertoire of the mass media and of US culture. In fact, critics, particularly those in Uribe's home town, found in his work a preeminence of humor that deactivated

Uribe was an artist who considered cultural objects and, through a thorough analysis, arrived at the conviction that they constitute a form of thinking, a privileged path into the understanding of taste, institutions, and traditions. Supported on playful, ironic, and humorous components, his work was able to reflect about key issues for Colombian society.



Autorretrato. *La cabeza parlante* (Self-Portrait. The talking head), 1975. Installation with photography and objects. Variable dimensions.

El cubo del ojo de Divino Rostro (The Cube of the Eye of the Divine Face), 1977. Luminous mixed construction. 160 x 40 x 40 cm



the critical dimension that, supposedly, was the task of high art. We must note that we are talking about a time when a journalist like Arturo Abella posited that Beatriz González's paintings of independence-era dignitaries were bald-faced plagiarism.

It is understandable, then, that some saw Juan Camilo Uribe's works as mere visual jokes, send-ups of the Art institution, although what prevailed in them was a systematic and thorough exploration of many of the artistic values established by modernity. It was Marta Traba herself who saw in this generation's tactics of appropriation a unifying characteristic, as they confronted the flow of images with an attitude that was more recreational than creative, more appropriationist than productive. More recently, the activity of commentators and of curators commissioned by various institutions have given artists like Uribe their proper due, pointing to the essentially critical intention of their works. For example, the very recent exhibition *Coordenadas. Historias de la instalación en Antioquia* ("Coordinates. Histories of Installation in Antioquia") put on display the importance of Uribe's interactive and ambient works, such as *Cabeza parlante* ("Talking Head") and *Medellín un lecho de rosas* ("Medellín a Bed of Roses"), had for the development of installation art in Colombia.

As has been said, in revising Uribe's collages and photomontages—two good examples are *La nueva imagen de Colombia* ("The New Image of Colombia") and *Milagro* ("Miracle")—we discover an artist who moves from formal and aesthetic concerns to culture as such, a common characteristic in many artistic proposals in Colombia since the 1960s. This process, a central aspect of contemporary art in the country, shows that the recreational and the humorous can coexist with an inquiry intended to produce interpretative outcomes. As the critic Eduardo Serano—one of the closest observers of this generation—noted at the time, Juan Carlos Uribe presents us with art understood as a creative attitude—one, we could add, where behaviors, formal decisions, and quests towards an aesthetic expansion come to coexist. The Bogotá-based critic accurately described Uribe by defining his imagery as "pop", his tone as "kitsch", and his inclination for the generation of ideas as "purely conceptual." From all that, what emerges is a body of work containing much more proposition than exposition,

where reason has clear primacy over contemplation.

In accordance with this hypothesis, and despite the importance of such inherently formal operations as serial repetition, extrapolation, and intertextuality, Uribe's fundamental interest is the conceptual inscription of the image—its uses, its participation in a specific ideology. Uribe's preferred corpus of popular images was that of naïf religiosity, the cult of the prosaic, the very monumentality of the tacky and the cornball, which, with its rhetorical greediness, has ample powers of social representation. Those who later found in Uribe a representational dimension that should be read not in a mimetic key, but a social one, where not mistaken. In his 2007 curatorship, Alberto Sierra argued that Uribe's religious images are intended as metaphors for the country. Like Beatriz González, Uribe seems to regard the candid sincerity of popular myths with a paradoxical attitude, while also finding in them an anthropological key, a belonging.

It is not by chance that many of Uribe's works approach this iconography in dialog with patriotic symbols, as if to recognize the connections that exist between them and an insufficiently secular State that can, nevertheless, induce in its citizens the maturity needed to identify and parody those very relationships. In that respect, works like *Sin título* ("Untitled," 1975)—a narrow Colombian flag, resembling a presidential sash, extended over the repeating effigy of José Gregorio Hernández—are eloquent. And the same can be said of works that use the image of the Sacred Heart, the patron saint of the Colombian nation, to make declarations concerned, above all, with the issue of identity.

In the later period of his career, Uribe's fervor for popular culture turns to eroticism, a new subject matter that allowed him to confront anew the issue of taste, the representation of the body, and the ideological inscription of kitsch imagery by means of strategies that now incorporated digital elements. His various "homages to boobs" seem to find in the stereotypical, decorative conception of the female figure a new field of exploration. Humor infuses his approach to aesthetic realities that, as happens in a society so dazzled by bodily modifications, turn grotesque.

All of this confirms the central role of irony in Uribe's work, as the artist always made use of indirection, an elliptical treat-

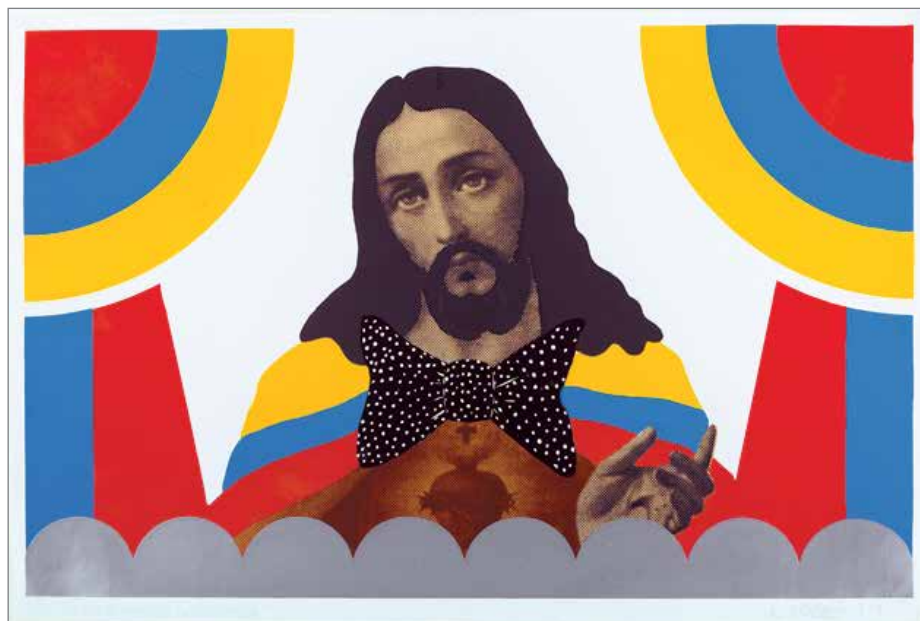


Medellin, un lecho de rosas (Medellin, a bed of roses), 1982. Reconstruction; assembly of artificial flowers and metal bed. Variable dimensions.

Detail: *27 Cartas (I Coloquio Latinoamericano de arte no objetivo)* [27 Letters (First Latin American Symposium of Non-Objective art)], 1981. Letters and airmail envelopes. Variable dimensions.



La nueva imagen de Colombia (The New Image of Colombia), 1979. Serigraph. 23¹⁵/₆₄ x 19¹⁹/₆₄ in (59 x 49 cm).



ment of his themes and issues, and yet produced, paradoxically, forceful communicative effects. It is worth remembering the recently deceased US critic Thomas McEvelley's notion that irony allows an artist to qualify his gestures and imbue them with unexpected meanings, without necessarily being a primary intention. This is evident in Juan Camilo Uribe, who in many instances seems to assert the value of something only to quickly deny or relativize it. For example, his figuration seems to embody a desire of appropriation, yet it is also something that demands to be unmasked. Something similar occurs with his works allusive to artistic and cultural institutions, towards which he adopts a celebratory attitude only to demolish them later with his critique. Such is the case of his well-known letters of dismissal for artworks held in the world's most famous museums, or of the advertisement he took out in a local newspaper to announce his leaving Medellín as a contribution to the first Latin American Colloquium on Non-Objectual and Public Art in 1981.

We arrive thus at a paradox: in works devoted to the image, we witness an equivocal enthronement of a moribund faith (religion) and something we recognize as a simulacrum (art), which nevertheless retain their drawing power and their ability to generate identity and thought. Popular

taste and the devotion to traditional representations are rescued from their obsolescence, displayed as repetition, as rather empty schematics that only language can fill with its masterful irony.

In Uribe, verbal supplements—titles, to be specific—acquire an importance comparable in Colombia only to those of Beatriz González or Bernardo Salcedo. Words make it possible for the images to be reframed, giving them a new code. We discover them thus not aesthetic but social representations, perishable emblems of systems such as art, the State, the Church. When we read titles like *Yo aquí quemándome por nada* (“Here I Am Burning for Nothing”), we understand that words are one of the artist's main resources.

Among Uribe's most interesting and least explored bodies of work is one centrally concerned with process, ideas, and, above all, an understanding of art as discourse and speculation. It comprises works like *Telescopios* (“Telescopes”), an interactive exercise in self-documentation using a technology for the preservation of memories that is very popular in Colombia, which reveals the role played by the extension of the arts for an entire generation of critics, artists, and theoreticians. This is what prompted Armando Montoya to assert, regarding works like the already mentioned *Cabeza parlante*—a precursor

of the incorporation of the body into artistic practice in Colombia—that they aspire to “encompass the world.”

This search for an aesthetic animation of reality can also be seen in yet a third group of works by Uribe. These are his most independent-minded, freer productions, devoted to unbridled speculation and intend on installing in our imagination a perspective valued for its ingenuity, its ability to twist the possibilities of execution in favor of autonomy. Two projects must be mentioned in this connection: the Riogrande hydroelectric and the José María Córdova airport. In the former, invited to present a project for the decoration of the area surrounding a dam, Uribe pokes at the art system with an impossible, unrealizable idea that nevertheless achieves an intense power of memorialization. In the later, Uribe deploys the imagery he was already well known for in his proposal of a delirious interplay that interrogates the role of culture in infrastructure projects and undermines the monument's ability to generate social capital. Here, the “powerful hand” (a popular-religious icon) moves from symbol to anti-symbol, from image to satirical artifact.

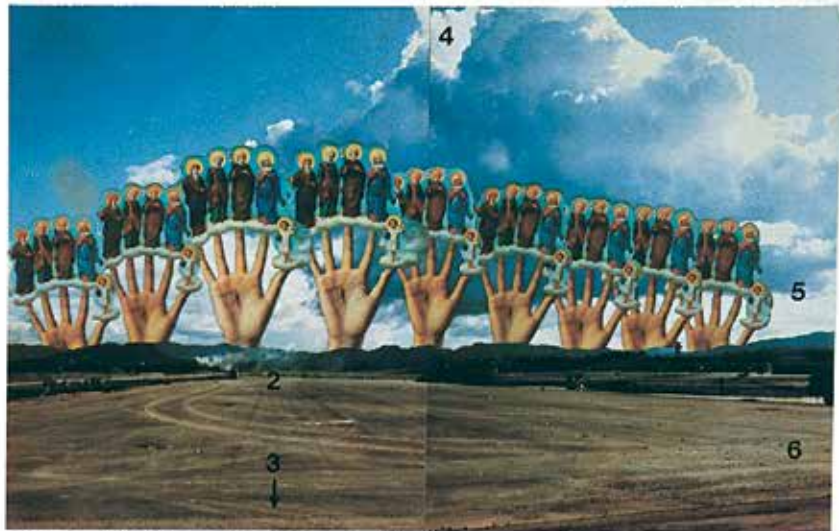
In the same vein he produced another work that, despite being anchored in the anecdotal, helps us identify the relational dimensions of an intelligent proposal of

Yo, aquí, quemándome por nada (Me, Here, Burning Me for Nothing), 1973.
Lighting construction, metal, wood, printed, lights. 43 1/2 x 45 55/64 x 3 1/32 in.
(110.5 x 116.5 x 7.7 cm).



Juan Camilo Uribe *Telescopios*.





PROYECTO PARA LA OBRA DE ARTE, EN EL AEROPUERTO JOSÉ MARÍA CORDOBA en LA CIUDAD de RIONEGRO (ANTIOQUIA)

por: JUAN CAMILO URIBE.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1 TERMINAL AEREO. | 4 NORTE. |
| 2 CABECERA de la PISTA. | 5 NOVE "MANOS PODEROSAS" |
| 3 DIRECCION de las AERONAVES en el MOMENTO del "DESCOLAJE". | 6 PISTA de CARRETERO. |

A -MOVIMIENTO de DESPEDIDA-
 POR MEDIO de un INGENUO MECANISMO SECRETO, LAS "NOVE MANOS PODEROSAS" SE AGITAN de LADO a LADO PRODUCIENDO el MOVIMIENTO de DESPEDIDA.
B-MOVIMIENTO de DESAPARICION-
 LAS "NOVE MANOS PODEROSAS" SUBIRAN o BAJARAN, PUDIENDO SE CONTROLAR SUS ALTURAS POR MEDIO de ELEVADORES.

C -MOVIMIENTO de SOCORRO-
 CUANDO UNA AVIONA AEREA SUFRA ALGUNA EMERGENCIA LAS "NOVE MANOS PODEROSAS" HARAN LOS DOS MOVIMIENTOS DESCRITOS ANTERIORMENTE, ES DECIR **A y B**. PERO ADEMÁS AQUELLA MANO QUE ESTE MAS CERCA de la AVIONA ACCIDENTADA, ADQUIRIRA UN LUMINOSO COLOR ROJO y DESPEDIRA ULTRASEY y SONIDOS INTERMITENTES INDICANDO el LUGAR del SUCESO.

JUAN CAMILO URIBE -
 MCMXCVI -
 -MCMXXXIV -

Project Work Jose Maria Cordova Airport, 1981.

surprising relevance today: the Sacred Heart of Jesus Fan Club, which Uribe launched as a prank but continued to manage as a relational device, a social experiment that allowed him to understand—no longer in the fiction of the image, but in his correspondence with real people—the presence of religion in Antioquia society.

These projects bring us to a second paradox: an insistence on the imaginary that, while affirming the power of the non-existent and the barely sketched, helps us value objects, spaces, and possible interventions. This is the always powerful realm of fiction. Art plays with what can only exist in the mind yet exhibits, precisely because of that, the possibility

of the new in its purest expression. Humor goes well beyond the visual joke that Medellín critics of the 1970s so feared. It is a refined attitude of playfulness that, in a satirical key, reinvents art with its speculation. We are in the terrain of conjecture, of utopia, one of the ways of extending the arts we have named, lacking a more appropriate designation, “conceptual”, “non-objectual”, or “relational”. As in the case of other Medellín artists who were starting to imagine the city and the art of the future, image and projects herald the territory of the possible.

EFREN GIRALDO
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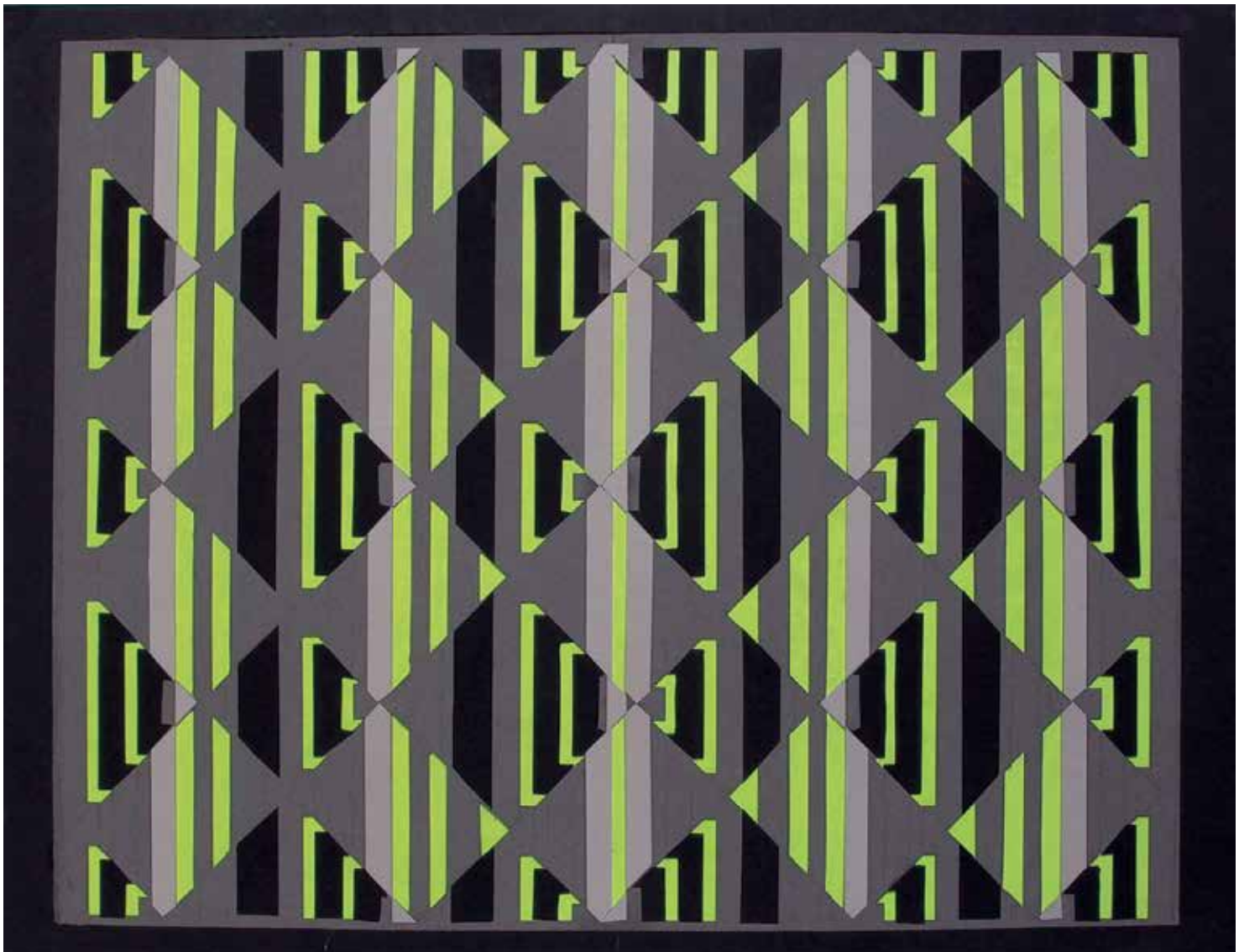
The Light is Turn Off. The Patient

Matilde Pérez

Kinetic Art in Motionless Chile

With independence of political opinions in a tumultuous Chile, Matilde Pérez's contributions in the arts cannot be denied. Curator and theorist Justo Pastor Mellado puts it this way: "Her figure is unique, anomalous, secret, and singular. This is why I think there was no critical attention to her work before now. She was a solitary, low profile artist. Yet she was able, without doing much, to focus critical attention. She was responsible for forcing us to read her, to try to understand her art."

Untitled, c. 1973. Collage paper die cutting. 1/1 unique work. 14 ⁶¹/₆₄ x 19 ³¹/₆₄ in. (38 x 49.5 cm). Private collection.





Apumanque, in red, 1983. Frieze in welded steel, ampules and electronic devices (lighting). 2755²⁹/₃₂ x 157³¹/₆₄ in. (70 x 4 mts).

JUAN JOSÉ SANTOS

In the noisy silence of the hospital floor, resting in her room surrounded by electronic devices with their prophetic lights, small luminous signs announcing whether she is alive or nearing death. Before closing the door, the nurse turns the light off. Pérez, Matilde, falls into deep sleep.

1982: the renowned, and by then veteran, artist Matilde Pérez, in front of her most ambitious work to date: the great frieze for Cosmocentro Apumanque. A mural composed in steel, a metallic band of schematic shapes, a geometric design that generates motion, a dynamic sensation, from its own stasis: it is kinetic art, of which she is a pioneer in her country, Chile. The Municipality of Las Condes, which managed the space, decided to charge for the use of Pérez's work as an advertising billboard (for that reason, no light mechanism could be used in it, despite its having been conceived for the use of lights). The frieze in the commercial mall measures 350 x 70 centimeters, and a reduced number of viewers approaching from Manquehue Avenue remain doubtful behind Pérez, who forcefully closes her eyes and contracts her face in rage. Not

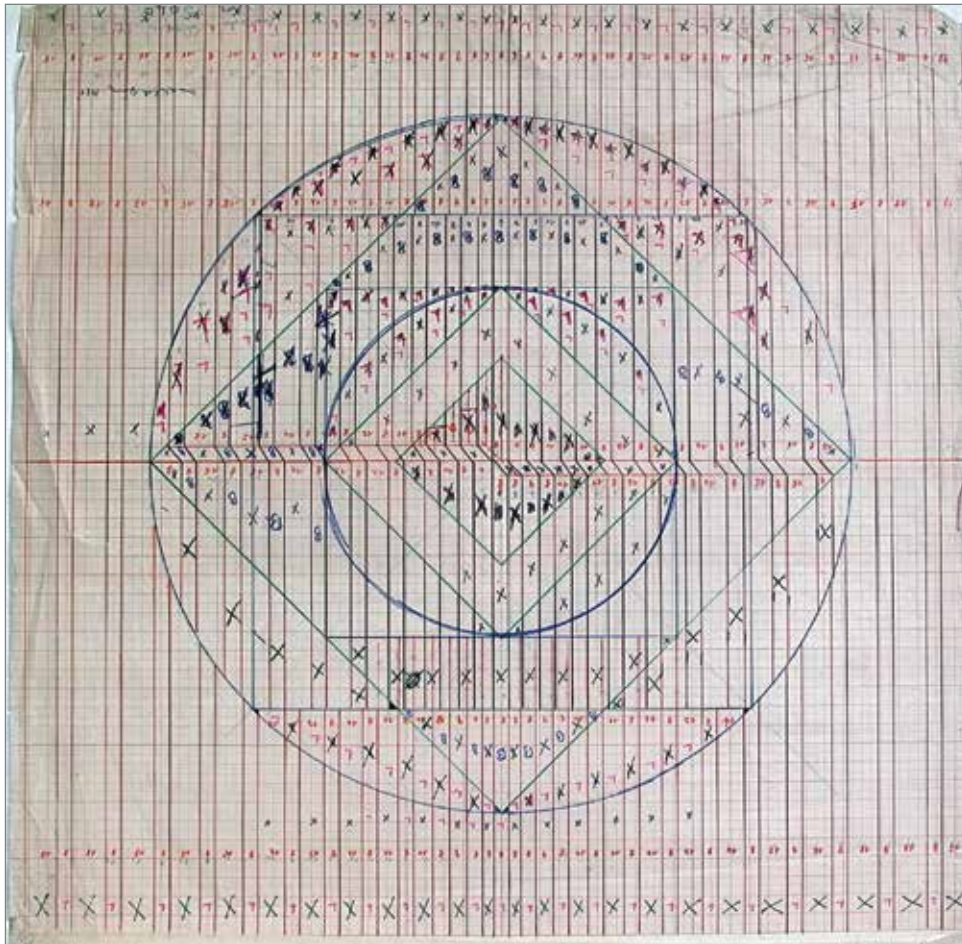
again. The circuit won't turn on. Just like in 61. Not again, not '61: Matilde Pérez returns to Chile after her stay in France with a government fellowship. Filled with energy, ideas, and sketches, she begins a solitary effort at Universidad de Chile. She presents, in the Fine Arts Salon, one work of art that synthesizes the knowledge acquired in Europe. It is a work of kinetic art with a light system... which, due to technical problems in the building, will not turn on.

Patient Matilde Pérez remains in the hospital, in the embrace of a sticky sleep, while a number of journalists in their metallic offices start with the mandatory copy & paste for such occasions. Pérez began her education as an artist in 1938, studying independently with Pedro Reszka. A year later she was admitted to the Escuela de Bellas Artes, where she had Pablo Burchard and Jorge Caballero among her professors. But her destiny was not connected to the traditional academic teachings of Chile's schools. In 1944 she decided to study muralism with Laureano Guevara (who she assisted in the creation of murals in the La Cisterna commune in Santiago).

Since the late 1940s, Matilde Pérez began a dedicated and lifelong relation-

ship with teaching. In 1948 she worked as a Drawing Teacher at the Dunalstair school, and in 1950 she established the Providencia Arts Academy. Her career in the politics-ridden Universidad de Chile was marked by the rejection of a large portion of the faculty, already since her beginnings as an assistant in the Painting and Drawing course at the Escuela de Bellas Artes (1951). This was due to her political opinions, which contrasted with the dominant leftism at Universidad de Chile, and to her artistic practice, which evolved into geometric abstraction against the informalism that dominated the scene.

The Rectángulo group (later Forma y Espacio) was formed in 1955 and included Gustavo Poblete, Ramón Vergara-Grez, Elsa Bolívar, and Uwe Grumann. Matilde Pérez joined the collective, which developed the main (better yet, sole) advances in geometric art in Chile, against the figurative tradition. They will be the country's representatives in the early editions of the São Paulo Biennial. Matilde Pérez, however, was not to remain with them for long: she left the group because Ramón Vergara-Grez rejected anything that wasn't oil painting, while she believed that "one



Preparatory sketch, 1971. Ink on millimetric paper. 18 ⁵⁷/₆₄ x 18 ⁵⁷/₆₄ in. (48 x 48 cm). MNBA collection.

can make paintings without paint.” Her works, using industrial materials such as metal, some accompanied by electronic systems and lights; her manipulation of color; her verticals and circles; all simulate motion and generate a dynamic sensation, while taking into account the context in which they are displayed.

These premises motivated Pérez to seek a sponsorship from the French government to complete her studies in Europe. In 1960 she traveled to Paris, where she met Hungarian artist Victor Vasarely. His teachings were not limited to the Yellow Manifest; this is to say they did not remain in the theoretical terrain, but moved also to the creative arena: notions of form and color; innovations in kinetic art. Matilde Pérez wanted to extend her stay in Paris, and to that end Vasarely commissioned her 20 works, which she finished in two days, on paper. But her husband, the academic draftsman and painter Gustavo Carrasco, demanded her return

to Chile, for him and their son. Upon her return to Chile, the artist intended to activate a collaboration agreement between the Art School and Vasarely, but was unsuccessful.

Pérez was patient. She remained in Chile and sustained contacts with colleagues installed in countries more favorable for avant-garde initiatives in kinetic and optical art, like Julio Le Parc from Argentina and Carlos Cruz Diez in Venezuela. In Chile, not only were almost no funds for this type of art (so that any work that included any kind of technology, even a basic electric circuit, has little future), but any work of art that distance itself from informalism was seen as alien. Despite all that, Pérez continued to develop and expand her investigations in optics, connected to a precise mathematical rigor. Many failed to understand her proposal and thought it boring, unconnected to reality, and dehumanized; for Pérez, her work was “a mental relationship with nature.” Once again, political motivations were behind

a new defenestration driven by the most political sectors of the art world, committed to the Allende government and to the opposition during the Pinochet dictatorship. Matilde Pérez remained in Chile, with the exception of another period in Paris between 1970 and 1972, when she was commissioned by Universidad de Chile to continue her investigations and studies in kinetic art.

Another frustrated initiative was the creation of the Center for Kinetic Research at Universidad de Chile’s school of design (the year she produced another one of her emblematic works, *Cruz del Sur*, 1975). Soon after establishing the innovative department, Pérez was fired from the university. Already past 50 by then, the artist continued to produce works on commission and in a variety of formats: painting, printmaking, sculpture, metal installations, public art, etc. Public recognition, however, was slow in coming. It was not until 1999 that the first retrospective of her work took place, at the Museo de Bellas Artes

(she was in her 80s by then). Outside Chile, however, her work was valued and recognized as pioneering in Latin American kinetic art, as exemplified in her inclusion in the *Cinético(s)* show at Museo Reina Sofía (Spain) in 2007. Pérez's most complete career-spanning exhibition was held in 2013: *Matilde x Matilde: Espacio Móvil*. This is what the artist commented on the event: "Several years have passed and the idea of promoting my exhibitions has not been lost. That is nice and I am thankful. I made this work because I was not born to tell half stories. Today I think I have the obligation to respond to an audience who has been watching me and waiting. If it weren't for them, I wouldn't know what I have done." Among the works exhibited in this retrospective, Pérez's last, were her *Túnel cinético* and the frieze she made for the Apumanque center in 1982, which had been dismantled in 2007 and, after the show, moved to its final location at Universidad de Talca.

Ramón Castillo was the curator of *Matilde x Matilde: Espacio Móvil*. This is

how he defines his collaboration with the nonagenarian but still active artist (among other things, the distribution plan and the trajectory were decided by Pérez herself): "It was a great opportunity to gain more information about emblematic works like *Cruz del Sur* (1975) and *Túnel cinético* (1970). In other words, Matilde was very concrete and made her ideas known inasmuch as one were in the same material and technical wavelength. *Cruz del Sur* and the *Túnel* were highly complex technically and required a long time for reflection, analysis, and electronic combinations. Pérez was well versed in electronics; there are several sketches where she works noting the negative or positive charge of the light circuit. She worked with sequencers and network circuits. In the exhibition we saw that constructive and technical side, which Matilde never made explicit if it wasn't necessary." The exhibition served as a settling of accounts; it shed light on her great achievements, established her as an artist ahead of her time during the first half of the Twentieth Century, and

associated her figure with initiatives like a competition for technological art by young artists.

There is still much work to be done regarding a controversial figure who was given scant recognition by her peers, except in that last exhibition. Her candidacy for the National Arts Award was presented up to six times, but she never got it. "I function for whoever wants to know me. Those who don't, it's fine. I have no responsibilities with anyone. I have never worried about being recognized in Chile," the artist said, Curator Ramón Castillo explains this anomaly: "She was not valued in Chile, she wasn't listened to, she was not studied or taken into account because the depth of the country's intellectual life is very low. There were no collectors, no critic, no artists studying and promoting her uniqueness. Several people have told me, 'Matilde should have remained in France'... and it is true. We talked about it more than once, but she trusted that things would change. Matilde chose well, but the country was mistaken about her, it did not

Túnel cinético (Kinetic Tunnel), 1970 (reconstruction). Installation. Variable dimensions. Photography Jorge Brantmayer.





Matilde Pérez in front of her work *Apumanque*, 1982.

rise up to the challenge. There was no policy to protect her oeuvre and it is not safeguarded in museums. Had she been in Venezuela, Colombia, Argentina, or Brazil, we would have buildings or public murals. In England, she would have been a Louise Bourgeois. Instead, the sole kinetic mural we had at Apumanque was violently torn down, which revealed the ignorance and shortsightedness of the proprietors, architects, and professionals involved, and the indifference of the citizenry. Matilde died without there being any documents or special reports... such as “the wages of Chile.” We were late, or she was too much ahead of us.”

Political factors were determinant in the scant consideration she received on the part of a broad sector of public opinion and art professionals in Chile. Despite the fact that, as curator Osbel Suárez notes, “the rigor and transcendence of her work is an exercise that should be made without contamination from any other realms.” She suffered rejection by leftist artists, like José

Balmes, who in an interview told this story: “Pérez’s husband was an angel putting up with her and she was a dead soul. Suddenly she met Vasarely in Europe and went crazy. I find her a mediocre artist (...) totally overblown. It is false that she was a pioneer in kinetic art, Gustavo Poblete came first. She just peels cables now, no more.” For Osbel Suárez, “Matilde’s adventure, her conviction in being part of an artistic event of a new order, condemns her to incomprehension, reduces knowledge of her work to just a few people, encloses her excessively in her studio, but at the same time makes her an essential figure to understand Chile’s dislocated, slightly out-of-phase, yet deeply necessary modernity.” And according to Ramón Castillo, “her low profile and attitude of constant investigation and studio work, made her work a form of political resistance and a response to the bullying by Universidad de Chile artists who insisted on ‘a committed art for the masses.’” From Vergara-Grez to

Balmes, she was resented and cast out, as though her creative independence or her “solitary militancy” for an aesthetic that was undervalued because it lacked literal or literary meanings, could not be tolerated.

However, and with independence of political opinions in a tumultuous Chile, Matilde Pérez’s contributions in the arts cannot be denied. Curator and theorist Justo Pastor Mellado puts it this way: “Her figure is unique, anomalous, secret, and singular. This is why I think there was no critical attention to her work before now. She was a solitary, low profile artist. Yet she was able, without doing much, to focus critical attention. She was responsible for forcing us to read her, to try to understand her art.” The relevance of Matilde Pérez’s artistic practice connect her name to that of Carlos Cruz Diez, Jesús Soto, Julio Le Parc, and Morellet. The mutual influences are so striking that, for some, Pérez’s works are not so much unique, but a Latin American translation of a European style. To that respect, Ramón Castillo explains: “She remembered, for example, how they made, on commission, black squares measuring two centimeters by two centimeters, and then had to organize them on a white plane. Later one sees works by those artists from the 1960s and 1970s, and the identity is found in the variations on the same motif. The question was not to repeat a formula, but to develop a formula of her own, mathematically and technically. This is to say, Matilde was not a translator nor a reproducer of models; she developed her own meter and aesthetics.” Curator Osbel Suárez, who specializes in concrete and geometric art, says that “every artist ‘translates’ influences. Doing it is not optional. These ‘digestions’, if they are considered and respond to an in-depth study of the sources, suggest new avenues for exploration.”

Ignoring all these comments, pre-mortem appraisals, and disputes, Matilde Pérez remained in her long sleep in her hospital bed. A sleep from which she never woke up. The artist died as a consequence of respiratory and cardiac arrest. The lights on the devices around her turned off October 1, 2014.

JUAN JOSÉ SANTOS

Art critic and curator, professor at the Universidad Diego Portales and Uniacc.



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Alfredo Ramírez

Transparency, Dissection, and Pure Geometry

SUSANA BENKO

Over the years, the formal and conceptual axis on which the body of work developed by Alfredo Ramírez (Caracas, 1957) since the mid 1980s turns, has acquired greater consistency and depth. This axis is what gives cohesion to his oeuvre as a whole, since, besides being the structure on which the individual work is formally supported, it connects the various themes to which the artist makes reference. Ramírez achieves such a degree of purity in his formal and conceptual logic that in his current work, the structure becomes an end in itself.

This renders all considerations of the media used by the artist at various points (painting, sculpture, electro-mechanic art), as well as stylistic observations such as his passage from a figurative to an abstract phase, while important, secondary. This is so because the fundamental issue in the entirety of Ramírez's creative process is the achievement of a harmonious and proportionate relationship between the

parts that comprise a body or an object, and idea that remains in different semantic levels throughout his work. Physics, biology geometry, psychology, literature, music, art history, among others, are present in his investigations, driving, structuring, or making visible in some way phenomena that takes place in nature and the human experience.

Initial Bodies

The education received from his teacher Angel Foong, a Uruguayan painter with a Chinese background residing in Caracas, and through his formal studies in Venice and Milan with Emilio Vedova, were decisive for Ramírez's understanding of the Divine Proportion, or, as it is also known, the Golden Ratio. Assimilating the notion that the parts forming an object in nature display a harmonious and proportionate measurement has been important to the artist. This relationship is precise, logical, and responds to a mathematical formula that artists of the Renaissance intended to make known. Starting from this principle,

it is possible to understand the meaning of series as heterogeneous as those created by Ramírez over the course of three decades: drawings, radiographs, electro-mechanical sculptures, translucent sculptures, among others, as they all feature underlying structures revealed through a golden-proportion formula.

At the same time, copying referential works by Mantegna, Titian, Rembrandt, Piranesi, Velázquez, Ingres, Delacroix, and Van Gogh, among others, also influenced Ramírez's study of the relationship between the different parts of the human body. This is one of his recurrent themes, handled through different approaches to the mode of representation since his beginnings to the present time. In the mid-1980s, living in Mérida after his return from Italy, Ramírez was interested in the effects of Kirlian waves, and for this reason his paintings of that era featured short, vibrating brushstrokes that alluded to female bodies integrated into a current of fluids, an effect expressed by means of an alternation of color hues (*Twin Peaks*, 1988). These figures are

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The Caracas Needle, 2011. Plaza Diego Ibarra, El Silencio, Caracas. Stainless steel. 866 x 157 ²/₅ in. (2200 x 400 x 400 cm). Collection Alcaldía Libertador. Photo: Paolo Collarino.

undoubtedly enveloped in a *life energy* (or spiritual aura), which irradiates from it. They are transparent fluids. They are subtle bodies.

The latter quality, transparency, drove him to experiment with a previously unexplored medium: radiography. Ten female friends (accomplices) were x-rayed at an outpatient clinic at Universidad de los Andes; the result is a photo-mural (*Luz química*, 1989-1990) comprised of 60 copies of radiographs of various parts of their bodies. The arrangement of the figures is of great importance: each one signals a counter-clockwise turn. Our reading of the work from left to right is reversible. In this way, it marks a spatio-temporal cycle moving from West to East and, which the cycle restarting in reverse at the end. Ramírez has not only created a work about femaleness the nature of which differs from masculinity, but has also made time relative in his proposal.

His experience of recording the bodies of his friend without the use of photographic cameras or chemicals continued between 1994 and 1997 with works titled *Registros*. The characters left a bodily imprint on plastic surfaces that had been previously prepared with dust, and the images resemble, in the words of Félix Suazo (MUAC, 2006), funeral shrouds.

Dissected Bodies

Luz química opened a door: he will to *traverse* the body, to visualize it as light (radiograph) and understand, in anatomical terms, its bone structure. At the same time, there was an integration of scientific knowledge and a mythical reinterpretation of these characters: these are Venusian figures, entirely translucent. Once again, we are dealing with subtle bodies. Yet, since his childhood, Ramírez was interested in the interior of bodies, something that was reinforced after a serious lung operation made with a heavily invasive technique. One consequence are his *Modelos tridimensionales*, works with which Ramírez brought into view the opaque, visceral, loathsome aspects that our bodies hide. Using resin and color, it extended in a realistic way all the components of the endogenous system: mouth, trachea, lungs, heart, liver, stomach, spleen, duodenum, large intestine, small intestine, all as a single fleshy tube: *Tube de carne* (1996), rising in the attitude of flight. As Ramírez notes, “*This system is unknown, it is the horror. It is synonymous with pain. It is in a situation of flight because the totality of functions of the endogenous system is independent of consciousness and of will, which do not decide anything about the workings of the organs. So, it is a free flight*”. The organic and the hidden become a volatile element

Chemistry Light, 1989-1990. 60 copies (mural). 94 ²/₅ x 196 ⁴/₅ in. (240 x 500 cm). Collection Peter Norton / Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Caracas / Fernando Eserverri. Photo: Alfredo Ramirez.



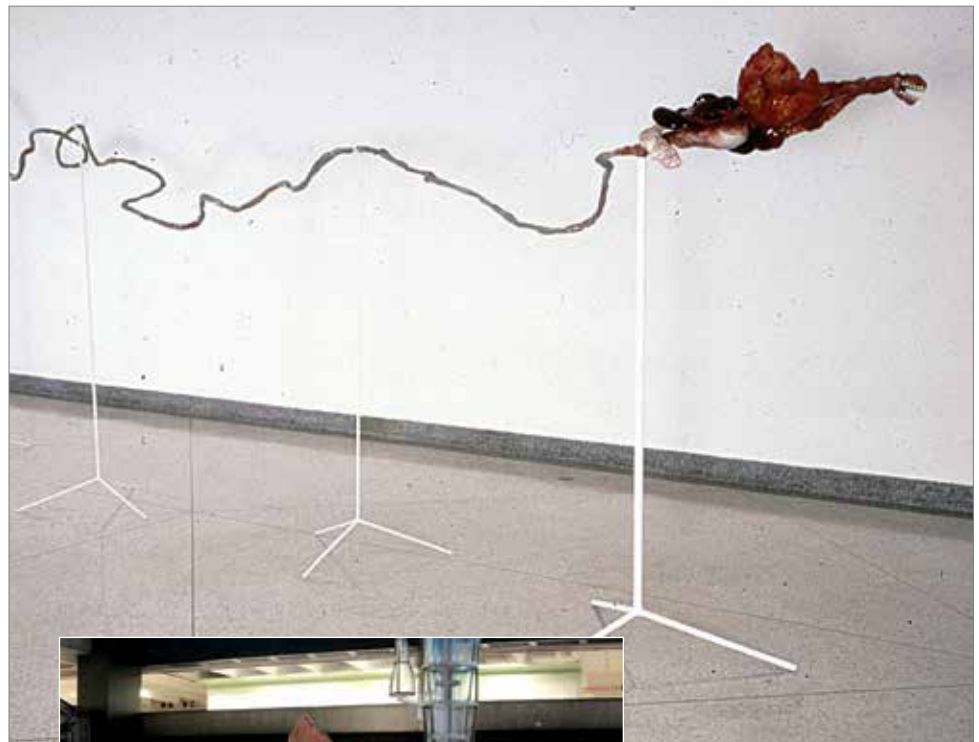
and, paradoxically, light. That year, 1996, Ramírez exhibited *La Novia de Corinto* at Sala Mendoza, where seven representations of the endogenous system traversed space as monstrous birds of thirsty vampires (Félix Suazo. *Panorama* catalog. Caracas: Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, 2006).

On the other hand, since the early 1990s, Alfredo Ramírez worked on a different kind of experimental art, which he continued to develop throughout the decade: spinal chords and electro-mechanical sculptures.

The spinal chord is the body's (and the artwork's) structural axis. These chords, or columns, possess in turn a variety of meanings according to their anatomical representation. *Laboratorio de sueños* (1991) was the first in the series. In it, a refrigerant gas compressor freezes the chord. The intention: to slow down time in order to stop cellular transformation and its connection with thoughts and dreams (the brain). Every neuronal branch goes through the spinal chord. With the chord frozen, all bodily transformations are stopped. *Birth Right Column* (1997) represents the anomalous morphology of two conjoined-twin girls with a single, but bifurcated, spinal chord. Another example is *Transfiguración* (2000), which refers, contrary to the previous instances, to Christ's transfiguration on the third day after his Resurrection. These are parallel columns that, reproduced twice, represent the same person: Jesus. Ascending intermittently between them is an electric current, metaphorically equivalent to a life impulse: the element that balances the boundary between life and death.

A Mechanics of Affection

Marcel Duchamp created, graphically, a seduction machine in *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (The Large Glass)*, 1913-1925. Octavio Paz writes in *Apariencia desnuda* about the way in which the bachelor's in the Large Glass become aroused as they sense the emanations from the bride in the higher plane. Automatically, the gears of this marvelous love machine are activated. Decades later, Ramírez decided to materialize and bring into practice a way to visualize the physiology of love: through his electro-mechanical sculptures. These works, described by Costanza De Rogatis as a *fascinating artificiality* (Alfredo Ramírez. *Arte Venezolano* Collection.



Detail.

Meat Tube, 1996. Iron and polyester resin. 74 4/5 x 19 3/5 x 315 in. (190 x 50 x 800 cm). Collection Fundación Museos Nacionales- Museo Alejandro Otero. Photo: Alfredo Ramírez.

1274-27.5, 2009. White carved polyurethane. 236 2/5 x 98 2/5 x 23 3/5 in. (600 x 250 x 60 cm). Collection of the artist. Photo: Alfredo Ramírez.



Caracas: IARTES, 2008), are machines in motion that allude to the topic without romanticism and with the coldness of a scientific approach to the workings of the inner body. The components of Ramírez's installation *El beso automático*, from 1992, have Bauhaus-inspired ovoid shapes. They are arranged according to the parameters of the Golden Ratio. The fan irradiates a divine wind, a heat that comes from the universe as it inflates the blue fabric, a tongue that in turn penetrates the ovule (vagina or female head). It is *kiss* and *coitus* at the same time. The automatic kiss is activated as the chord is moved by the

air-filled tongue. This capital work gave rise to the *Beso automático* from 1998: a structure comprising a central axis and two silicone-covered heads. It is the explicit representation of a kiss that two conjoined girls share repeatedly. He two heads turn on their axis and, as they meet face to face, an electrical charge is emitted. As in the hidden faces of Magritte's lovers, a feeling of asepsis is produced that also expresses a certain degree of coldness.

Translucent Sculptures: *Linternas*

In meditation, Ramírez explains, one perceives a light. His *Linternas* are

translucent works that seek to materialize such a vision. They are comprised of three sections, each corresponding to one Golden-Ration number. A progression is established. In these vertical bodies (axis), one cone is inside the other. *As with the organs, which are encased by the rib cage, the body is divided into strata: first are the ribs, then the muscles, finally the skin.* Ramírez's *Linternas*, then, refer also to the human body and are built on the basis of a pre-established proportional pattern. Light, in this case, is the golden number, as the starting point is that human beings are luminous.

Lantern, 2005. Installation: Iron and thermo-shaped glass structure. Variable dimensions. Photo: Alfredo Ramirez.



