

***IN WEITER FERNE,
SO NAH!***

MEXIKO IN BERLIN

***FAR AWAY,
SO CLOSE!***

MEXICO IN BERLIN

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INTRODUCTION

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the sisterhood between the cities of Mexico and Berlin, which is being celebrated throughout 2023, LAGOS-Mexico and MOMENTUM-Berlin in collaboration with the Mexican Cultural Institute in Germany, are honored to present the exhibition "In weiter Ferne, so nah! - Mexiko in Berlin", featuring the work of artists from Mexico who live and work in the city of Berlin.

The exhibition includes the work of eight artists who share a common generation and who, as residents of Germany, draw on their Mexican roots in their practice. They integrate the ancestral cultures of Mexico into their artistic discourses, creating through their work a conceptual bridge that unites tradition with contemporary language. The proposals stimulate a series of conversations about the relationship between Mexico and Germany, as well as a dialogue between the native cultures of Mexico and contemporary artistic production in Berlin.

All of the selected artists work in a transdisciplinary way, focusing on installations. The works that make up this exhibition establish a series of timeless and complex relationships. They dialogue with each other through conceptual themes such as the critique of modernity and progress, decolonialism, the Anthropocene and ancestral cosmogonies. The complexity of the artist's approaches is complemented by a view on Berlin and its own cultural hybridization. The exhibition shows ancestral images re-signified in contemporaneity, historical, mythical and mystical characters in a timeless and continuous dialogue, sacred places in the process of extinction, visions of an altered past and an uncertain future. Objects and sounds deconstructed and returned to their place of origin. Resistance and negotiation.

The exhibition takes its title from Wim Wenders' 1993 film of the same name, bearing in mind that it was also made 30 years ago, and refers to the apparent spatial distance between the two cities, but at the same time to the mutual recognition of the similarities that exist between them. The argument of Wenders' film is time and territory, as well as his reflection on individual and cultural identity. The dialectic between time/territory of the human vs. time/territory of the divine, which may suggest a line of interpretation of the selected works.

Finally, this exhibition is an invitation to intercultural dialogue, shows the complexity, diversity and potential of eight artists from Mexico in Berlin, highlights their uniqueness and recognizes the strength of their artistic discourse.

Luis Carrera-Maul
Curator

JULIETA ARANDA

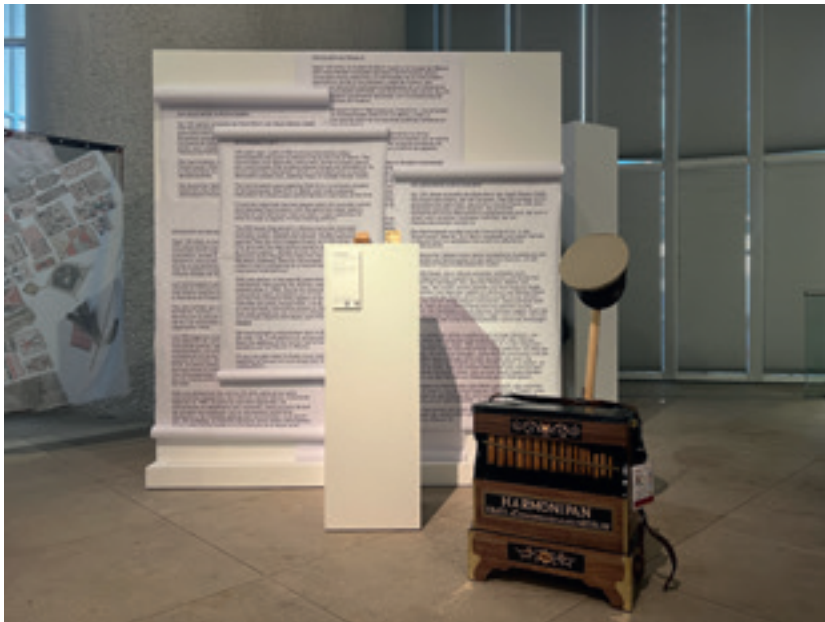
Born 1975, CDMX (Mexico City)

Lives in Berlin, DE and NYC, USA

120 years ago, a gift of 200 musical instruments called harmonipans was gifted to Mexico City by the City of Berlin. The harmonipan is an automatic instrument, similar to player pianos and music boxes, that re-plays popular songs pre-recorded on its punch card-like mechanism, which is enclosed within a lavishly decorated wooden box, bearing inlays of wooden flower motifs. The harmonipans were made by Frati & Co. a company located at Schoenhauser Allee #73, in Berlin, and were a popular instrument for street public performances in Germany at the time. It must be noted that German players were not musically trained, and operated harmonipans with the same technique used to manoeuvre old-fashioned meat grinders. It was customary for them to wear a vaguely military-looking uniform.

