

# MACG ACTUAL HABITAR EL COLAPSO

CYNTHIA GUTIÉRREZ

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**CYNTHIA GUTIÉRREZ'S (GUADALAJARA, JALISCO, 1978) PRACTICE ADDRESSES, FROM** different perspectives, the power structures and cultural paradigms that, although in crisis, continue to uphold contemporary States. Her work touches on the notion of official history, territory and national identity, cultural heritage, the fine arts and their presence in public spaces, the artisan traditions, economic growth and progress, and ecological awareness, among other vital subjects.

For over two decades, her work has interwoven critical and poetic approaches to commemorative monuments, the notion of ruins and archaeological relics. The pedestal as a legitimizing element is a feature of her work, as are the hybrid manufacturing styles that combine ancestral craft and industrial reproduction. The ever-expanding accumulation of works and relics by the cultural apparatus is framed in a sharp conflict – included in it, is, of course, the museum itself as an institution that materializes official history and the collapse of its convictions.

This exhibition comprises a group of works created in different moments in Gutiérrez's career, as well as a series of pieces conceived specifically for the initial presentation of this show at the emblematic Museo Cabañas in Guadalajara. Although adapted to the architectural characteristics of the Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, the exhibition maintains the incisive essence that has marked her aesthetic work.

Víctor Palacios

## CYNTHIA GUTIÉRREZ

*Strata, 2022*

Ceramic fragments embedded in the wall, led light  
Courtesy of the artist and Proyecto Paralelo

Transversal incisions in the white walls of the museum reveal piles of ceramic shards. Inside the museum's rigid structure other stories are able to swarm from the earth, and from the hands, from the silenced voices, which lie buried by white matter. Suffocated cultures, stories arising, intersecting and vanishing. Time coming together. Pot handles, vessels and broken idols claiming their territory.

*False Pilgrimages, 2022*

Volcanic rock, wood, MDF, lacquer  
Courtesy of the artist and Proyecto Paralelo

The sculptural installation *Falsos peregrinajes* is an interpretation of an archaeological ruin in which stone elements from different styles and times merge. In them, we see geometric white bases with clean cuts, straight and neat lines emerging from the floor, alluding to the way in which objects are displayed in exhibition spaces. Resting on these elaborate platforms we find rock constructions simulating historical vestiges that seem to claim territory and resist oblivion. The structures limit the exhibition space, changing the dynamics and movement of the viewer throughout the gallery, while questioning the way in which national identities are construed.



*Portrait of Shadows, 2021*

Ceramic, earth pigments  
Courtesy of the artist and Proyecto Paralelo

In the mid-nineteenth century in San Pedro Tlaquepaque, Don Pantaleón Panduro used to model small busts in clay. The quality of his work and the speed with which it was done attracted the interest of many. He made portraits of multiple personalities including politicians, bullfighters, policemen, circus performers, and famous people such as Jackie and John F. Kennedy, Queen Elizabeth, Lyndon Johnson, and some Mexican presidents. When Pantaleón died, he left his legacy to his children, who also dedicated their lives to creating clay. Today it is difficult to identify his pieces, over the years, his work began to be confused with that of his offspring and other potters who followed his style. There is no faithful record of his work and most information about Pantaleón Panduro has been lost in the period that separates us from his time.

In *Portrait of Shadows*, Gutiérrez makes a set of small clay pedestals trying to imitate Panduro's style. However, in her work the characters are absent.

*Chant of Descent, 2014*

Textiles, wood, quarry rock  
Courtesy of the artist and Proyecto Paralelo

Sculpted stone pillars rest on the floor, their limestone surface interrupted by textiles created with a hip loom, mostly produced by members of the Triqui community of western Oaxaca, now settled in Chapala, Jalisco. The weavings suggest banners emerging, or falling from the quarry rocks, a material linked to the production of monuments during colonial times. In the hybridization of these bodies we can find different pasts that suggest chimerical futures: the invention of a national memory is cracked by communal resilience.

### *Uprooting*, 2019

Black and white video, no sound, 1m 15s

Courtesy of the artist and Proyecto Paralelo

Rocks on the shore of a lake. At its center lies a large stone and on top of it, a smaller rock is balanced. The contours of the two stones appear to match. The flowing of water, the solidity of the rock. Mutable structure, fixed structure. Suddenly, the rock falls, gravity triumphs... nothing remains.

### *Suspended Breath*, 2016

130 bronze fragments

Courtesy of the artist and Fundación Calosa

The eagle, one of the largest predatory birds, has been a symbol for strength, power, beauty and freedom throughout history. It has been the symbol of majesty and victory, which is why it has been used by various empires, nations and peoples. The representations of this winged animal have been, for the most part, of a glorious character. On the contrary, in this sculptural work we are faced with a tragic scene: a bronze eagle broken into more than a hundred fragments. The emblem of the victorious nation has succumbed to announce an uncertain state, a broken, disintegrated, dismembered identity.



### *Prelude I-XXIII*, 2020-2021

Volcanic rock, artisanal spheres, iron

Courtesy of the artist and Proyecto Paralelo

The solid volcanic rock, the material with which pyramids, idols, reliefs, temples and statues were built, is a symbol of hardness and monumentality. Here it is perforated and penetrated with spheres made by hand. Holes are revealed in the geological structure. Rupture and breath. A volcano. Discharges of fire. Destructive force. Sunset. Origin. Fire as a creator-destroyer element. Cycles. The explosion as an overture to the sunset.

Gutiérrez's *Prelude* is a set of volcanic rocks with cylindrical perforations in which spheres of blown glass and ceramics are embedded, two traditions that seem to be heading towards oblivion, here persist, resist. Fragile elements that carry within themselves a story told through hands, earth and fire, replicated through generations, encapsulated in the solid rock. Stories that rise or sink. The confrontation between man and nature. New origins.