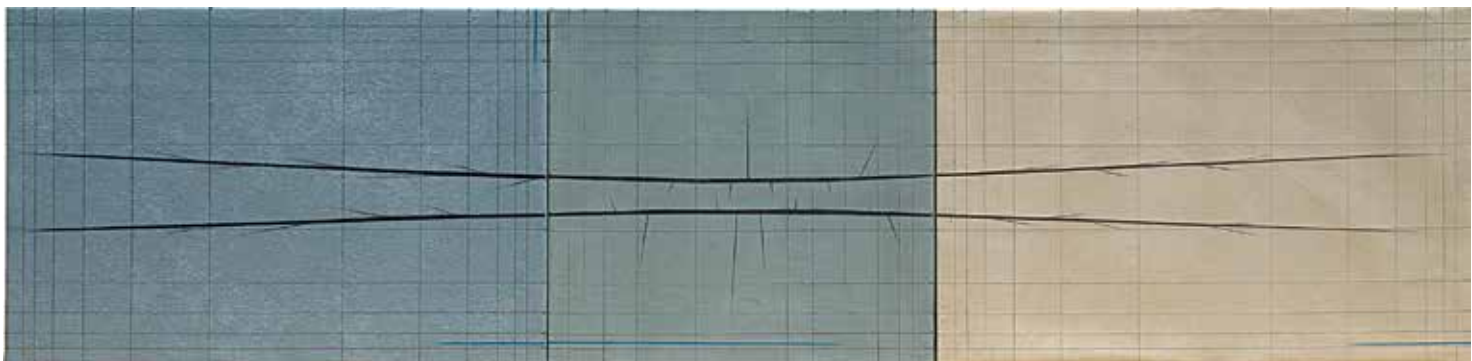
Transfiguration, 2000. Aluminium, iron, bakelite and electric system. 74 4/5 x 35 2/5 x 35 2/5 in. (190 x 90 x 90 cm). Collection Fundación Museos Nacionales-Museo Alejandro Otero, Caracas. Photo: Alfredo Ramirez.



Dragon, 2012. Rubber and steel. 118 x 23 3/5 in. (300 x 60 cm). Collection of the artist. Photo: Alfredo Ramirez.



The Mist Box, 2008. Wax, fabric. 88 1/2 x 23 3/5 in. (225 x 60 cm). Collection of the artist. Photo: Alfredo Ramirez.



These translucent sculptures (or structures) have made it possible for the artist, during the decade of 2000, to explore in greater depth two aspects that are also interconnected: proportionality and scale. During this period, Ramírez was worked on structures that are free of anecdote and figuration. Three important and recent urban-scale works are worth mentioning: *Hug* (2006), *Biosíllice* (2011), and *Aguja de Caracas* (2011). The latter work, conceived under the same notion of transparency, retains a harmonious and proportionate relationship in front of the two towers at El Silencio, emblematic constructions of Caracas' late-1940s modernity.

Drawings and Dragons

The study of the Divine Proportion in connection with natural phenomena has involved for Ramírez the adoption, in his work of the 2000s, some basic concepts from the field of physics. Concepts like *singularity* and *space-time*—a line of reflection that persists from the 1990s—are embodied in his works. *It is very beautiful*, the artist says, *because in the singularity you capture space and time as a single entity. In physics, one no longer speaks of space and time as separate. One speaks of the cone of space-time. Then, what is the singularity? It is a phenomenon that, because of gravity, produces a compression of time into infinitely small spaces.* This phenomenon is expressed in a drawing titled *Linterna* (2009). This work, in an intentionally outsize format (somewhat larger than the gallery where it was exhibited) shows the implosion process (from outside into inside) of particles liberated from a star whose growth has ended. Because of the compression caused by gravity, it collapses towards its own center. What is left is a black hole, the singularity, which is precisely with the totality of the star's matter is comprised into an infinitely small point.

The study of physics and the study of cellular growth are themes found in Ramírez's recent works. In his series *Caja de niebla* (2006 and 2008), the artist shows the “graphic” results of experiences in the electro-magnetic field using fog cameras. On the other hand, *1274-27.5* (2009) is a giant polyurethane mural with heat-carved grooves representing the anomalous growth of cancer cells. Given their condition, these cells grow in a counterclockwise direction, a rhythm that is expressed in the somewhat chaotic directionality of the grooves.



Biosíllice, 2011. Glass, steel. 93 ¾ x 78 ¾ x 78 ¾ in. (1000 x 200 x 200 cm). Collection Alcaldía Libertador. Photo: Paolo Collarino

The return of biology presents today a metaphorical and abstract meaning. The idea of the dragon—already present in a 1990 work titled *La sangre del dragon*—has to do with the concept of what the dragon represents: the presence of all animals, which is to say, the understanding of a totality conceived geometrically through proportional relationships. A vertical axis (which supports for instance works like *Pre-ludio* and *Dragones*, both from 2012), conceived as a totality, is divided symmetrically on the basis of a “greater/

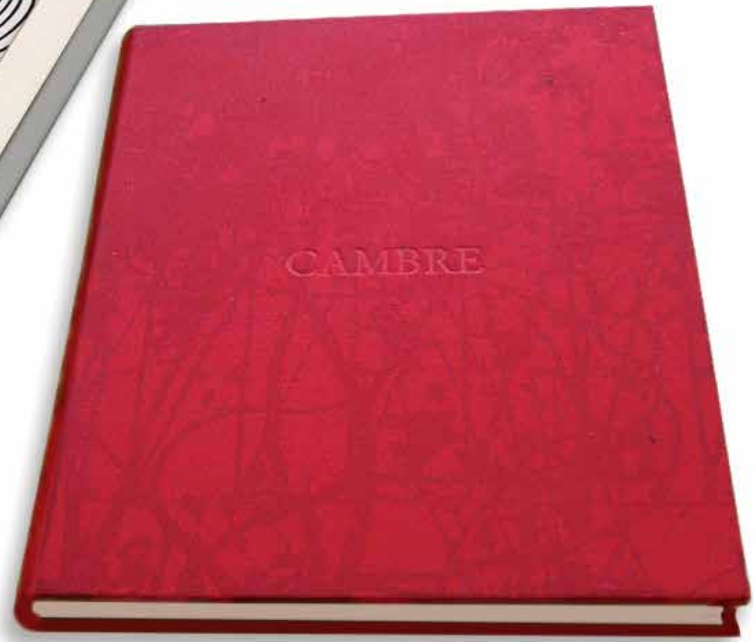
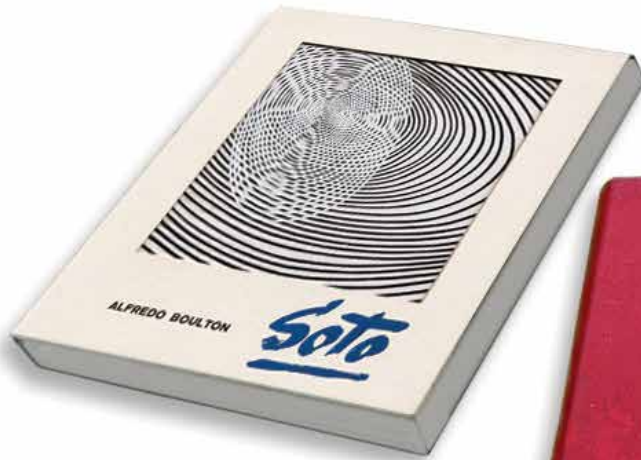
smaller than” relationship according to the Golden Ratio. With this, the artist creates progressions to infinity that are materialized in the helical shape of the works. As in *Luz química*, these dragons are arranged vertically. They are presences that are imposed by their force and their degree of absolute purity, as they are devoid of all content. They are pure geometry.

SUSANA BENKO
Independent art researcher.

Soto Book. Designers: **Cruz-Diez, Alfredo Boulton**
Armitano editores. Caracas, Venezuela, 1973.

Cambre's Artist Book. Designer: **Alejandro Ros.**
Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2008.

The Meta- Language of Art



Folios Latinoamericanos de Diseño, the first archive of the region's cultural graphic arts, focuses especially on design practices that communicate art. Conceived by designers Laura Escobar and Fabián Muggeri, this research project has video as its principal mode of transmission. By revealing the points of connection and disconnection in their ways of working, designers of books and catalogs begin to move towards an exchange of knowledge that is entirely new for Latin America. As the project moves forward, Folios is brought to different cities in the Southern Cone, where, in turn, it recruits new candidates.

CAROLINA MUZI

Many things connect Laura Escobar and Fabián Muggeri: a long friendship forged in university classrooms and extended beyond them; the shared profession for which they trained there; and years of professional work focused, in both their cases, on graphic communication on the service of culture, in particular the visual arts. Thus, it doesn't come as a surprise that their careers have also produced a desire to record and archive, and that together they launched a historical exploration of the cultural graphic arts in Latin America through the audiovisual testimony of its practitioners.

With the compilation and diffusion of cultural design practices in Latin America, *Folios* posits design as a generator of edito-

rial mechanisms: catalogs and art books that contribute to the development of a symbolic understanding of artistic language.

"We approach design as a communication instrument that brings the individual participants in a society closer to the various hermeneutics that comprise the world of art, contributing to their understanding and generating a new dialog with the work of art, a new language. We chose a video format as the principal medium for our investigation. And we sought points of connection and disconnection between the countries in the continent, attempting to unveil that which constitutes part of Latin American cultural graphic art," Escobar explains.

The new archive, launched in 2010, is impregnated with the agile and creative dynamism that characterizes its authors: after interviewing designers in different

locations throughout the Southern Cone, the duo can then present the material in other places and, in turn, explore new cases there. This is how, less than a year since its inception, the project has already recorded the work of twenty designers and presented the results in several cities in Argentina and Brazil, with the expectation of reaching several others in the remaining countries in the region during this year and next.

The videos, which are to be used as units for diffusion, center on four questions about a book or catalog created by the interviewed designer. The questions are intended to explore particular issues concerning each case, the plan for the mechanism, its construction, development, foundation, and, lastly, the influences and inspiration that marked it. The questions, presented in each case on a board visibly

hand-held by Escobar or Muggeri before each recording, are concrete:

1. What was your role as designer, what decisions did you make?
2. What were the particular conditions for the project?
3. What catalogs do you have as points of reference?
4. What designers have influenced your work? Why?

Since, as it often happens, besides the object itself the catalog is our most direct way to approach the work of art and also “what remains” after a show, “the book itself allows for other possibilities of touching, exploring, and thinking about the work of an artist. Also, most often the catalog includes essays, biographical notes, and parallel texts that tell the story from a different vantage. And in the case of foreign artists, such catalogs and art books are our only opportunity to learn more and to continue looking at their work in our own home,” says Fabián Muggeri. The number of such publications he has worked on as design director for MALBA make him an excellent witness in this matter.

“The catalog originally evolved, pardon the redundancy, as a cataloguing system for the works in an exhibition. In the beginning they were just lists of works, without even any illustration. Later these books gained centrality and developed lives of their own, and it is at that point that, little by little, other narratives and ways of telling began to be added that didn’t even correspond to the show as such. Sometimes a catalog has its own discourse, its own editorial team, curators, and designers, and they are created as another work that runs in parallel to the exhibition,” says Laura Escobar, co-director with Carlos Araujo of the cultural branding studio Duplex.

The kick-off for *Folios* was a conference on the publishing of art books and catalogs where Escobar and Muggeri were invited to present as “cultural” designers. Generously, they decided to bring along the voices of some of their colleagues focused on the arts and on culture in general. They used video because it was an efficient way to have those designers themselves explain their work, with two questions about a particular book or catalog and two more general questions about

Catalog of the ArteBA09 fair.
Buenos Aires, Argentina. Designer: **Marius Estudio**.





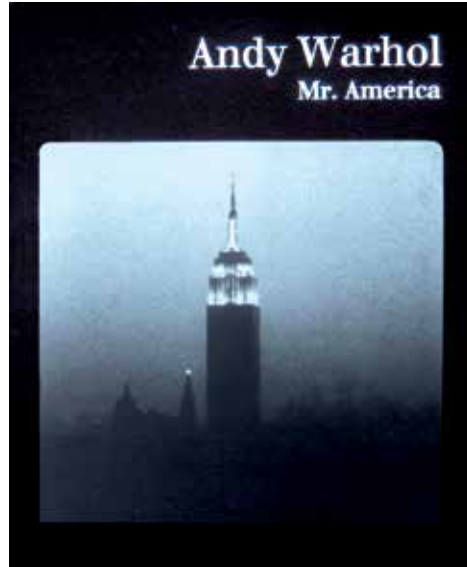
Jorge Macchi. Buenos Aires Tour, 2003. Object-book. Design by **Mario Gemin and Jorge Macchi**. Mar del Plata, Provincia de Buenos Aires, Argentina.

If I were Winter Itself. Catalog of Guillermo Kuitca's work. Designed by **Graciela Szalkowicz & Gastón Pérsico, Diego Bianchi**. 52nd Venice Biennial, Italy, 2008.



The Murderer of Your Heritage. Adrián Villar Rojas, artist book. Buenos Aires, Argentina. Diseño de **Vanina Scolavino**. KBB Kultur Buro, Barcelona, 2011.





Andy Warhol Mr. America. Catalog of the Warhol exhibition. Designer: **Claudio Filus**. Pinacoteca Do Estado de São Paulo, Brazil, 2009.



The Useless Truth. Res's Artist Book. Design by **Marta Almeida, Alejandra Bliffeld, Laura Escobar**. La Marca Editora, 2006. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

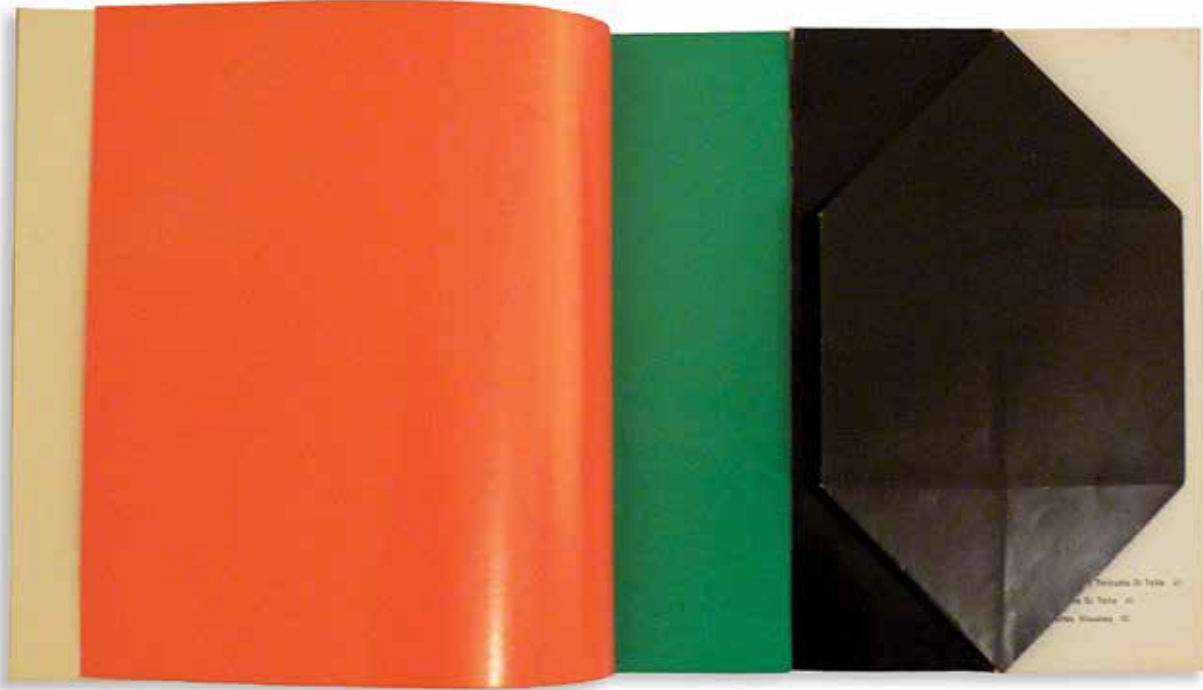
their sources of inspiration and referents, and their ways of seeing and approaching design. In their presentation, Escobar and Muggieri realized that their idea of revealing the inner workings of design in the art publishing world was virgin territory in the region. “It is believed that a catalog shows the inner world of an artist, but what we want to emphasize is that behind all that is the decision of *how* to show it; that decision will generate different discourses, and it is there that the designer is an important presence in the editorial team,” Escobar explains.

At first, the selection of designers was connected to the idea of encompassing several kinds of publishing projects, such as art books (thus, Alejandro Ross on Juan José Cambre); catalogs (Claudio Filus and Andy Warhol); historical explorations (the publishing history of the Instituto Di Tella, told by its graphic director, Juan Carlos Distéfano); artist volumes (Kuitca at the Venice Biennale, by Diego Bianchi with Cecilia Salkowickz and Gastón Pérsico); and catalogs of catalogs (Marius Rivero for ArteBA). Later, the selection of the archive of designers was guided by two solid premises: taste and intuition. And

they also recruited on the basis of their knowledge of the work of their colleagues, especially in Argentina, for instance Marta Almeida with the catalog of works by the photographer Res, or, more recently, Vanina Scolavino for the Rosario artist Adrián Villar’s submission to the Venice Biennale. On the other hand, if a book is published and they like it, they track down the designer and include him or her, as was the case with the São Paulo Biennial catalog and its author, Felipe Kaizer, from Cuba. “It is a completely arbitrary cut,” they explain. “We do not intend to highlight every single Latin American designer and we do not have any age or style parameters for inclusion. We are guided only by our desire.”

The same freedom is present in the interviews. Without aspiring to fancy production effects, Escobar and Muggieri converse naturally with their interviewees, whose hands are seen in closed shots that include the pages they are showing. In this way, we can smile as we listen to Distéfano confess that the first team he formed to work on graphics for the Di Tella in the 1960s “was almost a tyrannical mafia: artists had no say, we didn’t let them speak. If we liked them, we allowed them

to give their opinion; if we didn’t like them, they were silent (laughs). And the printer was happy to work with us because we experimented a lot, sometimes directly on the machine, and that broke their routine.” He then shows some of those experiments in a catalog for the 1967 Di Tella Award, a geometric concept with pages in filled-in color, whose corners are cut to form triangles that contrast against other pages. And he adds: “When I was a student there was no graphic arts or design school, only what at the time was known as Drawing for Advertising; our professors were not designers but painters. Drawing for Advertising was based mostly on illustration and not on typography as such. I began to understand what design was about based on information that came from countries in the Northern Hemisphere, particularly Switzerland and Germany. And under that influence I started to work on the concept of the modulation of a page. We admired them greatly. And also Polish designers for their unbridled expressionism, the opposite to the Swiss, who were rigid and austere, and, it seems to me now, boring. That ping-pong between maximum expressionism and asceticism suited us well.”



Exhibition catalogs, 1966. Instituto Di Tella, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Designer: **Juan Carlos Distéfano** and team.

Open Studio Art Experiences and Contemporary Culture. Design by **Marta Almeida, Laura Escobar**. Gob Editions, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2006.





Catalog of the exhibition *Beyond Geometry*. Instituto Di Tella, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Designer: **Juan Carlos Distéfano** and team.



Catalog of the 29th São Paulo Biennial, Brazil. Design by **Felipe Kaizer, André Stolarski**. 2010.

Distéfano emphasizes the complete freedom that the Institute's director, Jorge Romero Brest, gave them, and highlights one idea: "Ours was not the work of artists, but work in the service of artists. I see a solid line between art and design. Design is a service to be provided."

Designer and professor Enrique Longinotti, director of the Master's Program in Design and Communication at Universidad de Buenos Aires, revisited this line on the day *Folios* was officially presented at MALBA, in late 2011. "I believe that what Distéfano says is negated by the freedom they had. The Twentieth Century inaugurated two very important things: modern art, which is the culmination of art, and design, which is poised to culminate in the Twenty-First century. When art blows up, breaks down, or is demolished (art understood as canonical art, that is), a strange creature, bastardized in its beginnings, appeared: design. It took a long time to find the word to define this activity. In these times of porous borders, when artists design, project, or plan technological and conceptual aspects, and designers exhibit their works as works of art, this no-longer-so-strange couple finds new ways to make itself understood." For Longinotti, the work of an artist is the content of a book, and designers are called in to give it shape. Designers are shape-givers. "But to

shape content is to give content. There is no way for such shape-giving not to intervene and not to have a presence. The idea of this interplay, sometimes peaceful and sometimes hostile, between the wills that coincide on this kind of situation is interesting to me. If to give shape is understood as an aspect of content, design is always the co-author." In Longinotti's view, design does not adapt itself to art, but becomes a voice that intertwines with it. Thus, the not-so-strange couple he describes makes us wonder whether design is not the meta-language of art: "Our perception of art in the Twentieth and Twenty-First centuries is deeply linked to the image produced by catalogs, books, journals, museums, etc., first merely as information, but rapidly with the conviction that the publishing object was a kind of condensation and distillation of artistic expression. The language of design explains the language of art, brings it forward not only in time but in space, and allows for its circulation. In Argentina, as in so many other peripheral situations (this depends of course on what we assume to be the center), we have learned from books rather than from contact with the originals. These books and catalogs have been more than vehicles, they have been an exaltation of and an ability to communicate the most key ideas," he says.

Another idea in Longinotti's intervention is that of cultural design as graphic criticism and curatorship of art, which brings forth an interesting issue: "Does design then have a debt to neutrality, or is it indebted to a commitment with the times?" He left us with the question.

Concerning broader issues in beginning to speak of a Latin American cultural graphic arts, the first evidence detected by *Folios* is that "since printing in the region is more difficult than in other regions, much more thought is given to the use of resources; given this widespread reality, we assume and are in search of a common logic and shared working methods."

Folios has already registered the work of 20 studios devoted to the visual communication of the arts, and the project has visited five cities. This means that the journey has begun, but there is a long way ahead. Both are reasons to celebrate the initiative, which can be accessed in its entirety at www.foliosweb.com.ar. The task, carried out through personal effort and outside any institutional framework, calls for the identification of new cases, invitations, and support in reaching new locations in its march forward.

CAROLINA MUZI
Journalist specializing in design.

Fernell Franco

“Cali claroscuro”



Retratos de Ciudad Series, 1994. Gelatin silver print, 7²³/₆₄ x 9³¹/₆₄ in. (18.7 x 24.1 cm). Vintage print. Private collection, Paris. *

Amarrados Series, 1976. Gelatin silver print. 9¹¹/₁₆ x 14¹¹/₆₄ in. (24.6 x 36 cm). Vintage print, retouched by the artist. Private collection, Paris. *



CHRISTINE FRÉROT

The first European retrospective of the work of Colombian photographer Fernell Franco (1942-2006) is a masterly presentation by curators Alexis Fabry and Maria Wills Londoño. Indeed, this selection of images by a major Latin American photographer, who nevertheless remains scarcely known in the international scene, reveals for French audiences a sensitive and modern personal oeuvre traversed by the intensity of light and fueled by the artist's great love for his immediate context: the city of Cali. The exhibition, featuring 140 photographs on display in the Foundation's underground level, is organized thematically around ten series, and each section—titled in Spanish—includes prints in varying formats covering the period from the 1970s through 1996. This selection of photographs, most of them in black and white, shows us how a self-taught artist forged his aesthetic and metaphorical language through a number of professional experiences, as well as via an experimental process related to the intervention of his photographs (sometimes enhanced with color pencils) be it at the point of printing or in development—an alchemy that Franco applied to his work in order to achieve a dramatic quality or an “aged” effect.

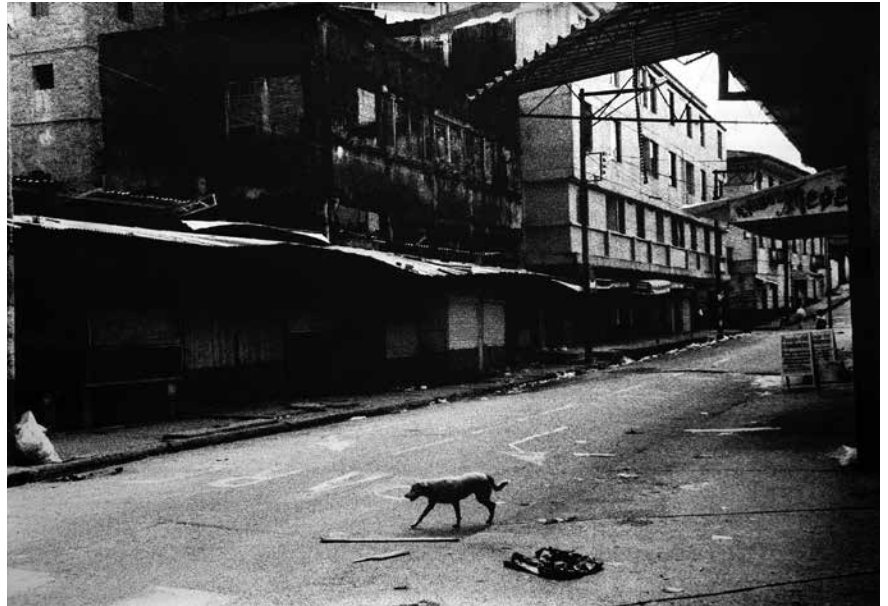
In Oscar Campo's documentary *Escritura de luz y sombras* (“Writing in Light and Shadows,” 1995), also projected in the exhibition, the photographer walks around the city, guided by his passions, and comments on his preferred subjects, noting whatever moves or outrages him. Underscoring the importance of light and the emotions that this fascination provokes in him, Franco time and again expresses his love for Cali (“I walk and walk... I am in love with this city”); confesses that, despite his experiences as a pho-

París, Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain

tojournalist in the *Diario de Occidente* and *El País* newspapers, he has “never been able to get used to violence”; and tells us that his passage through the world of advertising provided him with “a moment of poetry.” Franco also insists on the role of remembrance in his photographic choices and declares that, for him, to photograph is “to write with light and to tell stories.”

Conceived as a “portrait of the city” both human and metaphorical that unveils the many facets of Cali, the exhibition immerses us, from the first series (*Pacífico*) on, in the atmosphere of 1970s Cali, with an almost deserted, sunburned street where a wandering dog prowls, and also with an “underground” of water-eroded stilts where Franco liked to hide as a child. Each section is accompanied and enriched by quotes by the photographer, giving us access to his interests, desires, and emotions. A kind of highly palpable

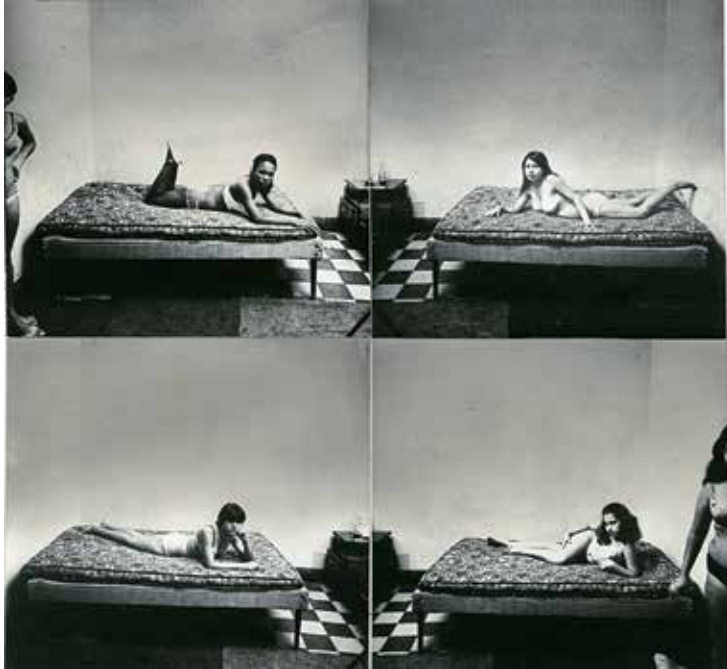
Interiores Series, 1978. Gelatin silver print, 7 ²³/₆₄ x 5 ²⁵/₆₄ in. (18.7 x 13.7 cm). Vintage print. Private collection, Paris. *



Pacífico Series, 1987. Gelatin silver print. 39 ³/₈ x 47 ¹/₄ in. (100 x 120 cm). Vintage print, retouched by the artist. Collection Leticia and Stanislas Poniatowski. *

Bicicletas Series, 1975. Gelatin silver print. 6 ²⁹/₆₄ x 8 ²⁷/₆₄ in. (16.4 x 21.4 cm). Vintage print retouched by the artist. Collection Leticia and Stanislas Poniatowski. *





Prostitutas Series, 1970-1972. Gelatin silver print (collage). 8 5/8 x 9 1/4 in. (21.9 x 23.5 cm). Vintage print. Private collection, Paris. *



Color Popular Series, ca. 1980. C-print. 10 15/16 x 11 17/64 in. (27.8 x 28.6 cm). Vintage print, retouched by the artist. Private collection. *

intimacy traverses every subject, even the *Demoliciones* that present us with derelict, cracking walls... demolitions in a dark, forgotten, sick city... Fernell Franco is not interested in the beautiful but in the insignificant, in details that may even be ugly, and when in full awareness he “ages” his photographs, he does so in order to more easily discover an aesthetic connected to “the old.” The series *Interiores* shows us social and architectural changes in Cali, while the series *Color popular* (the only one in color) takes us to the city’s dance halls at the (real) beat of salsa music and confirms for us the photographer’s sincere approach to fleeting instants and everyday experiences. The series *Amarrados*, which includes the exhibition’s largest prints, presents bundled, tied up merchandise in a market. These “objects” fascinate Franco, who finds in them a metaphor for the killing that has ravaged Colombia; as he put it, the idea

is “to bundle up and cover the corpse, and to put it out of the sight of the living.” In *Interiores* we note Franco’s curiosity—shared with Oscar Muñoz—for old, formerly majestic mansions now transformed into tenement houses. The loneliness that permeates these locales is also present in Franco’s earliest series, *Prostitutas* (1970-72), where the photographer sought, in his words, “the truth about life.” *Billares* carries us to a different atmosphere, where semidarkness and cigarette smoke reign: the pool hall, an eminently masculine domain.

A space in the exhibition is reserved for the Cali Group, formed in the early 1970s by visual artists interested in the urban context. Among them were Ever Astudillo (1948-2015) and Oscar Muñoz (1951), whose works are displayed here: a series of photographs and drawings of Cali in the case of the former, and an installation specifically commissioned by Fondation Cartier in the case of the

latter. With *El Principio de la Empatía* (“The Empathy Principle”), Oscar Muñoz pays a warm tribute to his friend Fernell Franco, in the form of a working table that evokes the photographer’s and uses everyday objects and images of his home being renovated. Still and moving images are juxtaposed to transform this installation into a moment for sharing, with the chair in front of the “table” generating in viewers a deeper empathy with the photographer whose sensitive and nostalgic, dark and luminous, present and buried world they have just discovered.

* Photos courtesy Fundación Fernell Franco Cali / Toluca Fine Art, Paris. © Fernell Franco.

CHRISTINE FRÉROT
French art historian and criticism, member of AICA.

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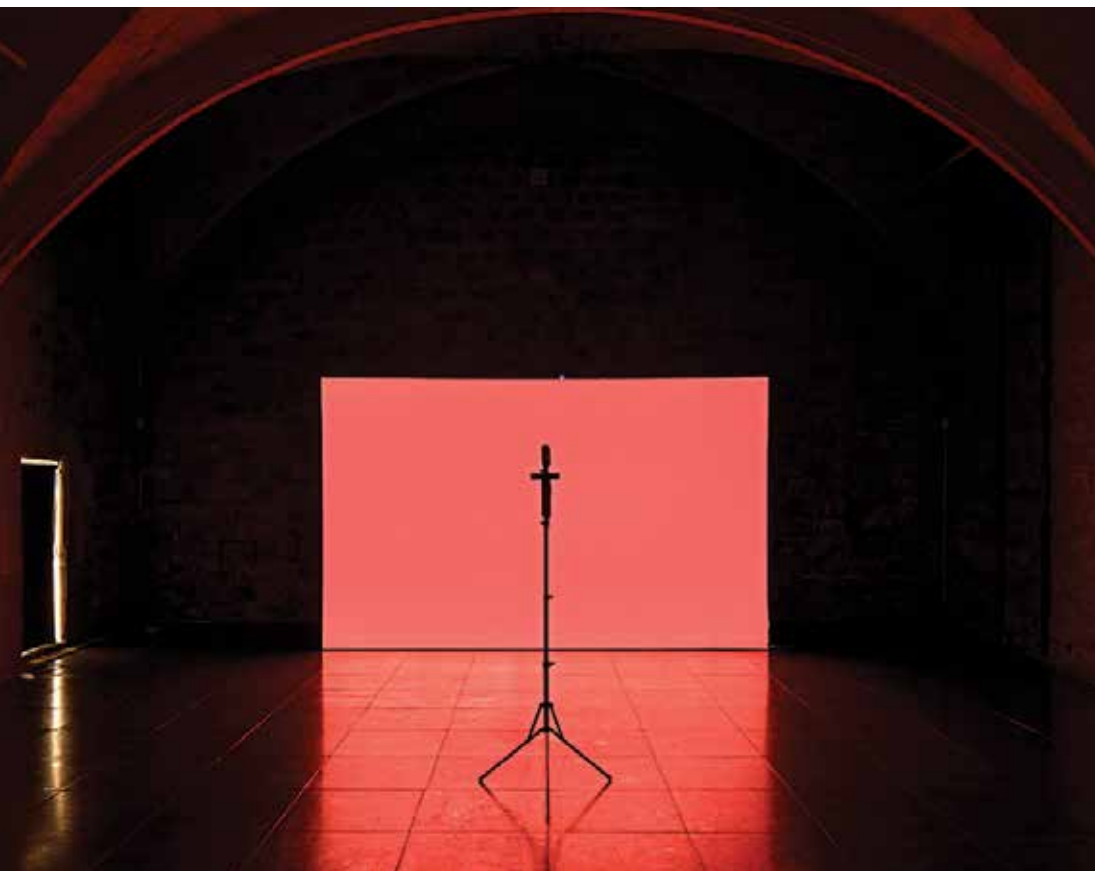


Realization



Ministério da
Cultura





El resplandor de la Santa Conjunción aleja a los demonios (The glow of the Holy Conjunction away from demons), 1991 (2016 reconstruction). Media-installation: Light box, sampler, synchronizer, flashes, tripod, speakers. Variable dimensions. Private collection. *

José Antonio Hernández-Díez

“No temeré mal alguno”

Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Barcelona (MACBA)

ELISA RODRÍGUEZ

No temeré mal alguno (“I Will Fear No Evil”) is a timely revision of key works in José Antonio Hernández-Díez’s career, works that a quarter century into the artist’s journey retain their power and their incisiveness, and remain symptomatic of the course of contemporary art. Video installations, taxidermy, and complex mechanisms make it possible to interrogate and dissect a complex mesh of the supernatural and the votive; that which transcends life and death; technology doomed to disappearance and displacement; the abject, visceral, and corruptible that by force insists on its own preservation, in forceful contrast with the intangible and the eternal—that which possesses the power of moving freely across dislocated temporal planes, which is precisely the exhibition’s turning point.

For the show’s curators, the works selected for display have a “phantasmatic” dimension through which past entities are expressed into the present. One could wonder whether it is by chance that the magnificent stone masonry of a Sixteenth Century chapel, impregnated with the legend of a holy dog who many centuries ago guarded its main entrance, is now the setting for an impeccable glass cabinet for the repose of “Saint Guinefort,” a taxidermy “immaculate” dog presented by the artist thirty years ago in Caracas.

One could say that the placing of this controversial artwork in Barcelona opens up a temporal dimension that allows for a re-reading of other works included in the now-mythical exhibition *San Guinefort y otras devociones* (“San Guinefort and Other Devotions”) presented in 1991 at Sala RG CLEARG, Caracas. At that time, the founding director of the space, Miguel García, coincided with the show’s curator, Luis Ángel, in asserting that Hernández-Díez represents “the rarest and most unexpected invention in Venezuelan art of the last decade.”

Since then, Hernández-Díez (1964) has been the creator of brilliant, trailblazing proposals wholly attuned to the postulates

of his generation's most accredited artists, like France's Pierre Huyghe (1962) and, especially, Britain's Damien Hirst (1965). It is worth noting that José Antonio exhibited his cleanly encased taxidermy dog a year before Hirst presented his famous "shark" suspended in formaldehyde under the title of *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*; Hirst's work was conceived in 1991 but debuted in 1992, in the first Young British Artists show at Saatchi Gallery in London.

José Antonio Hernández-Díez defines the sterility of a "pop syncretism" and neatly demystifies the complex pantheon of referents implied in having been raised in a Catholic family in such a rich and variegated context as the Caribbean, where practices like the "wake of the little angel," expressed in his *Vas pa'l cielo y vas llorando* ("You Go to Heaven and You Go Crying", 1992), are rather common.

Using technology, Hernández-Díez unfurls a "new religious iconography" ore in accordance with the era yet equally prone to disappearing. He deploys the scientific method in order to aestheticize and dispel doubt, isolating in diaphanous display cases phenomena that for centuries were understood in connection with metaphysics, with the unexplainable, with that which is unquestionable because of a faith's dogmas.

Hernández-Díez makes reference to other artists who transversally engage the profuse variety of Caribbean beliefs and superstitions and are characterized by the density, and even the viscosity, of their proposals, among them Venezuela's Miguel Von Dangel, Carlos Zerpa, and Rolando Peña, and Cuba's Juan Francisco Elso and José Bedia. Like them, Hernández-Díez is engaged in erecting new reliquaries; unlike them, he crystallizes an aseptic "soulless spirituality."

Along those lines he presents us with *Sagrado corazón activo* ("Active Sacred Heart," 1991), a work literally reinstalled at the heart of the new exhibition; it features a hyper-realist heart preserved in formaldehyde, beating inside a contained shaped like a transparent cross while it is



Sant Guinefort, 1991. Installation: metal, metacrylate, latex, rubber, stuff dog and compressed air. MACBA collection. *

Sagrado corazón activo (Active Sacred Heart), 1991 (2016 reconstruction). Installation: Metal, methacrylate, silicone heart, water, motor, compressed air, oscilloscope. Variable dimensions. Collection of the artist. *





La Hermandad (The Brotherhood), 1994 (2016 reconstruction). 3 video monitors, 3 tables, metal frame, aluminum trays, fried pork, single channel video, color, sound, continuous projection. Variable dimensions. Collection "La Caixa" Arte contemporáneo. *

reanimated by an obsolete medical device that is practically a modern archaeological artifact. Since then, this work brings to light our self-sufficiency with respect to divine will, and even makes it possible for us to reflect on our evolution from the standpoints of advances in biotechnology and cybernetics.

The artist confesses his lack of interest in technology as utopia, and he does not present us with a critique of the television medium in the style common in the late-1970s. For Hernández-Díez, the screens that are the support of his discourse compress a message that it is still possible to decipher, but will become encrypted in the future, only translatable and exhibited at great technical difficulty and cost.

No temeré mal alguno emphasizes Hernández-Díez's experimental video works of the late 1980s and early 1990s. One standout among them is *La hermandad* ("The Brotherhood," 1994), a three-monitor installation presenting the grotesque process of frying pig skins ("for a snack"), the basis for the confection of the rather "pop" *patinetes-corteza*, which

we then see devoured by a pack of hungry dogs—a reflection of our own voracity—and also hanging above the monitors, like final products exhibited in a serialized way.

Hernández-Díez insists on decoding the transit between life and death. With *La caja* ("The Box," 1991), the artist denounces the cruel fate of the "street children," the detritus of Latin American society, condemned to degeneration and prostitution.

The artist also explores and disassembles universal myths and characters. His video installation *Annabel Lee* (1988) turns us into spectators, via a subterranean monitor, of the anguishing state of Edgar Allan Poe's character, who was buried alive.

Houdini (1989) is an intelligent metaphor for the complex mechanism of "illusion." A monitor sunk into a liquid-filled transparent container displays the image of the artist freeing himself of chains under a swimming pool. The famous escape artist's distressing trick is thus revealed, and it is possible for us to inspect, again behind a glass partition, the workings of the cathode-ray tube that makes it possible for past events to reemerge.

In *El resplandor de la Santa Conjunción aleja los demonios* ("The Shining of the Holy Conjunction Keeps Demons Away," 1991), the flash from the camera-cross facing an abyss of red luminous barrier produces the moaning of some "demons." The artist develops the topic of submission vs. interactivity, how we react to advertising or "the temptation" prompting us to consume, and how can we respond with good criteria, with clarity.

Finally, specifically for the spaces of the *Capella*, Hernández-Díez presents *Filamentos* ("Filaments," 2016), a set of magnificent copper plates inscribed with the filaments that made possible the invention of the light bulb. These delicate works were conceived to be infused with the smoke of candles lit right in front of the same, contrasting the divine intersection of mystical light vs. artificial light, the civilizational "miracle" that dispels darkness and unmakes the monster-producing dreams of reason.

* Photos: Miquel Coll, MACBA.

ELISA RODRÍGUEZ
Graduate of Fine Arts UCV, Venezuela.

~~TOP SECRET~~

SECRET

TOP SECRET

**VOLUSPA JARPA
EN NUESTRA PEQUEÑA REGIÓN DE POR ACÁ
15.07-03.10.2016
MALBA**

NR



Untitled (Sticks of human hair), 1992/2016. Installation, human hair and wood. Variable dimensions. Photo courtesy Museo de Arte Universidad Nacional.

Flujos deseantes

Juan Fernando Herrán

Museo de La Universidad Nacional

NATALIA GUTIÉRREZ

To reencounter the early work of an artist is an extraordinary opportunity for young students and art lovers in general; all the more so in the case of Juan Fernando Herrán, who was born in Bogotá in 1963 and began to exhibit his work in the 1990s.

Revisiting Herrán's early works in this exhibition, I am put in mind of an artist who brought into the Colombian scene a strong understanding of different aspects of contemporary art. For example, the presentation of the space of matter and of "poor" matter: hair, uncooked clay, mashed bananas,

bones, and metal bottle caps found in the street. These materials, like a behind-the-scenes of form, directed the viewer's gaze towards life processes, which also take time to transform and to announce their eventual disappearance. It is along these lines that the exhibition presented us, again, with human hair displaying its malleability and softness on the floor; seventy pressed-clay objects resembling odd and fragile torture instruments; or a line of small metal bottle caps subjected to various kinds of destructive processes.

Herrán also brought into Colombian art the importance of a ritualistic way of doing, attentive to the particular manifes-

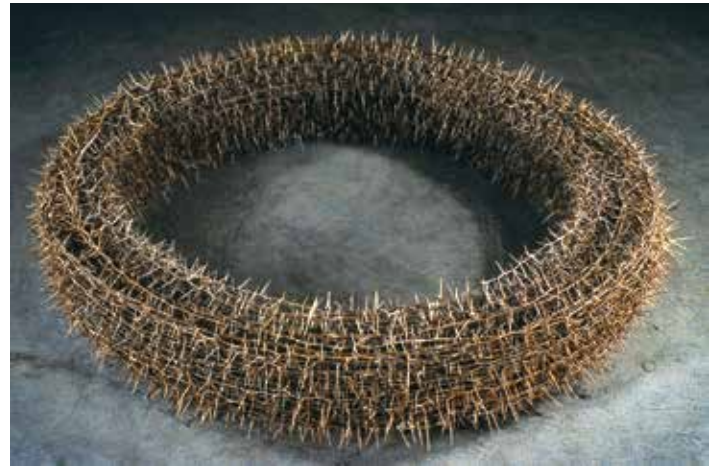
tations of culture and to the result of its transformations as it encounters the body. To the surprise of younger students, the exhibition included a video where Herrán chews grass and turns it into an almost perfect sphere in his mouth, presenting it to the viewer as an offering. By these means, Herrán introduced Colombian art to the need to be aware of gestures; gestures that are simple, but cannot be forgotten: to ruminate, to press down, to beat, to burn, and to rescue atavistic acts. So, in this exhibition we encountered once again Herrán's photograph of his feet sinking in manure.

I think it is important to mention here a book about Herrán written by

Nicolás Gómez, one of the most complete studies ever published on an individual Colombian artist. Its title is *En materia* (“In Matter”) and was published by the Ministry of Culture in 2012. Herrán says in that book: “The photograph was shot when I learned that peasant children in the highlands go out at dawn to milk the cows and step on fresh dung for warmth. I found this to be a very intimate relationship between the body and nature, determined by a need for comfort. The photograph underscores that action.” Bringing back actions that are lost in the midst of an accelerated process of modernization is a contribution of Herrán’s art, as is the intimacy that his early works, with their human-body scales, always favored. In that sense, curatorial decisions such as enlarging Herrán’s columns of hair and having them play with the site’s architecture, which emphasized the building rather than the body, made strange for me a work that was like an enchanted forest of hair rods, an intimate forest I had already crossed once.