The 200 boxes that arrived in Mexico had a pre-recorded selection of both popular Mexican and German songs of the time - including polkas, waltzes and corridos. Quickly becoming popular, they are now a staple of daily life in the centre of Mexico City, and over the past century became so familiar as to appear as a local custom - today almost no one knows that they are from Germany (despite the fact that they bear the manufacturer's name and the Berlin address). Mexican harmonipan players also wear a uniform that is something of a mixture between that of a traffic cop and a hotel bell boy. Only one person in the past 60 years knew how to tune these mechanical instruments: señor Alfonso Lazaro García, who sadly passed away in 1965. During the ensuing decades, the instruments went completely out of tune, so much so that the sounds they produce today appear to be totally abstract, and the melodies are barely recognizable, if at all. However the tradition of having these instruments played on the streets is so strong, that most people do not mind the strange noise they hear coming out of these objects and happily give money to the players in reward.

Regresando un Regalo (Returning a Gift) consists of bringing one of the harmonipans and its player from Mexico City to Berlin for a period of one week, during which he will play at various public locations, amongst them the address of the former harmonipan factory, and solicit donations just as the harmonipan players do in Mexico. At the exhibition, a music box plays an out-of-tune song from the harmonipan that is visiting Berlin.



Regresando un Regalo / Returning a Gift

2023, Performance, Music Box, mixed media, 10×10×7 cm



Julieta Aranda has been awarded numerous grants and merit scholarships, from institutions such as FONCA, the National Foundation for the Culture and the Arts in Mexico (1995–1996), and both the School of Visual Arts (1995–1999), the National Board of Review (1996–1999) and Columbia University (2004) in New York. She has also been an artist in residence at UNIDEE, the International Program by Fondazione Pistoletto in Biella, Italy (2006), as well as at IAPSIS, the International Artists Studio Program in Stockholm (2006) and at the International Residence of Recollets in Paris (2008). Her work has been shown in internationally renowned institutions such as the Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami (2009); the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2009); the National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo (2010); and Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León, Spain (2010), as well as at international art festivals such as the Liverpool Biennial (2010); the Kassel Documenta, Germany (2012); and the Shanghai Biennale (2012).

Aranda has been actively collaborating on e-flux since 2003, which is a publishing platform, archive, artist project, curatorial platform, and cultural enterprise founded by Anton Vidokle in 1998.



In her artistic practice, Julieta Aranda composes sensorial encounters with the nature of time and speculative literature. She observes the altering human-earth relationship through a multidisciplinary lens, looking at science and technology, environmental humanities, multispecies encounters, artificial intelligence, and collective subjectivities. Working with installation, sculpture, video, and print media, she is invested in exploring the potential of temporalities otherwise, and the ‘poetics of circulation’. Her projects challenge the boundaries between subject and object while embracing chance encounters, auto-destruction, and social processes.

Her installations and temporary projects, which often examine social interactions and the role that the circulation of objects plays in the cycles of production and consumption, are intensely site-specific. Much of her work takes up the concept of time, sometimes to consider alternative notions of the temporal experience, and other times to approach the arbitrariness of time and freedom from time.

LUIS CARRERA-MAUL

Born 1972, CDMX (Mexico City)

Lives in Berlin, DE and CDMX

Luis Carrera-Maul's Berlin work continues the geo-aesthetic intervention *STRATUM* realised in 2022 at the Mexican Museum of Sciences and Arts (MUCA, UNAM); it interprets the configuration and alteration of the Earth's strata as a fundamental political issue: according to Bruno Latour, all soil interventions are archaic political processes. In the present, marked by climate crisis and species extinction, the critical state of the forests and the aridification of its soils is a central theme that the artist now addresses in his Berlin installation *STRATUM / Wasteland*.