### *Nebula V*, 2016

Graphite traces on cotton paper, drawn from the silhouettes of a broken sculpture

Courtesy of the artist and Proyecto Paralelo

A series of traces on paper record the 130 fragments from a broken sculpture of an eagle. The contours, drawn on the same axis, form new figures that resemble a nebula: hints of stars made up of fragments, of dust. Trace clusters of fallen empires. Uncertain hopes for a new order.

### *Transfers*, 2019

Inkjet print on Fabriano paper

Courtesy of the artist and Proyecto Paralelo

A story that captures a diffuse memory of a conversation, a moment, a place, a particular skill, a piece and the difficulties of executing it, the passion for the material and its transformation, for the tools, the knowledge transmitted orally from generation to generation, the myth and the greatness of a historical past.

### *Transfers II*, 2022

Color video, 1h 18min 58s

Video recording by Ricardo Atl

Courtesy of the artist and Proyecto Paralelo

Based on the story captured in *Transfers*, 2019, the artist poses the speculative technical challenge of producing the sculptural, monolithic piece, the snake with an interior helical tunnel mentioned in the text. This is the record of the processes carried out, in collaboration with PANIK production workshop and artist Ricardo Atl, in order to find a way to build the object.

### *Fragments of Greatness*, 2018

Plaster, paint, iron

Courtesy of the artist and Proyecto Paralelo

A fractured column breaks the space. A great damaged structure that reveals, in its schism, the ravages of the one-sidedness of time. The colossal pillars that support Western civilization symbolize the strength and weight of imposed, seemingly inevitable ideas and systems. Ironically, the scene of decadent architecture, in ruins, breaks the constructive purpose of the same. The breaking of the vertebrae makes the present appear as emptiness; a meaningless structure that cannot sustain itself.

*Floating History*, 2018

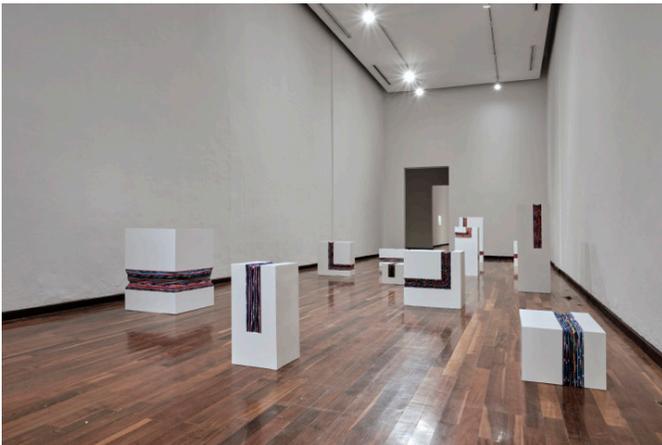
100% wool tapestry, hand woven by José Antonio Flores and Abraham Flores  
Special thanks to Taller Mexicano de Gobelinos.  
Courtesy of the artist and Proyecto Paralelo

Only the captions from the pages of a book are transferred to a hand-woven tapestry. In the textile we find words and also gaps. Through the text, the absent image is evoked: the mask of Quetzalcóatl that is in Rome and the headdress of quetzal feathers that is in Vienna. Displaced stories, uprooted, suspended, floating.

*Modern Graves I-XV*, 2019 -2021

Textiles, wood, lacquer  
Courtesy of the artist and Proyecto Paralelo

The work does not pose on the pedestal but arises from its interior and becomes part of it. The white, clean, and straight cuts of modern bases designed to present objects in museum galleries are interrupted by colorful veins of textiles that are inserted, intersected, running through them. Traditions, stories and contained memories, buried within its limits.



*Return to the End of the World*, 2021

Burnished clay, stainless steel  
Courtesy of the artist and Proyecto Paralelo

A burnished earthenware plate with the traditional technique of the Tonalá and Tlaquepaque area, with a strainer in its center. Returning to another piece by the artist, *El fin del mundo*, which in turn refers to Courbet's *L'origin du monde*, the female figure is replaced by an object that evokes housework and the repetition of a technique that is erased in its own reproduction. The cyclical character of the piece enables the debate of everyday life and encloses the contradiction in itself, affirming fragility, permanence, and the condition of possibility to sustain ourselves materially. A dish whose point of departure is at the same time its point of encounter.



*Trajectories III*, 2022

Obsidian arrowheads embedded in the wall  
Courtesy of the artist and Proyecto Paralelo

Obsidian is a volcanic glass formed from incandescent lava that, due to its physical qualities, was widely used by pre-Hispanic cultures in the elaboration of different instruments such as arrows. Even after the arrival of the Spaniards, in the first stages of the Colonial era, due to the scarcity of instruments made with European metals, obsidian continued to be used for the exploitation of maguey, in jewelry and in rituals.

In the work *Trajectories III*, we find ourselves in front of more than a hundred obsidian arrowheads embedded in the museum wall. These small elements that generate multiple incisions in the building, remind us of the advances and mistakes of the past, as a kind of vestige of the culmination and decline of ancient societies in an attempt to pause, reflect and imagine the lines of our trajectories and redirect our future. A return to the basics to think of new paths and ways of relating to the environment.

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Curated by  
Víctor Palacios

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**MACG ACTUAL** propone una línea curatorial enfocada en la realización de muestras individuales y colectivas de artistas cuyo trabajo aborda las problemáticas de nuestro tiempo

Cover image:  
Cynthia Gutiérrez, *Suspended breath*, 2016  
130 bronze fragments  
Courtesy of the artist and Fundación CALOSA

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Agradecemos el apoyo de