I want to point out also that Herrán brought into Colombian art a commitment to highlighting the fact that objects are not the port of arrival in art, but a potency that captures communicative, psychological, and “traveling” flows. The object, then, can disappear to reveal that nature or society, in their way, also help configure landscapes and things. At that point the artist can take a step back and account for the process through which social systems are flattened or configured. In this exhibition we had a chance to see Herrán’s unsettling flat sculpture of an artifact—an airplane wing, perhaps—transfigured by lead, which nevertheless seems to float on the floor. An “artifact” that acquires growing validity through its title: *Flotsam and Jetsam*, a reference to refuse and remnants, to floating debris thrown intentionally into the water or resulting from an accident.

In that order of ideas—the presence of objects transformed by stronger forces—I believe the exhibition would have benefited from one of the most important works of the 1990s. I’m referring to *inter faeces et urinam nascimur*, its title taken from a Latin quote by St. Augustine that



Untitled (*Crown of thorns*), 1990. Assembly: Vegetal material. $57 \frac{17}{64}$ diameter x $17 \frac{23}{32}$ high (148 x 45 cm). Art Collection of the Bank of the Republic. *

Untitled (*70 objects*), 1992. Unbaked clay. $157 \frac{31}{64}$ x $177 \frac{11}{64}$ x $16 \frac{17}{32}$ in. (400 x 450 x 42 cm). *



Untitled (*Fecal feet*), 1992/2016. Photography B/W, iron frame and manure. $14 \frac{3}{8}$ x $25 \frac{19}{32}$ x $1 \frac{37}{64}$ in. (36.5 x 65 x 4 cm). *





Untitled (*Piece of Grass*), 1993. Video projection. *

can be translated as “we are born covered in feces and urine”, and its complement, titled *Lat. 5° 02' norte – Long 5° 40' oeste* (“Lat. 5° 02' north – Long 5° 40' west”). Herrán built a sphere using bones, a material he easily found and collected as he explored the Thames river; he then decided to give this perfect sphere to the sea so that it would travel to the 1994 Havana Biennial. Herrán also sent to Havana a wind map, trusting the forces of nature to do their work (and highlighting the fact that they do). This work is essential precisely because it makes it possible to discuss an obvious yet very important issue in Colombian art: the idea that art is not only an object for sale, but a reason to experiment, pull, and point out other forces, which the object allows us to name.

Another quality of Herrán’s oeuvre is its avoidance of over-signification. Most of these early works lack a title. They, along with the precision and sobriety of the artist’s statements, avoid cloaking the art on a generic discourse about violence or the situation in the country. Herrán’s works cannot be said to attempt a representation of the pain or the violence suffered by others. But it is precisely their silence and their material presence that help each viewer—me included—to recognize his or her own loss and emptiness, and to name each work with a title that expresses the meaning they, the viewers, find in it.

The scene is unforgettable: the 33rd National Artists Salon, in 1990, included an untitled work that the audience named the *crown of thorns*. Set on the floor, this thorny material, rolled up like a crown, came as a surprise in a Salon where sculpture in metal seemed rather self-satisfied with its forms; this was a discrete object that visitors could place in the space of

their own loss, of their own grief, or of a collective grieving for the situation of the country.

All of this allows me to say that, while an exhibition like this one of Herrán’s early works must certainly be celebrated, *Flujos deseantes* (“Desirous Flows”) is a confusing title. It is faithful to 1980s lines of thinking and their gambit for a philosophy of desire, which might drive an empowerment of the subject as it inscribes its own rituals on the culture, but in the case of Herrán we are not talking about such an open kind of desire. The title signals an excessive, adrift individualism, as Santiago Castro Gómez puts it in his book *Revoluciones sin sujeto*, which critiques the excessive use of the word *desire*. Herrán’s work, evidence of the power of an artist guided by the drive to experiment with matter, has clear ideas as a testimony—albeit not an explicit one—of what I would term a cultural and political shipwreck. Herrán’s early and later works express rage, despair, perhaps his own experience, and that makes a difference. Behind them is an artist who, I can’t be sure, may have experienced pain, and the work never allows itself to be dominated by their design or by an exaggerated formal precision. The form of Herrán’s work is just right; it does justice to experience. And this is why, in my view, the exhibition’s open title missed an opportunity to tell students in a university museum—and it is me, perhaps, who now attempts to over-signify the art—that Herrán is an essential artist to any understanding of Colombian society’s process of fear, fragility, and *impermanence*.

* Photos courtesy Museo de Arte Universidad Nacional.

NATALIA GUTIÉRREZ
Anthropologist. Professor at Universidad Nacional.

Anish Kapoor

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BOGOTÁ / COLOMBIA

Beatriz González

Casas Riegner

Beatriz González is perhaps the most prolific painter in Colombia. In five decades she has covered the history of the country, inspired by that endless source of images that is the printed press. Since the beginning of her career, works like *Los Suicidas del Sisga* (The Sisga Suicides) drew inspiration from that source.

González's latest solo exhibition, "Reiterations," not only included a decent group of new paintings but also offered a compilation of press archives as well as some of her earlier works centered on two themes: the place and representation of indigenous peoples, and forced displacement.

González based her narrative on tragic events. The first of which was the death, in December of 2014, of eleven people from the Wiwa community located in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. The victims in question were killed by lightning that struck and completely destroyed the dwelling that they were occupying. Aside from the deaths, there were another 20 persons injured. One of the images of such tragedy was published by the *Diario del Magdalena* periodical, included in the show alongside a selection of press clippings collected about the event. That image was chosen by the artist as the central motif of the paintings and drawings on display. The image depicts the strange state of the burnt house, which was reduced to a few somber piles of wood darkened by the fire as result of the electrostatic discharge.

Beatriz González created two series of small size drawings and paintings based on this image, copying the original composition as a motif subjected to several variations and modifications. *Historias Wiwa 1* (Wiwa Stories 1) is a pastel and charcoal drawing where González united three images—all taken from the press, including the aforementioned photography from the *Diario del Magdalena*—and rearranged them vertically, one on top of the other, in the following order: on top, a nebulous almost abstract form rendered with black charcoal and firebrick pastel; in the middle, the already mentioned remnants of the house; at

Beatriz González. General view *Reiteraciones* (Reiterations) and *Wiwa I Stories*, 1981 – 2015. Pastel and charcoal on paper. Photography: Oscar Monsalve. Courtesy Casas Riegner.



the bottom, the enigmatic silhouettes of six characters in darkness, achieved through soft charcoal applications over the melancholic dark lilac predominant thorough the entire composition.

González used the image to produce one of the three types of wallpapers displayed in the exhibition; rough digital prints that replaced her memorable serigraphies. *Historias Wiwa 2* (Wiwa Stories 2), an oil on paper work from 2015—like all the “new” works appearing in the exhibition—represents an equally simple motif: the vertical ascent of eleven silhouettes of the victims from the Wiwa community—identifiable because of cotton fabric clothes, bags and long hair—through a winding road. Also extracted from a newspaper, the image is just as dark as the previous one. It was used by Beatriz González to create another wallpaper in which the predominant motif—the sinuous vertical road—acquired a coarsely ornamental quality through repetition and serialization.

Interestingly, the image is similar to others presented by Jaime Ávila in his recent exhibition titled “Lost City” at the Galería Nueve Ochenta during the end of 2015. Like Beatriz González, Ávila was also interested in the peoples of Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, true survivors of all forms of violence, past and recent—at the hands of the Spanish Monarchy, the Catholic Church, the Colombian state, guerrilla and paramilitary groups, and drug cartels—implicitly painted by González as enigmatic symbols of spirituality, the respect for life and nature.

The second part of the exhibition employed the same visual strategies. It thematically centered on the Venezuelan government’s massive expulsion of Colombians in 2015. Images of exodus and exile have been frequent in the work of this artist and, in this occasion, border issues become once again present: thus, one of the paintings is called *Reiteración Imposible* (Impossible Reiteration). González presents four oil paintings featuring characters carrying their belongings on their shoulders as they cross a river, and a frieze taken from another work titled *Zulia, Zulia, Zulia*.

A third section of the exhibition consisted of archival material and works created between 1981 and 2005 selected to showcase two motifs: wallpapers from different decades, on the one hand, and the images of Colombian leaders alongside representatives from indigenous communities, on the other—a theme that also encompassed the marginalization and various forms of violence to which those peoples are subjected.

In sum, it is possible to observe his most recent artistic production a progressive simplification of form(s), it is as if she was trying to reduce figurative representation to its most minimal expression—patches that turn out to be persons, traces that represent lumber—in order to offer images that, as the formalist before Pop Art would have wanted it, work because of their expressiveness and symbolic power. Once again, one must admire the ethical nature, quality, relevance and staying power of González’s work. She is an artist who, as we mentioned in the beginning of this review, has painted the face of a country that has been too stubborn and indifferent to avoid repeating the same mistakes and, thus, change the course of its history, at a time when the possibility of achieving lasting peace is within reach.

SANTIAGO RUEDA

Juliana Góngora

Flora ars+natura

Contemplating a work by Juliana Góngora generally involves touching its surface with the tip of one’s nose. Wanting to get every detail, viewers must poke around because the tiniest of points contains a wealth of meaning. Góngora has specialized in the miniscule through an explora-

tion that does not solely involve a different perception of the space but also of time, given that time passes differently for the enormous and for the small. This is the reason physicists must choose between studying atoms or stars as each category is ruled by a different set of equations.

The exhibition “Labor,” at Flora Ars+Natura centers on an endangered past: the rural home and, thus, the possibility of farming one’s own land; a way of life that survives only through remnants. In this manner, Juliana Góngora focuses on her grandparents’ home in El Espinal (Tolima, Colombia), a hot town in the middle of the Colombian Andes; she created four pieces that were made of time in the most diverse manners.

A still video shows the interior of a home through a door. Shadows and movements caused by wind are the only signs of time going by; elapses that in El Espinal do not appear to occur. In another place in the exhibition, directly on the floor, a rectangular and flat stone-labor, inverted with lime that gradually eats it, has been rendered purposeless, thus its vertical position on one of the gallery walls.

Across from the stone-labor, resting on a wall, there is a wall made of salt, reminiscent of another one made with *bahareque*, a material used in the construction of peasant houses. The essence of this work, salt is highly charged with symbolism. On the one hand, it was the ancient commodity for trading in the barter system practiced by the indigenous people from the savannah of Bogota—a subject that Góngora has focused on in her earlier work; and, on the other, salt is the element used to preserve meat in warm weather, to stop decomposition, which is in essence the same as to stop the passing of time. If water, which always appears new, is Heraclitus, then salt, which always seems ancient, is Parmenides. In this exhibition, the aged appearance of salt was present in the yellow and brown, Paleolithic, patches that began to appear on the wall’s surface soon after the installation was completed. In addition, the gravitational force eventually made the lower mass of the wall wider than its upper section. In fact, the amazing thing is that that wall-clepsydra somehow managed not to fall apart.

When Góngora was asked about this, she said that a sudden collapse was unlikely because salt likes to remain together, preferably in a solid state, ideally in stones. She then added that, in order to separate it into

the particles that we are used to ingest, it is necessary to combine it with iodine. Thus, she concluded, “the only thing I did was to get it together again.” And Juliana Góngora is well versed in the behavior of particles, tiny stones and miniscule seeds.

In *Ensayos Sobre la Fe* (Essays on Faith, 2012), Góngora placed three hundred sand stones, less than a cubic millimeter each, on top of four meters of spider silk. The work was extremely powerful and delicate and its dimensions were unusual: it was tiny but also vast, light but also heavy. All contradictions that surrounded the issue of scale, since a biped—Góngora—55,000 times heavier than a house spider, decided to take the place of the spider to obtain a result that was unattainable according to our sliding scale; an extremely thin thread holding enormous stones. Working within the parameters of a spider, Góngora was able to transform stones into light objects. To do so, she had to be very patient. The sole act of separating the tiny stones from the sand dust took her several hours. It took place, not without humor, in the waiting area of El Dorado airport.

In this last piece of the exhibition, Juliana Góngora returns to learning about spiders. She reconstructs a memory of her father involving the bed on which her grandfather slept in the home of El Espinal. It was a wooden structure covered with stretched calfskin stitched to the bed with very fine thread from a long weave, which gives the piece the appearance of being very light. The contrast between the loose blanket and the tense skin offers an incredible texture to the piece.

But now, in order to understand the blanket, it becomes necessary to get close, because the weave is filled with grains of salt, organized with the geometric regularity of crochet. The amazed reaction of viewers when they observe the grains is similar to the earlier response caused by looking at the tiny stones of spider silk. What are they doing there? I have no idea, but it is very beautiful and, on the other hand, the blanket could be placed on the soil to generate a new harvest. Indeed, the uneven extension of the blanket is the geography of Tolima on the bed, on the cow skin that belongs to the type of cattle that pastures along the mountains. Both converse about the history of farming and the contemporary agro-industrial reality that has devoured our world. But this is only a miniscule interpretation of work full of meanings. It is a piece that envelops time through the most diverse of flanks; the past of her grandfather, the ongoing action of weaving, and the future that, in spite of it all, is contained in each seed.

Juliana Góngora. *Cuja*, 2016. Handmade bed, wooden frame covered with cow leather and bed sheet woven with rice grains and thread. Bed: 70 ⁵⁵/₆₄ x 43 ⁵/₁₆ in. (180 x 110 cm), sheet: 78 ⁴⁷/₆₄ x 31 ¹/₂ in. (200 x 80 cm). Photo courtesy of the artist.



JULIA BUENAVENTURA

Jaime Iregui Espacio Odeón

Jaime Iregui has been interested for a long time in creating art that is inserted into public discussions. So much so that during the 1990s he gradually abandoned his work as a painter to develop a network of opinions centered on art; candid opinions that in 2000, with the strengthening of virtual networks, became *Esfera Pública*. For 16 years *Esfera Pública* has been an open forum about art. More than just opinions, the forum has also built an archive of valuable material that collects the issues confronting art, not only in connection with works and artists, but also with respect to censorship, the public space, art education, the art market, galleries, the despair and hope of a “profession” very difficult to practice and conceive.

As I see it, *Esfera Pública* is also important because it puts stock in a person’s opinion; “sending” one’s opinion to “others” establishes an exchange that contributes to the construction of the common. While

“the public” will always be mediated by the institutions of the state or by private entities, “the common,” according to Tony Negri, is a gathering of voices and actions by a diverse number of people that are “outside” and that gradually develop a way of thinking through transitory affinities. In this instance, there are thoughts about art permeated and influenced by social issues. It is likely that precisely for that reason Cordula Daus invited *Esfera Pública* to participate in the 2006 edition of Documenta (Documenta 12) in Kassel, Germany.

Jaime Iregui has also explored methodologies that encourage artists to survey and experiment in the city. Methodologies that revisit, for instance, the contributions of intellectuals Guy Debord and his *dérives* (drifts) and Miche de Certeau’s “city wanderings.” At any rate, this space for the walking artist erodes any notions associated with works of art, artists and museums, and frames art as a permanent self-reflective practice.

And this is also true in *Manifestos*, presented at the Espacio Odeón in Bogota. When he met Felipe Botero—an student at the Universidad de los Andes who also had experience as an actor—Iregui thought that he was perfect for his project, a concept that, in my opinion, is similar to the idea behind the Speakers’ Corner in Hyde Park in London, where the regular folk get to offer their opinion in public. And about this, it is important to note that anyone standing on a Colombian street willing to voice his/her opinion out loud would likely be regarded as crazy. The idea reminded me of a crazy woman in my town who talked to herself and made a lot of gestures. We all laughed at her, but her outbursts about the armed forces being in power, the irrelevance of sermons, and the place of women in society, were all actually very illuminating ideas. We definitely know very little when we label those with a point of view “crazy.” We actually need more people willing to express their opinion.

In *Manifestos*, Iregui prepares a text with citations from the *Proa* periodical, the magazine for modern architects in Bogota. It specifically references an article titled “So Bogota Becomes a Modern City,” from issue No. 5, published in 1946. Botero then stands on a strategically chosen street in Bogota and speaks with a loud and clear voice in what appears to be a combination of speech, proclamation, and conversation. Most people continue on their way and some stop to listen to this person whose opinions are for everyone to hear on the street.

It is important to note that, when said out loud on a modern Bogota street, the text cited in *Proa* magazine sounds as absurd as any Dadaist manifesto: some sections contain the following passages: “Bogota is a detention center. This is the impression we get every time we ponder on the bad mood of

its inhabitants. We have always believed that the source of such collective illness is its overly narrow streets, which leads pedestrians to get into each other’s space, causing altercations... Broad streets are happiness and healthy optimism.” But most meaningful is another text that it was hard for me to believe because it evidences the unwillingness of modern thinking to accept the singular conditions of the place: “There are cities like Athens and Rome erected with marble; others like Paris, Brussels and Madrid are built with stone; others yet, like New York, Toronto and Chicago are made of iron. In these, demolitions are expensive. But Bogota is a city made of soil and this is a good reason to be excited when considering the beginning of its definitive leveling and demolition.”

After reading and listening to those manifests, I left the space with the echoes of the “modern excitement” for flattening and cleaning. Their proclamations encouraged me to become more aware of the content in public discourses and to remember that Bogota, the city in which I live, has been shaped by a history of discourses that one must reference.

NATALIA GUTIÉRREZ

Leonel Castañeda Espacio El Dorado

From the anatomical studies by Berengario da Carpi (1521), Andreas Vesalius (1543), Jan Steven Calcar (1543), Jean Valverde de Amusco (1586), Gasparo Becerra (1556), Peter Hille (1576), Lucas Kilian (1639), Guido Guidi (1626) and Gêrdard de Lairesse (1685); to the history of art covered in works like *The Development of the Study of Anatomy from the Renaissance to Cartesianism* by Raphael Cuir; philosophical writings like *Ouvrir-Vénus. Le temps des Images* by George Didi-Huberman; to, of course, the *Anatomical Studies* by Leonardo Da Vinci, Rembrandt’s *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp, or Omniprésence* (Omnipresence) by ORLAN, among many others who would be impossible to list here; it is clear that “The Body Within” is completely fascinating. And Leonel Castañeda addresses such fascination in his recent personal exhibition that inaugurated the new Espacio El Dorado space. It is a subject that can also be problematic because it questions our taste, our willingness to observe that which we never see, beyond any considerations relating to beauty—an ideology in and of itself, as Karl Rosenkranz declared in his famous book titled *Aesthetics of Ugliness* (1850): “It is in this hell of the beautiful that we wish to descend.” The exhibition by Castañeda is an im-

Leonel Castañeda. *Untitled*, 2014 – 2016. Installation and collage: girdles collected in markets in downtown Bogota. Variable dimensions. Photography: Oscar Monsalve. Courtesy Espacio El Dorado.

Jaime Iregui. *Manifestos*, 2016. Performance, video installation.



mersion into the hell of the beautiful in which the sinister (that strangely familiar Freudian notion) invites us to recognize ourselves in that which he usually wishes to negate: the body-corpse, the body-remains.

Divided across three levels, the exhibition proposes a survey of the body as habit-girdle, as fragment-archive, and as object-animal, respectively. In the first part, the exhibition room was in complete darkness, only some well-directed points of light focused on several rows of girdles arranged one after another like articles of clothing. In each row and on the wall, a photograph showed a dissected body that revealed what we usually do not see. The tension generated between the articles of clothing—most of them for women—hanging from a metal structure, become “skins” and the unfolding of those bodies shown in the color photographs over a black background. Flesh and habit; how not to be reminded of Hanna Sterbak and her *Flesh Dress* or ORLAN’s *Manifeste de L’Art Charnel* (Manifesto of Carnal Art). Castañeda masterfully succeeds to immerse us inside the body, which is, in my opinion, where true nudity lives.

The second part consists of a series of display cases that jealously guard several magazines, books, sheets, photographs and other printed material that promiscuously cohabit with found objects and objects bought at street markets in the downtown area of Bogota: The “pulgeros” and the famous “agáchese” or informal market located along street sidewalks. Collected for a period of over fifteen years, all these objects allude to the body: dental prostheses, sexual objects and women’s shoes, among others. In this manner, Castañeda’s success in developing a perverse narrative of the body, in which texts, images and objects tie together that I have called a text-gram¹. It is a body of language that reveals a singular gaze on the absent body. We, the viewers, read anything we wish into it, as we freely associate images with texts and objects. This type of visual reading forms a different idea of the body, whose presence is marked by the real world, the world of medicine, since the images come from 19th century French anatomy books, combined with pornographic images and images taken in the morgue. Castañeda explains: “My intention was not to rediscover the body in the context of images already established.” It is a true work of aesthetic and cultural archeology.

Lastly, several aluminum display cases enclose skins and other fragments from dissected animals that have been intelligently intervened: horns with nails, a colt with a muzzle full of teeth, serpent skins, rabbit skins, turtle shells, among others, that remind us of those cabinets of curiosities from the 16th and 17th centuries, preludes to the museum where animal elements were placed alongside the monstrous and the exotic. Here, the animal body is exalted, desiccated skins become eternal witnesses, while the body loses its vitality and becomes something else.

These three moments offer us a comprehensive idea of what the body is, observed and experimented on from within, in its eternal nakedness—for the naked body is the one that is divested of its own skin. The exhibition by Leonel Castañeda shows work that we are just beginning to know; work that had remained unknown for many years and whose potential had been only appreciated by a few people like Carmen María Jaramillo and Beatriz González. They showed one of his display cases at the Banco de la República collection. Espacio El Dorado was inaugurated with an excellent exhibition that will be hard to forget.

NOTE

1. This concept refers to the union between text and image, between text and object. Ricardo Arcos-Palma, *La corporéité du langage. Le corps comme pre-texte et comme texte en soi même* (The Physicality of Language. The Body as Pretext and as Text Unto Itself) Thesis Submission. Bibliothèque de la Sorbonne. Paris, 2005.

RICARDO ARCOS-PALMA

Juan Cortés y David Vélez

Valenzuela Klenner Galería

Nature has always been a recurrent theme in the history of art. Particularly from Romanticism to the contemporary period, artists have approached it from a multiple number of perspectives. Artists have made visual inquiries into the relationship between the *natura naturans*—as Spinoza called it—and human and animal beings. The most complex part was proposed during the dawn of capitalism, which, according to the researches of the Potosí Principle¹, dates back from the colonial period and was generated in our continent within the context of devastating imperial policies, in which the desire to learn about nature is driven by the desire to dominate and exploit it; thus, conquering expeditions in search of El Dorado and the ensuing Royal Botanical Expedition during the Illustration had no other pretension than to inventory the wealth in the New Kingdom of Granada. That expedition was led by José Celestino Mutis in the 18th century with the support of King Charles III of Spain. The physiocracy of François Quesnay helped Spain to understand that nature is a source of wealth. Artists played a central role during that period. They were entrusted with the development of an inventory, unprecedented in history, so the King could access those riches as he pleased. Is it possible that the contemporary boom in the art and natural worlds is somehow connected to this colonial baggage in which artists were at the service of a “noble cause,” still going on to this day, of exploiting the wealth of our territory? While this idea must be further developed in greater depth, the exhibition by Juan Cortés and David Vélez goes beyond those art and nature booms—which, by

Juan Cortés y David Vélez. *Orden Natural 10* (Natural Order 10), 2015. Collection of satellite images of storms, printing on paper, . 55 1/8 x 31 1/2 in. (140 x 80 cm). Courtesy of the artists.



the way, sell very well in a contemporary art scene where there is an abundance of proposals that include plants, grass and other herbs, seeds and water, among other elements from nature, in a sort of palliative that fails to confront the actual problem caused by the exploitation of the land and its riches.

While “Natural Order” proposes from the beginning a close relationship between living beings and nature, it does not do so however in a futile or inconsequential manner. On the contrary, Cortés and Vélez propose an aesthetic experience in which sounds, images and objects frame nature in its rightful place: as a force that is most of the time uncontrollable, unpredictable and, thus, destructive. Natural disasters are interpreted by some as nature being vengeful, as a response to mankind’s incessant attack. This “natural order” or normal cause in the world is both terrible and terrifying, but also fascinating: it is that which Kant (I am sorry to have to bring up the old man from Königsberg, but it cannot be helped, we simply can not ignore him) called the sublime.

In this way, the concept of the landscape is approached in a fresh manner by the artists of this exhibition. Here the universe of sound becomes visible through the complexity of science. Fortunately, art and science go hand in hand and the landscape can be rendered in all of its complexity. “The concept of the landscape has changed dramatically since the invention of new instruments that allow the reading of a number of variables than is much larger than ever before, and the contemplation of other phenomena that are also part of the landscape. It is interesting when art is able to point to phenomena that are hidden. The landscape is much more than those things that we are able to observe. It contains waves, information, data, networks, etc. It is interesting to point to and observe the direction that the contemporary landscape is taking.”²

Indeed, it is about seeing beyond what the naked eye can see, and this can only be accomplished by creators who approach art from a scientific perspective. In fact, Cortés and Vélez worked with scientists from the Department of Geology of the Universidad Nacional de Colombia. In this sense, ruin and disaster are something natural, given that nature is in a process of continuous transformation and, thus, expresses itself naturally—and, thus, earthquakes, for instance, are not the result of divine

Edgar Guzmanruiz. *Sebastián, Dermis, Ciro Chiaroscuros, Narkissos*, series 2015. Digital printing on baryta paper. 14 ³¹/₆₄ x 10 ³⁵/₆₄ in. (36.8 x 26.8 cm). Courtesy of the artist.



design or the consequence of a curse that condemns the bad behavior of mankind. *Cartografía Descompuesta, a Partir de Fragmentos de Ruinas y Grietas* (Broken Cartography, from Fragments of Ruins and Cracks) presents a composition that elicits fascination in the viewers, as we unblushingly ask ourselves: Do we like ruins? According to Vélez: “Beyond any moral and spiritual aspects, I am most interested in nature’s need to move forward and to survive, to continue processes that cannot be caught by the layers of the human temporal scale.”³

“Natural Order” is an excellent exhibition featuring work by two artists of international projection. The MoMA in New York City opened its doors to them during the beginning of this year, and their works are part of the history of sound art in Colombia that we are writing.⁴

NOTE

1. Ricardo Arcos-Palma, Principio Potosí: “¿Cómo podemos cantar el canto del señor en tierra ajena?” *ArtNexus* No. 80, 2011.
2. Words by Juan Cortés in “Juan Cortés entre la naturaleza y la tecnología”. Ignacio Mayorga Alzate, *Rolling Stone*, February 4, 2016. http://rollingstone.com.co/n_juan_cortes.html
3. Words by David Vélez. *Idem*.
4. Arcos-Palma, Ricardo. “¿Nada que ver? Hacia una historia del arte sonoro en Colombia.” *ArtNexus*, No 94, vol. 13, 2014.

RICARDO ARCOS-PALMA

Edgar Guzmanruiz

L.A. Galería

The interesting thing about those theses proposed by French sociologists about the complex world of simulation, virtuality, reality, real time, etc., is that the speed with which things occur today surpass any of their postulates. Change, innovation and the blurring of the boundaries of that which is regarded as “private” are everyday occurrences. The interesting thing about the analyses offered by Virilio, Baudrillard, Levy and company, is that they need to be adapted to the changes occurring in the technological world, in the same manner that a tablet becomes outdated as soon as it is sold when compared to other tablets about to hit the market. It is not that reading their works is worthless or that it does not help us to comprehend the environment in which we live. But in order to fully take advantage of them, we must first understand the context in which those books were written, the technological age of the times that they make reference to.

Three decades ago, having a computer at home was unthinkable; two decades back, owning a mobile phone was rare; and years later, who could have thought that mobile phones would be used to surf the internet, take photos and record video. Today, we witness a period in which we are “connected” with the present lives of the entire world; we can have direct contact, real time conversations, with several people from several places around the world at the same time. We can access all types of information with the click of a mouse, check out commercials and, in any given day, we can “be” in several places while having lunch. This is not strange in contemporary world. Nonetheless, this much happiness and access to immediacy end up taking us back to essential questions human beings have been asking for centuries. What happens to the relationship between the “self” and the “other,” when the “self” becomes so mesmerized by its own reflection? What is real when looking through a mirror? Why do conversations so recurrently turn to concepts like “vanity” and, thus, “death,” after one has been talking about things like “reality,” “mirrors,” or the “self”?

“Narkissos,” the title that Edgar Guzmanruiz decided to give to his exhibition, takes a look precisely at the “narcotic” effect of screens on

people. When Narcissus is condemned to desire his own image reflected on a pond, he does nothing else but go there every day to adore himself. Nothing and nobody, not even beautiful Echo, can take away from that infatuation with himself, that addiction to his reflection; until one day, in a desperate move to possess the object of his desire, he dives in the mirror of water and dies. In this manner, Guzmanruiz analyzes the way in which the virtual world traps, blinds, and forces people to be in permanent contact with the screen. The body posture becomes reverential and submissive before the light that emanates from these devices. Interpersonal changes and, indeed, the screen as mirror converge into new forms of life. The way in which mysticism gradually transforms is not very different from that process. If art and the museum space were regarded as places of retreat similar to religious temples, if loyal participants were to replace the silence of praying by the confrontation of the exhibited image; and, if after all, self-absorption can also occur in a bus, a coffee shop, a bedroom, or a living room, it is then time to begin to regard the screen as a sort of supreme, omnipresent, being. The reflection endorsed in this exhibition by Guzmanruiz is geared towards the new forms in which numbing adoration is manifested through the interaction of the “self” and a light-emitting superior world that traps the gaze and submits the body.

In this exhibition Guzmanruiz underscores several aspects, including the unavoidable “selfies,” ponds turned into mirrors, screens that achieve the same dramatic effect of old chiaroscuros and of the characteristic sound of a server connecting to the internet. While the exhibition offers rivers of conversations in “chats,” viewers cannot escape the anguish generated by not being able to see their reflections in the show. The images exclude us from the frames of selfies and away from those absorbed with their screens. Like in *Las Meninas*, the famous painting by Velázquez, we are left to wonder about the content in the canvas being painted. In the case of Guzmanruiz’s work, we are left to uneasily wonder about the content in the screen illuminating the faces the possessed subjects. Although the evasive images do not stare back at us they are nonetheless an unsettling reflection of ourselves.

ANDRÉS GAITÁN T.

BUENOS AIRES / ARGENTINA

Roberto Plate

Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes

The anthological exhibition titled “Buenos Aires-Paris-Buenos Aires” by Roberto Plate (Buenos Aires, 1940) at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (MNBA) surveyed 50 years of a prolific artistic trajectory based in France since 1970. Curated by Raúl Santana, the exhibition included more than one hundred paintings of different sizes, pieces associated with his work as scenographer, as well as the recreation of several emblematic conceptual installations from the 1960s.

Plate belongs to a generation of artists that emerged into the public eye from the Centro de Artes Visuales of the Instituto Di Tella (1963-1970) and then had to leave the Argentina because of the increasingly repressive environment. Despite the 1966 military coup led by Juan Carlos Onganía and the ensuing intervention of the university, the 1960s decade was a period of important artistic, intellectual and political work. This exhibition “is to some degree a historic reparations. Like many other artists, Plate had to flee Argentina during the 1960s because of political unrest in the country. The same state that made him leave today welcomes him with open arms and recognizes the value of his

work,” said Andrés Duprat, the new director of the MNBA, during the inauguration of the exhibition.

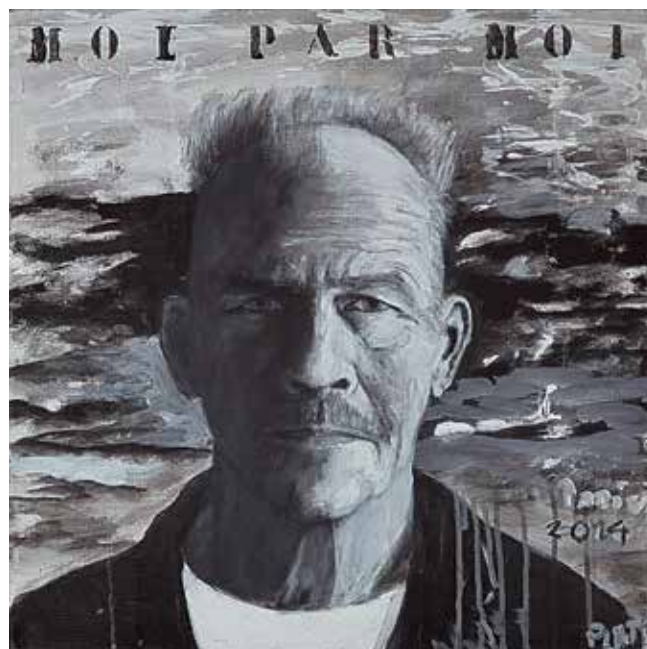
The trip from Paris to Buenos Aires begins almost upon entering the museum in the ground floor with the installation titled *Los Ascensores* (The Elevators), located far from the pavilion of temporal exhibitions in which the rest of the exhibition presented. Observers not familiar with the museum would be in line to go up or walk past the doors of the so-called elevators (which do not go anywhere), believing that these are a part of the architecture of the place and not an installation created by Plate. When first shown in 1967 at the Museo de Arte Moderno in Buenos Aires, it generated all sorts of comments.

Then, the prevalent presence of painting multiplies in the exhibition hall, which includes two sections that showcase an erotically charged series and documents that contextualize Plate’s itinerary and attest to his work in Europe and Argentina through short videos of interviews, records of previous exhibitions, installations, scenographies, and his work in his studio.

A prominent and persistent painter, as it is well documented in the generous amount of paintings of various sizes, Plate paints without preparatory sketches and his proposals are self-referential for the most part. His countenance and figure, fragments of his presence, dominate and populate the canvases from different and unusual angles. Some canvases are full of colorful gestures, while others are inhabited by subtle forms. According to Santana, “The visible that surrounds Roberto Plate in his studio in Paris: easels, stretchers, paints, jars and brushes—that olfactory and retinal world that is so dear to the artist—materials that while recurrent have nonetheless served him well throughout his life as a painter and scenographer to evoke the most different things in the world. They have been a constant point of departure to activate his body, that other grand protagonist that completes the miracle that is his painting.”

The installation titled *Reflejos* (Reflections) — a new version of the original work of the same name presented in Paris in the 1990s — closes and summarizes his love for the painting profession. It consists of twenty small and vibrant paintings hanging on the walls of an enclosed area that resembles the interior of a brush jar. The paintings are reflected on a pool of water with a dark tonal range that is reminiscent of the liquid

Roberto Plate. *Moi par Moi*, 2014. Acrylic. 19 11/16 x 19 11/16 in. (50 x 50 cm).
Courtesy Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (MNBA).



left from washing the brushes. At the center, a large brush descends from the top. With this work viewers get to complete their immersion into Plate's painting.

However, there is one installation that is responsible for changing Plate's life. The piece (was it called an installation back in the day?) titled *Baños Públicos* [Public Restrooms (Instituto Di Tella, 1968)] was banned by the dictatorship and Plate rose to fame as a result. Just as it occurred in *Los Ascensores*, the mimetic element is central in this piece. *Baños Públicos* consisted of a construction that included doors with the silhouette of a man or a woman, respectively. The doors opened to a space with white walls but no restrooms. It was designed so visitors could access it and write something on its interior walls. There were all kinds of phrases written on them, but the politically charged writings were what caused the censorship. Police taped notice of closure signs on the doors and a constant police presence impeded access to the original installation. In the current one, Plate displays a gigantography next to the doors that shows the moment the police closed down the installation. In response to the censorship, the other artists participating in the original exhibition removed their works and destroyed them in front of the Instituto Di Tella located on Florida street.

A multidisciplinary artist, Plate acted in risky happenings and theatre plays developed at the Instituto Di Tella by a group of artists. He was also friends with Alfredo (Rodríguez) Arias. After leaving Argentina, Plate entered the TSE theatre group and became a prominent scenographer. The exhibition is complemented with a profusely illustrated hardcover catalog that includes writings by curator Raúl Santana, Marguerite Duras, and Carlos Espartaco.

VICTORIA VERLICHAK

Ana Gallardo

Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires - MAMBA

The exhibition titled "A Place to Live When We Get Old" at the Museo de Arte Moderno in Buenos Aires (MAMBA) is comprised of a comprehensive selection of works created in the last ten years by Argentine artist Ana Gallardo (1958). The conception of these works is based on a persistent idea: the passage of time and the inexorability of death. The artistic object takes shape solely as part of a program born from intimate stories that belong to Gallardo and others. In this manner meaning is

Ana Gallardo. *Baile japonés* (Japanese dance), *Primary actions series*, 2014. Video. Duration 9 min 45 sec.



given to objects—relics, the practice of dance and song, films, and even to charcoal drawings. Nonetheless, writing—and, most importantly, the way the artist's voice is conveyed—is perhaps the constant basis for the entire group of works. Even the epigraphs reject technicalities and disaffected descriptions in favor of writing that accompanies the soul of each action.

Mi tío Eduardo (My Uncle Eduardo, 2006) and Mi Padre (My Father, 2007) are film records that show emotions, stemming from past experiences, of two of Gallardo's dear relatives. Through Gallardo's gaze, uncle Eduardo sees the landscapes of Granada that he would have wanted to see again after fifty years. Her poet father reads with emotion a note found by chance in an old periodical from Rosario: a reporter chronicles the arrival of Gallardo's parents to Argentina after leaving Spain, their homeland.

Gallardo lives in each work. She is like a sensitive host that opens her home to visitors, invites them to seat and shares with them family photographs and also her deepest and most unsettling feelings. For a year, Gallardo and her daughter were homeless and had to move often from one borrowed house to another. She lost most of the furniture that they had to leave in storage. The few things that Gallardo was able to recover were used in the piece *Casa Rodante* (Trailer Home, 2006), a utopic home that she even paraded through the streets of Buenos Aires.

Extracto de un Fracasado Proyecto (Extract From a Failed Project, 2011-2015) is based on an unfinished project developed in a retirement home for former prostitutes in Mexico City. For a time Ana Gallardo cared for Estela, a person with complete paralysis who eventually died. That experience established the groundwork for a possible work. But, how could a narrative be developed when the material, because of its raw nature, can hardly be expressed through the usual forms or writing? Thus, the entire body must be put into action. A museum wall is perforated from end to end, word by word. Only then can the story acquire the required spatial-temporal dimension. There will be no choice but to slow down and take the time to go over the writing and become the flesh of a grim and intimate confession. A while back, Gallardo addressed in the following manner how she would suggest viewers to read her work: "[...] I wish to encourage thought that is sensitive, emotional, and cathartic; thought that above all else is generated by emotion." And this statement continues to ring true in her work today.

In *Curriculum Laboral* (Work Curriculum, 2009) Gallardo tells with her own voice the type of jobs that she has and had to do in order to make a living and support her family. It is striking the variety of jobs that she has performed and how she still managed to never deviate from her goal of becoming an artist.

In the series "Primary Actions," she delves in the activities performed by persons over the age of 70, immerses herself in their spaces and takes over their vital rhythm. A group of Korean women practice Karaoke; another group gathers to perform typical Japanese dances. Like a feminine version of Zelig—the character created by Woody Allen that adopted the characteristics of the persons that he got near to—Gallardo dresses, dances, sings and behaves like her subjects of study, as she once again involves her entire body. But her goal is not just being like them in order to be accepted by the group—like Zelig did—or merely to perform an empty role, but rather to get as close as possible to the experience of being old, within a happy context in which art can still survive and, most importantly, appease the shadow of death.

The installation titled *Boceto para la Construcción de un Paisaje: La Laguna Zempoala* (Sketch for the Construction of a Landscape: The Zempoala Lagoon) spread across the large exhibition room located in the 2nd basement level and marked the end of the exhibition. A large group of charcoal drawings produced between 2001 and today completely covers the walls. Located in Mexico, the Zempoala Lagoon in Mexico becomes

the place that Gallardo selected to spread her mother's ashes across the landscape. Her mother died when Gallardo and her sister were still very young children. There once again writing appears as an introduction to the work: an emotional text written from the heart, and not subjected to revisions, corrections or additions, precedes the exhibition room. The tone established by the texts continues on the lines of the charcoal drawings. It is as if the series has taken a life of its own and expands ad infinitum, finally achieving the ultimate goal of transcending death.

VIVIANA SAAVEDRA

Graciela Hasper y Mariela Scafati

Del Infinito

French curator Philippe Cyrulnik, who is more than a sporadic visitor to the local contemporary scene, proposes a dialog between “two Grand Dames of Argentine pictorial abstraction” and two historic works by Raúl Lozza and Manuel Espinosa as transgenerational guardians of the scene. This exhibition, which opened during the Buenos Aires summer season, attracted large audiences and prompted fittingly poetic readings on the part of critics, thus confirming that certain moments and places remain tacitly in waiting for a given event that, when it comes to pass, focuses the attention of all concerned. This was a necessary exhibition.

Given the uniqueness of Graciela Hasper's and Mariela Scafati's work, so decidedly assumed by the artists themselves, their participation in an experience that does not eschew an element of playfulness strengthened the force of their individual/personal artistic proposals. With significant careers already behind them, both Hasper and Scafati engage the subject

Mariela Scafati. *Bondaje*, 2015. Installation. Variable dimensions.



of color via a classic medium such as painting, in dialog with the discipline itself, with the history of international art, and with elements of everyday reality. Yet, the paths they have followed have been divergent, almost contrasting: vivid, saturated colors in the case of Hasper; an atypical palette, obtained by mixing, in the case of Scafati. Not all the works featured are recent; rather, each selection functions as a concentrated anthology. The curator crafted a forceful presentation that can be seen as a thesis about the continuity of painting as a discipline across centuries and the genre's resulting dynamism, after new paths opened up from orthodoxy some seventy years ago, at the dawn of the contemporary era. These two artists take up the gauntlet deftly and daringly.

Scafati's works make many references to works from different periods, among them Robert Rauschenberg's famous *Bed* (1955), one of his earliest “Combine Paintings” and also one of the most emblematic. It is a genuine and long-standing instance of the origin of a new genre, a lineage to which the Argentine artist's paintings could perhaps belong. When Barbara Rose asked Rauschenberg about the special relationship he had with his materials, the celebrated American artist replied that every material has a history of its own, a history whose foundations may even lie within the material itself, and that there is no such thing as an “optimal” material for the creation of a work of art. To this he added that all artists select their material on the basis of their own existence, their familiarity, or their confidence. Meanwhile, among us, Kenneth Kemble was among the first historical figures to feel the need to integrate other objects and materials into his painting.

Hasper has always worked in the terrain of geometric abstraction with great skill and deep knowledge. In her work, colors vibrate in their saturation as they traverse interconnecting lines or circles, squares, rectangles, and other geometric shapes. Almost everything is always in motion in her work: color, form, or both. Her strategy subtly implies a kind of sublimated reality that nevertheless includes the whole of life's energy.

Circling back to that dialog between the “Grand Dames”, Hasper unfurls an instantaneous presence in the glitter of the modern city and its environs. We must remember that she hasn't lacked in reflections about the geographic identity of her abstract art. She has paid close attention to Helio Oiticica, Lygia Clark, and Lygia Pape. Scafati, in turn, makes allowances for a certain languor, for evocativeness and reminiscence. The real-world objects she incorporates into her work are chosen with attention both to reason and emotion. Clothing items—sweaters, a skirt with ruffles, a small modern-style piece of furniture used as support for a wholly abstract work—fuse into her paintings. These perfect combinations express that which painting doesn't: the warmth of wool, the flight of a skirt in dance. A baroque Hasper; an essential, stripped-down Scafati; and a counterpoint that could continue just like their celebration could endure in time.

MERCEDES CASANEGRA

CALI / COLOMBIA

Henry Salazar

lugar a dudas

In 1965 Swiss architect Charles Édouard Jeanneret-Gris, known as Le Corbusier, died in France, but not before spreading his architectural universalism—a global concept for human habitat—around the world, even all the way to its borders. In 1947 the urban planning project for Tumaco, a port city by the Pacific Ocean, was greenlighted in Bogotá (Colombia). Architects José Luis Sert and Paul Lester-Wiener, associates at the New York-based architectural firm Town Planning Associates,

worked on the project and developed several urban plans for Latin American cities in Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, and Cuba between 1942 and 1959. The growth experienced by cities, or even the foundation of brand new ones, made it necessary to organize and regulate their development. Some of the urban planning never came to fruition and others did so only in part. These plans represented the application of urban principles proposed at the International Congresses of Modern Architecture (Schnitter, 2003)¹.

These urbanistic principles proclaimed from a *center*, a place whose global formulations attested to certain power, disrupted Latin American urban environments by not properly taking into account the multiple geographic and cultural differences between places. The exhibition titled “Office of Possible Projects” by Henry Salazar, currently presented at Lugar a Dudas, is the result of a macro-project named LCNEA or *Le Corbusier No Estuvo Aquí* (Le Corbusier Was Not Here). With it, Salazar responds to the modernist movement from the mid-20th century. He investigated things surrounding the reconstruction project of Tumaco, a remote port city located in the Colombian southwest, and the incidence of modern architecture in the heart of a coastal forest marked by social inequality and poverty. After Tumaco succumbed to a fire in the 1940s, importing housing models to control the development of the city seemed like a great idea. It was like a sort of social splint or orthodontic treatment prescribed by the dynamics of progress and development.