Bosque de Chapultepec I & II

2014, Digital print, 50×70 cm

Reminiscences

2017–2023, 12 Glass bottles filled with water from rivers in Germany: Neckar, Rhein, Lahn, Mosel, Wupper, Wesser, Fulda, Elbe, Spree, Donau, Saalach, Isar

He places 8 objects of compressed and dried soil on an abstracted geological relief map of Germany spread out on the floor of the exhibition hall, always at the location from which he had taken soil samples from various German forests on a tour in 2017. During the exhibition's runtime, these dried clumps of soil are watered so that they can become the substrate of new plant growth – an experimental arrangement that profiles the artwork as an instrument of ecological research. The autopoiesis of plants, should it actually happen at the exhibition site, becomes a metaphor for the power and vitality of vegetation, even in a possible posthuman future. Thus, in the artistic imagination, the withered wasteland of dying forests is transformed into vital woodscapes.

Carrera-Maul's critical topography of a country plagued by forest dieback and increasing drought produces orientational knowledge for the debates about the Anthropocene. It is an aesthetic soil science that inscribes itself in the "geological turn," which defines the geological as a subject of the arts and humanities. In this context, the conceptual development and elaboration of an artwork becomes a complementary form of knowledge. *STRATUM/Wasteland* offers a sensual realisation of the constitution of our living worlds, stimulates reflection on a more responsible approach to planet earth.

– Peter Krieger, Dr. phil., curator and research professor

STRATUM / Wasteland

2023, Installation, soil, ceramic paste, recycled material, geomembrane, drip irrigation system, 300×400 cm

Luis Carrera-Maul is an artist who has followed several lines of research throughout his career, mainly around the Anthropocene and geo-aesthetics. His work establishes a strong dialogue between science and art. In this sense, his projects seek an interdisciplinary connection, taking up concepts from ecology, archeology and geology, among others, as well as themes related to the environment and therefore, to the political. Many of his works are process-oriented and site-specific installations on a large scale, in which he normally uses both traditional techniques and new media.

Luis Carrera-Maul is a visual artist, curator and art professor born in Mexico City. He earned his Master's degree in arts teaching at the Faculty of Arts and Design (FAD) at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). Postgraduate studies in Visual Arts at the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the University of the Arts in Berlin (UdK). He is founder and director of the Lagos Project - Studios and Residencies for artists, created as a platform for experimentation and exchange for national and international artists. He has received several awards and recognitions including being Member of the National System of Art Creators (FONCA), the Acquisition Award in 2010 at the II Biennial of Painting Pedro Coronel. Nominated for Best Latin American Visual Artist in the United Kingdom (LUKAS Awards, 2015) and nominated for Prix Thun for Art and Ethics in Switzerland in 2017. In 2018 he was commissioned artist to produce a work for the XIII FEMSA Biennial.

He has exhibited both individually and collectively in Mexico, Spain, Argentina, England, Italy and Germany, at institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art (MAM), the National Museum of San Carlos, in Mexico City, Museum of Latin American Art (MALBA) in Buenos Aires Argentina, Barcelona Contemporary Culture Center (CCCB) at Barcelona, Spain, Pedro Coronel Museum and Francisco Goitia Museum both in Zacatecas, the Museum of Oaxacan Painters, Museum of the city in Mérida and the Art Museum of Querétaro, Mexico.



MARIANA CASTILLO DEBALL

Born 1972, CDMX (Mexico City)

Lives in Berlin, DE and CDMX

UMRISS is a series of large-format photographic prints based on a Mexican advertisement of the 1980's promoting Stelazine, an antipsychotic medicine. The flyer used the following slogan:

"Schizophrenic patients sometimes hide behind a mask of psychotic withdrawal, which can make them inaccessible to therapy. Stelazine: Remove the mask of the psychotic patient."

This pamphlet was illustrated with images of Mexican masks with extravagant and texturised colour backgrounds, which was in turn a translation of the American advertisement for the same brand. The original version used the African and Canadian equivalents of these masks.

Mimicking the style of the promotional campaign, *UMRISS* uses examples from the Mesoamerican collection of the Ethnographic Museum in Berlin; acquired at the beginning of the twentieth century and originating primarily from the south of Mexico and Guatemala. The photographs only show the backside of the masks, putting an accent on the inventory number from the museum, and the backside and usually invisible part of the object, exhibiting its manufacture, and the side where the face meets the mask when being worn.