This attempt to modernize territories in order to bring them to the present reveals a series of vibrations between global notions and particular situations of a local order, between differences in origins and destinations. Henry Salazar began his project with the creation of mockups based on the design by Le Corbusier, but renders them with boards taken from old houses by the port; homes created in a local architecture style that was far from the urban development planned. He constructed the mockups on the characteristic pile-dwellings found under coastal homes. These objects convey the contradictions that had not been historically addressed and, thus, become an answer and a political reaction generated from art. Such anachronistic responses address the problems experienced during the negotiations for the urban

Henry Salazar. *Silla LC2-A [Chair LC2-A (Le Corbusier Was Not Here Project)]*, 2015. Assembly, installation: wood salvaged from demolished houses. 36 ⁷/₃₂ x 32 ⁹/₃₂ in. (92 x 82 cm).



planning in America; thus, theme and project are intertwined when thinking about differences and non-correspondences.

The project emphasizes the gap that separates idealization from reality. It is a space that allows for multiple future possibilities also associated with the discrepancies between control and chaos. The future cannot be planned and contingencies respond to needs that are specific to a particular territory, where a world vision is connected to every detail. Everything in Salazar’s project rescues the contingencies and randomness that are found at the edge of the world, a border where strategies of control mutate and are filled with noise, modulating other possible variations impossible to anticipate. Nonetheless, it also allows viewers to wonder about the possibilities of being border and center at the same time, given that both conditions are the product of distance and difference.

In *La Oficina de Proyectos Contingentes*—a proposal selected by Local Grants for Creation 2105 organized by Lugar a Dudas—Henry Salazar recreates furniture originally designed by Le Corbusier: the so called LC2s. But, instead of using leather and steel, Salazar relies on wood from the homes that survived the urban planning project from the last century. These pieces became part of Lugar a Dudas’s furniture and visitors could sit on them if they wished, thus giving another dimension to the concept of LCNEA, associated with the body and the habitability of the work. Another piece in the installation is a video that shows a block in the town of Tumaco. This block stands out for having three neighboring homes that convey the passing of time: One home has been completely renovated, another only partially, and the third one—soon to be demolished—is the only one preserved in its original condition, untouched by the urban development planning.

The project stops have been an exhibition to become a habitat. It also turns into a series of workshops that address the notion of contingency and the possibilities to further develop, move, think about and manipulate the materials brought into the space by Salazar. With this, the artists also proposed the possibility of addressing the concept of the “different,” encouraging debate and experimentation and, in the process, transcending the notion of the exhibition.

NOTE

1. *Sert y Wiener en Colombia*. La vivienda social en la aplicación del urbanismo moderno [Sert and Wiener in Colombia. Public Housing in the Application of Modern Urbanism]. Patricia Schnitter Castellanos. Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, Medellín, 2003.

BREYNER HUERTAS

CARACAS / VENEZUELA

Jacobo Borges Galería Freites

Personalities from the cultural scene, visual artists and a large number of visitors attended the opening of the solo exhibition by Jacobo Borges (1931) at the Galería Freites. The exhibition consists of a group of fifty medium and large two-dimensional works that attest to the evolution of Borges’s work during the last 30 years or so, from 1983 to 2016. It includes 38 pieces from different periods that belong to private collections—which turns the event into a tribute to this prominent painter from Caracas.

The exhibition offers a wide ranging selection of pieces, from those created with the most traditional approaches—oil, acrylic, mixed media on canvas—to more sophisticated proposals transferred to digital patterns. Space, time, memory and water are discursive centers that guide a body of work grounded on the idea of change as the transforming prin-

ciple that drives life. The accompanying catalog offers a thorough study in which the curator of the exhibition, María Luz Cárdenas, analyses the thematic, conceptual and formal proposals of Borges's legacy. The text includes critical references, experiences and anecdotes that describe, in a clarifying manner, the different phases of his creative process, chronologically divided into twelve cores or chapters titled according to the themes covered: 1. Background and Gears, 2. Water Mirror, 3. The Door and the Threshold. Mexico and Berlin, 4. Matter and Time, 5. The Soul is a Strange Thing on Earth, 6. Approach to Paradise Lost, 7. Portraits and Self-Portraits, 8. Living Room with a Window View of the Ocean, 9. Color in an Observer of Sawn Leafs and Bulbs, 10. The Forest II and that Which Grows, 11. Landscapes of Memory, and 12. From the Ocean.

The works in the first floor of the gallery include paintings of large group portraits from the 1980s. There were other stylistic contributions during that same decade rendered with loose brushstrokes that attempted to imitate flow of water. One example of this is the piece titled *Reflexiones de Agua II* (Water Reflections II, 1986) and *Clavado* (Dive, 1992). The canvases from the 1990s include doors, thresholds, and other elements that denote perspectives, movements or separations between two places. In other years, he created several series that detail interiors, corners with found objects, as well as intimate and familiar environments, like in the work titled *La Máquina de Coser de Mi Madre* (My Mother's Sewing Machine, 1994). The second floor contains Borges's "Portraits and Self-Portraits," some of which are inspired by paintings by Rembrandt but reinterpreted in a loose manner as in *Retrato Amarillo con Libro* (Yellow Portrait with Book, 2000). Towards 2005, Borges began to amplify and multiply the planes, implemented perspectives that elevated the horizon towards further away distances. This contraposition with the foreground saturated with strong tonal contrasts is evident in *Sala con Ventana al Mar N° 19* (Living Room with a Window View of the Ocean N° 19, 2014). "The window is a cavity—writes the curator in the text—it is gap and interstice, a space through which to view the exterior, a point of contact between reality and fiction, a place of light: it is access to the outside world, but also a tool to pull the exterior in [...]."

Jacobo Borges. *Sala con ventana al mar N° 19* (Room with window to the Sea N° 19), 2014. Oil on canvas. 53¹⁵/₁₆ x 68⁷/₆₄ in. (137 x 173 cm). Photography: Egon Koopmans Kuhr. Courtesy Galeria Freites.



The mounting synthesizes the preoccupations that led Borges to explore the perceptive phenomena that are intrinsic to the form-content relationship but that surpass the purely narrative and symbolic. Thus his interest to capture and explore through different supports, environments and resources anything that is associated with the visual field—like he did in other circumstances of his life, when he explored filmmaking, theatre, performance, installation, photography, video and multimedia.

His thirst for learning new things is unquenchable. In 2008 he began to explore the possibilities offered by computers, with surprising results. He began this process with an actual sketch that he then transferred to a computer in order to turn the rendered composition into a photograph. Borges designed a unique methodology that began with the sketch, continued with fragmentation, superimposition, erasing and repainting to reconstruct the final image by means of the *duborcom* technique. The impressive resulting print consisted of compact agglomerations and simultaneous volumes, an accumulation of crystalized patches, lines and vibrant colors on translucent surfaces.

Borges invents, tests, and disassembles the technological schemes. In an interview he explained this as follows: "I decided to transgress its order [the computer's], its programming, [...] by repeating one, two, three, thousands of times the same function or tool, randomly [...] I was interested in producing a series of 'digital accidents' [...] to go beyond the limits of programs or, perhaps, to transform them into new visual tools [...]." The exhibition was accompanied by a series of six conversations with the artist, curator and other guests. They talked about his work and its relationship with music, performing arts and other art manifestations.

GLADYS YUNES-YUNES

Corina Briceño

Galería Beatriz Gil

Corina Briceño stands out for her extraordinary ability to visually explore the natural and urban environments and integrate mediums (graphic arts, painting, collage, drawing, photography, and video). Her

Corina Briceño. *Rojo en el puente* (Red on the Bridge), 2015. Photography intervened with watercolor and acrylic, print on canvas. 35⁷/₁₆ x 53⁵/₃₂ in. (90 x 135 cm). Courtesy of the artist.



creation is geared toward the discourses that express the processes of construction-destruction of the figure and the landscape in field explorations, with a refined power of synthesis of the image.

In recent years, Briceño radicalized the core of her concepts towards the fragility of memory, the accumulation-disappearance of recollections, and the manner in which those processes are permeated by everyday life, her relationship with nature, and the manner in which memory can alter the perception of that which we observe, feel and are able to accomplish.

The exhibition titled “123 Flowers” offers that same reflection, but this time memory has more to do with the out-of-control violence that has permeated everyday life in Venezuela. Briceño constructs a poetic iconography and documental archive that takes the violent act to a deep existential expression.

Two central elements permit the structure of the project’s conceptual basis: the first, processual in nature, is the notion of movement; and the second, existential in nature, a reaction to the out-of-control violence that has disrupted the lives of Venezuelans and transformed Caracas into one of the most dangerous cities in the world. Around 2005, Corina Briceño began a visual documentation of sites and situations that generated reflection—intervened walls by the disenfranchised, for instance—and, later, she began to identify emblematic places at different times of the day from her car, during her commute from home to work at the Instituto Armando Reverón. The collection of images represents a record of the passing of time and the changes undergone by the city, its streets, buildings and monuments. At a time when the country is falling apart, this record becomes powerful as memory. The movement, which stayed pretty consistent for several years, was then joined by the second structural key that comes from life experience. The sign of violence has marked every inhabitant of this land, and this did not go unnoticed by Briceño. So when in 2014 she observed the dramatic increase of victims fallen, she did not hesitate to incorporate the events into the iconography of everyday life. And these works, with their precise style and piercing poetry, are the result of that. Carefully selected, the photographs from several periods were intervened with very subtle flowers and painted with acrylic and watercolor.

The 125 flowers refer to the victims of a genocide originally perpetrated by common criminals. But as years have passed other types of violence have appeared in the form of shortages of food, medicine and basic services. These elements in the exhibition become symbolically representative of a fraction of the 390 murders that occurred the month when Briceño decided to approach the problem: cayenas, lilies, and roses—whether the complete plants or fragmented petals—appear to delicately populate like spectrums the usual itinerary among the streets of Caracas. The grey tones on a background with buildings and monuments flooded by sunlight or diffused through rain, strengthen the rather subdued palette. Some journeys fade among the drops and fog. In this manner, the icon of María Lionza on the Autopista del Este (a cultural reference in Venezuela) raises her voice between the fog and a cloud of white flowers. In *12 Azules y Gotas* (12 Blues and Drops), the car window and the rain dilute the Estadio Universitario and serve as background for 12 blue flowers that could very well be marks left by bullet impacts. In other pieces like *Cayenas y Bolívar*, the Torres de El Silencio and the Asamblea Nacional building stand out clearly to give way to a rain of yellow cayenas. The city changes rapidly, and this work could be a visual-aesthetic record of such changes, given that between the moment of the topographic take and the present, the shameful eyes of the dictator, who had appeared to be contemplating the fall of the city, have already been erased.

But perhaps the most emblematic piece is *Rojo en el Puente* (Red in the Bridge), where a broken sewer, a tire and a red cayena have severed the connection between the church La Pagüita and the El Calvario park, accentuating the perceived absence of escape exits.

These images lead us to an intangible plane, blurred and barely perceptible, which we are sometimes unwilling to recognize in order to avoid pain. But they are also redeeming images and their authentic poetry does not distract from the screams that emerge from them as warning not to forget the truncated lives. There, in that clamoring for justice that hurts, is where this proposal by Corina Briceño becomes compelling and powerful.

MARÍA LUZ CÁRDENAS

India-Serena

Galería Graphicart

The importance of geometric abstraction in Venezuelan art is well known. It has been an indisputable visual referent since the 1950s in our cultural context, and it has recently become popular not only in Venezuela but also across continents. Because geometry is a universal language, geometric abstraction is accessible to any viewer around the world. It offers unlimited possibilities and the gaze becomes sensitive to the novel forms, color contrasts, compositions, illusory optical effects, etc.

There is no doubt that geometric figures are a constant subject of exploration for artists that favor this artistic current. It can be innovative in an unlimited number of ways, and that is palpable when observing works by a new generation of artists. This is the case with the pieces created by India-Serena, a young Venezuelan artist raised in the state of Nueva Esparta and based in Paris since 2004. She surprised the public from Caracas with her “Visual Symmetries”, which she recently exhibited at the Galería Graphicart, in what represents her first solo exhibition in Venezuela.

Although India-Serena was born in Caracas in 1985 and spent her early years in Margarita Island, her exhibitions have almost entirely taken place in France. Since 2010, she has presented her work there, in Venezuela, Germany, China and Japan. She has said that her interest in geometric abstraction is the result of the strong impact that the work by Jesús Soto has always had in her, particularly the yellow *Penetrable* exhibited several times at the former building of the Galería de Arte Nacional in Caracas. Other influences that she holds in high regard are Piet Mondrian and concrete art. Since a young age India-Serena has approached her work with discipline and precision, as she has learned from the legacy of those great masters whom she admires.

From Soto’s *Penetrable* she took the verticality of forms and made it essential in her work. She became interested in the rhythm that verticals generate. This has led her to reflect on the seemingly paradoxical concept of the verticality of the square, the conceptual basis in her oeuvre. She uses horizontal lines in opposition to such verticality. It is her way of reinventing geometry. While the square is an exact form that does not favor verticals or horizontals—for if it did, it would cease to be a square—through formal variations India-Serena is able to represent other geometric forms without losing the reference to that figure in her compositions. And this is precisely one of her virtues.

In addition to her focus on form, color is also an extremely important part of her work. On the one hand, because of the impact that the selection of intense colors has in her compositions and, on the

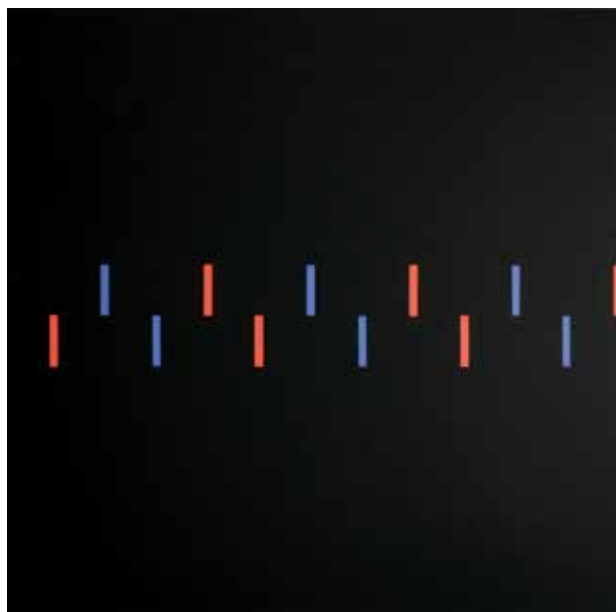
other, because of the relationship that she establishes between the highly contrasting color planes. While the accent is on form (on the square and its variations), according to India-Serena, her palette “is very select.” Indeed, red is not any red when she uses it in opposition to black. It becomes a very particular created color that, with a tinge of orange, achieves a high visual resonance. This is eloquent in pieces like *Orden, Secuencia y Ritmo I* (Order, Sequence and Rhythm I) and *Orden, Secuencia y Ritmo II* (Order, Sequence and Rhythm II). The figure-background relationship is inverted in one work in relation to the other, which allows viewers to observe the manner in which the effect of the color red and the color black varies depending on their context. This also occurs in more recent works. India-Serena’s creative process has been recently more inclined towards synthesis, to the point of rendering the square invisible when the color black covers almost the entire pictorial surface, barely suggesting other segments of colors on some of the square’s sides (*Orden, Secuencia y Ritmo III*). It is possible to observe those strips or small segments, the way in which color becomes relative and appears to change according to the chromatic context in which is placed.

Based on the square format—which is the distinctive characteristic in all of her paintings—India-Serena pictorially creates a structure (or composition) that is also based on the square shape. These structures present significant alterations through the enlargement or disarticulation of any of their parts. The result is a series of moving forms (and/or structures) that are very dynamic as result of the vibratile effect that they produce. Interestingly, all these movements eventually lead to the concept that is alluded to by Juvenal Ravelo in his presentation and that defines the title of the exhibition: to a *visual symmetry*; a symmetry achieved precisely because the structural and symmetrical notion of the square is never lost.

This exhibition was conceived as a small anthological selection formed by pieces that compellingly describe India-Serena’s objectives: to make concrete, through form and color, the infinite *metaphors of the square*, as India-Serena calls them.

SUSANA BENKO

India-Serena. *Orden, secuencia, ritmo No. 3* (Order, Sequence, Rhythm # 3), 2014. Acrylic on canvas. 31¹/₂ x 31¹/₂ in. (80 x 80 cm). Courtesy of the artist.



GUAYAQUIL / ECUADOR

Wilson Paccha DPM Gallery

Despite being the result of inquiries into everyday themes, eccentricity dominates the artistic production of Ecuadorian Wilson Paccha. He completed a degree from the Art Department of the Universidad Central in Quito, his hometown and where he has developed a great part of his work. Paccha is one of those artists that can “hook” us once we enter the psychedelic universe that emanate from his paintings, artifacts, assemblages, sculptural objects, and installations. The subjectivity that they elicit comes from the diaphanous and marginal creole humor that inhabits them. Anyone who stops to observe his works is susceptible to break into laughter, even involuntarily. Lately he has been very present in the artistic scene of Ecuador and his last exhibition titled “Wild Caprices,” presented at the DPM Gallery in Guayaquil, focus on the themes that interest him. He makes fun of the educational world in the Ecuadorian artist field and of certain models self-defined as exceptional. Likewise, Paccha also takes on soccer fans or the paroxysmal anxiousness of young people in the social networks.

In his production, which has occasionally been performative in nature, he takes advantage of any material or event to build a game, to construct a metaphor, a critical inquiry framed by a sharp gaze. In the piece titled *Eva y la Casa del Chapo* (Eva and the House of Chapo), Paccha uses a pig to allude to a character—represented with four eyes, strident colors and ovals—placed in the middle of a garish landscape. In this work we delve into an endless number of questions about the type of story that this artist is interested in constructing about that iconic character. Strange and caustic vegetation appears as a catalyst element, as an exit from a symbolic literature book; a UFO, an apple, an animal penis turned into a bottle opener. Despite its flashy flexibility, the boar is shown as heir to its own habitat. Located in the middle of a puddle, it appears impassible, sovereign, but most importantly prey to its own uncertainty. Here Paccha offers us a festive version of Joaquín Archivaldo Guzmán, the feared “Chapo” Guzmán, head of the interna-

Wilson Paccha. *Eva y la casa del Chapo* (Eva and the Chapo House), 2015. Oil on canvas. 76⁴⁹/₆₄ x 102²³/₆₄ in. (195 x 260 cm).



tional drug trafficking organization known as the Sinaloa Cartel, and a character with an extensive criminal record.

El Chapo's ability to escape on more than one occasion, to elude the law and to deal with movie and television stars, has generated a wave of confusion, especially for the naïve spectator. On the lookout for any scandalous episode, especially when it involves the participation of the media, Paccha subjects us to the examination of a situation that is both ambiguous and laughable. Is this character as smart as he is painted to be that he can escape from high security prisons without inside help? Whose heads would roll if a thorough investigation about Guzmán's constant transgressions were to be conducted? The way in which he is covered in the media makes Guzmán a character that enjoys the sympathy of many. This is particularly clear in social networks, where people constantly joke and comment about the abilities of the famous fugitive.

There are some works that play with the voluptuous condition of searching and gathering of sexual content in social networks. Young women in provocative and sensual poses are also the target of this artist's discourse. Wilson Paccha becomes at once a tolerant, attentive and critical user. Once a space to express sociocultural opinions, a place for dialogue, for the promotion of a diverse number of events, or for interaction between family members, Facebook, for instance, has become a global site in which many women, or young people, offer cheap and reproachable negotiations that also happen to be dangerous.

The exhibition offers constant quotes by other artists and personalities from the entertainment world like Giuseppe Arcimboldo, Damien Hirst and Lionel Messi; a series of declarations that demolish any sacred or lasting notions associated with their legacies. Excessive, deprave and disturbing manifestations are at the core of Paccha's focus. According to him, he

has always wanted to attack attention because that has been part of his extroverted personality since he was a child. Now as an artist, he is able to poke fun at himself just like any other person that has reached maturity.

I recall one occasion when, while visiting one of the editions of the July Salon of Painting, I saw one of his works confined to a corner as if the curatorship had not considered it very important. When I asked one of the organizers why had that work not received any award, I was told that the jury had decided not to include it. After some time, I understood the reason for the shunning: Paccha makes fun of any group, trend or distinction associated with artistic notions. It is a sort of Ecuadorian alter ego because it dismantles any cliché about the creole and tropical imaginary and, at the same time, exerts through such dismantling the seductive power centered on accomplishments through one's own means, without regard for the appearances or complexities surrounding the "white cube" or any technological props. Generally speaking, Paccha's work causes a contagious, spontaneous and fresh enjoyment that does not detract from its commitment.

I applaud his ability to recycle any object and/or language. He can teach a few things to younger artists about the possibility of creating with economy or resources and a critical approach. For several years Wilson Paccha remained away from the public eye, salons, and galleries, because he felt that the art world was consumed by its own pretentiousness. Today, he belongs to a group of artists that are widely covered by the media and followed by the public. There is something that I find to be very interesting: it has been said many times in the media that Ecuadorians are among the happiest people in the world; however, while this is something that certainly does not ring true in the Ecuadorian art world in general—as discourses are often very solemn—it is certainly true in the work by this incorrigible satirist.

AMALINA BOMNIN

HAVANA / CUBA

Lázaro Saavedra

Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Wifredo Lam

In 2015 Lázaro Saavedra was granted Cuba's National Visual Arts Award. This recognition included the presentation of an exhibition by the artist at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Havana. The work that Saavedra created for the exhibition was a "Base/Superstructure" that in the end had to be displayed at the Centro Wifredo Lam because a video installation, which included a car, could not fit through museum's entrance.

At the Centro Lam, that work welcomed visitors by the entrance hall and part of the outdoor patio. It consisted of a US manufactured vehicle, popularly known in Cuba as almendrón (big almond), with its hood open as if were in the middle of being repaired. Projected from the engine, a video was projected on to a white bed sheet hung from a clothesline. The video showed Barack Obama and Raúl Castro seated posing for an official photograph, flanking a monitor showing the documentary that gives the work its title, *El Progreso de una Nación* (The Progress of a Nation), a film about the former Soviet Union's first exhibition of scientific-technical achievements in 1961, in the initial museum in which "Base/Structure" was supposed to be presented. Several clothes hung from the clothesline, including t-shirts with images of prominent works by Saavedra printed on them, including the iconic image of a Christ that, through speech balloons, spoke in Russian and thought in English but had a Cuban flag on its heart.

Saavedra conceptualized the car as a variant of Joseph Beuys' social sculpture. In an adjacent hall he defined his own version as "an object

Lázaro Saavedra. *Politicarte*, 2015. Acrylic paint, frame as an object in itself and for itself, PVC slats. 31 1/2 x 29 7/16 in. (80 x 70 cm).



from material culture, shaped by a social author-collective.” Next to this, a diagram identified the origin of all of the car’s parts, from its US-made bodywork and chassis to the front brakes taken from a China-made Wuling pickup, to the rear bearings from a Soviet Lada Niva. Like Christ’s heart, the battery was made in Cuba.

Fortunately, the change of venue mitigated the piece’s theatricality, thus favoring the other works. Conceived as a parody of the Marxist dichotomy between base and superstructure, the exhibition was divided in two sections. The first floor contained reproductions of works that circulated like emails from Galeria Imeil, which represents Saavedra. The images shows characters, taken from the mass cultures of the US, the Soviet Union, and Cuba, presented in humorous situations.

Dedicated to the Superstructure, the part of the exhibition found on the second floor unfolds like a series of installations connected by thick irregular lines drawn on the floor. Their central elements were direct drawings on paper and the use of framed canvases, some of these painted but left blank for the most part. Irony was everywhere, and the first thing we were told was that “Art is not to be read. Its purpose is to offer aesthetic pleasure or pain.” Saavedra incorporated text in many of the works and accompanied them with fake and out of place critical comments.

Saavedra studied at the Instituto Superior de Arte and was a member of the legendary Puré group during the 1980s, characterized by their irreverent attitude towards institutions and their use of sarcasm. In keeping with this tradition, he would scathingly criticize concepts overused in art theory. His sharp intellect was evident in his work. With maxims about what art should be, Saavedra rehashed terms that have been overused (political art, emerging art, protest art), and introduced others (opportunistic art, affirmative art), employing an old strategy that his generation transformed into a modus operandi: based on the literal interpretation of official propaganda phraseology. Saavedra appeared to be comparing the jargon used in theoretical-critical discourse with the one used in politics, questioning its emptiness of meaning as result of being overused.

Located in a small exhibition room, the piece *Articido* (*Articide*), presented a hanging rope that supported a blank painting whose canvas had been cut in the style of Lucio Fontana. An overturned chair was on the floor. This motif of the chair reappeared in the other side of the gallery in the form of a drawing on the wall titled *Cabesilla*, a play on words that combined the Spanish words for “head” and “chair.” There, Saavedra alluded to present motifs as the chair appeared within the head of a figured with an outlined torso. Thus the chair was no longer the symbol for surrender conveyed in the earlier work but a symbol of power in this one. Saavedra has demonstrated his sharpness in many works in which he used blank canvases. While *Un Lienzo lo Aguanta Todo* (*A Canvas Can Support Anything*) consisted of a canvas resting on a wall, the accompanying critical text wondered whether it was actually the other way around and the work was supporting the institution’s wall.

Lastly, in a work the conveyed a gesture of estrangement Saavedra portrayed himself as victim. It consisted of the enormous writing of his last name on black vinyl glued to the floor, on which viewers had to stand up in order to be able to read a phrase written with a very small font: *cuando estás abajo, todo el mundo te pisa* (when you are down, everybody steps on you). The seriousness of this statement contrasted with the predominant ironic one in the rest of the exhibition. By the end of the show, one cannot but wonder whether everything was a joke used by Saavedra to solidify his image of a martyred enfant terrible, now from the superstructure of Cuban art.

ELVIS FUENTES

Carlos Alberto García de la Nuez

Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes

After not exhibiting in Cuba for more than two decades, Carlos Alberto García de la Nuez presented twelve paintings at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes under the title of *Cardinales* (“Cardinals”). Eight of these paintings were large formats, 285 x 285 cm; the remaining four, medium formats, 150 x 120 cm. Warm colors, reds and yellows, in contrast with black, dominated the set. Combining impasto, drybrush sweeps to emphasize flat surfaces, typographical inscriptions, sgraffito, and drawing, the painter displayed an impressive formal range with equal degrees of ease and precision.

García de la Nuez attended the San Alejandro Academy and later the then-recently established Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA) in Havana, where he studied under Soviet professors. Through these experiences he acquired the rigorous craftsmanship that was soon to characterize his pictorial production, as he stepped into a professorship at ISA and joined the legendary 4x4 group. A staunch advocate for painting in a decade when more novel modes of expression were widely favored, García de la Nuez has remained loyal to the genre without losing his ability to experiment and grow. Indeed, he has inscribed the conceptualization of his practice in connection with the history of Cuban art and the abstract painting tradition in modern Western art.

Mapa de La Habana (“Map of Havana”) is the visual focal point that opens the exhibition. Against a blue background, the artist painted a slightly square structure featuring thick red stripes. Two vertical ones flank five horizontal stripes. Along the red stripes we see the names of well known Havana streets: Prado, Factoria, Obrapia, Amargura, Trocadero. The texts are rendered in the same blue color of the painting’s background, resembling a typographical cutout. The pigmentation of both background and structure is very intense, and the surface has been treated as a drybrush sweep, with traces of the black base behind the pictorial surface. These resources produce an enhanced optical effect of depth.

In some of his paintings, García de la Nuez harks back to old bird’s-eye view maps. This style of semi-abstract representation of urban spaces is one of the earliest visual records of the New World, documenting the

Carlos Alberto García de la Nuez. *El mapa* (The Map), 2015-2016. Mixed on canvas. 112 ¹³/₆₄ x 112 ¹³/₆₄ in. (285 x 285 cm).



transplant of European culture. The artist revisits it in works like *La colonia* (“The Colony”) as a singularly rich source of formal references for exploring the representational ambiguity of the pictorial space. Appearing against a black background is a series of 41 irregular yellow shapes, which the artist calls “houses”; on them, García de la Nuez has drawn perspective lines to indicate depth. The lines suggest corners, stairways, banisters, ramps, and by virtue of them the semi-abstract shapes become windows or openings into domestic interiors. Each shape resembles an expandable painting. Indeed, *Escalera* (“Stairway”), with its whimsical combination of shapes staggered in different directions against a yellow background, could very well be understood as a zoom-out and occupy the place of one of the 41 “houses”.

Cuatro casas en fuego (“Four Houses on Fire”), in medium format, is a tribute to four artists whose names García de la Nuez explicitly inscribes as referents in the modernist tradition toward abstraction: Turner, Monet, Rothko, and Twombly. Against a scratched blue background, schematic outlines of houses in an intense red hue sprinkled with yellow are placed at the cardinal points of the pictorial space. The text is also red. As in *Mapa*, the contrast between background and figure is translated into the creation of a sense of depth, without wholly representing spatial perspective.

Another notable aspect is the reflexivity of the shapes, expressed at times on the canvas’ very surface. In *Dos* (“Two”), the artist wrote: “With one hand we open the circle that the other hand has just closed” and “Because light is thin and shadow is fat.” These texts appear above and below, respectively, of a thick horizontal band formed by two rectangles, black and red, at the center of the painting. In turn, four irregular circles

made with thin, wire-like black lines against a yellow field circumscribe the horizontal band. This painting is a sign whose actualization is as important as its meaning. In it, as in the rest of his work, Carlos García explores the dichotomy between semiotics and aesthetics that has so intensely preoccupied modern artists since it became clear that creating a language is only possible through the abstraction of reality.

ELVIS FUENTES

LONDON / ENGLAND

Gabriel de la Mora Timothy Taylor

Serial is a repetition in every sense. It is a repetition of superimposed images, a collection of fortuitous findings, and a reutilization of discarded materials. It is a chain of movements, displacements, and actions in the creation of which the artist repeated, accumulated, and archived almost obsessively. Similarly, *Serial* is a reproduction of sounds that communicate via silences and rhythms, a dance of lights and shadows, that are recontextualized and gain new meanings. It is a composition of images and stories that dialog, expand, and complement one another on space and time.

This is Mexican artist Gabriel de la Mora’s first solo exhibition in Europe. Presented at the Timothy Taylor gallery in London, it features three new bodies of work, arranged in two spaces. The first section welcomes us with two series of two-dimensional works in a variety of formats. As we enter, we initially think them abstract paintings of geometric shapes in dark colors, almost monochrome. As we approach them for closer inspection, however, they start to seem like collages in another kind of material, made from fragments of advertising images and several different types of disfigured, inserted, and transformed iconographies. Looking at the images again we realize that they contain a much more complex narrative and story, and we discover that they are made with rubber sponges and aluminum plaques of the kind used in offset printing, found, appropriated, and manipulated. We can clearly see a series of blurrings and superpositions of color, generated by the continuous use of the four inks of the offset process: magenta, cyan, yellow, and black.

For the creation of these works De la Mora used materials found in a print shop located under his own studio in the Roma borough of Mexico City. The artist has been using the same space for twelve years, but it was only recently that he noticed the print shop. What appealed to him, in particular, was the sound of machines dating from the 1920s-40s, which have a rhythm resembling that of minimalist music. The sound guided him to find a number of rubber and aluminum pieces that were ready for disposal. He noticed their textures and shades of color, similar to painting. Later he became interested in their history: the patina that results from thousands of reproductions made over time; the machines are cleaned for each new run, but they are never absolutely clean, which causes the blurring effect. Finally, the artist set for himself the task of accumulating the most he could of these materials from different sites, archiving and classifying them with the advice of a restorer who instructed him in the use of chemical cleaners to clean or manipulate the pieces. Hence the title of the exhibition, *Serial*. It has to do with a chain of movements and actions; with obsession, accumulation, and archiving. These works explore the relationship between the image (painting and graphics) with reproduction, time, and accident.

Located in the second section, more sequestered and less central to the exhibition, is a site-specific installation titled *Crystals of Inevidence*.

Gabriel de la Mora. *MCI / 6-III f*, 2015. Discarded rubber blanket from offset printing press rubber, mounted on wood. 70 ⁷/₈ x 47 ¹/₄ x 2 ³/₈ in. (180 x 120 x 6 cm). Courtesy Timothy Taylor.



This work fulfills the function of seriality by means of an effect contrary to the gesture of transforming and giving new meaning to discarded objects. Here, the artist inserted into the gallery wall a series of microscope coverings or glasses in a mathematically rhythmic pattern. The light shining on them produces an effect of motion, reflections, and shadows, which shifts depending on the angle at which each piece is posed. The color of the wall also shifts: it appears clearer, more intense, or darker, and it becomes segmented. In this way, the glasses cease to be coverings or microscope pieces and are transformed into a sculpture of installation, a work of art. The work is contemplative, fragile, and beautiful. We sit on a bench in the gallery and think on that which is not evident, in the glasses' very fragile, almost invisible materiality; they are instruments for our eyes, equally fragile and equally invisible to us (their owners), to see what they can't see by themselves.

At the end of our visit, we breathe and get up. We think that both the production and the contemplation of art are philosophical exercises. For De la Mora, the encounter with the work begins with the gaze, and is later made stable via the emotions and the other senses. When one observes and contemplates, questions and ideas emerge. "Thinking and doing go hand in hand, as do seeing and thinking, or walking, thinking, and seeing," the artist says. The conclusion, then, is that *Serial* is a reflection about time, about the re-signification, re-encounter, and re-production of images and stories, including concepts of possibility, control, and accident.

PAULA LÓPEZ ZAMBRABO

MADRID / SPAIN

Ulises Carrión

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía

To understand Ulises Carrión in a museum context, it is helpful to think about the writer first and then move on to thinking about the artist, without ever setting the former too far aside or entirely forgetting about him. Let's think about the artist who wanted to stop being a writer, who devoted his efforts to publishing, and who predicted the end of the book. Let's think about the Wittgensteinian fly clashing against the glass of language, and also about the poetry of its flight. *Querido lector. No lea* ("Dear Reader. Don't Read"), the work appropriately chosen by curator Guy Schraenen as a title for the show, works not only as a motto and epitome for Carrión's creative drive, but also as the best possible user's manual for visitors.

Ulises Carrión (1941, San Andrés Tuxtla, Mexico – 1989, Amsterdam, The Netherlands) was one of Latin America's earliest conceptual artists. His first retrospective, *Me ocurrió bastante tarde* ("It Occurred to Me Rather Late") was held in 2003 at Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, but only now is he having a European one. His work has not been as visible in Europe as it deserves, with the obvious exception of The Netherlands. Ultimately, this initiative by the Reina Sofía can be seen as part of the institution's gambit for collecting Latin American art of the 1970s and 1980s and giving it greater exposure. In recent years, this inclination has prompted the acquisition of archives and a collaboration with the Red de Conceptualismos del Sur, crystallized in the 2012 exhibition *Perder la forma humana* ("Losing Human Form").

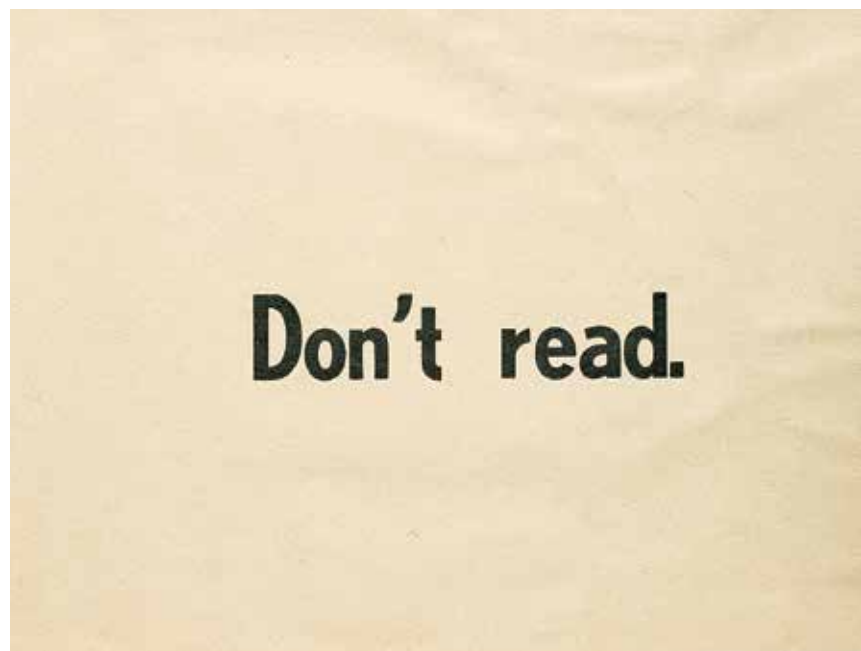
This exhibition offers a complete, well-rounded panoramic not only of Carrión's work, but, even more importantly, of his creative processes. With great conceptual solidity and based on a deep knowledge of the work and the artist, this exhibition features some 350 items, including books, magazines, sound-art works, mail-art works, public projects,

and performances, never losing sight of the fact that many of these fetish objects are nothing more than the remnants of the inexhaustible methodologies and explorations behind Carrión's many initiatives as curator, publisher, distributor, lecturer, archivist, art theoretician, and writer. Some sections of the exhibition are articulated around thematic-conceptual nuclei that remained constant throughout Carrión's career (fundamentally, the ideas of reading and of books), and others touch on specific projects such as *Gossip, Scandal and Good Manners* (1981), a field study of the mechanisms and structures of gossip and rumors, documented in a graphic format and later presented in a conference, like any scientific investigation would be.

Carrión is primarily identified with projects like the legendary bookstore-gallery *Other Books And So* (1975-1979), the first of its kind devoted to artist's publications, which in 1979 became the archive of the same name, or his participation in the mail-art network. This show also presents visitors with lesser-known projects and works, such as Carrión's organization of a film cycle about Lilia Prado at De Appel Arts Centre, in 1984, or videos like *TV-Tonight* (1987), which posited sharp and humorous reflections about language, communication, writing, and visibility. The show ends in a multidisciplinary gallery featuring video, here sound-art works, and a reading area where visitor can (finally!) peruse facsimiles or some of Carrión's books, non-books, and anti-books, and consult a bibliography about the artist. The gallery's simple idea would have delighted Carrión—it could indeed have been one of his own works—who was a precursor or the agitated debate around notions like "original," "copy," and "forgery," and an enemy of fetishism in the arts.

The stimulating power of Carrión's work perhaps resides in the fact that it remains an enigma. His early career in Mexico unfolded in literary circles, and his self-exile in Europe meant also an exile from literature and a move towards the visual arts. He never settled definitively in any of those two fields, and his main contribution to both is, precisely, his positing of a lack of definition as the site of the poetic. His status as an outsider in every aspect of life always meant the challenge of construction/deconstruction as inevitable moments of the processes of life and communication. Revealingly, the work from which the exhibition takes

Ulises Carrión. *No lea* (Don't Read), 1975. Printing on paper. 10 ⁷/₁₆ x 13 ²⁵/₃₂ in. (26.5 x 35 cm) each one. Private collection, Paris.



its title was conceived as a diptych. *Querido lector. No lea* (1975): two phrases, two moments, two frames, two images. In Carrión's video *A Book* (1978), one hand tears pages from a book and crumples them up, while another hand smoothes them out and reorders them into a pile. In the first instance, the gesture of unfurling the creative process into two parts is, clearly, the closest thing to an incantation or an act of therapy; in the second, integration is, undoubtedly, an accurate self-portrait.

DIANA CUÉLLAR LEDESMA

Gustavo Díaz Sosa

Galería BAT Alberto Cornejo

The work by painter Gustavo Díaz-Sosa (Sagua La Grande, Cuba, 1983) is defiant in its narrative approach. The exhibition titled "Epopée for a New Millennium" is on display at the Galería BAT Alberto Cornejo in Madrid, Spain.

In his painting Díaz-Sosa employs a clearly recognizable iconography: monumental architectures, individual identity subjected to a collective one, waiting lines, modern bureaucratic situations and an almost futuristic style in search of a unitary vision of society.

In his series titled "Exodus of the New Millennium," Díaz-Sosa includes legends like "and now we are just like yesterday" or "exodus and the desire to continue." The composition is placed on streets that are approached as collective and shared spaces in which to identify flows, changes and speed. The work titled *Éxodos. Odisea y Supervivencia* (Exodus. Odyssey and Survival) reiterates the idea of travel, transition and movement, but this time by alluding to immigration through the representation of a boat.

Díaz-Sosa's own statement reads as follows: "I try to describe an exhausted and desperate universal society in the face of that which is considered a "Democracy" at the global level. My characters continue to escape towards nowhere in search of doors or exits in the monumental walls that surround and contain them in bureaucracies and established norms. Like sheep, they wander in herds trying to save themselves without regard for others." This take on social unrest and the back and forth of subjectivity is conveyed on the canvas through mixed media that layers brushstrokes with, for instance, fragments of phonebooks that allude to the homogenization of identities through numbers and, metaphorically, to the "archival furor" coined by Suely Rolnik.

There is also a place for punishment in this almost Foucauldian take on institutions, surveillance and social structures. The piece titled *Purgatorio* (Purgatory) describes a circular building that houses a prison in which people are constantly leaving or entering. The cold chromatic palette in this work emphasizes the feeling of guilt. All the works in the exhibition share two elements: institutional architecture as a device that generates an entire series of relationships, movements and identity forms surrounding the piece, and human beings as mere instrument at the service of mechanisms of power. On this same vein, the work in the series titled *Huérfanos de Babel* (Babel Orphans) recreates, as the title suggests, a Tower of Babel spiraling and unfolding in black and yellow lines. The work appeals to the confusion of languages that is present in the famous biblical story, which is often associated with postmodernity and, specifically with the architecture that vindicates contradiction in the face of the fragmentation of the modern project. In the case of Gustavo Díaz-Sosa, that image of polyphony and confusion is revisited to recreate the chaos of a contemporary world framed by a transcendental and teleological dimension.

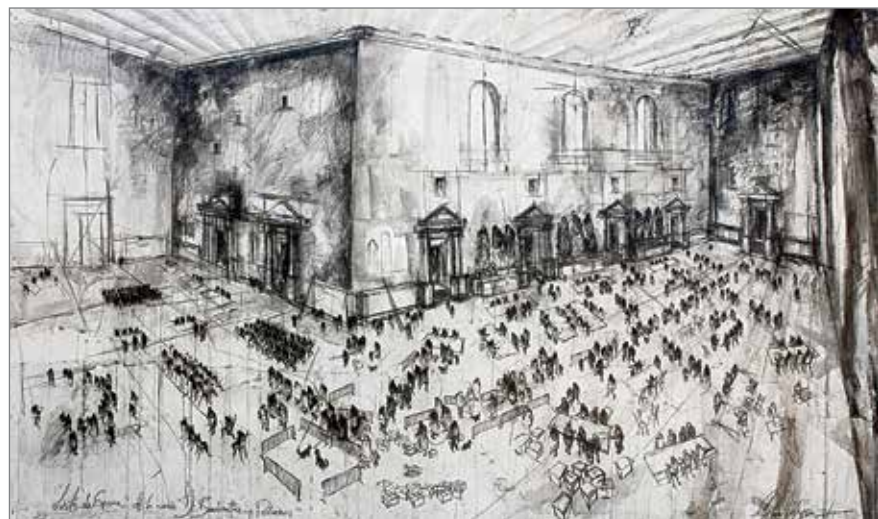
Another work from the same series includes the representation of a Trojan horse that rises above the crowd. It is, on the one hand, an omen of what could happen (war?), but also about the introduction of an epic episode that takes us to that intra-historical perspective offered by Díaz-Sosa.

The series titled "Of Bureaucrats and Godparents" reflects a collectivity in constant flow and certain bureaucratic "traps" like waiting in line or dealing with public servants in bureaucratic settings. The architecture that frames the entire composition is grandiloquent, classic, institutional and ideal-based. It is set in contrast to the reality of the confusion associated with the body and identity. Lines are blurred and torn through techniques often expressionistic in nature that can sometimes even border on the surrealist.

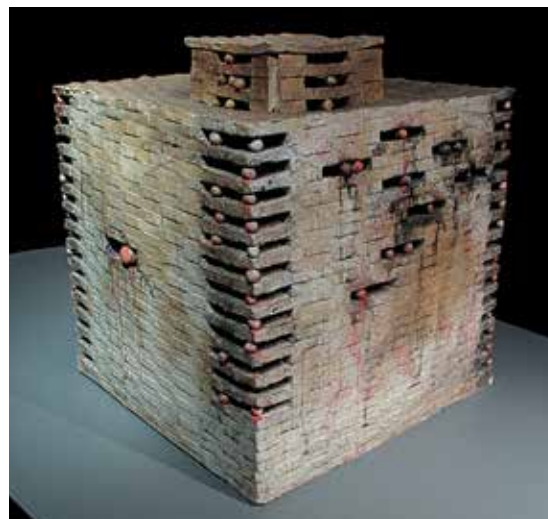
One of the most surprising aspects of Díaz-Sosa's painting is the recovery of that which is real, of narrative, figuration, and even historicism. As we have got used to observing in galleries art that is increasingly more dematerialized, conceptual and processual, it is noteworthy to once again stand before work that resorts to an iconography that is traditional to a certain extent and that represents the most matteric brand of painting.

Conversely, *El Proceso Según Cuenta K* (The Process According to K) conveys a situation of surveillance and judgment dramatized through some witnesses. Once again, we observe the apparition of the institution as the staging of power and its procedures to establish a particular order.

Gustavo Díaz Sosa. *Bureaucrats and Godfathers* series, 2015. Mixed on canvas. 57 ³/₃₂ x 96 ¹/₁₆ in. (145 x 244 cm).



Francisco Toledo. *Untitled*, 2015. High temperature ceramics. Photo courtesy: @edeloseme



The work titled *Apoteosis de la Humanidad* (Apotheosis of Humanity) is framed by a bleak, dry and fragmented territory. Díaz-Sosa once again relies on phonebook fragments and textured reddish colors that insist on the idea of scarcity. The paintings by Díaz-Sosa compellingly envelop his vision about the new millennium and his perhaps prophetic take on the future of the modern world.

ANA FOLGUERA

MEXICO / MEXICO

Francisco Toledo

Museo de Arte Moderno - MAM

It was 35 years ago that Mexican artist Francisco Toledo (Juchitán, Oaxaca, 1940) presented a retrospective exhibition at the Museo de Arte Moderno in Mexico City. Today, he returns to this museum with one of the most visited and compelling exhibitions in recent years: "Francisco Toledo. Grieving."

Consisting of a hundred ceramic pieces created in the Taller Canela with the collaboration of ceramist Claudio Jerónimo López, Toledo conveys one of the most painful stories in Mexico of recent years: the dramatic increase of force disappearances, torture and murders that go unresolved and unpunished, in a country where the rule of law is not capable of addressing a situation in which the state is clearly involved in criminal activities.

One of Toledo's preoccupations when producing this series was the necessary coexistence of his vast aesthetic language with the themes that generate anxiety in public opinion. Nonetheless, each of his works manage to expressively convey the tragedy of thousands of people murdered or disappeared, and, with a brutal economy of means, leave viewers to reflect on the consequences of a sort of undeclared war.

In this manner, the exhibition "Francisco Toledo. Grieving" welcomes visitors with a basket full of ears. This piece not solely references the crimes of a famous kidnapper (today imprisoned) known for cutting of the ears of his victims to send them to the victims' families, but also the old pre-Columbian narrative according to which warriors would return from battle carrying baskets full of ears that belonged to the defeated enemy. The exhibition unfolds with a splendid museography by Patricia Álvarez, who placed the ceramics on long black tables arranged together to form stars and following the round shape of the exhibition area of the Museo de Arte Moderno.

It is true that Mexico has a long and documented relationship with the theme of death. The pre-Columbian *tzompantli* were walls with stoned carved human skulls. Stakes would be placed on these walls with the heads of fallen enemies. There are also the funny skulls by José Guadalupe Posada, who chronicled everyday life through engravings filled with skeletons smooching, dancing, enjoying themselves, singing derisive coplas that destroyed politicians; there were the skeletons, of living people and death people. Since childhood they have got us used to live with death.

The death that comes from the hands of Francisco Toledo are nothing like Posada's playful skeletons. They are closer to a hell shaped by the aesthetics of suffering and the senselessness of violence. The macabre beauty of the intervened ceramic dishes, the faces extracted from the mud, the simple, and yet symbolic, objects of persons who no longer exist, become in this exhibition a powerful symbiotic reference to absence/presence.

Toledo's imaginary and cosmogony are given free rein in each of these high temperature and polychromatic pieces—mostly reds, blacks and earth colors. Faces without eyes, hands separated from their bodies,

remnants like shoes, belts, pants and bones that are very similar to those found in clandestine graves, nourish a very strange and macabre beauty that, nonetheless, confers the artistic object a compelling presence without detriment to the subject matter. According to Toledo, "When you are dealing with a subject that is so painful, you realize that, despite the pain, there is also an aesthetic element that you cannot ignore."

The animals that have accompanied him throughout his long artistic trajectory also appear in this exhibition: frogs, dogs, octopuses, spiders and bats, among others. It would appear that Toledo has summoned them to lighten the load of a difficult process of one of the most critical and accusatory exhibitions that he has produced in the last two decades. Social activist, philanthropic, environmentalist, cultural promoter and collector, Toledo is above all a prolific creator that has known to translate his activism to one of the most relevant bodies of work produced since the second half of the 20th century.

The high temperature ceramic work (cooked at 1,500 °C) involves an almost ritualistic and purifying activity. Without making preparation sketches, molds or drawings, Toledo shaped each piece until reaching a macabrely beautiful denunciation. The presence of several mortuary urns in the exhibition—like the one specially created to contain the ashes of recently deceased photographer Mary Ellen Mark, with the head and bones of a dog, as homage to her love for this animal; or the one that recreates clandestine places of captivity—outlines a map that surveys accusations, reconstructs spaces, and underscores a geography armed with unmentionable secrets.

At 75 years old, Francisco Toledo continues his struggle for justice, for not giving in, for saying that which needs to be said and fighting for the most complex caused. "Francisco Toledo. Grieving" entrenches a memory that must not be forgotten. This exhibition is a tribute to the victims of violence, torture and injustice.

SANTIAGO ESPINOSA DE LOS MONTEROS

Mario García Torres

Museo Tamayo

I do not know which children and adolescent books Mario García-Torres read when he was growing up in the city of Monclova, in Coahuila; whether he read adventure novels or superhero comics, if he favored the stories

Mario García Torres. *¿Alguna vez has visto la nieve caer?* (Have You Ever Seen Snow Fall?), 2010. 89 slides 35mm transferred to video with sound (56'). Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection.



of great travelers like Marco Polo or went straight to the source and had a volume of *The Million* in the home of his parents or grandfather.

I could have just directly asked him about such references (which I am sure also include films and TV series) and list them here, but I chose to imagine them, turn him into a Marco Polo—although he could very well be a Vasco da Gama or a Bernal Díaz del Castillo. I do this so I can place García-Torres in a map of correspondences between the world that he has filled with inquiries and explorations and his point of departure, the place in which everything started: Monclova, a town in the north of Mexico, a city neighbored by the state of Nuevo León and not far from Monterrey, where he studied art before moving west to continue his education at the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) with a full Fulbright scholarship. From there, the world, to follow a path in search of conquering caprices and circumstances experienced by a handful of emblematic creators from the 20th century—conceptual artists many of them—in places as remote (if we consider New York, London or Paris, de point of reference) as the city of Kabul, in Afghanistan, or Cuernavaca, in Mexico.

Although García-Torres has spent long periods in Mexico, his artistic trajectory can be traced all over the world, with solo exhibitions at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Kunsthalle in Zurich, the Museo Reina Sofía in Madrid, and the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, among others. He has also participated in the Biennials of Venice, Taipei, São Paulo and Berlin, and, at Documenta 13, presented works in connection with the residency of Italian artist Alighiero Boetti in the city of Kabul who ran a guest house (the One Hotel) in that Afghan city and created

the piece *Mappa* (Map, 1971-72) that was supposed to be exhibited at Documenta 4.

The works by García-Torres that refer to Boetti and Kabul were presented around the piece by the Italian artist which, now recovered, was finally able to participate in Kassel 40 years later. Some of the works presented by García-Torres include the 2010 *¿Alguna Vez Has Visto la Nieve Caer?* (Have You Ever Seen the Snow Fall?), a projection of fifty slides of images captured during the 1970s by anonymous authors that illustrate a description recorded by García-Torres of events that followed the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Beyond reclaiming the 19th century spirit of discovery, Mario García-Torres has described this conceptual inquiry as contemporary archeology. He endeavors to turn the experiences of events and explorations into the main material of his work, which may be achieved through watching screens or participating in guided walks—for viewers are expected to continue the experience outside the exhibition space by following an itinerary that includes visiting guest rooms in the Hotel Montecarlo in the Historic Center (where there an exhibition awaits them, and only them), the Museo de Geología of the UNAM, in the Santa María La Ribera neighborhood, where one can see paintings by José María Velasco displayed on the second floor; and the presentation of a performance in one of the theatres of the Centro Cultural del Bosque de Chapultepec. Then viewers get to break with those intervals of time by going back and forth between places in time, bringing them together through gestures and intentions that render them contemporary.

This superimposition of time and space reveals its own adventure as an invocation to turn the adventure of others into the reality of his (or the viewer's) own adventure. I guess that this is the reason García-Torres demands from viewers an extraordinary amount of time to follow his work. Between the time it that takes to watch the videos and films exhibited at the Museo Tamayo (which represent his first grand exhibition in his country of origin), and the walks that he proposes, viewers can easily spend more than an entire workday. It would appear that his intention is to appropriate viewers, turning them into an extension of his work by forcing them to repeat the gestures that have defined his work.

We follow his track as an artist in the same manner that he has followed the track of other artists, not solely in an effort to unravel some particular gestures of those artists, but also to establish a bond, a way to recognize (which, paradoxically, is a form of discovery) himself in others through the narratives in (or as result of) the films, videos and installations that conform the exhibition of 30 works created during the last 15 years. One of the essential elements of García-Torres' work is its weight—the materialization of concepts, if you will, and also of actions. Like in the piece that showcases the virtual correspondence that he maintained with the artist referenced, which appeals (and does not) to the conceptual art from the west coast and to land art (which unfolds in the horizon of his films. García-Torres not only creates archeology towards a past that is both close and remote, but he also leads us to new inquiries. The curatorship was performed by Sofía Hernández Chong Cuy.

RICARDO POHLENZ

Mónica Mayer

Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo - MUAC

The subtitle of the retrospective exhibition by Mónica Mayer, "A Retrocollective Exhibition," does justice to the reach, complicities and collective work involved in the work by this Mexican artist in the last

Mónica Mayer. *Justicia y democracia, Pinto mi raya* (*Justice and Democracy, I Paint My Stripe*), 2016. Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo, MUAC installation, a collaboration with Victor Lerma. Variable dimensions. Photography: Oliver Santana.



forty years. It is true that Mayer is a central figure, literally or even in the sense that the center position in basketball is—where the forward player can no longer bounce the ball after he ends his dribble and must decide whether to try to score or pass the ball up, down, to one side or the other, with the hope of completing the play and score.

The works by Mónica Mayer are physical in that way. They are at once imposing and suggesting, strategy and symbolism, struggle and support. They are political, social, ludic, textual, and documental. But above everything else, they are art. She does not care about boundaries and does not bow to conventional supports, but instead favors the possibilities offered by adverse and conflicting environments that propel her to create works that are illuminating and subversive, humorous and confident, to the same extent that they are also critical about the prevailing cultural and institutional prejudices in Mexico and around the world.

These components have been present in her work since the “77/78 Salon: New Tendencies,” exhibited at the Museo de Arte Moderno in Mexico City, where she participated with the installation titled *El Tendero* (The Clothesline) when she was still a student. In this piece she used a clothesline as the literal support. It consisted of successive lines of cord—like a clothesline for hanging clothes to dry—supported by a freestanding red metal structure filled with pieces of paper fastened to the cord with clothespins. Women from all spheres and social classes were invited to interact with the piece by writing on the pieces of paper something that completed sentence: “As a woman, the thing that I most detest in the city is...” Mayer has used this approach throughout the years in different latitudes, formats, and questions. In the current exhibition she has even expanded the participation by using social media (through a Facebook page).

Another approach in the same vein was *Pinto Mi Raya* (I Paint My Stripe), a project that Mayer founded in 1989 with Victor Lerma, her partner and accomplice in both her private and public life. The project began as a gallery but soon became a platform from which to organize conceptual art projects, including—and as result of the clear absence in Mexico of bibliographic material on contemporary art—an archive that, to this date, has collected more than 300,000 texts published in the Mexican press about performance art, feminist art, cultural policies, among other themes.

Mónica Mayer has always stood out as one of the most multifaceted and militant exponents of a generation of artists dedicated to breaking the schemes of the status quo through strategies that seek originality. Her art has been pigeonholed as feminist—and it clearly is—but is more than that. From the humorous, Kafkaian-like, angst of her collages—not to forget her collaborations with Maris Bustamante in the group *Polvo de Gallina Negra*—in which she uses as formal support the stereotypes that have characterized the feminine to denounce gender violence, her process reaches with gentle ferocity beyond feminism to a terrain in which action, place and perspective construct a subversive dialectic that questions contemporary art practices in order to reassert them in another place.

This relocation—which could be compared to the movement of viewers through the exhibition spaces or to the movement of the sun across the sky—becomes the medium that shape works whose content, which is sometimes evident, is resignified.

On the one hand, there is the work based on her private life: works such as *El Nacimiento de la Sra. Lerma* (The Birth of Mrs. Lerma, 1980), *Foto Falsa a Diez Años de la Boda* (Fake Photo Ten Years After the Wedding, 1990), and *La Cena y la Exposición* (The Dinner and the Exhibition, 2015), which follows and documents her relationship with Victor Lerma as part of a life project that they titled *Las Bodas y el Divorcio* (The Weddings and the Divorce).

On the other hand, there is the systematic practice of playing with interpellations and dialogs in *El Performance Parásito* (The Parasitic Performance), which Mayer has been presenting and developing since 2005, sometimes with the collaboration of Victor Lerma. In this work, Mayer stands next to a performance already taking place with a placard that reads “If you have any questions... ask” (the name given to this exhibition). It is an invitation to viewers watching the performance to clear any doubts that they may have without them knowing that they have just become part of it. As an extension, Mayer has allowed other people to perform it.

The exhibition consists of an introduction, titled “Hanging out Networks,” and three thematic centers: “Feminism and Education;” “Towards another Eroticism: Art, Life, and Affection;” and “The Personal is Political, Performative, and Public.”

The exhibition ends with an 8 hour long performance by Mayer. The exhibition was curated by Karen Cordero-Reiman.

RICARDO POHLENZ

Betsabeé Romero Museo Anahuacalli

The Anahuacalli museum has been conducting an interesting program of installations/interventions by Contemporary artists both Mexican and international that establish a dialogue with the permanent collection of pre-Columbian antiquities. Curator Karla del Niño de Guevara explained that the program which has been in place since 2010 has showcased Sarah Lucas (2012), Ugo Rondinone (2014) and Prune Nourry (2014) among others.

Betsabeé Romero. *Huehuateotl de chicle* (Huehuateotl gum), 2015. Sculpture of clay, fork lift tires, metal structure, gum flavors.



This museum's holdings are actually the celebrated private collection of Pre-Columbian art that was amassed by Diego Rivera throughout his life, and which was a constant drain on his financial resources, but a great source of pride as well as a minefield of inspiration for his work, particularly the frescos; there is a gallery in the museum that illustrates this point displaying the drawings and cartoons that Rivera used for his fresco projects. At his death the museum, designed by Rivera, was realized with the help of Juan O'Gorman, who was a close friend, a muralist painter, and was also a well-known architect. It was also O'Gorman who built the famous house for Frida and Diego in Mexico City with a connecting bridge between two separate entities, which would allow them to share a life together while maintaining separate private quarters.

The interior of the museum manifests a close allegiance to the pre-Columbian architecture, though naturally adapted by modern influences, it is a most successful amalgamation of the past and the modern in an enclosure that with a large amount of wall space and good natural light is ideal for the display of the collection.

Betsabeé Romero's installation, titled "Idols in Front of Altars" is a reversal of the title of a famous book, "Idols Behind Altars" a work that studies the importance of the Pre-Columbian roots in Mexican modern art. Written by Anita Brenner in 1929, it became an important reference for the development of *Mexicanidad*, the cultural movement that strengthened and re-defined the country's identity during the years of the Mexican Revolution. The main idea of the book was to establish a connection between the official Catholic culture, which had been imported during the Colonial period and had metastasized within the parameters of a modern and burgeoning bourgeois culture after Independence at the beginning of the 19th century and was being re-examined by artists and intellectuals within a critical context by the beginning of the 20th century.

The Mexican Revolution was trying to establish new frontiers for Mexico's future development as a modern and liberal republic, which included revision of its complex history and culture. As Anita Brenner interpreted it, behind the altars of the imported Catholic faith were the hidden, but alive and present, "idols", as a presence that was invisible yet represented the authentic culture of the real Mexico.

Betsabeé's exhibition, which at one point also included an altar for the Day of the Dead, a tradition closely associated with Pre-Columbian ancestor worship, was strikingly effective in this environment. On the outside patio she created a column with her engraved and carved tires that are her signature mark. The illuminating aspect of this part of the installation is how her use of contemporary utilitarian materials, in this case the tires, blends so well with the ancient style of the architecture, to the point that from a distance, it looked like a standing column form an earlier temple had been renovated with a fresh coat of paint.

Inside the structure, in the first gallery there is the first exposition of the intervention, where the artist has provided a series of Pre-Columbian representation of deities with the ray-like gold or silver "potencias" that are fixed to the heads of the traditional Catholic saints' sculptures, in this case the intervention is making a visual bridge between the earlier and later religious culture transposing Catholic symbols unto the ancient culture of Mexico while proposing issues of repression, adaptation and identity that are particularly relevant for today as Mexico has revisited the issues with the troubled situation of land ownership and appropriation with native communities in the state of Chiapas.

In another gallery, the artist has placed her version of a figure of Huehuetéotl, the god of fire, who also represents the center of the universe according to the Aztec religion. Huehuetéotl-Xiuhtecuhtli was associated with ideas of purification, transformation and regeneration of the world through fire. As the god that oversaw the passing of the calendric

year, he was associated with the cycle of the seasons and regeneration of the earth. Betsabeé depicts the god made out of *chicle*, (chewing gum) which forms a pattern in different colors for the two interpretations of this theme; one in green and taupe, is placed next to its ancient counterpart in exactly the same form: The head with the huge ears and ornaments, crowned by a huge sombrero-like headdress that was used as a brazier; the other in red and yellow colors, wearing a double brazier in his head. These figures are thus rendered as a modern offering manifesting renovation and renewal, within the context of its location, in close proximity to the ancient versions of this important deity.

The issues of migration and re-location, as well as the preservation of memory are important in Betsabeé's work.

The tires are a symbol for transport as well as for the possibility of an ephemeral mark on the ground. The artist has also done works, in which her patterns on the tires are reproduced in textiles over which the tires have printed with colored dyes. Though these were not present in this exhibition, in the courtyard there was an installation with four tires, each one carved on a different pattern, and the mark they had made when rolled on white sand, which reproduces figures and abstracted forms that are very close to the ones used in pre-Columbian codices.

The tires resurfaced again on top of pedestals in the interior galleries, this time imitating the markers for the scoring of points in the ancient ball courts, where the stone circles are believed to have been the basket-like feature through which the ancient players scored points in the game. Here the artist's versions are adorned with patterns, one of them carved and filled with gold leaf represented the double-headed pre-Columbian snake that is at the sides in the temple staircases and a traditional symbol for Quetzalcoatl, the plumed serpent god with whom Cortez was identified during the conquest. This strong symbol in the tire is exposing a new level of cultural *mestizaje* which is a concept that has been used by contemporary art critics in Mexico to label the presence of diversity in the cultural production of Mexico; where the ancient symbol is applied to a perishable, industrial object, in contrast to the traditional stone material, yet communicating the strong resonance of power associated with cars as luxury objects, which is at the very root of Betsabeé's practice, as her first works were cars that she had intervened with her decorative techniques.

The juxtaposition and dialogue created by the artist's installations and interventions in the Anahuacalli was not only inspired and created a challenging and interesting aesthetic dialogue between her work and the collection. It also was an ideal situation to see work in context within its art historical roots, and an art practice that re-generates itself and finds the right locus to demonstrate the conceptual evolution of Mexican Contemporary Art.

ALBERTO BARRAL

Ariel Orozco Licenciado

Ariel Orozco presented *Estática de gato que observa* ("Static of a Watchful Cat") at Licenciado Gallery, formerly Myto. In this series of works, Orozco explores the use of synthesis as an aesthetic procedure in order to reflect, subtly, about the gaze and its relation to truth, spirituality, and power. Orozco, born in Cuba, relocated to Mexico more than a decade ago. A graduate from the Instituto Superior de Arte de La Habana and a member of the *Enema* group, he belongs to a cohort that has eschewed the traditional subject matter of Cuban art in favor of an approximation to post-conceptualism that is indebted to action art and minimalism.

Across from the title wall, Orozco placed a white marble plank horizontally on a wooden base to resemble a table. The bas-relief inscriptions on the marble plank simulated the liquid stains left by glasses surely similar to those used on opening night. The seemingly unkempt state of the table contrasted with the neatness of the recently renovated gallery space. In this way, *Río seco* (“Dry River”) became a kind of sleight of hand alerting viewers to the need to sharpen their gaze.

In the next gallery, *Cuatro verdades sobre la mesa* (“Four Truths on the Table”) consisted of a brown wooden table placed on the wall like a painting. At first glance, it seemed like a perfectly normal table. However, the accompanying card revealed that it had been slightly altered so that all its angles were different: 86, 93, 90, and 92 degrees.

Occasionally Orozco also played with the viewer’s powers of observation and the inertia that often propels us through an art exhibition. For example, in two black-and-white confetti collages of medium and large formats, he drew small, very difficult to discern gold and silver rings, respectively titling the works *Estática de triunfo* (“Static of Triumph”) and *Estática de gato que observa* (“Static of a Watchful Cat”). In another gallery he presented the photograph of a life-size collage in such a way that viewers thought it the same kind of object as those mentioned above. Similarly, *Medium* is a photograph that pretends to be a collage. The image is that of a candle sliced vertically in half and lit against a black ground. The flame was the only element joining the two sides of the image. In turn, *Cruces y estrellas* (“Crosses and Stars”) consisted of an obsessive accumulation of the motifs of the title, miniaturized to create an abstract image.

Some of Orozco’s works in marble followed a different path towards synthesis. For example, for his *Aquiles* (“Achilles”), the artist partially soaked a white marble rock in a container filled with black ink. In using these materials, he was alluding to two classical modes of legitimization: statuary and ink, presented here in brute form. On the other hand, *Lengua* (“Tongue”) featured the clapper of a bronze church bell placed on a marble base. Orozco underscored the parallelism between the bell and a mouth. Placed on marble, which is symbolically associated with power, the clapper became a dysfunctional object, which is to say, a decorative, mute object.

In a sculpture on wood titled *Corazón* (“Heart”), Orozco brought his synthesis close to religious asceticism. To create this work, the

artist commissioned a church cross from a team of craftsmen, to be made according to the official specifications of the Catholic Church. Once the cross was finished, Orozco cut off its arms, keeping only the intersection of the planks. In his gallery installation, Orozco lit the mutilated cross almost directly from overhead, producing a dramatic effect similar to that of religious altarpieces. On the opposite end of the spectrum, *Oscuridad aumentada* (“Augmented Darkness”) consisted of a hole in the wall above which Orozco had placed a magnifying glass that looked into nothing; meanwhile, *Papeles ocultos* (“Hidden Papers”) presented us with the whiteness of framed paper, although the card indicated the presence of blood on it, covered by other pieces of paper.

Finally, *Horizonte* (“Horizon”) was an installation occupying a small room and composed of two elements: a school desk and a blackboard set across from each other. Orozco altered the blackboard by cutting its surface horizontally to the size of a single line of chalk. On opening day, the artist did a performance that consisted of tracing the only possible line that could be traced on that blackboard: a horizon.

The final works in the exhibition were two light boxes with abstract-looking photographs of bodily details, titled *Con los ojos cerrados* (“With Eyes Shut”) and *Desnudo* (“Nude”, which takes as its starting point the image of a geisha’s neck), and a series of ink drawings. With this exhibition, Ariel Orozco has demonstrated his conceptual maturity, as well as an apt taste for impeccable presentations, the latter being a key aspect in an artistic proposal where the gaze plays a central role.

ELVIS FUENTES

MIAMI / FL

Carola Bravo

Frost Art Museum – FIU

Blurred Borders, an exhibition of works by Carola Bravo (Caracas) at FIU’s Frost Art Museum, is an immersive installation where the outlines of visitors moving through the cozy gallery are promptly integrated into the projections that populate the space with poignant scenes of immigrant life.

Ariel Orozco. *Médium*, 2015. C- Print photography, 4²³/₃₂ x 4²³/₃₂ in. (12 x 12 cm). Courtesy Licenciado.



Carola Bravo. *Migration Dreams # 4*, 2015. Still image from video 4 mins. Edition of 5.



The video installations featured in this exhibition come from two series: *Migration Dreams Series* and *The Immigrant Portrait*.

The former is an appropriate starting point for analyzing the subject of migration and its implications for the immigrant's memory and identity.

Taking the Great Migration¹ as an inspiration and emotional analogy, Bravo appropriates—and pays tribute to—Jacob Lawrence's iconic *Migration Series* (1940–41). She uses the image of simplified color planes that summarize crucial scenes and moments in an immigrant's journey as the background for new approaches to the issue of immigration in the US, now re-contextualized by waves of immigrants from Central and South America.

Renunciation, determination, loneliness, nostalgia, exile, and, above all, hope, are the leitmotifs holding Bravo's series together, which infuse new life into Lawrence's work via animations that emphasize the desire and persistence of immigrants as they go through their turbulent passage. Reality and illusion become at times interchangeable for characters—embodied by the artist herself—who seek to find their way in unknown landscapes and/or situations, and who, more often than not, find themselves wrapped up in and confronted by a new reality that isolates them as it drives their ultimate determination to build a better life.

Migration Dream Series # 2 (based on Jacob Lawrence's Panel #25) finds inspiration in Gabriel García Márquez's novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Bravo rearranges elements from Lawrence's original work just like an immigrant tries to adapt a new reality to his or her own history. From a window we see an image of Caracas, and gradually a swarm of yellow butterflies emerges to inundate the video in a kind of vital dreamlike allegory.

Carefully selected, each one of the symbols active in these videos—yellow butterflies, white doves, suitcases, among others—contribute to weave and enliven the paintings revisited by the artist.

Another highlight in this series is the show's central video installation, *Migrations Dream Series # 3*, which, projected in life-size scale, envelops visitors in a warm embrace.

Migrations Dream Series # 3 takes as its starting point Panel #60 in Jacob Lawrence's series, which portrays the anxiousness of waiting in a bustling platform and presents the artist's own figure hauling his heavy baggage. The bench at the center of the gallery becomes one more bench in the platform, incorporating the visitor into the expectation of a journey as yearned for as it is feared.

This series also includes references to the work of painter Manuel Cabré, specifically his well-known landscapes of Caracas' Mount Ávila, and to the celebrated quilt-making tradition in Gee's Bend, Alabama, where African-American women have been creating patchwork quilts in geometric compositions since the Nineteenth Century.

The second series in *Blurred Borders*, titled *The Immigrant Portrait*, involves a much more personal vision, where memories and dreams connect in a circular poetics, and the boundaries between reality and unreality dissolve to become part of the unique world that an immigrant builds for his or her ultimate survival. Here, Bravo starts with Roy Lichtenstein's portraits of crying women to create an inward-oriented trilogy of great poeticism and sensibility.

The Immigrant Portrait # 3 comprises three extreme close-ups of Bravo's face covered by yellow butterflies that drink her tears. It is based on a real-life fact: butterflies gather on the heads of tortoises in the eastern region of the Amazon basin and drink their tears to obtain sodium, which is scarce in the area. Bravo's installation alludes to the continuum of life and the feedback loop involved in migration, beyond personal suffering.

The intimate and immersive character of *Blurred Borders*, with its symbolism and emotion, makes us personal and collective participants in this tempestuous, agonizing, and yet magnificent adventure that is migration.

NOTE:

1. The term defines the largest internal migration in the history of the United States. The Great Migration, marked by the mass displacement of African Americans from the rural South to the industrial North, began in 1915 and lasted for several decades (until 1970), ultimately transforming the country's ethnic, economic, and cultural structure.

JANET BATET

Carlos Medina

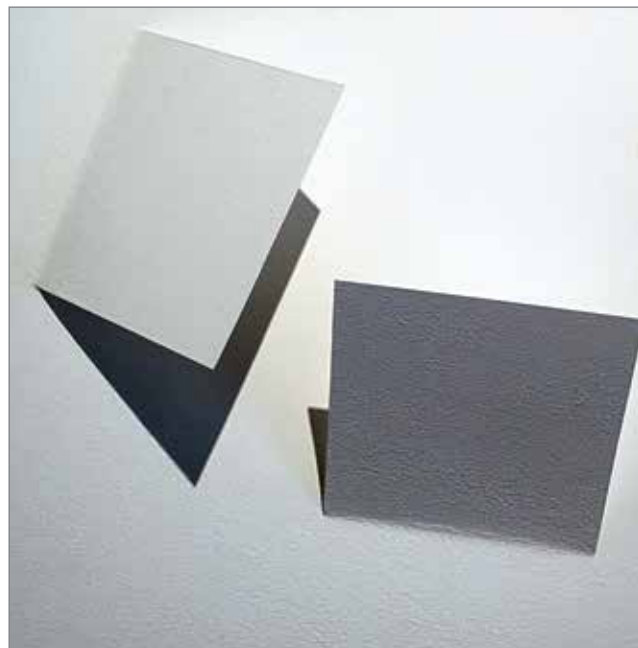
Ascaso Gallery

Walking around *Essential*, an exhibition of works by Carlos Medina (Barquisimeto, Venezuela, 1953), one had the impression of being in a kind of laboratory where experiments about the laws of thermodynamics and quantum physics were being conducted. Occupying spaces on the gallery floor and tracing ascending or descending trajectories, these installations and "paintings" advanced, with their very titles, approaches to the material reality of nature and the infinite universe of its expression.

Titles like *Superficie con neutrinos II* ("Surface with Neutrinos II", 2014), *Neutrinos AGM. Spatial intervention* (2015), *Fragmentos de lluvia. Spatial intervention* ("Fragments of Rain. Spatial Intervention", 2016) or *Estudio para superficie negra 15 y 20* ("Study for a Black Surface 15 and 20", 2013), told us about Carlos Medina's marked interest in testing the boundaries of our perceptual-sensorial system. His work, besides being rooted in the terrain of geometric abstraction, also interprets the expressive resources of a neo-conceptualist poetics.

In *Essential*, viewers are allowed a view of the mechanisms on which such approaches to the unfathomable perceptual phenomenology of Being ground their articulation—the phenomenology that emerges from the relationship between the subject of knowledge and the material-world objects that surround and determine it. In installations like *Fragmento de Cascada AGM. Spatial intervention* ("Fragment of Cascade AGM. Spatial Intervention") and *Neutrinos AGM. Spatial intervention*, among others, art expands in space. The works occupy and "inhabit" space, albeit in a fragile, weak way, making it possible for viewers (and inviting them) to experience them sensorially inside the very space that,

Carlos Medina. *Superficie a dos cuadrados (Two Square Surface)*, 2015. Assembly MDF, PVC, white vinyl acrylic paint. 16^{17/32} x 16^{17/32} x 4^{21/64} in. (42 x 42 x 11 cm).



in turn, the work itself demarcates and interprets. As a result, these works incorporate, somewhat in the manner of Soto's *penetrables*, a high degree of permeability, a kind of fragility that renders them "accessible", if you will, for the body of the viewer, who perceives them as weightless, aerial, as if they were somehow floating without a precise or localizable center of gravity. The line of motion in these works comes and goes, with meanings whose order can be perceived, at the same time, as a sustained movement towards the external, or vice versa. A perpetual shuffle of force and energy.

But, while this is the perceptual behavior of the works mentioned above, there are others, like *Estudio para superficie negra 15 y 20*, *Superficie a dos cuadrados* ("Surface in Two Squares"), or *Superficie con neutrinos II* that turn this dynamic around. Where the former expand space, the latter contract and constrain it, emphasizing its materiality to a greater degree. These works also deal with the properties of space, but unlike the former, they do so by demarcating volumes that are more tangible, less ethereal, and combining on white planes geometric elements that can have the same or a different color, but are whose sum in all cases projects a much more compact and rotund physicality. Given their more constructivist-like construction, these are works where motion appears frozen. It is a kind of constructivism that, in a way, reminds us of Carmelo Arden Quin and Gyula Kosice, the founders of the MADI group (*Movimiento-Abstracción-Dimensión-Invencción*), which starting in 1946 defended geometric art in its purest, non-figurative forms with universal and constructive values, and whose influence is central in any historical understanding of the development of contemporary Latin American art.

In *Essential's* selection of two-dimensional works we encounter an artist who, interestingly, puts forth an idea of modernity, in the sense that all art seeks the specificity of its medium. In abstraction—one of modernity's foundational spirits—this gesture means that painting can be reduced, in essence, to line and color. By virtue of this, these abstract-geometric works, like all spheres of modern knowledge, come to reinforce the autonomy of the artistic sphere. Yet we also perceive in Medina's works—more installative, more illusory, and, as such, less tangible—the inverse dialectic, in the sense that they, unlike others, transcend the categories of the perceptual-sensorial and emphasize the conceptual aspect. Against the perceptual-sensorial, they emphasize the conceptual, which is to say, they build, in direct opposition to autonomy, a heteronomy that construes art as concept as much as perception. Thus the fact that Medina's works "fly" or "float", connecting and intercommunicating aesthetic and scientific discourses and nevertheless telling us about the subject's inapprehensible, inexpressible experience of being in the world.

DENNYS MATOS

Cisco Jiménez

Farside Gallery

Titled "In Advance of a Stupid Glandule," the nearly thirty works by multifaceted Mexican artist Cisco Jiménez (Cuernavaca, Mexico, 1969) shown at the Farside Gallery synthesize about 20 years of a prolific artistic career and are a perfect example of Jiménez's versatility when it comes to exploring different media: paintings, sculptures, drawings, found objects, assemblages, and collage that showcase the cultural-geographic palimpsest of several referents that Jiménez, an industrial designer turned artist, has been accumulating from early on in his career.

The group of pieces exhibited pay tribute to the late art critic Joel Weinstein and are part of the art collection of Arturo and Liza Mosquera.

The curator, Cheryl Hartup, suggests a disordered arrangement process pertaining to the evolution of Jiménez's creative thought. Through the incorporation of sculptures, paintings, assemblages and installations the boundaries between art, illustration, collage and comic are erased, questioning issues surrounding "high" and "low" art.

Jiménez's work ranges from the cunning nature of double meaning and representation to the denunciation of social and cultural issues. His works reflect the idiosyncratic subversive alliance of his multiple creative interests: personal narratives, counterculture, the history and prehistory of Mexico, found and intervened objects, votive offerings, popular proverbs and sayings, activist gestures and the use of maps of technological or corporal circuits. These are combined in planes or sculptures to build a sort of conceptual and surrealist neurosis in which valves, communicating vessels, organs and words are responsible for establishing the connections.

Jiménez is pleasantly and constantly influenced by the humoristic vignettes from the tradition of José Guadalupe Posada, pre-Columbian cosmogonies, found objects, popular sayings and proverbs, autobiographical elements, humor, important moments in Mexican history and politics, and the influence of Robert Crumb's underground comics, among others. Likewise, he is interested in the human body as a container of communicating vessels and organs; anatomical sheets and medical jargon are the perfect support for combining pictorial and linguistic signs.

From early on in his life, Jiménez has been fascinated by the explanatory diagrams of circuits and connections, as well as by electronic devices that had disappeared and reappeared, such as boom boxes and record players that today are regarded as "vintage" and have become

Cisco Jiménez. *Molecular Coatllicue*, 2013. Collage and drawing on paper. 47 1/7 x 12 19/32 in. (120 x 82 cm). Photo courtesy of Farside Gallery.



very valuable. With them, Jiménez clearly alludes to all social and consumerist ailments—through direct references to technology, the massification of culture and planned obsolescence—in connection to media culture, social activism and political commentary.

In several of his paintings, such as in *The Newest of the New*, *Bossa Nova Painting* and *Molleja Fractal*, there is a large and central element that occupies almost the entire space with abstract backgrounds on which Jiménez wrote words that refer to the subject. In this manner, each canvas attests to that speed of thought, to a sort of narrative thread of the unconscious, to the desire to record a collection of experiences, legacies and ideas that appear in the brain; implications of words as metaphors.

In drawing-collages like *Olmeca Sound Stones* and *Molecular Coatlique*, Jiménez divided the pictorial plane into undefined spaces or vignettes on collected memorabilia to stridently illustrate his fascination for body organs, blood systems, communicating vessels, epidermal maps, utopic societies and futuristic spaces, robots and anatomical illustrations, as well as cartoons of Aztec goddesses on which he once again incorporated words, proverbs and neologisms from the popular lexicon. His drawings are precise, delimited and the point. They pay attention to detail and rely on the verbal satirical elements that accompany the rest of his body of work.

“In Advance of a Stupid Glandule” brings together Jiménez’s voracity for popular consumption and Mexican tradition; in this manner, a green wall at the end of the exhibition presents, like oversized vote offerings, about fifteen small assemblages and paintings created with found objects: rims, flip-flops, superimposed leather shoe soles, wood carvings with hair and intervened adverting posters, among others. Next, viewers find the sculpture titled *Campesino* (Peasant), a wood carving portraying a man intervened with tequila bottles, rifles and the word *culero* (asshole) in reference to a sort of traitor—a commentary on the social unrest experienced by that sector of the population in Mexican society.

A critical observer of our time through a lens that is both nostalgic and forward-thinking, Jiménez underscores the popular culture in which

he grew up, the pre-Columbian mythologies that gave him his history and the media culture in which we leave today. His work is hybrid, irreverent, syncretic, critical and sagacious; his humor is caustic and his imagination infinite.

AMALIA CAPUTO

Juan Raúl Hoyos

Miami Dade College. Galleries of Art + Design

The relationship between architecture and urbanism, the tense pulse between public and private space, became one of contemporary art’s key concerns in the early 1990s. Far from tapering off as time passed and “artistic fashions” came and went, this preoccupation has only grown in the first decade of the Twenty-First Century. It is so ubiquitous as to have come into its own as a discursive domain for the latest contemporary art, albeit from the standpoint of the different poetics that result from specific artistic reflections elaborated within this domain.

Architectural Playground, an exhibition of works by Juan Raúl Hoyos (Colombia, 1962), curated by Aluna Curatorial Collective (Adriana Herrera and Willy Castellano), deals mainly with the constructive aspect of buildings and urban spaces in our cities in the era of the global village, their dynamics, and the socio-cultural meaning they have acquired. In that sense, Hoyos’ works posit a kind of constructive typology that on the one hand takes the vertical module (especially in his sculptures and installations) as its formal gravitational axis, and on the other reveals the inner workings of the process through which the artist produces these works. This is a constructive typology because Hoyos, finding his inspiration in Le Corbusier’s rationalist architectural ideal, picks up the notion of the module—a reference to the Swiss architect’s concept of the *housing unit* (*Unité d’habitation*)—in order to represent, among other things, how it has mutated in the uses of the most contemporary speculative urban construction. Le Corbusier’s revolutionary concept of the *housing unit* is a component of his functionalist architectural philosophy, where the building, the construction, was supposed to become a “machine for living.” In this way, as a constructive architectural solution of the modern era connected to the “machine for living,” the *housing unit* spearheaded an architecture whose social-democratic ideology sought to ameliorate housing deficits in European cities devastated by WWII. And it is well known that Le Corbusier’s architectural philosophy, which had the provision of affordable housing as one of its objectives, was adopted as official policy in many countries with the intention of helping the less favored. On the other hand, through an overexposure of the process and the devices used in the production of the works featured in *Architectural Playground*, Juan Raúl Hoyos brings to the fore a symbolic parallelism with the building processes—invisible to the eye—that are used by large corporations in the construction business. Hence Hoyos’ interest in deploying materials and practices that, for example, put on display the processes used in silk-screening and also the fragments or recycled objects used by the author in the production of the work, as he does in *Reordenamiento N 31* (“Reordering N 31”, 2012-2015).

In the words of Adriana Herrera, this work articulates “different artistic movements and styles (including postal art, *arte povera*, and Bauhaus-influenced abstract art) that ultimately activate a different way of looking at, traverse, and conceptualize contemporary urban life.”

The experience of *Architectural Playground* reminds us, in a sense, of the conceptual art of Gordon Matta-Clark, a precursor of architectural-space interventions. It does so to the degree that Matta-Clark, in his urbanism interventions of the early 1970s, carved holes in buildings

Juan Raul Hoyos. *PLAYGROUND*, 2014 – 2015. Installation with 25 sculptures: acrylic, silk, wood and casters. 90 x14 x 11 in. (228 x 35 x 27 cm).



about to be torn down and took out samples from them, thus revealing and at the same time documenting photographically (as Juan Raúl Hoyos did in *Project Sintec*, 2007–2010) the materials and methods used by construction companies. These biopsy-like procedures reveal the innards of a constructive body that responds, to a large degree, not as much to the need to build a “habitat” for citizens, but to speculative interests and criteria dominated by the surplus-value considerations of capitalistic firms. It is impossible not to connect the modular, rounded towers of the 2014–2015 installation *Playground*, its “different” and promiscuous constructive typologies, with the phenomenon of global real-estate speculation, and in particular with the case of Miami in recent times. Here, the forces of capital have eclipsed the utopia of an architectural modernity in the manner, for instance, of Le Corbusier, who aspired to build cities planned and organized as “machines for living,” capable of generating potentialities that respond to the material and spiritual life of their citizens. It is these forces, expression of the State in its most neo-liberal version, the ones that really create the guiding plans for cities in the new global village. It is them that establish profitability criteria for the use of land and property, cutting off the possibility of a harmonizing relationship between public and private space, between citizen and society, and in the process rendering any true sociability impossible in the urban landscape of the city. The need for a “machine for living” as a manifestation of authentic social and cultural life has been exchanged for a “machine for exploiting” the fantasies of comfort, the mixture of vanity and the ostentation installed as a horizon for the subject’s expectations in postmodern culture. An exhibition like Juan Raúl Hoyos’ *Architectural Playground* also helps us understand this.

DENNYS MATOS

NEW YORK / NY

Silvia Gruner

Americas Society

Silvia Gruner’s exhibition at Americas Society is a required stop for anyone interested in Latin American art and its relationship with contemporary art since the mid-1980s through the present. Titled *Hemispheres: A Labyrinth Sketchbook* by Silvia Gruner and curated by Gabriela Rangel—the Americas Society’s Director of Visual Arts—and Mexican independent curator Tatiana Cuevas, the exhibition reasserts the historical importance of Gruner’s oeuvre, taking as its starting point a recent (2014) work by the artist, comprised of two videos: *Hemisferios (Jardín frente)* (“Hemispheres [Front Garden]”) and *Hemisferios (Jardín atrás)* (“Hemispheres [Back Garden]”), and two balls of yarn titled *Hemisferio derecho* (“Right Hemisphere”) and *Hemisferio izquierdo* (“Left Hemisphere”), respectively.

In the first video, a middle-aged man walks for 45 minutes in the front garden of the artist’s Mexico home, undoing as he does a grid of red yarn. The ball of yarn the man holds in his hands grows as he walks through plants and bushes, and as the original logic of the grid, schematic and orthogonal, disappears. The opposite occurs in the back garden, where the man walks randomly for 120 minutes undoing an intuitive, crazed labyrinth made of the same yarn but lacking in any rational measurements in its labyrinthine, multifarious narrative. Both videos, allegories of the brain’s right and left sides, are projected on translucent screens set opposite each other; on display next to screens, as if demarcating

in space the four points of a cross, are the balls of yarn that resulted from the actions in the garden. What is on exhibit, then, is time: the mind’s process of understanding, which is translated, materially, into the size of the balls of yarn. Yes: more than chronological time, the artist alludes here—as she has done in previous works—to a temporality that is psychological in character and underlies her own body and identity.