UMRISS

2014, Two laser chrome prints mounted on dibond,
270×180 cm, courtesy Kurimanzutto Gallery

Mariana Castillo Deball is a visual artist whose work has explored the history of cultural objects, their prevalence and the different ways in which these have been interpreted and understood throughout time. Her work's multidisciplinary focus has driven her to collaborate with professionals of different branches of knowledge on science and culture. Castillo Deball's installations, performances, sculptures and editorial projects emerge from the recombination of different languages and explore the role of objects in the understanding of our history and identity. Her work is the result of long research processes that allow her to analyse how certain historical objects can be read over time and how they constitute a dialogic version of reality that creates a polyphonic panorama. She takes on the role of the explorer or the archaeologist, compiling found materials in a way that reveals new connections and meanings.

Castillo Deball works with ethnographic collections, libraries and historical archives, seeking to go beyond contemporary art institutions and museums. Her artistic production includes several editions: books or objects whose different uses and formats aim to open up new territories. Her raw material arises from the exchange between anthropology, philosophy and literature in a process of mutual learning.

Mariana Castillo Deball has been awarded internationally renowned prizes, including the Prize of the National Gallery, Berlin (2013). She has participated in numerous major exhibitions and biennials, including the Sao Paulo Biennial (2016), Berlin Biennale (2014), dOCUMENTA(13), Kassel (2012) and the Venice Biennale (2011). The artist's most recent solo exhibitions include MGK Siegen (2021), MUAC Mexico city (2022), Modern Art Oxford, England (2020), Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne and New Museum, New York (both 2019).

She has been teaching as a professor of sculpture at Münster Academy of Art since 2015.



EMILIO CHAPELA

Born 1978, CDMX (Mexico City)

Lives in Berlin, DE and CDMX

Río *Revuelto* is part of a series of works that consists of paintings and drawings that aim to better understand the varied and complex motions experienced by moving water — as manifested in the form of turbulence, calm water, vortexes, whirlpools, splashes, waterfalls, eddies, waves and tidal movements. Each painting is made by making numerous strokes of paint that fill the canvas with the objective of assimilating the complex movements of water and sediments in a river. This polyptych of six paintings is only a segment of an ongoing image that unfolds from painting to painting describing the flow of a river as it advances forward.

There have been consistent efforts to control and domesticate the flow of rivers with the help of infrastructure works like dams, canals and diversions that aim to redirect, reduce floods, or even change the direction of a river flow. While some of these engineering works might be useful, water often finds its way to break through them. It does so by remembering the places where it used to flow or by finding its way out, flooding and changing in shape. By understanding how water moves, it might be possible to learn new forms of resistance to control structures and impositions, like the ones forced on water throughout human history.

However chaotic in appearance, when water becomes agitated and turbulent, it is subject to a high degree of spontaneous order: water particles become sensitive to other molecules and their environment, which results in a coordinated response. This is similar to the kind of order seen when a large group of people accommodate without explicitly agreeing to it and walk through a narrow path or tunnel: bodies become tightly packed and move in coordination. Similar forms of spontaneous order are also seen in climatic events, ecological systems and technology systems.

Río Revuelto

2023, Six paintings polyptych, Acrylic on canvas, each 140×140 cm

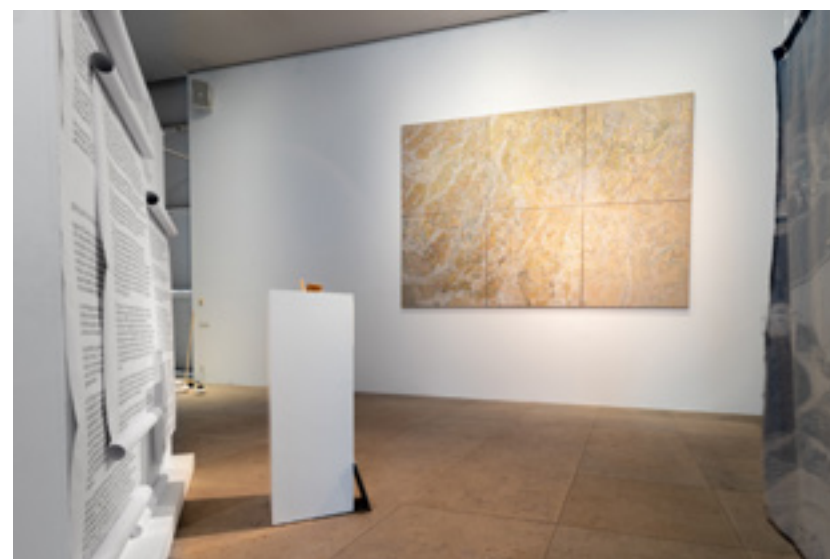
The Río Revuelto is a series of works that unfolds as a long (potentially infinite) line of paintings that resembles a river flow and that are always connected to each other. One painting “flows” into the following keeping the same direction, similarly as a river advances by moving forward, as an arrow. Physicists also use the image of the arrow to describe how time moves, from the past to the future in an irreversible motion. ‘No one has ever seen a river flow up a mountain’, explains the philosopher Michel Serres, referring to the direction of time as manifested in rivers: The Seine in Paris flows from “memory to hope”, he explains in the *Incandescent*. *Río Revuelto* also flows from past to future advancing in time.