Silvia Gruner was born in Mexico City in 1959. After studying sculpture at the Brezalel Art and Design Academy in Jerusalem and in the Massachusetts College of Art’s MFA program in Boston, she returned to her native city and became a key presence in the Mexican art scene of the 1990s. In that period—or even before, if we take into account what she considers her first work, *Arena* (Sand), which dates from 1986—Gruner’s sculpture became an innovatively interdisciplinary practice that combines video, film, photography, performance, and installation. In this process, a series of visual narratives connected to feminism, the patriarchal and heroic narratives of modernity, eroticism, and also humor began to emerge in Gruner’s art, establishing private, critical relationships with respect to art and tradition. At the Americas Society, visitors had a chance to examine these narratives in the exhibition’s central work, installed in the central gallery. In this way, visitors were invited to think about Gruner’s production in historical terms through a selection of nine videos and photographs. Visitors were invited, then, to think about the artist’s myths, ironies, and fears; her female body at times nude and rolling down a large dune (as in *Arena*), or her fully dressed body, its back to the viewer, quietly contemplating a large modernist fountain in *Centinela* (“Sentinel”, 2007), a 10 minutes 30 seconds video originally filmed in Super8 and transferred to a digital format.

The latter work is, in my view, an excellent example of the artist’s prolific body of work, if we take into account the relationships between feminism and modernity in Mexico. Projected in the first gallery just next to *How to Look at Mexican Art* (1995)—a photographic diptych where a *molcajete* (a traditional Mexican grinding mortar) set against red plastic challenges the ongoing assumption of an indigenous cultural legacy in local contemporary art—the video features the artist’s body confronting the large fountain designed by Isamu Noguchi, Mathias Goeritz, and Ricardo Legorreta for the Camino Real hotel. Gruner, with her back to the camera, stands at the edge of the fountain. As she

Silvia Gruner. *Hemisferios (jardín atrás)* [Hemispheres, back garden], 2014. HD to SD, 120 min.



contemplates the churning of the waters, which echo the modernist design created by the architects—celebrated male individuals of the Twentieth Century—the artist remains immobile; yet, the camera does move, and it gradually reveals Gruner’s shaved head, the product of the chemotherapy treatments she had to undergo after developing cancer. An impossible chasm, one could think, separates the dressed, sick body of this woman from a heroic patriarchal modernity.

Gruner’s references, however, are not limited to Mexico and Mexican Modernism, as the exhibition clearly demonstrates. In the Americas Society’s third gallery, the video *500 kg de impotencia (o posibilidad)* (“500 kg of impotence [or possibility]”) could well be read in connection with Robert Smithson’s famous *Spiral Jetty*, as Gabriela Rangel noted, and the quotes from Eva Hesse’s and Donald Judd’s minimalism in the photographs that comprise *Bauhaus para monos* (“Bauhaus for Monkeys”, 2011) speak of the trajectory of an artist who, from Mexico and Latin America, engages post-structuralist discourses about art from inside and from outside, all the while signaling their contingency in the present. In this way, as Anna C. Chave said when she analyzed Hesse’s work in relation to biography and feminism, Gruner’s work gives the following answer to Foucault’s Beckett-derived question: it does matter, crucially, who is it that speaks.

FLORENCIA SAN MARTÍN

Hugo Bastidas

Galería Nohra Haime

Culture and nature co-exist tensely in the sublime paintings of Hugo Bastidas. Socio-economics, eco-politics, and conceptual arrangements come together in an ironic sensibility that is inventive, seductive and troubling. In his latest show called “Illuminations 1”, the artist continues to propose surreal allegories that compel speculation about our identity and our future.

Bastidas has always found inspiration in nature. In horizontal depictions of profuse flora, beauty and danger commingle. Exotic landscapes are rendered in gray, pencil-like tones that are slightly blurred, making one look closely and inviting intimacy while evoking temporality. These conjured moments represent an ontological intersection between memory, presence and projection.

Underpinning all of the work is an investigation of collective assumptions about interrelatedness and our place in the world. In “Study for Flowers from the Place of the T’s” the scene is overexposed. Light blasts a bank of blossoms. The glare mimics our media-centric society as it spotlights the riotous overgrowth. The repetitive flower shapes suggest that individuality is sacrificed in a community of uniformity.

Circles were repeated in a rhythmic manner in “So Similar.” Cherries hung like discs in a welter of branches and vines. Some of these spherical shapes appeared as if they were props in a staged scene. Flattened and distorted, they seemed more like reproductions than actual products of nature.

The loose grid of discs was suspended in a network of unruly lines, imposing artificial order onto a chaotic lattice of inter-looping plants. The abstracted forms were poised in elemental opposition. As the circles and vines interacted, they directed the gaze into a portal where the pictorial space bent in to create a recessed sanctuary — or subtle pathway.

Significantly, there were no humans in any works except for “Knowing Where You Are.” What appears to be a lone figure perched as if in meditation atop a canopy of trees. Impossibly light on the high branches,

the small shape was tenuous and inarticulate. Bastidas lets you question your own sight in this touch of magic realism that also served as a metaphor for both aspiration and anomie.

“Study for Grand Connectedness” introduced a potent symbol. In the foreground, just off-center, a chandelier dangled from a gnarly, twisted tree trunk. A weather-eaten log lay along the bottom, echoing the large branches above and framing the chandelier. A cluster of bushes and long-leafed plants burst forth. The dichotomous subject matter was polemical but remained open-ended.

Several other paintings positioned a chandelier in wilderness. The clear standout of these was the sole black and white work. Again, a jumble of vegetation spread out exuberantly. Leaves, vines, and stalks were brightly sketched against dense, inky recesses. Just to the right of center and back a bit, hung a chandelier. Aesthetically, its symmetry balanced the tangled tendrils and climbing creepers while its anachronism was disorienting, warping our sense of time. The incongruous imposition was at once attractive and intrusive.

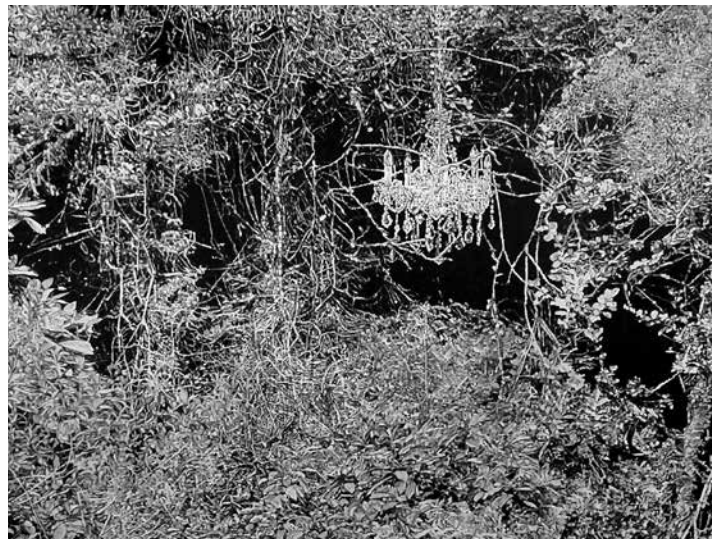
Romantic and emblematic of desire, chandeliers evoke palaces and nightclubs. They symbolize illumination. Yet Bastidas presents them outdoors in daylight, stripping away context and utility. Chandeliers also symbolize wealth and privilege. They allude to colonialism. They imply unsustainable practices, generating a menacing undertow. The absurd juxtapositions call to mind excesses that lead to revolution and point to the existential threat of global warming.

The interaction between the divergent subject matter makes these works “targets” in the way Marshall McLuhan described the term. “Art... acts as an early alarm system, enabling us to discover social and psychic targets in lots of time to prepare to cope with them. The concept of the arts as prophetic contrasts with the popular idea of them as mere self-expression.”

“One-Sided” could be prophetic. A commando bridge (only half of a suspension bridge) was partially submerged. It crossed a swollen stream and continued on the other side, disappearing into lush foliage. In this wry piece, Bastidas played with several motifs including faith, mortality and volition.

A final piece, “November on the Seine,” portrayed a deserted rowboat full of dried leaves. Could this be our Eleventh Hour as the title suggests? Is our extinction destined as these unpopulated paintings imply? On our trip across Lethe, will our legacy be a cargo of death? Questions of

Hugo Bastidas. *How Grand*, 2015. Oil on linen. 48 x 72 in. (122 x 183 cm).



preservation and idealization confront the viewer in this melancholic but sly, humorous vignette.

If Bastidas only did good-looking landscapes, his lyric compositions and hovering brushwork would be satisfying on their own. Adding a surreal and conceptual overlay makes his paintings undeniably relevant. He has the skill and unique vision to focus our attention on spirituality, survival and aesthetics all at once. His robust style is balanced by a nuanced technique, resulting in a complex and resonant oeuvre. This important exhibition revealed a mature artist at the height of his prowess. Few artists fuse such disparate subjects with as much effect and portent.

JEFFREY WRIGHT

Javier Téllez

Koenig & Clinton

The ironies in Javier Téllez's continuing quest to tell us truth(s) have led him consistently to investigate through others the limits of rationality: irrationality as the only rational discourse, one of the basic precepts of Dadaism transferred to the Surrealists. And it is the ethnographic branch of Surrealism that Téllez often conjoins with investigations into the boundaries of understanding. In this he echoes much of the concerns of French philosophical questioning of Western thought emergent in 1960s poststructuralism, the decade of Téllez's birth. The irrational has been reframed as inside normal discourse rather than extrinsic to it. Implicitly, this names joy and ecstasy as pathways to higher mental states and Téllez devotes most of his artistic career to questioning institutionalized demarcations between madness and sanity.

The centerpiece of this exhibition is a film by the same name, "To Have Done with the Judgment of God," and it is Téllez's second in a planned trilogy. The inspiration derives from the French dramatist and poet Antonin Artaud, a figure central to much of Téllez's work. In 1936 he visited with the Rarámuri (or Tarahumara) Native Americans in northwest Mexico in the high Sierra Madres in search of a "primitive" experience as an antidote to the corruptions of Western consciousness. This included peyote and his writing of the experiences, "A Voyage to the Land of Tarahumara." Its title is also the name of Artaud's 1947 radio play that was recorded but censored due to its anarchic and scatological nature. Téllez uses both as a guide to construct his film and he commissioned a translation of the play into the endangered Rarámuri language to rebroadcast it on a local radio station as the Rarámuri went about their daily life.

To judge by the film, most of the broadcast seemed to be ignored by and irrelevant to the peoples. One likely unintended consequence was to demonstrate the continued outside status of much of Western avant-gardist strategies, or the absurdity of absurdism outside its narrow confines in art. However, the best parts were exactly what Artaud would have us have: his screams and nonsense syllables at high volume blasting across Téllez's silent images of the rocky landscapes of the mountains that Artaud found symbolic. This allowed the viewer to experience their own unnamed delirium, with the vocables functioning exactly as Artaud intended in his use of "glossolalia" in the Theater of Cruelty: incoherent sounds and utterances as the only vehicles truly able to express the emotions repressed by rationalized language.

The second part of the film records fragments of two rituals described by Artaud but lacked sufficient context to function in either ethnographic

or symbolic terms. At best we see the well-known post-colonial integration of Catholic rituals, ones Artaud wanted to deny, with localized gestures, dances, peyote use, and singing, whereby local traditions modify the global into hybrid forms.

The installation outside the film room consisted of postcards from places in Artaud's life, first editions of Artaud's writings and extracts from Artaud's glossolalia compiled in 16 pages and mounted on the wall ("Artaud Remix"). A sculpture ("Artaud le Momo") was installed in the corner, a life-size mannequin dressed in a straight jacket and wearing a modern Tarahumara ritual mask. The straight jacket recounts both a specific moment in his life, one often used to assign his "loss of mind," and a generic reference to madness as a category.

In many ways the rest of the installation evoked a theme Téllez has used in many of his films which focus on and purposefully blur the lines between the artist and institutionalized patients. Here there seems an attempt to meld Artaud with Téllez himself, forgetting that while there may be no difference between an "art of the insane" and art (as Jean Dubuffet among others has pointed out), there is a legitimate distinction between those who are able and unable to operate within the constructions of society, where madness is not choice nor strategy nor merely, as Michel Foucault argues, following André Breton, a category produced by authoritarian regimes.

However, both Artaud and Téllez believe in performative rituals of communal actions, whether it be theater, the drumming cadences of ethno-poetics, or mythologies and drugs as thresholds to a change in consciousness. Both aim to keep the questions open, in front of us, rather than our unquestioned acceptance of understandings based on categorical barriers.

RICHARD LESLIE

Roberto Diago

Magnan Metz

Ascending City was an installation of small houses in burnt wood presented by Roberto Diago at Pittsburgh's Mattress Factory in 2010. Now arranged on the floor and the wall in the back area of Magnan Metz gallery for his solo exhibition *Marca en la memoria/Imprint of a Memory*, the little houses present us with the shine of their charred surfaces. Fire

Javier Téllez. *To Have Done With The Judgment Of God*, 2016. Install View.



has turned them into a somewhat dramatic child's drawing, which now expands theatrically and leaves only small gaps for viewers to wind their way through their accumulation. As we move further into the work, we discover areas untouched by the fire in which the natural color of wood pops up randomly.

Interested in areas of marginality, especially those related to racism in Cuban society, Diago has employed recycled "poor" materials in many of his works since he came onto the scene in 1990s Cuba. At the time, the country's deep economic crisis forced him to adopt an aesthetic of poverty, which, while carrying a risk of stereotyping, still persists in this scattered citadel like the neighborhoods that surround capital cities in third-world nations, and also in the remaining works in the exhibition, which combine hard and soft materials, metal and canvas.

Five large-format works from the series *Variaciones de Oggún* ("Variations of Oggún", 2010) stand out for their power. Oggún is one of the deities (*orishas*) in the afro-Cuban pantheon of *santería*, known as a warrior and protecting father, lord of iron, tools, and weapons. Created using roughly soldered metal plates, these works have been placed next to the wall that faces visitors as they enter the gallery. In this way, they are perceived as a giant protecting wall. The plates, painted in flat colors and polished by the passage of time, produce an agreeable effect. The wall seems to become a large quilted curtain, another technique associated with scarcity.

However, the most relevant formal element in the execution of Diago's *Variaciones de Oggún* is the soldering joining the plates. Rather than hiding the joints, Diago highlights them. The soldering comes to represent keloids, the skin protuberances produced as a wound heals. In Cuba, such markings expand as traces of the mixed blood of their carriers. In 1997, an exhibition pioneering artistic engagement with the issue of racism in the Island adopted the term for its title. Diago's work was featured in that show.

The protuberances created on the metal surface by means of soldering have an interesting correlate in one of the three white-colored works made on canvas, also in large formats. These are the artist's most recent productions, dating from 2015. Against a ground of rectangles and squares with frayed borders, Diago placed a kind of braids, equally frayed. The white keloid doesn't serve the purpose of joining the sections of the painting, but is overlaid on the background as a misplaced addition. It is also soft, although its appearance is rudimentary. Perhaps in this way Diago is allegorizing white racial privilege. The other two works combine rectangular patches with thin vertical stripes, which make the surface more dynamic without losing their decorative effect.

Roberto Diago belongs to a generation of Cuban artists who have adopted social themes as the center of their explorations. A graduate of the San Alejandro Academy (1990), he soon developed a language rooted in neofigurative expressionism, indebted to Antonia Eiriz, who burned the surfaces of her works and subjected them to extreme rigors. Diago understood that this language was appropriate for engaging a society where inequality was rapidly rising to the surface after the mirage of a Soviet-backed bonanza.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, interested in a return to the craft of painting, Diago devoted himself to the production of diaphanously brutalist works of art, focused on the symbolic load of the materials. After adopting this rough language he began exploring issues of race, albeit increasingly from a perspective centered on formal questions. This is why his recent work has been shaking off the direct allusions that characterized his art for over a decade, such as the use of text and black human figures. Diago has emphasized the symbiosis between the materials used and certain signifying forms. In this context, metal soldering and canvas suture are metaphors of cicatrization, like the marks left by suffering in the memory of all Cubans.

ELVIS FUENTES

José Vincench

Thomas Jaeckel Gallery

José Vincench's exhibition comes at a time when art produced by Cuban artists is gaining greater presence in New York and, partially, in the US as a whole. It is important for art historians and critics to reflect with the visiting public about the seriousness of a given exhibition, its relevance for the present, and its contributions after many years with such scant information about artists living in the island (we have invited readers to reflect about these issues in a number of solo-show reviews in *ArtNexus*, and in upcoming essays.) On the other hand, we do have a large repository for artists who left Cuba, whose work has been presented both in commercial galleries and in institutions, and who have seen the products of their personal creativity celebrated as they expanded our language about the issue of migration and life in Central America, and brought to the fore the differences between those born and located in the continent and those born and located in island territories.

Such subject matter has been the most frequent, and this gives José Vincench's exhibition, featuring paintings and sculptures, a dual

Roberto Diago: *Untitled*, *Variaciones de Oggún* series, 2010. Mixed media. 5 pieces. 78 ³/₄ x 59 ¹/₁₆ in. (198 x 149 cm) each one.



value: the work on exhibit here—especially Vincench’s most recent production—displays aesthetic expressions not often emphasized in Cuban art, and the artist deploys a language halfway between personal and international. Vincench does not seek/present narrative, figuration, or autobiography. He emphasizes an elegant and sarcastic line of work. He stretches his creation into a geometric language—rational, imbued with social reflection and considerations of language art—and the (scarce) signals of insularity in his work are given by a modicum of organic emotional forms. Given these descriptions of the visual contents in his production, Vincench is not an artist inscribed in a movement, but one who works in a *trans* territory (to synthesize, *trans* responds to the legacies and personal developments of the *-isms*, postmodernity, and deconstruction.) Similarly, *trans* artists like Vincench share the characteristic mobility of our hyper-accelerated era, marked by extremely consequential shifts in a variety of global orders.

Devoted to the creation of his art and to teaching, José Vincench gives Central American baroque—and Latin American baroque in general—a new turn. He does not ignore it, but restructures it from the standpoint of non-figuration, and ratifies it through his use of *gold* as a signal of the gold-filled Earth that tempted the conquistadors, which also traveled from the conquistadors to their kings so that the latter would continue to finance the former’s travels/adventures. And as the early *coin* for the payment of taxes to European conquerors, and as a use of the material that surrounded and surrounds a transported and imposed Catholic liturgy. A first look at Vincench’s use of gilding and gold color could prompt an association with Mathias Goeritz, the insatiable Polish-Mexican thinker. This is a reasonable association, and it becomes more extensive as our gaze covers the entire exhibition. These two dissidents of different moments of political criminality coincide in the field of language, each in their own way (Mathias Goeritz was a precursor of several movements, Concrete Poetry among them.) Says Vincench: “Gold Leaf provides me with a seductive, poetic, and lyrical material in the old artisanal mold. I am intentionally creating a decorative product,

José Vincench. *Gusano* (Worm), 2015. Gold leaf on canvas. 48 x 48 in. (121 x 121 cm). UBS Art Collection.



an ironic reality of yesteryear and today on which it can be possible for us to forgive and reconcile.” His works can already be found in a number of national and international collections; this exhibition will undoubtedly increase his presence.

Cambio (“Change”), a steel sculpture, is simple in appearance, yet it brings together a number of the artist’s concerns. The painting of the same title, in gold leaf, expresses an organic form of abstraction, similar to the one in *Gusano* (“Worm”). In geometry, the painting *Disidente* (“Dissident”) makes clear the turn in the artist’s approach. Large formats predominate in the exhibition, and there is an option to visualize certain paintings individually but also forming diptychs and triptychs. The backgrounds in the paintings mentioned so far, and others that are action paintings, are resolved on white canvas. As can be noted, titles are often monosyllabic; they are the most highly figurative allusions in the exhibition, and respond to José Ángel Vincench’s social concerns. Both the individual works and the selection as a whole pose a deconstructive demand, express a search for perfection, and communicate the intensity of the island’s light—one of the autobiographical details that extend beyond the theoretical. The exhibition’s general feel is one of serenity and intensity.

GRACIELA KARTOFEL

Saúl Sánchez Praxis

To enter Saúl Sánchez’s exhibition is to feel oneself motivated by the author’s reflexive aesthetic look at some movements that formed in the Twentieth Century in the realm of abstract art. Sánchez is in no way merely repeating such movements, nor are the works on exhibit cold or demanding. As the exhibition’s title, *Un otras otro* (“One After the Other”), indicates, Sánchez’s works bring forth their author’s reflections and investigations around both the pictorial process and the facets that certain movements’ theories make explicit. What Saúl Sánchez does is not the kind of revival that has acquired preeminence as the contemporary calendar marches forward, for example in this very moment in the course of our Twenty-First Century, when kinetic art and op art, among others, are gaining new attention. Sánchez is driven by a personal-conceptual investigation structured by constructivism and its derivatives, and focused on two factors: form and surface. Readers may wonder if there is no risk of confusion in the intertwining of two or more movements; the answer is that there is none. Sánchez’s works are limpid individualized outlines against the gallery walls.

In this exhibition, the artist—who was born in Colombia and lives in New York, where he is finishing his Master’s degree—focuses on the theories and visual creations of Suprematism. Sánchez concentrates on square and rectangular shapes, on horizontal and vertical tracings, and develops diagonal inclinations, symmetries, and asymmetries. A general glance at these working elements and works of art will produce an impression of repetitiveness. A more detailed look will gradually reveal delicate variations between them. One example that condenses all of Sánchez’s excellent speculations is the series *Cuadrado con pintura azul ultramarino* (“Square with Ultramarine Blue Paint”), measuring eighty by fifty-seven centimeters and one meter by one meter. The natural richness of the linen (as processed as all materials are today) provides a somewhat neutral ground for Sánchez’s proposed intellectual emphasis. The presence or absence of a frame confirms the author’s reflections. Case by case —“one after the other”—the analysis is explained

by comparisons between factorial positions, as well as by a dynamic of varying dimensions in each painting, as if one had visited the artist's workshop over a period of time as he was creating these works and were able to see what each proposes, how they are finished, and what results move him towards the next one with subtle variants that nevertheless retain the discourse of dismantlement in which he is engaged. Thus, the process of executing these works, the event of painting, and the way in which Sánchez carries it out, are externalized here.

What develops within the parameters set by the paintings' edges, which intersect one another at right angles, are analytical scenes. There is no perception of a brush or a spatula; on the contrary, what has left a trace is the application of a spray. Viewers are held in an enveloping embrace of linens on which the artist applied oils and acrylics, all in the same range of colors: blue, white. One factor of variability plays out in a light shade of blue, uneven and emerging from the gesticulating application and *fading* of the material on the metal container. The color white plays a function and occupies a region: it works as a ribbon demarcating the essential square already mentioned, and alludes to the tape that is part of the materials and resources deployed in conceptual art and in other artistic movements invoked here. This demarcation-white paint-tape is positioned as a square, be it centered, decentered, in equal dimensions, or with irregular sides. Its four corners are different in each painting. The ribbon—made with paint—presents as if chopped by hand. In the language of art criticism, these are “dirty colors”. Here, however, the intention is to put on display an intentional, provoked carelessness that achieves an ethereal, non-perfectionist, post-impeccability appearance, albeit utilizing in good measure the resources of those aesthetics. There are those who insist on telling us that only time will tell us which works of art are landmarks in history. In this exhibition, Saúl Sánchez is intent on revealing which movements are landmarks in history for him.

GRACIELA KARTOFEL

Saúl Sánchez. *Square with Ultramarine Blue Paint IV*, 2015. Oil and acrylic on canvas. 20 x 15 in (50 x 38 cm).
Photography: Janette May. Courtesy Praxis Gallery.



PARIS / FRANCE

Iván Contreras Brunet Maison de l'Amérique latine

Iván Contreras Brunet (Santiago de Chile, 1927) followed a highly personal path. His work is on exhibit simultaneously at Maison de l'Amérique latine under the title of *Passage de la couleur* (“The Passage of Color”) and at Gimpel & Müller as *Iván Contreras Brunet. Homenaje*. The visibility that these two spaces give him now coincides with new perspectives for reading the art of this representative of Latin America's geometric and optical-art schools. The expansion of knowledge and new scientific discoveries produce a continuity of expressions.

Contreras Brunet began his studies at the School of Fine Arts in Santiago de Chile in 1949; there he was a student of Gregorio de la Fuente and Marta Colvin. He has lived in Paris since 1952. In 1968 he was a founder of the Co-Mo group (Constructivism and Motion), whose projections connect him with the work of Russian constructivists like Vladimir Tatlin and Alexander Rodchenko, and to others like Vantongerloo or Jesús Soto. Contreras Brunet lived in New York City for four years between 1957 and 1961, when he returned to Paris. In that period, his art focused on materials, spatial depth, and peripheral vision.

Despite their maturity, Contreras Brunet's works participate in this spirit of change. This artist did not stop at propitiating viewer's autonomous perceptions, but produced a chromatic range all of his own. The study of Impressionism's rules for the use of color and its concept of the capture of time drove him naturally to the field of chromatics. Subtlety and aesthetic intimacy are alloyed in these structures. After experimenting with several different materials, he chose wood, acrylic, and metal mesh. As installations, on the ground or suspended from the ceiling, his forms retain an element of independence or complementarity that adds fluidity to the scheme. These works can be read individually in alternating fashion or as a whole as they incorporate shapes into space and add uniformity to the relief.

Contreras Brunet's achievement is to have introduced a spatial structure that, overlapping like a net, questions the essential element of the flat surface, where it does not fragment color or surface but is able to produce a harmonious tone that transcends shape. These works, made on a monochrome basis, produce an original visual effect.

The pictorial surface is revisited or vested—a tactile process between vision and vestment—by this netting, which, indistinctly colored, cuts and structures the plane. To the support thus elaborated, Contreras Brunet adds suspended circles or ellipses of small metal rods. The shapes in space of a metallic net, almost scientifically colored, complete a perspectival visual grid of great impact. The layers of material intercut each other and present us with a shifting landscape. Thus, many of his works are named *Pasajes* (“Passages”).

An effort is required on the part of viewers for the contemplation and completion of the visual itinerary in front of them. Physical space and atmosphere come together in artworks that demand keen and patient readings. Motion and perception make these works vibrate, and they can be read from different angles. There are as many variations as destinations and points of view to be chosen.

Contreras Brunet eschews the notion of monumentality in the work of art, in the sense that he adds an apparent fragility and a kind of intimate space into this aesthetic journey. He prompts a commingling between viewers and experience and its implications. He not only

introduces unusual elements in terms of the optical mixture, but also new structural aspects into the work. His will to experiment drives him to utilize modules, grids, *pochoirs*, and other painting or cutting techniques that produce an effect of modernity and set him apart from genre academicism.

Contreras Brunet was the first artist to represent Chile at the Venice Biennale, in 1972, thanks to the good offices of Michel Seuphor and the Italy-Latin America Institute in Rome. Also worth noting are his retrospective at the Isabel Aninat gallery in Santiago de Chile, with works dated between 1958 and 2012, and *Relieves móviles* ("Mobile Reliefs"), at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo in Buenos Aires, in 2014.

Several works by Contreras Brunet are in private collections and institutions. He has exhibited and created works at the Museo de Cuauhtémoc (Mexico); the Museo Jesús Soto in Ciudad Bolívar (Venezuela); the Centre Georges Pompidou; the Museum of Modern Art of the City of Paris; the Cambrai and Cholet museums in France; and the Stedelijk Museum Schiedam (The Netherlands), among others.

SUSANA SULIC

Oscar Lloveras

Musée des Arts et Métiers

Superficies tangibles ("Tangible Surfaces") is the title of this installation by Oscar Lloveras (Buenos Aires, 1960), at the Musée des Arts et Métiers in Paris. The event is unusual not only for the size of the work but also for its location at the entrance of the traditional institution. A spatial structure with lines of planned expansion unfolds at a height that ranges from five to sixteen meters and covers a surface of over 800 meters.

Lloveras' work refers to the latest forms in design while maintaining a respectful attitude towards tradition. The three basic wings

made in high-resistance polyamide canvas are suspended and kept in place by tension cables. This is an important discovery, since the material is used in oceanographic missions at great depths that demand high resistance. Lloveras' creation, inspired by aerodynamic or aquatic natural forms, roots, and leaves, adjusts to this primordial element. The parts prompt contemplation and adapt perfectly to the building's structure, without altering it. Wind, light, and weather accidents are incorporated into the work's modifications. Along the same lines of these dynamics and ecological rules, the colors have been produced using natural pigments fixed in alcohol. All of this is in accordance with Oscar Lloveras' intended message of respect for the environment.

Lloveras began his artistic practice at the age of 14, when he started attending the School of Fine Arts in Buenos Aires. Later he studied Sculpture at La Sorbonne (Paris), and dabbled in anthropology. His education also included medicine and kinesiology. Lloveras' interest in Eastern religions and writings took him to Japan and motivated him to research the origins of Shinto and Buddhism.

His work includes a preoccupation with social issues, the force and implications of energy, man's relations with his environment, and the notion of temporality. Lloveras has created monumental works for the communities where he has resided, and contributed to the training of youth in that activity.

The places selected for the earliest installations in the genre also correspond to an environmental approach and the search for a way for social groups to live in harmony with nature, and maintain values of ecological respect. Lloveras' structures are the product of social work. Among their most important precedents are monumental sculptures created during the artist's stays in Japan—in Kamiyama—in 1999 and in 2013; and his participation in the renewable Energy Festival in Pennsylvania in 2010.

After producing carvings in stone and wood, Lloveras gives free reign to our imagination with this new type of structure that integrates

Iván Contreras Brunet. *Seis círculos azul / rojo* (Six blue / red circles), 1969. Weave, acrylic and wood. 47 1/4 x 39 3/8 x 15 3/4 in. (120 x 100 x 40 cm).



Oscar Lloveras. *Superficies tangibles* (Tangible surfaces), 2016. In situ installation. ©Oscar Lloveras.



itself both into nature and into the urban space. The viewer who, in his or her motion, interacts with the work complements a perception of emptiness and plenty, of durability and instability, of shadow and light. This kind of spatial work of art is connected to the notion of harmony in relation with the space that holds it. Students at the Monotsukuri association from the University of Kawaga participated in the execution of this work.

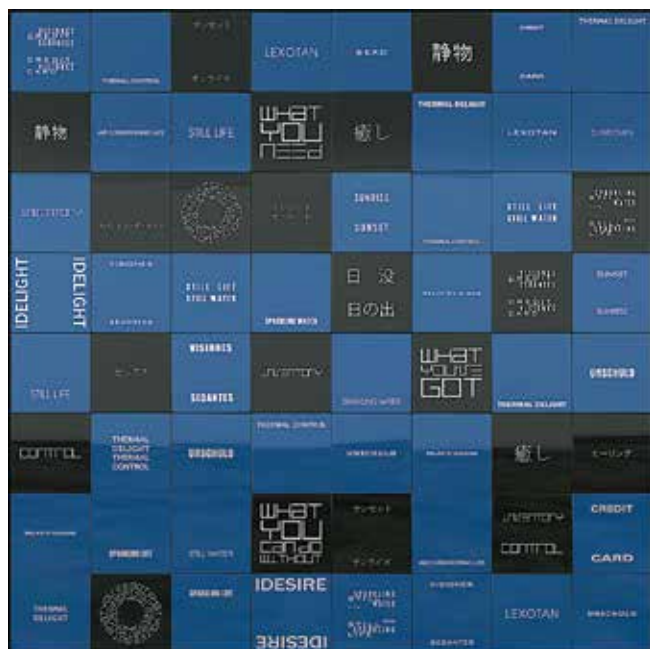
Oscar Lloveras also finds innumerable aesthetic keys in Japanese literature, in a kind of ritual. He leaves nothing aside and pays great attention to every element. He joins in this way the ranks of those artists who achieved universality thanks to their respect for local cultures, and who sought new philosophical destinations and new explanations about the essence of the human. The integration of these elements is associated with a humanistic content and a committed attitude. The latter can also be read as a Latin American referent.

Lloveras' work connects with a spirit of nomadism, intelligence, and poetic projection. His chromatic technique is particularly original, as natural pigments are fixated in alcohol: matter has been especially created for such construction. The achievement is even more impressive if we add the fact that for a long time historical sites of this magnitude remained closed to the possibilities of intervention. The museum, located in the Saint-Martin-des-Champs Abbey, preserves machines, drawings, and documents related to important inventions of the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries. This is a key historical site in France, and many architectural styles have come to overlap in its evolution. Inviting Lloveras to present this proposal is part of a new cultural policy in the museum, which nevertheless maintains its established line and its purpose of safeguarding our contemporary scientific and technical legacy.

Lloveras' work extends into the city, as it can be seen from outside the museum. Spirituality and metaphysics come together in the vision of one reality overlapping with another: one architecture upon another.

SUSANA SULIC

Ana Maria Tavares. *Forgotten Mantras I*, 2016. Color engraved stainless steel, anodized aluminum and ACM. 62 63/64 x 62 63/64 x 2 3/4 in. (160 x 160 x 7cm). Single edition. Courtesy Silvia Cintra + Box4.



RIO DE JANEIRO / BRAZIL

Ana Maria Tavares
Galeria Silvia Cintra + Box4

In a world conditioned by the standardization of compartments and the mechanization of everyday life, the interaction between the sociological and artistic fields reveals that connections between art and life continue to be part of contemporary aesthetic debates.

This notion has been the leitmotiv in the work of Brazilian artist Ana Maria Tavares and is reflected in "Forgotten Mantras," her second solo exhibition at the Silvia Cintra Galeria de Arte in Rio de Janeiro. In addition to four works from the series of the same name (two-dimensional polished stainless-steel plaques with words engraved on them), the exhibition also includes an installation with small works that form "mantras" based on words like desire, delight, stilnox, lexotan and sex that can be mounted in different ways.

According to Tavares, "mantras are like a synthesis of the present and work as signs to navigate the contemporary world." It is precisely for this reason that mantras have increasingly become more complex and are conceived in several languages, encouraging homogenization and repetition from one culture to another, all contaminated by copying.

Tavares began to incorporate words in her work in 1997, but it was in the series "Cityscape," specially created for the 50th anniversary of the São Paulo Biennial in 2001, when mantras began to play a bigger role in her proposals. In that series, Tavares used eight words and expressions printed on polished stainless steel, which together formed a large panel that reflected the image of Ibirapuera Park.

At the beginning of her career, Tavares created paintings that worked as sculptures or objects for installations. Then, she began to create objects that combined the concept of sculpture with that of design. In recent years, she developed works that consciously appeared uncertain about the reality of art and the reality of life. This is the case of the installations that she exhibited in large institutional spaces in Brazil and abroad.

Tavares worked to promote an aesthetic that reached beyond the physical and intellectual spaces of museums and galleries. She was recognized for her highly fluid public works, like those exhibited in airports, in which she presented recurrent themes that symbolized a sort of exile from everyday life through places suspended between the real and the virtual. One of her most prevalent concepts was the idea of the "non-place" developed by philosopher Marc Augé, particularly in projects for places in which notions of identity and history are not present, namely places that are not memory friendly.

For this exhibition, Tavares appears to have returned his work to the artistic space, also showing that, as art critic Tadeu Chiarelli once declared, Tavares has "created a niche between poetry and the visual arts." About her use of words: it is an element punctuated throughout the entire survey of the history of art during moments with peculiar characteristics. As scholar Simon Morley pointed out in the book titled *Writing on the Wall*, we can follow that "symbolic quality of words" from the Renaissance, to the posters by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, the vanguards (cubist collages, paintings by René Magritte and Fernand Léger) in the postwar—like, for instance, the 1959 painting *Trophy 1* by Robert Rauschenberg—or even the 1970 conceptual works by Lawrence Weiner, like *Earth to Earth Ashes to Ashes Dust to Dust*, among others.

By saying that images can be read in the same manner in which we read words, Morley is affirming that this operation represents an

offensive against all forms of fundamentalist thinking, given that the relationship between images and words promote ambiguity and a stance against pattern codes, eliciting a semiotic whirlwind that exerts pressure on the calm surface of language. Thus, Tavares return to the institutionalized space through aesthetic and political insubordination. This very “rebelliousness” appears in the paradox between the spirituality of mantras and their relationship with words that are part of the capitalist repertoire, particularly with respect to hedonistic pleasures and the so called “Prozac Generation.”

ALESSANDRA SIMÕES

Lasar Segall Pinakotheke

With the support of the Lasar Segall Museum and of IBRAM, the Brazilian Museum Institute (an organism of the country’s Ministry of Culture), Pinakotheke Gallery is presenting in its São Paulo location an important exhibition of works by Lasar Segall, featuring paintings, drawings, prints, and sculptures by a master of Brazilian modernism and offering a welcome opportunity to revisit the contributions made by the artist born in Vilnius, Lithuania, in 1889. The exhibition encompasses 57 works and a number of documents related to Segall’s biography, with information about his experiences in Germany, where he lived for a time, and in Brazil.

The exhibition’s opening was also the occasion for launching a new publication, with an essay by art historian Vera D’Horta, a specialist in Segall’s work; it includes new information about the artist’s birth year, now established as 1889 rather than 1891 as had been asserted before.

The selection of works makes it possible for us to trace Segall’s various experiences, starting with his works using paper as support and his paintings of the German period, made as WWI raged.

We are surprised by Segall’s assured and sensible draftsmanship in xylographs, lithographs, and graphite or color-pencil works on paper. Portraits, everyday scenes, themes of Jewish culture, and events that marked the artist’s personal life are all present in the show.

In her introductory essay, Vera D’Horta notes that Segall’s European production is best represented here by the xylographs he made in Germany in the second half of the 1910s and in the 1920s. These works, says D’Horta, are aesthetically and ideologically related to primitive engravings. Evident in the selection on exhibit are Segall’s simplification of forms and his immersion in German expressionism. D’Horta notes that “the artist explores the decisive contrast between black ink-filled surfaces and white spaces carved in the wood matrix, as did his predecessors Erich Heckel and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff—the creators, in 1905, of *The Bridge*—as well as later, second-generation members (like Segall) of this German artistic movement.”

Present in Segall’s engravings are the subject of the “Wandering Jew”, memories of his native city, and reminiscences of Orthodox Judaism’s rituals. In her analysis, D’Horta reviews the impressions that the artist retained of Vilnius, occupied and razed by German troops in 1915. This is the context for works like *Widow and Son* (1918) and *Widow* (1919), *Lunar Prayer* (c.1917), *Praying Youth* (1920), *Wandering Women II* (1919), and *Mother and Son* (1921). This repertoire, deeply significant in Segall’s oeuvre, is presented always within an expressionist aesthetic. Another high point in the exhibition is provided by the canvases Segall painted in Meissen in 1915—*The Market in Meissen I* and *II*—when he found himself in that city due to WWI: Lithuanians were relocated to Meis-

sen because their country was part of the Russian Empire, Germany’s enemy in the war.

One perceives in those canvases the importance of free-hand brushstrokes for building the composition; the artist creates urban scenes with his brush while his agile and fluid lines reveal the urge for gestures in the elaboration of a painting. In that period, Segall was interested in documenting aspects of the city and its environs, and D’Horta notes a certain influence of German impressionist master Gotthardt Kühn.

Another surprising painting in this exhibition is *Funeral Vigil* (c. 1928), where the artist reports the death of his father, recording the date and time of his passing (February 10, 1927, 7:30 am). The composition, all in brown hues, includes Segall’s signature in Russian characters. The subject of the death of the father reappears in works such as *End and Beginning* (1929), which depicts his father and his son, Mauricio, and in xylographs such as *Funeral Vigil* (c.1927) or the etching *Kaddish* (1927).

Also included in this exhibition are the significant works Segall made in Campos do Jordão, a small mountain village in the state of São Paulo known as “Brazil’s Switzerland”. Frequenting it from the 1930s on, Segall left important registers of the local landscape, such as *Bluff with Houses and Animals* (c. 1937) and *Animals with Pines* (1931), in reference to the tree species endemic to the region.

Another highlight of the show is *Closed Glade* (1954), a synthetic, almost abstract oil-on-canvas work. Here the artist records, in an arrangement of vertical lines, a vision of tree trunks aligned to cover the entire surface of the support, yet allowing us to see light as it filters through them.

Lasar Segall (1889-1957) settled in São Paulo in 1924, and in that Brazilian city he built an important part of his life’s trajectory. In São

Lasar Segall. *Widow*, 1919. Xylography on rice paper. 12¹⁹/₃₂ x 8²¹/₃₂ in. (32 x 22 cm). No signature.



Paulo he married for the second time and raised a family. There he participated in the local modernist movement that burst into the scene with the Modern Art Week of 1922. However, Segall had visited the country before: it was in 1913, when he presented in São Paulo and Campinas a selection of his works, an event that is acknowledged as a significant antecedent for Modern Art in Brazil.

LISBETH REBOLLO GONÇALVES

SANTIAGO DE CHILE / CHILE

Fernando Prats

Galería Patricia Ready

It all begins with a brief essay by Gabriela Mistral: “In the condor and the deer of our national emblem, Chileans have an uncommonly expressive symbol, one that touches on two different aspects of the spirit: strength and grace.” Using the two local species that are Chile’s national symbols, Mistral was subtly giving us her view of Chilean identity. Fernando Prats appropriates this strategy. The Andes mountains, condors, and the stars are the co-authors of this solo exhibition. And the vehicle for it is poetry.

Prats’ video *Carnaza de la poesía* (“Poetry’s Carrion”) is highly suggestive. A group of condors feed on animal carcasses. Among them, strewn on the ground, are poem verses that refer to local landscapes, written by Chilean authors—most of them dead, including Mistral. The metaphor “poetry’s carrion” is rendered literal. A metaphor for those who, in the present, take advantage of the legacy of artists from the past? In her essay, Mistral described herself as more deer-like than condor-like. Had she seen this exhibition, she would have eagerly confirmed this self-assessment. The video is in good company: large drawings—if they can be called that—created by the actions of the birds’ flapping wings, air, and smoke. What remains are gestures, traces of the passage of nature that reveal motion and a lost vitality.

Fernando Prats. *Cordillera Dentada* (Jagged mountains rage), 2015. Model of bronze and gold, maxillary arch and mandibular. Variable dimensions. Credits: Vicens San Nicolás.



A kind of radiography hanging on the gallery wall in sets, placed like clothing in a store. Saliva, blood, and dust are among the elements with which Fernando Prats collaborates. His intervention is limited to placing the supports on which nature is to have an impact, or to adjusting the frame in order to record the exercise. And we move from a “from below” to a “from above”.

In the series *Mapa mudo de los Andes* (“Mute Map of the Andes”), the artist rolls up his sleeves. The traces left behind by smoke and air reappear, yes, but here Prats uses oil on the photographs and the paper. The result is a series of images that resemble defective smartphone or computer screens. Equivocal and suggestive visions. Prats carries this maximal economy of means into another video, *Poema invisible* (“Invisible Poem”): via digital manipulation, he transforms the Andes by playing with their symmetrical reflection in a fluctuating figure, a slash in the sky. Chile, land or poets. Poetry of the land. And from its highest elevation, the Andes, we move toward an endless ceiling: the sky. A gigantic portrait of the night sky above the mountain chain.

Not everything here is large-scale. There are also small objects that help us find the point of coherence for this “poetry carrion”. *Cordillera dentada* (“Serrated Cordillera”) is a model, in bronze and gold, of an open set of jaws. An artifact (in the manner of Nicanor Parra) that connects the human and the natural.

Fernando Prats returns to Chile bringing with him a series of works that move back towards the essential. In his career we can identify a logical trajectory—if exploring such extreme regions implies anything as evident as that—and an evolution that begins with the primacy of texts over images. In this body of work, the letter is ahead, be it in those feasting condors (guided by the stench of poetry) or in the poetic object with the golden teeth. This is the Word made into art. The smoke and oil that sketch on paper the repeating shape of an “H” give us a possible key: more deer (*hemul* in the local terminology), less condor.

JUAN JOSÉ SANTOS

Benjamín Ossa

Galería Artespacio

Eleven red ghosts. Eleven materializations of something that existed in the past. Eleven deformed apparitions levitating in the gallery space. Benjamín Ossa considers time: there is no way to waste it. Neither is there a way to capture it.

The series Ossa presents in the exhibition space are diverse, yet they all share a communicating thread: light and time. Hanging from the ceiling in the first gallery are eleven sculptures, the result of an action that remains documented in a photographic series. In this series we see the artist, clad in a welder’s outfit and gear, manipulate at great cost a piece of flexible material until it takes the shape we see in the sculptures. Suspended, the sculptures produce a sensation of suspense. They are the congealed, static regression of an action registered in black and white. A colorless snapshot: it could have been taken at any point during the past century. Hence the idea of connecting those “empty garments” with a visit from the past. The proposal is titled *A 250º en 1:30 segundos* (“To 250º in 1:30 seconds”): it refers to the temperature at which Ossa molded the material and the time it took him to do it.

In the second gallery we find several ways of engaging the same problem. In a series of Polaroid photographs, Ossa recorded light as it shifted over a 24-hour period (Monday, November 9th, 2015). The location was the Atacama desert, where light is extreme. The artist’s

intervention is minimal, since Polaroid images develop automatically and the camera does not allow adjustments to the diaphragm or shutter speed. Ossa applies a second operation and, in consequence, a second time register. He photographs photography. This produces two timelines: the one captured by the camera (where we can see the color variations of the Atacama sky), and a second one resulting from shooting the Polaroids diagonally against a neutral space (which nevertheless picks up a small trace of the shadow in the original shot.) Different temporalities and different optics to confront them, all in a single day. There is no way to waste time, and neither is there a way to capture it.

Two more series in the same gallery insist on the exhibition's subject, but adding a new element: the viewer. *Esculturas de dualidad y azar* ("Sculptures of Duality and Chance") features three steel tubes with holes through which visitors can see, in different ways, whatever is on the other side of the cylinder. It could be anything from the series described above to the motion of other visitors. Using a set of handles, the cylinder can be pointed at different objectives, like a periscope. Ossa's second proposal in this section is a re-reading of his register from November 9th, 2015, now focusing on dawn and dusk. A number of plates, shifting in position in the manner of solar panels, reflect the viewer's presence. More abstract and unconnected to the recording of light in the desert, this series stands apart from the rest of the exhibition and diversifies Ossa's language to an excessive degree. Here, his treatment of discourse goes through many layers of intervention, while in the other proposals on exhibit the artist's presence is attenuated. Returning to *A 250^o en 1:30 segundos*, we see Ossa's action reduced to barely a minute and a half, an action or a choreography immortalized in the photographs. And as we have seen in the case of the Polaroids, the trace is also residual.

This concentrated solo exhibition confirms Benjamin Ossa's versatility as he confronts a problem he has engaged since the start of his career: time and light. The new pathways he explores in sculptural form pres-

ent us an artist determined to meet the challenge head on and with the whole of his powers. The result is something more than a collection of brilliant works of art. It is what remains after the battle.

JUAN JOSÉ SANTOS

SAN JUAN / PUERTO RICO

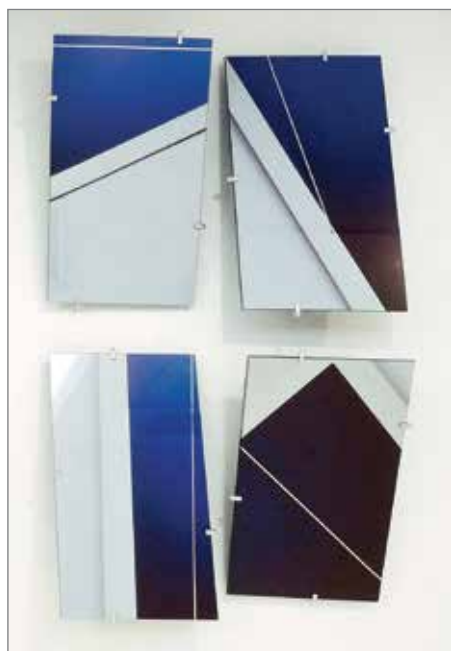
Adán Vallecillo

El Lobi

Adán Vallecillo's inaugural exhibition at El Lobi, a space directed by artists Vanessa Hernández Gracia, Tony Aponte and Melissa Sarthou, led viewers to consider what needs other than functional ones do objects answer? *32 with 8; the limits of the machine and the movement* investigates how practical items undergo a continual mutation and expansion from a technological system towards a cultural system. Vallecillo salvaged obsolete articles from Puerto Rico's defunct *Impresora Nacional* or National Press and he re-presented the industrial objects as aesthetic objects that signify the indices of time. From 1971 to 2014, the National Press printed leftist newspapers like *Claridad*, and materials for the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, that argued for the island's independence. Thirty-two black and white pages and eight color pages was the press' maximum capacity. Vallecillo, who studied art and sociology, used the term *abstracciones implícadas* or "implied abstractions" to describe his artistic practice, whereby abstraction is linked with the social, political and economic factors related to objects, before his intervention in their selection, formation and presentation.

32 with 8 resonated with Puerto Rico's critical juncture by making the invisible visible to improve society and sharing the voices of those who have lost agency. Vallecillo's exhibition came together

Benjamín Ossa. *Amanecer del día lunes 9 hasta el martes 10 de noviembre del año 2015* (Dawn on Monday 9 to Tuesday 10 November 2015), 2015. Printing on aluminum flat bed; glass and silver nitrate. 23 ⁵/₈ x 15 ³/₄ in. (60 x 40 cm) each one.



Adán Vallecillo. *La Rotativa*, 2016. Offset printing blankets. 72 x 175 in. (182 x 444 cm). Photography: Abdiel Segarra.



during his participation in The Harbor, a residency program at Beta-Local, a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting and promoting critical thought and contemporary artistic practices in Puerto Rico. His project happened rather serendipitously through the connections of Sofía Gallisá Muriente, co-director of Beta-Local, and the interests of poet and editor Nicole Delgado, a participant of Beta-Local's research and production program *La Práctica*. Gallisá Muriente contacted Carlos Jiménez who had worked for decades at the National Press to see if there were some materials at the abandoned facility that Delgado could use for her center for graphic experimentation in Santurce called *La Impresora* or The Press. Jiménez agreed to meet Gallisá Muriente and Delgado at the former plant and the women invited Vallecillo to join them. Upon entering the workshop, he was deeply struck by the loss of a forty-three-year-old political struggle.

Vallecillo's brief scavenger for objects at the National Press for an exhibition had striking and seductive results. *32 with 8* was a thrilling example of how he brings to his discipline a sense of the poetry and vulnerable beauty of materials and an acute feeling for the color, form and texture of commonplace industrial objects. *La Rotativa* featured two rows of seven offset printing blankets in shades of grease, indigo, cerulean, seaweed, olive and chartreuse. *La Rotativa* suggested a core sample from the depths of the sea and moments in the history of abstract painting. What was hard to believe was that people took bullets for those blankets. In *Otro PR*, Vallecillo, like the workers at the National Press, took a negative and made a positive. A grid of thirty-six pages of black film on a bright yellow matrix for a printed booklet detailed the deplorable conditions of health and education in Puerto Rico.

Pueblo Trabajador suggested a resting figure. Vallecillo curved two black rubber bands with teeth (*bandas dentadas*) and placed one inside the other to form a ninety-degree angle running along the floor and up the gallery wall. *Vertebral*, another allusion to the body, was a forty-eight-inch-long broken line of small shaped wood and carbon blocks. This simple gesture showed Vallecillo's remarkable aesthetic alertness to the forgotten, useless, and commonplace in everyday life. *Flora Tropical*, a grid of twenty-four tomato red ink prints on celery-colored paper, was made at Delgado's The Press. Vallecillo used her Risograph, a digital duplicator, to print a detail of the ubiquitous Puerto Rican office decoration--an image of a *Flamboyán* or Royal Poinciana tree--left hanging on the wall at the National Press.

32 with 8's keystone piece was an audio recording of a conversation between three former National Press employees--Carlos Jiménez, Jorge Rodríguez Escribano, and Víctor Sánchez. They reflected on their experiences with Diego de la Cruz, a family friend and former *La Práctica* participant who works next to The Press, and Vallecillo and Delgado. Artist Omar Abdulio Peña-Forty assisted with the sound recording and Gallisá Muriente included short excerpts of the recollections in her thorough article on Vallecillo's project published in *El Rojo*, *Claridad*'s online newspaper. The co-workers' conversation was an illuminating remembrance of solidarity. Together they grew an independent political, industrial, and commercial enterprise that generated the need to acquire the tools to be free, and they applied their collective values to their personal, familial, and communal lives. The audio recording reminded viewers of what one cannot do without, though we lack it. A future transcription of the conversation would transcend the limits of *32 with 8*.

CHERYL HARTUP

SÃO PAULO / BRAZIL

José Spaniol

Pinacoteca del Estado de São Paulo

The blue immensity of the ocean, the deafening noise of the waves, the unstable swinging of the boat, the smell of the sea in the wind. These references directly refer us to the brute and uncontrollable force of the natural environment. But on this occasion, we are actually referring to the installation titled *Tiamm Schuoomm Cash!* by artist José Spaniol, displayed at the Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, in the heart of the concrete forest that is the largest metropolis in South America. The piece is part of a series of works associated with the sounds produced by ocean waves. It consists of two wooden boats, each measuring 6 feet long, which appear to be floating 10 meters up in the air but are actually supported by bamboo sticks. The bottom-up perspective offered to viewers generates an additional sense of strangeness to the already unusual placement of the boats--elevated and not surrounded by water. Arranged in the center of the octagon, flooded by the natural light that enters through the building's glass ceiling, the installation is positioned like a three-dimensional version of the traditional reverential paintings usually found on the domes of temples and on the ceilings of palaces. The arrangement of the bamboo sticks is inspired on the rhythm of waves. According to Spaniol, his intention was to create a fictional scenography that unsettles the public: "The elevated planes provoke some vertigo, shorten the dimensions and tend to dissolve boundaries." Spaniol has always been interested in contrasts and paradoxes, as well as in the relationship that the work of art establishes with the architectural and urban environments. In 1997, Spaniol created the installation *Mirante* for ArteCiudad III, four rammed earth walls that formed a square with cracks that gave viewers access to the interior. Nothing but the sky could be observed once inside that flat terrain. The work *Cadeiras* (Chairs) of 2006, materializes onto the space the reflection of this piece of furniture, forming a double, conjoined, object that loses its utilitarian function and is offered for aesthetic contemplation like something surrealist. The surroundings have meaning in Spaniol's work, as he unfolds its entire symbolic dimension and makes it interact with his installations or objects.

The series of contrasts offered in *Tiamm Schuoomm Cash!* began as early as in the preparation phase of the elements that make up the work. The very construction of the boats occurred on land, far from the littoral to which they aspire. It involved a team of artists associated with the Serrinha Art Festival, in Bragança Paulista, who worked in the project for a period of two months. José Spaniol has a long-standing relationship with Serrinha. Besides being an artist, he is also a university professor who has participated in several editions of the festival, developing workshops and taking his Universidade Estadual Paulista (UNESP) students to artistic residencies in the estate that houses the event.

Initiated in 2003, Proyecto Octógono is a space centered on contemporary art within the oldest museum of art in the city. Founded in 1905, the museum has an important collection of art from the 19th century, with nearly 9,000 works. In recent years, the institution has been strengthening its ties with contemporary national and international art productions. Proyecto Octógono has already exhibited nearly 40 site-specific installations by artists from Brazil and abroad.

José Paiani Spaniol studied at the Facultad de Artes Plásticas of the Fundação Armando Alvares Penteado (FAAP) and is currently

professor of the Instituto de Artes of the UNESP. In the beginning of his career he relied on referencing everyday objects, with which he created interactions between their utilitarian and poetic functions. Beginning in the 1990s, he began to focus more on the relationships of his work with architecture and the exhibition space. He participated in countless group and solo exhibitions, both in Brazil and abroad, including the International São Paulo Art Biennial (2010); and has received several awards throughout his artistic career. In 2011, he created the installation *Columnas* (Columns) at the Palácio Gustavo Capanema in Rio de Janeiro, and *O Descanso da Sala* (The Resting Area of the Living Room) at the Parque Burle Marx, in São Paulo. In 2012, Spaniol participated in the opening exhibition of the Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Sorocaba (MACS). He received an award at the 3rd Itamaraty Contemporary Art Competition, promoted by Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and at the Honor of Merit, Art, and Patrimony Award 2013, from Brazil's Ministry of Culture. For years he has been part of the selection of artists represented at SP-Arte by the Galeria Dan. In 2014, he participated in ARCO Madrid, and in the exhibitions "The Art that Remains," Colección Francisco Chagas Freitas of German art, at the Museo Nacional de Correios, in Brasília; and *Fortune and Magnetism After Dreaming*, at the Casa Museu Marta Ortigão Sampaio, in Oporto (Portugal). In 2015, José Spaniol presented a solo exhibition at the Biblioteca Mário de Andrade (BMA) titled "Bamp Uuoom Wawai!," as result of the Honor of Merit, Art, and Patrimony Award that he received in 2013 from Brazil's Ministry of Culture and the Instituto de Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional (Iphan).

SYLVIA WERNECK

Niura Bellavinha

Galería Millan

When Georges Didi-Huberman writes that "What we look at is only valuable—only alive—in our eyes because it looks back at us. Inside us, the cleavage between what we see and what sees us is inescapable,"¹

we realize that the author's conceptual effort lays the foundation of an interpretative immersion dealing with the dialectical vitality of the image and its unsettling persistence in our era.

Actuating connections between the dialectic of the image and the contemporary Brazilian scene, we situate here the visual thinking of Minas Gerais artist Niura Bellavinha in order to accompany some of her most recent sensorial and chromatic investigations.

In her exhibition at Millan Gallery, the artist presented a new series of inquiries that actualize studies and interests about the material status of her painting—between various pigments, formats, and supports—and activate a new analytical key, bringing it into contact with her more recent interpretations of light.

The exhibition, titled *Ita Lítica Barroca*, revisited a consciously programmatic aspect of the artist's work, the decision to use uncommon materials as protagonists of her ephemeral paintings (for example, dust, an insistent authorial density in Bellavinha's compositions).

A central player in the exhibition was *NhãNhã*, a medium-length film from 2014, proposed as the guiding thread for the exhibition project at Millan Gallery. Conceived and directed by the artist in collaboration with Alberto Saraiva, it silently narrated the presence of a visual field, like a painting on the landscape in earthen hues, dust, and projected shadows, inserted in a suspended temporality.

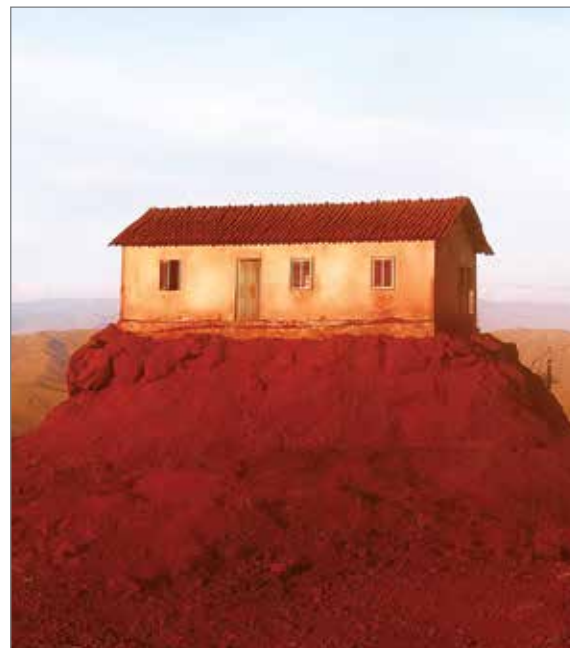
This work was centrally concerned with materiality as embodied in pictorial processes that the video image translated into a forceful narrative about the sources for the artist's investigation, such as dry pigments, dust, various kinds of clay and minerals from cities like Ouro Preto and Mariana, in the state of Minas Gerais—cities that played a significant role in Brazil's colonial past thanks to the exploitation of gold and precious stones.

Located at the center of the gallery space, the exhibition of *NhãNhã* provided the outlines of a veritable epic tale of environmental loss, as the image of dust, which could almost be felt traversing the canvas, made its appearance in a red scattering amidst transparencies, enveloping in its dispersion the view of an isolated homestead in a neglected, desiccated landscape that time seems to have forgotten.

José Spaniol. *Tiamm Schuoomm Cash*, 2016. Wood, bamboo and paraffin. Variable dimensions. Credit: Isabella Mateus.



Niura Belavinha. *Articulado Nhã-Nhã 8*, 2014-2016. Mineral printing ink on cotton paper. 16⁷/₃₂ x 31¹/₂ in. (42 x 80 cm). Photography: Everton Ballardin.



The video also brought forth, as a testament to the disastrous local situation, the tragedy that results from the chaotic activities of the extractive industries in Minas Gerais, the exhaustion of the region, and the dramatic state of areas lost to desertification and depletion.

Other works exhibited in Millan Gallery established a dialog with the video's experiment, insisting on the dialectic of the image as a constant concern for the artist, especially with regards to her process painting.

Our course through the exhibition was completed by *Articulado Guignard*, from 2015, mineral ink print on cotton paper and paint with cosmic pigments on carbon and silk; the photograph *Articulado Rodapé*, from 2016, mineral ink print on cotton paper; and the painting *NhãNhã*, from 2015, earthen pigments and minerals on canvas.

Process painting, which can be understood as a structural axis in Bellavinha's oeuvre, has remained an important referent throughout her career, incorporating specific behaviors that, in a way, singularize her production in the context of Brazilian art. Be it in the use of blown dry pigments, water jets, or liquid drips that cover the entire body of her support, Bellavinha's visual thinking produces recurrent practices already seen by São Paulo audiences.

In fact, Bellavinha's oeuvre deals in conscious experimentations with diverse materials and supports, with drawing, painting, printmaking, photography, and video as areas of interest driving the artist's entries into the contemporary scene.

Since her formative years as a painter, already when she frequented the Guignard school in Belo Horizonte and under the guidance of Amílcar de Castro, she discovered the potential of light and developed an interest in the light-related temperament of color in layers of pigment—like tranches opening one upon the other—and this has given direction to her practice.

The factors that have modulated Niura Bellavinha's gaze are the pictorial phenomenon as such, its character, and its materiality—the dripping of paint on her supports.

In a direct reference to the context of the artist's lived experiences, the title of the exhibition, *Ita Litica Barroca*, brought to mind the mineral presence of precious and semi-precious stone quarries and veneers—a

repeating sight in Minas Gerais—and the tradition of the state's Baroque art, reinvented by slaves who created a different vision for sculptures sometimes even made in soapstone.

The exhibition key brought forth an outline of painting on landscape via the video register and the exercises with earthen pigments and minerals, and it reasserted the persistence of those processes that imbue Niura Bellavinha's investigation of the dialectical image with authorial value.

NOTE

1. Didi-Huberman, Georges. *Ce que nous voyons, ce qui nous regarde*, 1992

CLÁUDIA FAZZOLARI

René Francisco

Galería Nara Roesler

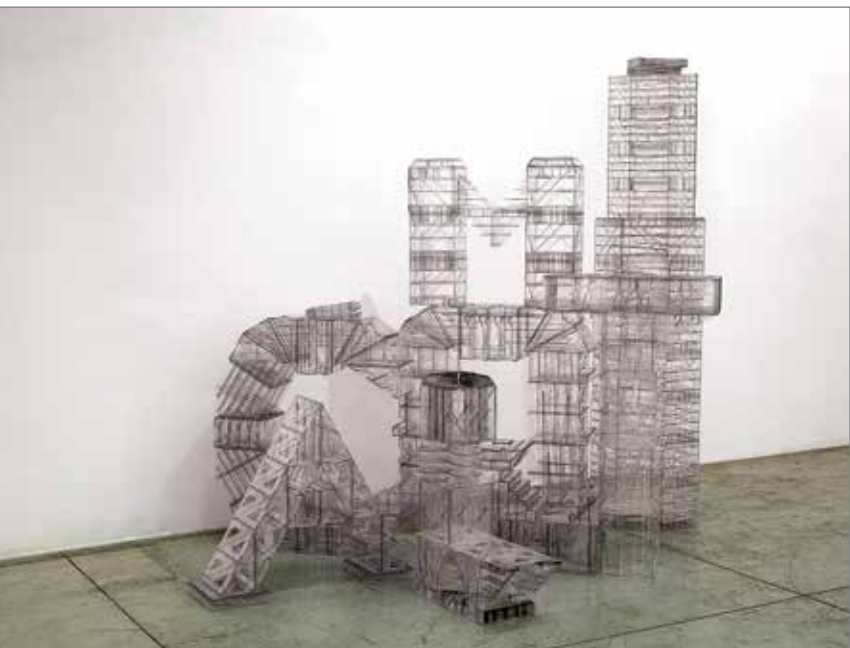
"We Shall Prevail" has been heralded as the first major solo exhibition by Cuban artist René Francisco in Brazil. This exhibition follows his first two presentations for the Brazilian public, both in Rio de Janeiro. The first, in 2014, consisted of about twenty canvases presented at Casa Daros, a space dedicated to contemporary art. A year later, in that same institution, he participated in a group exhibition centered on an anthology of Cuban art titled "Fictions." Now, in this current exhibition curated by Ella Cisneros, Francisco completes the cycle with an ambitious group of works presented at the Galeria Nara Roesler in São Paulo.

Conceived to include works with a very limited chromatic range of greys, the exhibition countered the predominant Neo-Baroque cultural legacy in Cuban art as a response to the contrasting urban reality in São Paulo, where René Francisco's work would gradually be divested of the intertext that has flourished in other moments of his artistic career. In the process, he confronted the artistic currents in Brazil that he admittedly used to regard as clichés from afar and looked deep into them through the development of works that returned to the Russian influenced constructivism that he practiced during the 1990s.

At first glance the exhibition results in a very elaborate, formalist, conceptualism that is nonetheless highly speculative when it comes to subjectivity. Without abandoning figuration, Francisco propagates the anthropomorphic element by individualizing the mob, as he embraces with clever seduction the aesthetic of constructivism and narrative. A scene turned into composition, or vice versa, nothing should surprise us since his works in this exhibition are syntheses.

A variety of aesthetic sources and materials form the work of René Francisco. Two large tensioned bodies convey such plurality. They contrast each other and are also combined throughout the exhibition space. On the one hand, there is the series "Figures and Backgrounds" that depicts individuals as archetypes purposely rendered with tubes. It is important to remember that the first tubes that Francisco incorporated in his work were the containers of oil colors, a symbol that drove his personal trajectory. But then he began using the toothpaste tubes found in every Cuban home, and turned them into a parody of that everyday act of pressing and handling them. The meaning of these pieces was heightened by the sexual positions that they staged, as well as by the title of the series *Tubosutra* (in a reference to *Kamasutra*). Because this pointed toothpaste tube is almost a national Cuban symbol, his work thus desacralizes art that is at the service of utopic and revolutionary ideas. On the other hand, in the current exhibition, these "Figures" are expressed through a more intimate vocabulary in which anthropomorphism flirts with Gestalt or with the provocations between abstraction and antithesis.

René Francisco. *Untitled*, From the series *City of Names*, 2016. Acrylic rulers. Variable dimension. Photography: Everton Ballardín. Courtesy Galeria Nara Roesler.



The other body represented in the exhibition centers on the metaphor of architecture, a theme present in a large part of Francisco's work. Like in the performance of his pedagogical action titled *La Casona* (The Manor House, 1993), when he invited a group of students to reconstruct an old colonial building according to the demands of the people that inhabited it. A piece that foreshadowed the path of postmodern art and the molds envisioned by art critic Clement Greenberg: "The painter-sculptor of the future will have to be a carpenter."¹ But in the series "The City of Names" this metaphor is more a poetic/utopic option. It is important to mention that Cuba—an island that determined its destiny during a period of social uncertainty and where illusory situations are not limited to the art field but also abound in political and economic situations—became fertile ground for proposals and imaginaries of constructivism.

In one of the installations that is part of "The City of Names," oversized letters constructed with measuring instruments invoke a highly sophisticated and minimalist architecture eventually modified by a verb (logos). Another group is formed by pop pointillist paintings and characters in a mob that move around matchboxes arranged like architectural agglomerates. Without major pretensions, what at first appeared to be a graphic rendition of a standard city is put into question by the flammable nature of the material. The last of these groups centered on the city consists of projects—rather than in architectures—of intertwined urban-like structures in which words-slogans act like support structures or powerful barriers. In this manner, Francisco invokes other solemn aspects found in the history of Cuba, in the same vein as the one that is included in the title of the exhibition "We Shall Prevail."

Immersed in the art system like few artists are, René Francisco has become the paradoxical image of the social artist in constant confrontation with the precarious ethics of a failed utopia. His constant inquiries associated with performance and with what he called "From a Pragmatic Pedagogic," applied at the Instituto Superior de Arte, are added to the fact that his authorship is the simile of a collective being. A collective that is eventually reflected in this artist's archive as he brings together the possible revisions of knowledge.

NOTE:

1. Clement Greenberg quoted by Sandu Darie in a letter from March 26, 1951 addressed to Gyula Kosice.

XENIA BERGMAN

Sandra Cinto Casa Triângulo

Sandra Cinto's exhibition at Casa Triângulo was titled *Acaso e necessidade* ("Chance and Necessity") and the works of art it brought together were strongly stimulating for the visiting public. Celebrating the 25th year of the artist's career and also the opening of the gallery's new location at Estados Unidos Street 1324, São Paulo, the show featured an installation and a selection of six works on paper.

The installation, which dialogued with the gallery's architectural space, occupied Casa Triângulo's largest area and was comprised of two canvases, 300 x 750 cm each, placed across from each other on the room's main walls. It also featured a three-dimensional component in white wood, arranged as a divider between the canvases but directly connected to them in the construction of the work's meaning. This three-dimensional element was a bridge with a toy horse at one end and a rocking chair at the other, perhaps in allusion to the transit between childhood and old age.

With great sensibility and careful technical execution, the two canvases impacted viewers with their blue and white hues, suggesting landscapes of mountain slopes down which water flows in abundance. The canvases were created by applying gesso on the white fabric, which was then sanded down to create a porous surface texture for the splashing of water infused with blue dye. The artist draws between the shapes thusly generated, inscribing delicate, detailed lines made with a special pen Cinto calls a "permanent pen". The resulting work is a painting/drawing or a drawing/painting; the two genres fuse into one to produce a unique aesthetic language, enveloping the viewer with their beauty and sensibility. Behind the manufacture process one immediately notices something that is almost a ritual: Cinto positions herself on a scaffold to splash water on the surface and produces random effects, blotches that bring to mind the falling of water in a mountainous geography. Only after the water has been splashed and the splotches are fixed does Cinto begin to draw. The necessity is interior, a motivating, gestural force, a creative drive.

A feeling of immensity and a sense of the potency of nature come from the image in the large canvases. Water, one of nature's vital elements, is the force of the "landscape"—of that imagined site, a territory of reveries. More than ever, "landscape" achieves here its most general meaning: a place formed by natural elements observed from a specific vantage. It is the artist's elegy for nature, for life. It's pure lyricism.

The meaning of the work comes to completion with the three-dimensional component that represents a connecting bridge or a reference point separating waters as they flow, building a metaphor for the passage of time in life itself.

The six works (drawings/paintings on *washi* paper) exhibited in the room next to the installation signal the same quest: we also find in them the randomness of splotches created by the aspersion of water, now, however, using a dense Japanese paper as support. Again, the artist inscribes her draftsmanship between the splotches. Confronted with these works, we sense the boundary between abstraction and figuration, and we feel ourselves involved in a game of identifying shapes, akin to

Sandra Cinto. View room, works: *The Bridge* and *Untitled* (Perhaps and Need series), 2016. Painted wood / acrylic and permanent pen on canvas. 43 ⁵/₁₆ x 216 ¹³/₁₆ x 23 ⁵/₈ in. (110 x 665 x 60 cm) 118 ⁷/₆₄ x 295 ⁹/₃₂ in. (300 x 750 cm). Photography: Leonardo Finotti. Courtesy Casa Triângulo.



what we do as we watch the transit of clouds across the sky, although in this case our perception takes us to an image of very tall mountains. Water remains the main material for the creative process.

There is a certain *japonerie* in the work of Sandra Cinto, as has been pointed out by critics in the past. In the works on exhibit at Casa Triângulo, the issue is forcefully present due to the special circumstance of the series having evolved after the artist spent a few months in Japan, intensely imbibing the country's culture. In Japan she was able to research how dyes are applied to fabrics and to familiarize herself with the contemporary meanings of this ancient technique.

The title of the exhibition—*Acaso e necessidade*—comes, by the way, from a Zen Buddhism idea. The exhibition unveils a Zen feeling experienced by Cinto; it also indicates the profound maturity of her art at this point in her career. It illuminates the intensity of the aesthetic reflection it prompts in the viewer as it propels our potential for elaboration. The richness of these works takes us back to other moments in Cinto's career, and this very dialectic is a key feature in the artist's aesthetic evolution.

Like the clouds and the turbulent sea waves of previous periods, water serves here a metaphorical function: it means the vital flow of renewal, the passage of time; it possesses an ontology, and it is a poetic image. There is an intuitive cosmology in the work of Sandra Cinto. Water, like air—elements of the material world—give birth to fantasies, metaphysical messages, and an emotionally resonant creative imagination.

LISBETH REBOLLO GONÇALVES

Túlio Pinto

Galeria Baró

Túlio Pinto presents the exhibition titled "Blue and Unicorn" at the Galeria Baró in São Paulo that consists of a selection of his most recent works, some specially created for the show. Pinto is known for harmonizing his sculptures through counterpoising tension and equilibrium, relying on materials apparently that are apparently very dissimilar in terms of weight, resistance, volume, and even origin. Pinto acts as a magician who challenges the laws of gravity and places the attraction between different bodies in apparently improbable situations on the foreground. Relying on

Túlio Pinto. *Unicorn*, 2016. Video. 9'52". Edition 5/5. Photography: Martin Bernard.



glass balls, stainless steel, a blue cord and the outlines rendered by their borders, he conveys the delicate interaction between different elements.

The video installation titled *Unicornio* (Unicorn) dialogs with the staged sculptures. The video was created by Pinto during the seven week period of his artist residency in the grand desert metropolis of Phoenix (Arizona) in November and December of 2015. The video was conceived before he began the residency. In his luggage, he carried inflatable pumps and orange clothes. Once in Phoenix, he complemented the production by acquiring a unicorn mask and by seeking the collaboration of local artists in the creation of the video. The recording took place in the desert of the Superstition Mountains located to the east of Phoenix; with the unicorn anchored to the balloons, it offers an almost absurd, surrealist, visual juxtaposition. The video installation activates the same sensorial operation pursued by Pinto in other works (tension and harmony). The carnivalesque elements draw viewers into a walk through a fourth dimension in which mythology leads to the perception of an altered state, where the surreal becomes real, impossible encounters are established in a sort of interval, a bridge towards the imaginary space of immanence. Pinto materializes another reality from the character wearing a unicorn mask, amid an unwelcoming environment harmonized with the strong and contrasting tones of orange and blue.

The appropriation and *carnavalization* based on the mythological unicorn demonstrate Pinto's immersion into a realm without rules or investments. According to Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin, carnivalization is a performance without a stage, the element that separates the public from the actors, a new way of human interaction opposed to any socio-hierarchical relationships. At a carnival man becomes free from regulated behavior and moves towards emancipation. The character chosen by Pinto, the unicorn, is a symbol of purity, honesty and freedom who nonetheless manages to preserve its wild and indomitable nature. The color blue embodies purity and protection from the ethereal. It is in this vain that Pinto creates a sensorial dialog that harmonizes with the notion of that which is different, breaks with hierarchies, subverts rules and proposes a magical space in which the deepest and most emotional forces are imposed on nature and social relations.

More than merely subversion, the investment made by Pinto—who challenges reality, nature, and even the laws of gravity that pulls bodies towards the center of the Earth—searches for an instance of levitation, of movement that overcomes the laws of nature, conquers the inexorable, projects, flies and transcends; bring opposites together and generates dialogs among them.

The exhibition consists of six sculptures structured by minimalist precepts from the mid-twentieth century: using prefabricated materials not marked by the artist's hand, and producing works that interact with the space. Pinto maximizes the physical properties of the materials. Free from traditional supports, his work is projected on to the space of viewers and establishes an interactive relationship with them, allowing them to move freely around the object. Tensions and uneasiness usually ensues once viewers come to the realization of the piece's potential collapse as result of the combination of materials, some as strong as steel and others as fragile as blown glass. Unlike the minimalists and post-minimalists Túlio Pinto addresses contemporary art themes relating to tension and harmony, and the power of the human mind, its choices and movements, whether these are physical, mental or emotional. His construct serves an order in which anything is possible, where it is possible to dialog and coexist without impediments. Pinto offers powerful works that overcome intolerance in search of a utopia.

HÉLCIO MAGALHÃES



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Natureza franciscana

Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo

Art, like human knowledge in general, feels the urgency of an effective ecological debate. Curated by Felipe Chaimovich, the exhibition *Natureza franciscana* ("Franciscan Nature"), at the Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo, presented a contemporary idea of the collaborative relationship between nature and human beings. The show was based on stanzas from "The Canticle of the Creatures" written by Francis of Assisi between 1220 and 1226, which is widely acknowledged as a precursor text in matters of ecology.

In his approach to the paradigm art/ecology, the curator selected from the museum's collection 18 works directly related to the subject of nature; another 19 came on loan for the exhibition, adding to a total of 37 works in a variety of supports: photography, drawing, prints, video, artist's books, installation, sound art, objects, sculpture, and embroidery.

"The works originate from relationships with the elements described in the Canticle: the Sun, the stars, air, water, fire, Earth, sickness and tribulations, and, finally, death," explains Chaimovich, who became a student of Francis of Assisi's work fifteen years ago. The curator has presented exhibitions about art and ecology before, even in the same museum, such as "Ecology and the Garden Festi-

val" at the MAM in Ibirapuera, in collaboration with Chantal Colleu-Dumond, curator of the Chaumont-sur-Loire International Garden Festival, in 2010. The MAM also exhibited the shows "Ecological Dwelling" and "Reason and Environment", curated, respectively, by Dominique Gauzin-Muller and Lauro Cavalcanti, both in 2011.

The goal of the curatorship was not simply to propose an apology for "ecological art" or a romantic return to nature. It did seek to recognize and understand critical and creative productions that dialog with the ethical principles and values of Deep Ecology, such as the work of Frans Krajcberg, who exhibited here a relief on handmade paper (1981) with the image of a leaf printed on it. Renowned for his intensive research and the use of natural elements in his work, as well as for his staunch environmental advocacy, Krajcberg focused his artistic journey on the complex weave of interconnections between personal and artistic life, denouncing deforestation in the Amazon basin and the Atlantic forest in the far south region of Bahia (where he went to live in isolation).

Krajcberg's is among the works arranged in the exhibition to represent one of the elements mentioned in the "Canticle of the Creatures" (in this case, the "Earth"). Repre-

sented the same element was a 1975 installation by Sergio Porto, composed of thirty cardboard boxes filled with tree leaves and branches packed in plastic, cardboard, and color photographs.

The exhibition begins with the subject of the "Sun", represented by *Lámpara* ("Lamp", 2012), a color photograph by Lucia Koch, next to *The Celebration of Light* (1991), a black-and-white photographic series by Marcelo Zocchio, and the twelve books in Japanese artist On Kawara's series *I Got Up* (1968-1979). For twelve years, Kawara wrote "I got up" on the postcards gathered in this work.

In the section devoted to the element of water, an in-depth look to environmental issues infuses the work of Brígida Baltar, who presented images from the series *Recolección de la neblina* ("The Collection of Mist", 1998-2005), with fantastic images and a dream-like, unreal, almost colorless atmosphere. Also included in the exhibition were five China ink drawings (2004); the glass sculpture *La recolección del rocío* ("The Collection of Dew", 2001); and the video *Recoleccion* ("Collections", 1998-2005), in which the artist reveals an apprehension of the world by the act of collecting that which is inapprehensible, such as mist, dew, and the smell of the ocean. In these works, humanity is not present, and the observer is referred to existential and phenomenological matters.

The element of water is also represented by *A Line in the Arctic #1* and *A Line in the Arctic #8* (2012), two photographs by São Paulo artist Marcelo Moscheta, whose work has as its connecting thread a confrontation with elements in faraway landscapes. The experience of traveling and living in inhospitable environments prodded him to photograph the memory of given places, and to elaborate a classificatory system resembling that of archaeology that explores, by means of art, the domains of geography and physics.

Using uncommon materials and techniques, Moscheta's works focus on the notion of the ephemeral and in humanity's efforts to understand and recreate aspects of the geography and the physics of natural environments. "I am interested in the landscape as a system of representation where humanity can measure its own world," he says.

Moscheta created the works in the *A Line in the Arctic* series during one of his sojourns in Spitsbergen Island, in the Arctic region. In

Sérgio Porto. *Untitled*, 1975. 30 cardboard boxes with leaves and tree branches wrapped in plastic and color photographs. 118 ⁷/₆₄ x 118 ⁷/₆₄ x 118 ⁷/₆₄ in. (300 x 300 x 300 cm).





Marcelo Moscheta. *A Line in the Arctic #8*, 2012. Lambda print in methacrylate and polystyrene. 19 ¹¹/₁₆ x 31 ¹/₂ in. (50 x 80 cm) each image.

this work, a line of adhesive tape is stretched on the ground as an attempt to follow the location's exact parallel and meridian lines to the north, south, east, and west. However, the GPS signal the artist was using was somewhat treacherous at that latitude, which generates doubts about the accuracy of the action even though the devices readings were understood as very precise. "These works speak of the faults and incoherences in our attempts to measure the world and place it on a mathematical grid according to parameters that, in most cases, seem dislocated from the real situation and the characteristics of a natural landscape."

In counterpoint to the sinuous character of water, fire is symbolized by *Homenaje a W. Turner* ("Homage to W. Turner", 2002), a video by Thiago Rocha Pitta. This video depicts the image of a small ship on fire, in reference to William Turner's painting and its light-filled atmospheres and marine scenes. Captured in 26 mm on a beach in the island of Fundão, in Rio de Janeiro, *Homenaje a W. Turner* finds its inspiration in Turner's painting titled *Burial at Sea*. Along with its direct reference to this painting, Rocha Pitta's work explores the experience of directly contrasting fire and water.

Also concerned with the subject of fire, the work of Shirley Paes Leme features the traces left by smoke on acrylic and on paper. The abstract images resulting from exposing these surfaces to smoke reveal natural, unbridled, free-in-the-world traces that, on the basis of the work itself, become an aesthetic proposal. The simplicity of the images does not diminish their visual impact; despite their abstract character, they refer to fire in poetic ways. While residues are ephemeral and can vanish, fire in the work of Shirley Paes Leme is captured in order to make it possible to verify its existence.

A sculpture by French artist Yves Klein, *Venus Bleue* ("Blue Venus"), represents the element of air. According to Chaimovich,



On Kawara. *I Got Up*, 1968/1979. 12 books. 8 ¹⁷/₆₄ x 5 ⁵³/₆₄ in. (21 x 14.8 cm) each book.

Brígida Baltar. *La recolección de la neblina* (Mist collection), 1996. Action and photography. 15 ³/₄ x 23 ⁵/₈ in. (40 x 60 cm).





José Leonilson. *Untitled*. 1993. Sewn fabric. 58 ²¹/₃₂ x 17 ²³/₃₂ in. (149 x 45 cm).

Yves Klein. *Venus Bleue* (Blue Venus), 1962. Blue pigment on plaster. 27 ⁹/₁₆ x 12 ¹⁹/₃₂ x 9 ²⁷/₃₂ in. (70 x 32 x 25 cm).



the curator, when Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin declared that the Earth seen from space is blue, Klein saw his work vindicated, and even that the idea of creating a unique shade of blue, officially registered (IKB, Klein Blue) was not a merely aesthetic proposal, but a deep communion with the infinite blueness of the sky, a “song in praise of the sky and the air,” in the manner of the Franciscan canticle.

The stars are represented by seven photographs by German artist Wolfgang Tillmans. In his images, light appears in a variety of forms, from clearly contrasted images to monochrome fields. On the walls, these images appear as constellations against a light-colored background, suggesting the act of mapping a universe filled with randomness and uncertainty. The artist was always interested in satellites, planets, and comets. Tillmans can easily identify constellations in his photographs of the night sky, the acquired skill of people who have watched the stars since childhood. His familiarity with astronomy gave him a geometric understanding of light; the composition of his images seeks to follow the laws of light as such.

Illness and tribulations are the subject of *Dis-placement* (1996-7), an installation by Paulo Lima Buenoz: in a furnished room filled with medicine jars, roses, tarpaulin, chalk, and ink, the artist presents us with the paths he followed in order to gain access to

AIDS medicine before the development of anti-HIV cocktails. Nazareth Pacheco exhibits a series of black and white photographs showing cleft lip patients, teeth, x-rays, and plaster objects. Finally, death is represented by the last piece of fabric embroidered by José Leonilson before his passing in 1993. Chiara Banfi’s sound installation *Todo aquí* (“Everything Here,” 2015), floods the exhibition space and encompasses all the elements featured in the exhibition.

The thinking involved in the process of producing art concerned with environmental issues, as well as the systematic creative act involved, evolved amidst the urban transformations of the 1960s and 70s. In that period, art became interested in a new logic of human and environmental relations, and it developed this interest in a critical, sensible, and authentic manner in the face of the parameters imposed by the massive growth of large cities. Some artists working in Land Art, Earth Art, and other new, diverse languages launched a process of sensitization towards the environment and evolved new ways of relating to its elements, in some cases reconnecting or attempting to preserve ancestral cultures.

In *Natureza franciscana*, the relationship between art and ecology is brought to the fore on the basis of Francis of Assisi’s foundational ecological position in Western culture. In Franciscan thought, humanity must collaborate with natural elements: nature is not

Thiago Rocha. *Homenaje a W. Turner* (Tribute to W. Turner), 2002. Digital video 17’.



to be subordinate to human interests. Francis wrote the "Canticle" in the last years of his life. There, the various elements of nature and the many aspects of life are construed as brethren. After Francis' death, in 1226, the Franciscan order promoted a new way of looking at the universe, focusing on the traces of a unique geometry destined to conjoin human thinking to the natural world.

In Brazil, the number of artists using this repertoire in their poetics is still small. However, the urgency of confronting the accelerating destruction of the country's natural wealth through the implantation of monocultures and rural land speculation around the extensive cattle-raising industry, may push the number upwards in significant ways.

ALESSANDRA SIMÕES

Nazareth Pacheco.

Untitled, 1993.

Photography B&W and pasted paper on lead in wooden frame and glass.

10 ⁵/₈ x 13 ³/₁₆ x 3 ³⁵/₆₄ in.
(27 x 33.5 x 9 cm).



Prohibido olvidar

Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Bogotá - MAC

"Going to school was forbidden, or to university; Constitutional rights were forbidden; all sciences, except for military science, were forbidden; complaining was forbidden, to ask questions was forbidden too; today I say to my brother so it never happens again, forgetting is forbidden."

Rubén Blades, "Forgetting is Forbidden"

At a time when we are approaching an era of peace, when we speak of forgiveness, not forgetting is extremely important. And not forgetting means to confront the country's memory, of this continent suffering from chronic amnesia, where forgetting has been a constant as if that famous epidemic of oblivion caused by insomnia sickness, masterfully narrated by Gabriel García Márquez in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, were still ravaging the memory of these peoples.

Prohibido olvidar ("Forgetting is Forbidden") is the title of a group exhibition presented at the MAC (which, by the way, is celebrating its 50th anniversary) in February and March of 2016. In the words of its curator, Juan David Quintero, it is "an invitation to wake up, to keep our history alive and current, to not make the same mistakes of the past, to find equality in a society that has somehow lost its way, and, most importantly, to struggle for dignity and

for the right to live freely."¹ From its very title, this exhibition posits a prohibition that in turn confronts a series of other prohibitions that, paradoxically, are intended to bring oblivion about. The show outlines a brief but forceful trajectory through the work of artists from Chile, Mexico, and Colombia, countries that in one way or another have shared a history of systematic human rights violation in the context of a dictatorship (Chile), the violence of the drug trade (Mexico), and political conflict in a civil war lasting for over fifty years

(Colombia). These artists, judiciously selected by the curator, prompt us to reflect about the meaning of remembrance.

Let's begin with the work of Fernando Arias, *Humanos derechos* ("Right Humans," 2011); a series of four bronze figurines in variable sizes with a military character, fatigues-clad and weapons at the ready, situated on the left side. Gradually, this character loses his garments in the other figures, appearing entirely nude in the last one, in an erect posture, with his hands to the back.

Fernando Arias. *Humanos Derechos* (Human Rights), 2011. Bronze sculptures. Variable dimensions. *





Fernando Pertuz. *Responsabilidad social* (Social Responsibility), 2016. Installation: painting, candle and chocolate texts. Variable dimensions. *

This work generates a strange mirroring relationship where a heavily armed person ends up revealing an inherent fragility. Yet a different reading is also possible: the confrontation of an unarmed, naked individual with an armed one, the former even holding his hands back, as if offering his chest to the bullets. This work insists on human rights violations on the part of military forces that in one way or another have been involved in such execrable events. Arias presents us with a work of art in a traditional technique, bronze sculpture, that points out a complex issue in today's politics.

Responsabilidad social ("Social Responsibility," 2016) is the title of Fernando Pertuz's work on exhibit here; in my judgment, Pertuz is one of Colombia's most significant artists of the last twenty-five years, because of his political commitments. His work is a critique of the perverse kind of altruism brandished by multinationals, which in reality paves over the centuries-old colonial exploitation of the region's resources. The artist says in this connection: "Social Responsibility is an advertising strategy that many multinationals have deployed in order to cover up environmental disasters, the exploitation of workers, damag-

ing uses of the land, and territorial controls that ultimately are controls over life."

This work occupies an entire wall, and it reproduces, in chocolate, the logo of one of the world's four major chocolate producers. A thick candle, also in chocolate, waits to be lit up, like a death symbol, while in the lower section we find reproductions of chocolate drawings made by child workers in cocoa plantations. Printed by the artist in the upper section—also in chocolate—is the following phrase: *Gracias a estas Corporaciones...* ("Thanks to these corporations..."), in a play of words that fuses the concept of a

Catalina Mena. *Trilogía* (Trilogy), 2014. 3 different kitchen knives used and embroidered with gold thread polyester. 18 7/64 x 18 7/64 x 1 31/32 in. (46 x 46 x 5 cm). *



Edison Quiñonez. *Zapato hecho de fémur humano y otras cositas* (Shoe made of human femur and other little things), 2015 – 2016. Sculpture. Variable dimensions. *



multinational concern with religious prayer (*oraciones* in Spanish). This work is part of a project titled *Oro de las colonias* ("gold from the colonies"), where "ingots" made from materials such as cocoa, coffee, soil, and others, emphasize the issue of what in the first half of the Twentieth Century José Carlos Mariátegui termed *coloniality*, which still afflicts us.

Edison Quiñones is another one of the artists featured in this exhibition, and with his *Proyecto Falso O+ Relatos en hechos violentos* ("False Project O+ Narrative in Violent Events," 2015) and *Zapato hecho con fémur humano y otras cosas* ("Shoe Made with A Human Femur and Other Little Things," 2015-2016) he is able to offer a critical reflection about a phenomenon that has devastated and continues to devastate our country: paramilitary action against civilian populations. In the former, the testimony of a demobilized paramilitary fighter hangs on the wall, detailing his criminal record for the prosecutor's office in order to receive benefits stipulated in the government's proposed Peace and Justice Law. It is truly frightening to see this individual, who was a fruit seller in a small town in the Antioquia department, was recruited into the paramilitary *Autodefensas* as a young boy, under threat of death, and by the age of 13 had already begun to be prepared for military command. Afterwards he traveled across the country, to wherever the presence of the guerrilla forces was strong. The narrative of these events ends a chill down one's spine: war is truly a terrible thing. As if to countervail this, Quiñones' second work on exhibit presents human remains that are used to manufacture a flute, a necklace with a rattle, and little baby shoes. A forceful lesson, especially now that the paramilitary organizations have staked a strong position with regards to a possible negotiated solution to the armed and political conflict between the State and the guerrillas. Undoubtedly, because of its rawness, one of the most striking works in this exhibition.

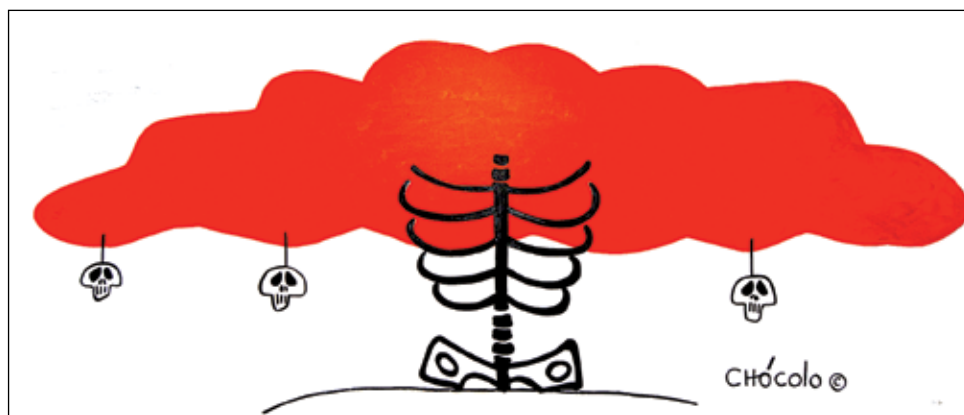
Trilogía ("Trilogy," 2014) is the title of the work by Chilean artist Catalina Mena included in this exhibition. Three knives of the kind generally used by butchers are arranged here on the wall in a triangle shape. On each blade, the artist has perforated letters to form the words *búsqueda, destino, vida* (*search, destiny, life*). The allusion to the violent killing and forcible disappearance of people is strongly compelling here. A yellow thread connects the three knives and filters through the holes that form the letters *v* and *i* in the word *vida*. This work derives from Mena's *Léxico doméstico*, which



Francisco Peró. *Está escrito que...* (It Is Written That...), 2015. Acrylic silhouette, silhouettes and drypoint on paper. Variable dimensions. *

Luz María Sánchez. *V.F(i)n**, 2015-2016. Installation/multichannel sound sculpture. Variable dimensions. *





Chócolo. *Árbol genealógico de la Violencia* (Violence Family Tree), 2016. In situ intervention on the walls of the museum. Variable dimensions. *

also features knives with words engraved into their blades, arranged on walls as decorative items or hanging from the ceiling like lamps to generate odd effects of beauty and horror. In this cases, words acquire new meanings and literally become lethal weapons.

Luz María Sánchez, from Mexico, offers a visual reflection about the problem of organized crime that is ravaging her country. Her *V.F(i)n** (2015-2016) is a visual and sound device that, weapon-like, reproduces a series of gun battles recorded by civilians using their camera phones. According to the artist, these unedited recordings are uploaded to the web and fly under the sensors of the criminal band's own information or propaganda media. Twenty sound recordings are reproduced by twenty guns, with viewers "brandishing" the weapons in order to hear them. A strange relationship

thereby evolves as viewers bring the hand to their ear. This sound sculpture opens a door to sensibility, since the sound of gunfire dominates everyday life for a good portion of the country's population, immersed as Mexico is in a wave of raw violence through which the mafias continue to express their power. The artist tells us that these "gun battles recorded by citizens trapped in the combat between the police and organized crime across the entire territory of Mexico" are a way for her to raise those citizen's voices, silenced even by the mass media, because they are the true victims who find themselves under crossfire."

With *Está escrito que...* ("It is written that..." 2015), Chile's Francisco Peró brings up issues of police violence and repression by the State. A large black silhouette reveals a number of bodies: we can easily recognize the form of

policemen hitting a defenseless citizenry with their shields and batons. This is an image we encounter often, and all can recognize it. Like butterflies, another set of paper silhouettes, this time white and much smaller, reproduces the same scene. The idea is for viewers to find the silhouettes on a little table and/or shelf on the red wall that gives support to the entire visual device, and to write on them narratives of violence related to the image. This participatory work is intended to be built gradually, installing a narrative of criticism and protest. It is a simple yet forceful work of art that gives the public a voice.

Finally, Chócolo and his wall drawing titled *Árbol genealógico de la Violencia* ("Family Tree of Violence," 2016), features a human spine and its lumbar section as support for a red tree crown on which a number of skulls hang like fruits. In the style of a cartoon, the artist deploys humor and irony to point towards the problem of violence as a tragically genealogical matter. There is nothing to be done, he seems to be suggesting, since the tree of wisdom has been exchanged for the tree of death.

In sum, this show accomplished its goal by insisting on non-oblivion, because forgetting is enormously dangerous.

NOTE

(1) Juan David Quintero. Extracted from the exhibition flyer.

* Courtesy Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Bogotá. Photographs: Alejandro Triana.

RICARDO ARCOS-PALMA

Faces Cachées- Chilean Photography 1980-2015 (Faces Cachées- Photographie chilienne 1980-2015)

Maison de l'Amérique latine, Paris

This exhibition features works by Zaida González, Alejandro Hoppe, Álvaro Hoppe, Luis Navarro, Claudio Pérez, and Leonora Vicuña. Patrice Loubon, curator and director of NegPos gallery, in Nîmes, was in charge of the selection.

In 130 images, the real-figured is equated with the expectation of beauty that was involved in political combat in the streets, and is made to express the artists' personal gestures.

Despite the shadows still cloaking events immediately before and after the overthrow of Salvador Allende, these works of art tell

us about their era and are part of historical memory. It must be noted that many archives and documents of the period resurfaced only thanks to the action of journalists.

It is impossible, for that reason, for our approach to be restricted to an aesthetic experience. Aspects of Chilean and Latin American society can be read in the different attitudes present.

Observers will not be able to avoid imagining the artists' dangerous adventure as they carried their cameras around with an eye on the viewfinder, the click of the shutter release always threatening to give

away their presence, at a time of terror (1973-1976) when photography of this kind was prohibited.

Luis Navarro (Antofagasta, 1938) defines himself as "the photographer of the defeated and the dead." He was forced to flee his region in the mid-1970s after speaking up and helping the families of the disappeared. He traveled to Santiago with borrowed photo equipment in his bags, and there he continued to photograph events, with a camera hidden under his clothes. In 1981, after suffering through months of persecution and a stint in jail, Navarro met a nomadic family who

welcomed and sheltered him. That same year he helped launch the Independent Photographers Agency as a response to State terror, working with thirty colleagues intent on defending the profession, information rights, and freedom of expression, as well as to oppose the imprisonment of journalists for political reasons.

Navarro made the life of gypsies in Chile part of his personal destiny.

He focused primarily on the women, the expressions, the color of the garments, and the habitats of this segment of Chilean society, people who “invite us to celebration, freedom, music, and happiness.” Navarro names “the truth of the instant” as his school.

Alvaro Hoppe (Santiago, 1956) is a skilled photo-reporter who focuses primarily on urban settings. He demonstrated his command of a militant gaze whenever the historical situation required it. He can describe many scenes of social injustice during the military dictatorship and registered the vast range of spontaneous situations that emerged during the transition to democracy. His skill is evident in works like *Santiago*, from 1983. The face of a soldier in action is traversed by a bullet hole on a windowpane. Everything can occur in an instant. The image is perfect, the vision almost surgical.

The career of Alejandro Hoppe (Santiago, 1961) began when he was 21. Combined, his skills with color, light, and movement reveal an instinctive sensibility for the capturing of images. Alejandro Hoppe projects himself as an attentive observer into everyday scenes.

Álvaro Hoppe and Alejandro Hoppe mastered their craft in the midst of street combat. With a clinical gaze and great technical skill, the Hoppe brothers tell the story of how repression unfolded. Along with Navarro, they were pioneers of militant photojournalism during that tense, tragic era.

Leonora Vicuña (Santiago, 1952) practices video and performance as well as the photographic techniques necessary for her registers. Her commitment to the defense of ancestral cultures drove her to document fantasy and myth. A good portion of her investigation, between ethnology and contemporary anthropology, is devoted to the preservation and the memory of the Mapuche people. The complex, inspired vision revealed in her enigmatic images is much more than surface-deep. In *Rewue, personal*, a group of indigenous faces are altered by contrasts of light and shadow. Signs, tattoos, or gestures induce discrimination and



Luis Navarro. *Linda Pantich*, Chile, 1983. From the book: *Foturi*. 11¹³/₁₆ x 15³/₄ in. (30 x 40 cm). ©Luis Navarro. *

Alejandro Hoppe. *Tribunal militar* (Military Tribunal), Santiago, 1987. From the book: *Chile Desde Adentro*. 11¹³/₁₆ x 15³/₄ in. (30 x 40 cm). ©Alejandro Hoppe. *



Alvaro Hoppe. *Untitled*, Chile, 1983. From the book: *Chile Desde Adentro*. 11¹³/₁₆ x 15³/₄ in. (30 x 40 cm). ©Alejandro Hoppe. *





Claudio Pérez. *Procesión* (Procession), San Pedro Station, 2005. From the book: *Ritos y Memoria*. 15 ³/₄ x 23 ⁵/₈ in. (40 x 60 cm). ©Claudio Pérez. *

suffering, configurations of a struggling identity, and a scrutiny of the magic that resides in popular rituals.

Claudio Pérez (Santiago, 1957) lived in Brazil, but in 1983 he decided to return to Chile, intent on confronting the events in his country. He approaches local myths and rituals with a committed attitude.

Zaida González. *Untitled*, series *Recuérdame al morir con mi último latido* (Remember Me as I Die with my Last Heartbeat), Chile, 2009-2010. 3 ¹⁵/₁₆ x 5 ²⁹/₃₂ in. (10 x 15 cm). ©Zaida González. *



Pérez uses the "photographic portraiture" form as a document of social and political memory. One highlight in his oeuvre is *Procesión, Estación San Pedro*, included in his book *Ritos y memoria* (Chile, 2005). The image is marked by an abrupt horizon, and the scene involves elements that can only be confronted through experience.

Leonora Vicuña. *Rewue personal*, Chile, 2008. 32 ⁹/₃₂ x 48 ¹/₃₂ in. (82 x 122 cm). ©Leonora Vicuña. *



The magic of faces enveloped in an occasional haze is emphasized or dissolved by a deployment of forms harking back to the documentary genre.

As a representative of her generation, Zaida González (Santiago, 1977) explores the underground, the transgressive, and the popular. She is the youngest artist in this selection and her background is in advertising. Her black and white copies are intervened with watercolor inks.

Social problems affecting women and their lives in the private sphere dominate an alternative psychosocial context. In her current work, González focuses on the relationship between the animal and the human, sex, and group belonging in specific situations and times. She values humor, materialized with a touch of malice as befits her personality. Such is the case of the scene in her *Sin título* ("Untitled"), from the series *Recuérdame al morir con mi último latido* ("Remember Me as I Die with my Last Heartbeat"), from 2009-2010.

This exhibition does not overwhelm viewers with brunt political demands, and moves from quasi-documentary testimony to the pictorial through intimate, closely held frames. Different aspects of social reality are represented in a selection dominated by photo stories. At the time, this was a militant social attitude; today, it is a tradition.

As they explore the massacre of opposition activists and the persecution of witnesses, these works confront the brutal unfolding of repression with technical skill and clinical rationalism. There is in this practice an ideal to be projected and an evaluation of the result to be made.

The release of the photographic shutter reveals the unfolding of consciousness. The relationship between the individual and society, the posing of critical questions, and the bearing of witness are the communicating threads and translate the dialectic between what history seeks and what it finds. Reading the exhibition vertically, we are referred back, in the first place, to the 1970s and 80s, with political conflict at its most intense. But a transversal cut opens a parenthesis that is yet to be closed. With their gaze clearly trained on popular intentions and expectations, these images remain undeniably current. They reflect the nomadic life and the exile suffered by many segments of society; because of this, the contents of the show are dissolved in an antinomy between the particular and the universal.

* Courtesy Gallery NegPos.

SUSANA SULIC



El Ávila en la mirada de todos

María Elena Ramos. With contributions by José Balza, Marco Negrón, Pedro Cunill Grau, and Ricardo Gondellas. Caracas: Playco Editores, 2015

Generally, the title of a book functions as a guide to its content. In the case at hand, María Elena Ramos' most recent publication, the title acquires great relevance: *El Ávila en la mirada de todos* ("El Ávila in Everyone's Eyes"). Indeed, the author sets out to explore the way in which *we all see* and relate to "El Ávila," the mountain bordering the northern part of Caracas that is such an essential component in the identity of every one of the city's denizens.

This book is essential in terms of its presentation (Playco Editores), its design (Dieter Grossberg), and, of course, its conceptual proposal (M. R. Ramos). As the author notes, it is not an art history volume; its goal is to *sensitize our gaze* to the mountain and its environs so that we can see them in a *multiple and diverse way*. To that end, Ramos explores works in any medium—paintings, prints, drawings, photographs, installations, etc.—dated from the Eighteenth Century onwards. She organizes these works according to the themes and subthemes presented in her "Introduction" and in the six chapters that comprise her investigation. Essays by six specialists from different fields complement her view of this art: a writer, a geographer, an urban planner, and an excursionist, a selection intended to provide a *transdisciplinary* vision of the mountain.

Ramos explores the way in which artists have looked at the mountain, and from what perspectives. The first chapter, "Where to Look From," begins by recreating the scene from the point of view of someone arriving in Venezuela *from the sea* and encountering the mountain's imposing volume. As the book moves forward, the author presents us with diverse vistas of "El Ávila": frontal views as we look towards the coast from on high or from a ship; lateral looks; views from the peak; and, of course, panoramic views. On the other hand, the most contemporary vantage, a bird's eye view, allows us to discern how the mountain separates the sea from the Caracas valley. In this tally we find both naturalistic works by traveler-artists and more recent ones that recreate imaginary geographies. The author warns that foreign visitors to Venezuela in the Nineteenth Century were the ones who focused on the country's landscape, since local artists had their eyes on the patriotic struggle. Ávila Mountain became a central motif in Venezuelan art towards the end of the Nineteenth Century, and much more emphatically in the Twentieth.

The second chapter, "Into Ávila," centers on visions that derive from exploring the mountain itself. Various stories are thus revealed: ruins, castles, fortifications, all the way to more modern constructions, such as the funicular and the Humboldt Hotel. The mountain becomes "public space and private site."

Many artists, aware of the transformations underway in the mountain, gradually *undrew* it by blurring its boundaries. Some do it out of adherence, others out of rejection, and the artist explores these issues at length in her third chapter: "Forms and Their Fading." The process is both visual and conceptual, especially in the modern and contemporary era. By making it more diffuse it, artists end up representing an essential idea of the mountain. It is a process of abstraction that eschews any imitation of nature in order to express "what is most universal in its ways of being," which is to say, "*its being mountainous*." In that connection, Ramos quotes Schelling: "Seldom does the great majority of artists, even as they imitate nature, reach the concept of its essence," a statement directly applicable to Nineteenth Century painters.

There are many ways to *dissipate* the mountain: seeing it as a horizon; seeing

it in facets or fragments; blurring it by means of the incidence of light upon it or by focusing the gaze on the density of its volume. And there are also those artists who, more than expressing a material or subjective vision of the mountain, decided to reflect about it. Some approach "El Ávila" via words, via sequential or fragmented transfigurations, or by appropriating images made by others and integrating them to our own reality.

"The Shadows", Ramos' fourth chapter, deals with the night, including cataclysms. The fifth chapter, "The Mountain's Dialog with Other City Landmarks," approaches it from specific sites: El Calvario, Sabana Grande, etc. Finally, the sixth chapter, "The Human Dimension," talks about the inhabitants of the Caracas Valley. Ramos explores here key aspects like scale (characters dwarfed by the mountain's great heights and volume) and also *the fixed* and *the motile*.

The contributions by invited authors complement this view of the mountain. In the prologue, José Balza summarizes the ideas the book expounds on and adds literary quotations from chroniclers of the past as well modern writers. He also tells us about music allusive to El Ávila. Marco Negrón analyzes the mountain-city relationship as an urban space, considering its history and the shift from valley to metropolis. Pedro Cunill Grau analyzes the geographical, historical, and cultural meanings of the mountain, seeing it as a "cultural geosymbol." He mentions several natural disasters between 1500 and 1999, studies the climate regions from the base to the peaks, and explores the vegetation, fauna, and spiritual life through rituals and offerings. Journalist, writer and hiker Ricardo Gondellas chronicles an expedition into the mountain and analyzes the way it changes, highlighting the natural processes of creation and destruction it cycles through, which we all should learn to see.

Very seldom does a book about art combine the analysis of artworks and realities from some many points of view. Thus the justice of its title: "El Ávila in Everyone's Eyes."

SUSANA BENKO



Laura Vinci
Cosac Naify
São Paulo, Brazil. 2013
 180 illustrations.
 10,2 x 8,2 in.
 209 pages.
 Texts by: Lorenzo Mammi, Rodrigo Naves, Paulo Sergio Duarte, among others. Galeria Nara Roesler Donation. (Portuguese)

[4498]

Antonio Dias
Cosac Naify
Galeria Nara Roesler
São Paulo, Brazil. 2015
 280 illustrations.
 11 x 11 in.
 381 pages.
 Texts by: Achille Bonito Oliva, Paulo Sergio Duarte. (Portuguese)

[4495]



Carlito Carvalhosa
Nice to Meet You
Cosac Naify, Charta
São Paulo, Brazil. 2010
 160 illustrations.
 7,4 x 5,9 in.
 280 pages.
 Texts by: Arto Lindsay, Luis Pérez-Oramas, Paulo Herkenhoff, among others. Galeria Nara Roesler Donation (Portuguese)

[4499]

Tuca Reinés
Olhar em Suspensão = La mirada en suspensión
APC Brasil
São Paulo, Brazil. 2015
 280 illustrations. 10,6 x 7,8 in.
 339 pages.
 Texts by: Agnaldo Farias, Rafael Urano. Galeria Nara Roesler Donation (Portuguese)

[4496]

Poesía viva
Paulo Bruscky
Cosac Naify, Galeria Nara Roesler
São Paulo, Brazil. 2015
 80 illustrations.
 9 x 6,2 in. 140 pages.
 Texts by: Antonio Sergio Bessa, Paulo Bruscky. (Portuguese)

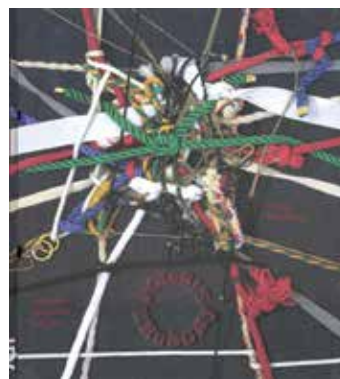
[4497]



Historia do Futuro
Milton Machado
Cosac Naify, APC, Galeria Nara Roesler
São Paulo, Brazil. 2012

40 illustrations. 11,2 x 11,8 in.
 118 pages.
 Texts by: Milton Machado. (Portuguese)

[4500]



Paulo Bruscky
Poiesis Bruscky
Adolfo Montejo Navas
Cosac Naify, Galeria Nara Roesler
São Paulo, Brazil. 2012
 260 illustrations. 10,2 x 9 in.
 313 pages.
 Texts by: Adolfo Montejo Navas, Paulo Bruscky. (Portuguese)

[4501]



Iole de Freitas
O peso de cada um
Tisara
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. 2015
 62 illustrations. 12,2 x 9 in.
 69 pages.
 Texts by: Ligia Canongia. (Portuguese)

[4502]

Verbo
Mostra de Performance arte
Performance Art Festival
Tijuana
São Paulo, Brazil. 2015

180 illustrations. 11,8 x 8,2 in.
 292 pages.
 Texts by: Marcos Gallón. (Portuguese)

[4503]

Waltercio Caldas
Ficção nas coisas = fiction in things
Galeria Raquel Arnaud
São Paulo, Brazil. 2015
 24 illustrations. 11,4 x 9 in.
 54 pages.
 Texts by: Waltercio Caldas. (Portuguese)

[4504]



Vik Muniz
O Tamanho do mundo
Imago Escritorio de Arte
Rio de Janeiro, Brasil. 2014
 46 illustrations. 10,6 x 10,6 in.
 119 pages.
 Texts by: Marcos Madureira, Ligia Canongia. (Portuguese)

[4505]



Ileana Dieguez
Cuerpos sin duelo
Iconografías y teatralidades del dolor
Ediciones Documenta-Escénicas
Córdoba, Argentina. 2013

55 illustrations. 9,4 x 6,2 in.
284 pages.
Texts by: Elmer Mendoza, Walter Benjamón.
(Spanish)

[4506]



Selva Cosmopolítica
Diálogos de Saberes en el Museo de Arte
Universidad Nacional de Colombia
Bogotá, Colombia. 2014
86 illustrations. 7,8 x 5,9 in.

179 pages.
Texts by: Fernando Urbina, Carlos Rodríguez, María Clara van der Hammen, among others.
(Spanish)

[4507]



Ángel Marcos
The Intimate Subversion = La subversión íntima
Eikon
Vienna, Austria. 2015

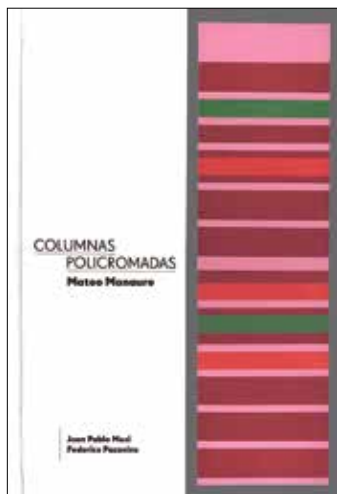
240 illustrations. 9,8 x 6,6 in.
269 pages.
Texts by: Luca Massimo Barbero, Fernando Illana.
(English - Spanish)

[4508]

Jaime Romano
Introspección 1967- 2014
Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Puerto Rico
San Juan, Puerto Rico. 2014

74 illustrations.
9 x 11,8 in.
109 pages.
Texts by: Enrique García Gutiérrez.
(Spanish- English)

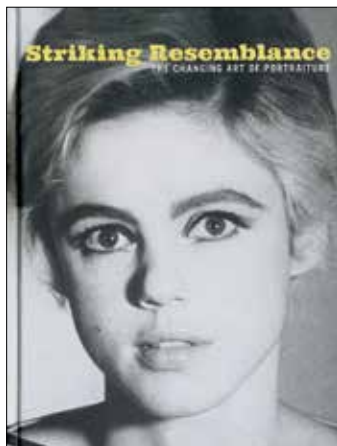
[4509]



Columnas policromadas
Mateo Manaure
Galería Muci
Caracas, Venezuela. 2013

88 illustrations.
11,8 x 7,8 in.
188 pages.
Texts by: Juan Pablo Muci, Federico Pacanins.
(Spanish - English)

[4510]



Striking Resemblance
The changing art of portraiture
Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers University
New Jersey, USA. 2014

110 illustrations.
11 x 8,2 in.
174 pages.
Texts by: Donna Gustafson, Susan Sidlauskas, Lee Siegel.
(English)

[4511]

José Luis Vicario
Deriva
José de la Fuente Gallery
Santander, Spain. 2015

130 illustrations.
8,2 x 5,9 in.
199 pages.
Texts by: José Luis Vicario.
(Spanish)

[4512]

Laboratorio de sueños
La diáspora del surrealismo en México
Una exposición colectiva
Galería Pablo Goebel Fine Arts
Polanco, Mexico. 2014
38 illustrations.
8,2 x 6,2 in.
64 pages.

Texts by: Pablo Goebel, Luis-Martin Lozano.
(Spanish - English)

[4513]



Arte Total
40 years Galeria Luisa Strina
Galería Luisa Strina
São Paulo, Brazil. 2014
90 illustrations. 10,2 x 7,8 in.
135 pages.
Texts by: Jens Hoffmann.
(English)

[4514]

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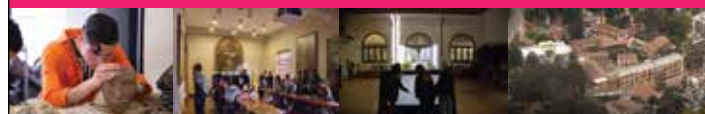
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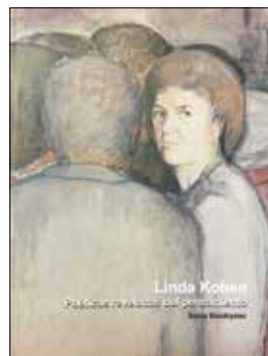
★ NEW BOOKS



★ **Señales/Signals, Adolfo Bernal**

As a result of the first posthumous solo exhibition of the works by Adolfo Bernal, titled *Quien tenga ojos para ver vea* ("Those Who Have Eyes to See, See"), presented at Casas Riegner. The book provides a purely textual exploration of the artist's body of work, revealing his fascination with poetry and his arrival in the art scene, and presenting of the best known facet of Bernal's production in the arts. Published in 2015 by La Oficina del Doctor, Casas Riegner. 136 pages. Spanish/English. Soft cover. 50 color images and 20 black and white images. 13 25/64 x 9 29/64 in. (34 x 24 cm.).

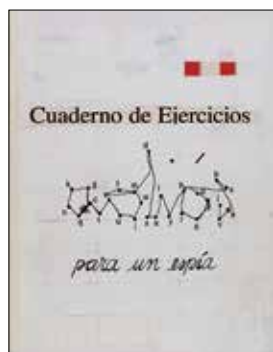
\$20 US



★ **Linda Kohan**
Revealed poetics of thought

This book on the life and work of Linda Kohan provides a tour through her childhood and adolescence in a Jewish family in Italy during the first half of the Twentieth Century, until the rise of fascism, when the family decided to move to Argentina. The essays featured in the book explore Kohan's development as an intellectual and artist, the creation of her style, her insertion in the local scene, and critics' perception of her art. Edited by Sonia Bandrymer, 2016. Essays by Pablo Thiago Rocca and Sonia Bandrymer. Spanish and English. 160 pages. 88 illustrations. Hardcover. 12 1/64 x 8 55/64 in. (30.5 x 22.5 cm.).

\$60 US



Cuaderno de ejercicios para un espía

Is part of the exhibition *Rompecabezas* ("Puzzles") and from a previous exhibition, *Secreta prudencia* ("Secrete Prudence"), presented in 2014 by Luis Roldán. It is a collage of thoughts united together by cut-ups from a Spanish language textbook and images collected by the artist. Published in 2015 by La Oficina del Doctor, Casas Riegner, Henrique Faria Fine Art, Museo La Tertulia. 500 copies, 50 numbered and signed by the artist. Spanish. 112 pages. Soft cover. 8 27/64 x 6 29/64 in. (21.4 x 16.4 cm.).

\$15 US



Rosemberg Sandoval
Obra 1980 - 2015

Different authors share their vision of Rosemberg Sandoval's work, the modes of his creation and the materials he has gleaned from his lived experience in Colombia. The book covers Sandoval's career from 1980 through 2015. It was published by Universidad del Valle in 2015, and includes articles by Rosemberg Sandoval, Álvaro Villalobos, Carlos Jiménez and Mario Espinosa Cobaleda, as well as interviews with the artist. 280 pages. 196 color images. Soft cover. 9 1/6 x 9 29/64 in. (23 x 24 cm.).

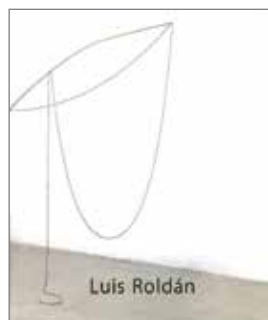
\$27 US



Doris Salcedo

The book was edited to accompany the groundbreaking retrospective by the Colombian artist whose installations, sculptures and site-specific as well as public space interventions refer to the trauma of the victims of political violence, racism, systemic inequality and overall, war. Edited by Julie Rodrigues Widholm and Madeleine Grynstejn with the collaboration of Elizabeth Adan, Katherine Brinson, Helen Molesworth and Doris Salcedo. Published by Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago and The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2014. English. 240 pages. Hard cover. 110 color illustrations, 5 in black and white. 9 1/5 x 11 2/5 in. (23.5 x 29 cm.).

\$40 US



Luis Roldán

A book that focuses on the career of this Colombian artist. Through experimentation processes with different media, such as drawing, painting, collage, sculpture, installation and video, Roldán constructs taxonomies of fragility and the ephemeral that reveal a lyrical experience of the mundane. Published by Villegas Editores in 2014, the book includes essays by Carolina Ponce de León and Luis Pérez-Oramas. 240 pages, 184 color images. Hardcover. 12 9/32 x 10 5/16 in. (31.2 x 26.2 cm.).

\$47 US



Lygia Clark: The Abandonment of Art, 1948-1988

Catalog of the exhibition by the same title, held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, MoMA. The book includes several essays that span different periods of the artist's work; a large number of pictures of works and performances, as well as a thorough chronology and selected bibliography. Texts by Cornelia H. Butler, Luis Pérez Oramas and Geanine Gutierrez-Guimaraes among others. Edited by MoMA, 2014. English. 336 pages. 400 color images. Hard cover. 12 x 9 1/2 in. (31 x 24,5 cm.).

\$70 US



Transpolítico
Art in Colombia 1992-2012

A publication sponsored by J. P. Morgan, exploring the Colombian art production of the last 20 years. With the contribution of the renowned curators José Roca and Sylvia Suárez they provide an in-depth knowledge of the artists and subjects that mark this period, with an impeccable organization by topics. Prologue by Lisa K. Erf; texts by José Roca and Sylvia Suárez. English and Spanish. 194 pages. 159 illustrations. Hard cover. 10 4/5 x 9 1/5 in. (27,5 x 23,5 cm.).

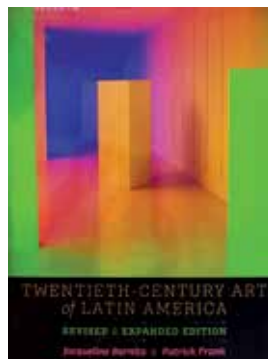
\$70 US



★ **Hélio Oiticica**
Folding the Frame

A publication of The University of Chicago Press that delves deep into the work of this important Brazilian artist and his vast oeuvre. Divided in chapters, the text explores specific themes in an understanding of Oiticica, such as the construction and demarcation of form and space; color; and the body. Each chapter includes images of works and actions, as well as notes and bibliographic references. Edited by Irene V. Small. 2016. Essays by Irene V. Small. English. 294 pages. 135 illustrations. Hardcover. 10 ¹⁵/₆₄ x 8 ²⁷/₃₂ in. (26 x 22 cm.).

\$41 US



★ **Twentieth-Century Art of Latin America**

This revised and expanded edition updates Jacqueline Barnitz's 2001 book of the same title, which explored the art of Latin America and parts of the Caribbean from the Nineteenth Century through 1980, taking us to the end of the century with a review of tendencies and artists whose work was essential in the 1980s and 1990s. Includes a summary by chapter and a bibliography. Published by University of Texas Press. Essays by Jacqueline Barnitz and Patrick Frank. English. 415 pages. 300 illustrations. Softcover. 11 ¹/₃₂ x 8 ¹⁵/₃₂ in. (28 x 21,5 cm.).

\$55 US



Macaparana

A book devoted to the work of the Brazilian artist Jose de Souza Oliveira Filho, known as Macaparana, the name of his native village. The book features essays about Macaparana's oeuvre, his beginnings, his friendship with Willys de Castro and Hércules Barsotti, and his insertion in and relationship with the Brazilian art scene. The book includes a detailed chronology and excellent images. Published by Osbel Suárez, 2016. Texts by Osbel Suárez and Ferreira Gullar. 249 pages. English. Hard cover. 127 color images. 12 ¹/₆₄ x 9 ⁴¹/₆₄ inches (30.5 x 24.5 cm.).

\$45 US



Hecatomb

Illustrated book of a Patti Smith poem dedicated to Chilean writer Roberto Bolaño, with 17 drawings by José Antonio Suárez Londoño. Published in 2015 by La Oficina del Doctor, Casas Riegner. 48 pages. English. Soft cover. 20 color images. 12 ¹/₈ x 9 ¹/₁₆ inches (30.8 x 23 cm.).

\$20 US



Conversaciones en Colombia

This book features a series of conversation that Hans Ulrich began in 2010 with Colombian artists and became an exhaustive exploration of the country's art landscape. *AnaÑam.Yoh-Reya* (the book's subtitle) is not a mere compilation of interviews with artists, filmmakers, writers, and politicians, but also a collaborative project with original contributions by artists Beatriz González, Mateo López, Gabriel Sierra, and José Antonio Suárez Londoño. Published in 2015 by Karen Marta and La Oficina del Doctor, Casas Riegner. Texts by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Beatriz González. 230 pages. Spanish. Soft cover. 96 color images and 11 black and white images. 9 ¹/₄ x 6 ¹/₂ in. (23.5 x 16.5 cm.)

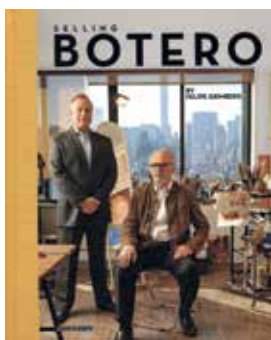
\$25 US



El otro lado de la imagen y otros textos (La poética de Regina Silveira)

This book brings together a selection of articles around de poetics of Regina Silveira, written by Adolfo Montejo over the course of seven years, from 2002 to 2008, to trace a variety of aesthetic itineraries and conceptual territories in the work of the renowned Brazilian artist. The book was published by the University of São Paulo in 2012. Spanish, 232 pages. 58 color images. Hardcover. 7 ⁹/₃₂ x 9 ²⁹/₆₄ in. (18.5 x 24 cm.).

\$32 US



Selling Botero

The experience of Felipe Grimberg as art dealer focused on the production of Fernando Botero including his countless stories around his professional relationship with the artist and his visual development. The book features tales on how the dealer has moved in the art market as an enthusiast and expert. Prologue by Fernando Botero. Texts by Felipe Grimberg. Published in English by Silvana Editoriale, 2015. 404 pages. Hard cover. 506 images. 12 ¹/₅ x 9 ²/₅ in. (31 x 24 cm.).

\$75 US



Jesús Abad Colorado
Mirar de la vida profunda

This book brings together the photographic work by the artist who, for more than 25 years has become the wandering memory of armed conflict in Colombia and of its victims. It includes texts by Jesús Abad Colorado, Álvaro Sierra Restrepo and Carolina Ponce de León. Published in Spanish with English translation, by Paralelo 10 in 2015. 200 pages. 148 color images and 8 in black and white. Hard cover. 10 ⁴/₅ x 11 in. (27,5 x 28 cm.).

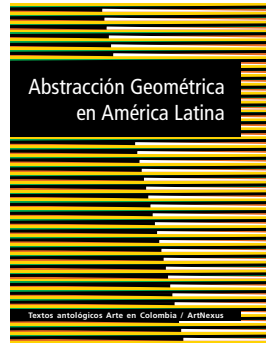
\$95 US



Julio Le Parc. Kinetic works

This catalog accompanied the exhibition presented at Casa Daros, Rio de Janeiro. The book starts with an interview to the artist where he explains some of his work's themes and motivations as well as aspects of his personal life. It is complemented with important texts on his career and on his relation with other artists and movements. Edited by Daros Latinamerica, 2013. Texts by Hans-Michael Herzog, Ruth Schmidheiny, Alexandre Alberro, among others. Portuguese, English and Spanish, 256 pages, 104 images. Soft cover. 10 3/5 x 8 3/5 in. (27 x 22 cm.).

\$47 US



Geometric Abstraction in Latin America

This book gathers an anthological selection of texts published in Arte en Colombia / ArtNexus magazine around geometric abstraction in the region. Four chapters group essays, monographic articles and exhibition reviews: 1. Profile of Trends; 2. Exhibitions as Spaces for Reflection; 3. The Initial Protagonists; 4. An Ongoing Reflection Around Geometry. Published by Art & Art and ArtNexus, 2013. Additional texts by the Editor, Ivonne Pini; Juan Carlos Maldonado, Founding President, Art & Art Collection. English and Spanish. 296 pages. 271 color images and 101 in black and white. Hard cover. 11 4/5 x 9 in. (30 x 23 cm.).

\$60 US



Una teoría del arte desde América Latina

This book gathers texts by important artists and scholars from different Latin American nations, providing elements to understand the situation of the art production of our time. Edited by José Jiménez with texts by him and personalities such as Ticio Escobar, Antonio Zaya, Luis Camnitzer, Justo Pastor Mellado, Elena Oliveras, Celia Sredni de Birbragher, Maria Elena Ramos, José Carlos Mariátegui, among others. Published by MEIAC /Turner in 2011. Spanish. 448 pages. Soft cover. 6 x 8 3/5 in. (15,5 x 22 cm.).

\$20 US



María Thereza Negreiros: Vida y obra

A book centered on the work by Negreiros, particularly on her series, beginning with her most recent ones, and then continuing with a retrospective look at her entire body of work. It includes essays, an interview with the artist, her most important exhibitions and biography. It was published by Sylvia Patiño in 2015. Essays by Francine Birbragher, Carol Damian, Marta Traba and Sofy Arboleda, among others. 250 color images, 30 black and white images. Spanish, English and Portuguese, in separate editions. Hardcover. 12 1/64 x 11 27/64 in. (30.5 x 29 cm.).

\$70 US



The Great Swindle

A book on the editorial and artistic project by Colombian Santiago Montoya, visual artist of Halcyon Gallery, who works with the subjects of the financial system. Edited by José Luis Falconi. Texts by Falconi, Robin Adèle Greeley, Christian Viveros Fauné, Miguel Palacios and Justine Ludwig. Published by Halcyon Gallery in 2014. English. Hard cover. 394 pages. 365 color images. 10 x 11 3/5 in. (25,5 x 29,5 cm.).

\$60 US




ArtNexus Brasil en Colombia

Anthological book of Brazilian art conceived from texts published in ArtNexus/Arte en Colombia between 1974 and 2011, with Adriano Pedrosa as editor. The 295 page book, presents a selection of texts by renowned art critics such as Aracy Amaral, Carlos Jiménez, Gerardo Mosquera, Ivo Mesquita, Luis Camnitzer and Paulo Herkenhoff, among others. Includes color and black and white images of key works. Published by Projeto de Promoção Internacional ApexBrasil, Associação Brasileira de Arte Contemporânea ABACT and ArtNexus in 2011. English and Spanish. Hard cover. 8 2/5 x 11 in. (21,5 x 28 cm.).

\$50 US

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Waltercio Caldas

A catalogue published in conjunction with the exhibition "The Nearest Air: a Survey of Works by Waltercio Caldas", organized by the Blanton Museum of Art and the Fundação Iberê Camargo. The publication offers an extended look at the work of Waltercio Caldas, a central figure in Brazilian art. As the first illustrated English language publication to explore Caldas' work, it is aimed to raise awareness of his influences upon much of the art world of the late 20th century. Edited by University of Texas Press. Foreword by Simone Wicha. Texts by Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro, Richard Schiff, and Robert Storr. English. 138 pages. 89 images. Hard cover. 11 x 12 in. (28 x 31 cm.).

\$60 US



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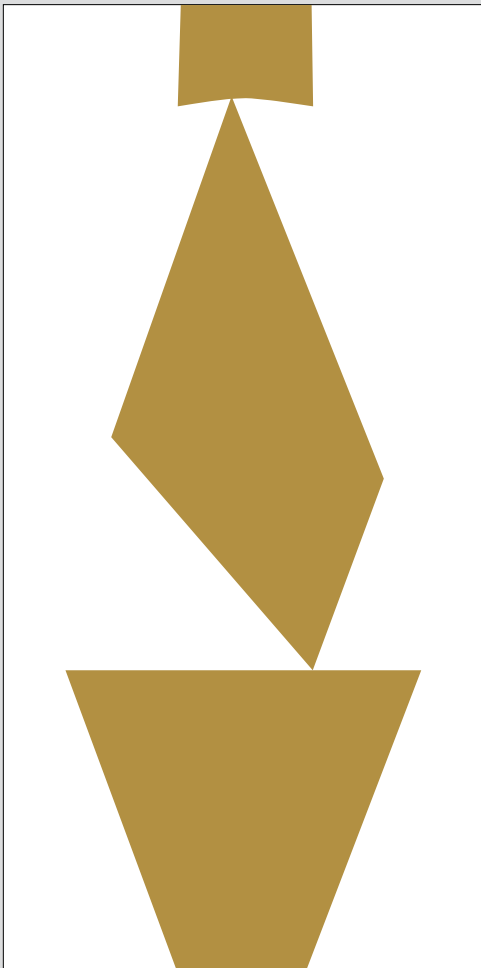


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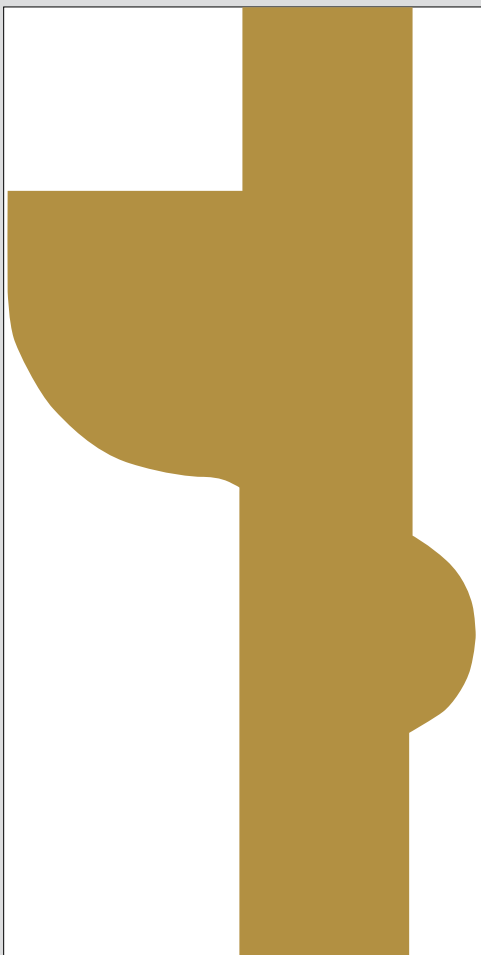
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