Emilio Chapela is a visual artist and researcher. His work is informed by science, technology and ecology and aims to visualise bonds and connections between humans and nonhumans to reconcile with the world's various temporalities and movements. Chapela inquires on notions of time and space that are manifested through matter and forces such as astronomical phenomena, light, weather, gravity, rocks, plants, volcanoes, and rivers. He utilises writing, walking, hiking, and stargazing, as tools for his art practice.

Emilio Chapela is a fellow at Sistema Nacional de Creadores de Arte (2022–2024) in Mexico. He has exhibited extensively in Mexico, Latinoamérica, the USA and Europe in institutions and museums such as Museum Fine Arts Houston, Fundación Jumex, Phoenix Art Museum, FEMSA, Museo Rufino Tamayo and Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, amongst others. His most recent solo show *En el tiempo de la Rosa no envejece el jardinero* was exhibited at Laboratorio Arte Alameda in Mexico City in 2019, where he collaborated with architects, astronomers and scientists. He holds a PhD in artistic research from the University of Plymouth, UK.



SANDRA CONTRERAS & ANSELMO FOX

Born 1974, CDMX (Mexico City)

& Born 1964, Mendisio, CH

Live in Berlin, DE



intervene / negotiate

2023, Wood, cotton rope, plaster, furniture, dimensions variable



42 cleaning cords, approx. 3 meters long, twisted from natural white cotton threads are pierced at their ends into one brush body each and thus connect the two handles twisted into them. Usually, a stem connects us to the event of our action, which is performed with it and thus triggers a function. In this respect, its linkage can also be understood as prompts, especially when it is part of the room leaning against the wall. The two handles make them a flexible and mobile venue for an interaction that expresses the shared and physically spatializing activity of brushing as an ornament of mutual perception. Their entanglements are the occasion for blackish lumps to embody themselves as one-grips. The situation is different in the immediate vicinity, where two pieces of seating furniture spread out in front of them, an action that has just taken place as a communicative order of what is literally strained.

Inward and outward invaginations stretch their surfaces curvaceously and transitionlessly in opposite directions. On closer inspection, their supple bulges illustrate the petrified shaping of the action performed and the mass displaced under the pressure of in-formation to the extent of material cohesion. As a result, the elasticity of the moulding mass arches its increasing loss of form and forms bulges, with the degree of its surface curvature, symbolises the approaching moment of the return to the state of uneventfulness, which weakens the memory of form. Pulling, pushing, grasping, turning, pressing and holding out are stored as information of the social body.

For the exhibition *Far Away So Close* at the Mexican Cultural Institute in Berlin, the artist duo Sandra Contreras and Anselmo Fox have focused on the activity of cleaning as an occasion for the structural investigation of private space. For this intercultural exchange, Sandra Contreras and Anselmo Fox have twinned two mechudos, whose German counterparts are the mops, by means of a surgical procedure and, not entirely free of humour, sculpturally exposed them to decision-making processes.



Sandra Contreras and Anselmo Fox are a Mexican-Berlin-based artist duo. Together they address topics such as the working conditions of the lower and precarious social classes under social and environmental aspects, migration, cultural differences and private space.

Sandra Contreras is a Mexican artist who since 2001 has lived and worked between Berlin and Mexico City. Her artistic practice is situated in the emerging field of contemporary textile work, a territory that intersects with the practice of painting, drawing and installation. Since about 10 years, Contreras has been exploring embroideries that are transformed into hand-made objects — for example: altars, curtains, carpets, tapestries, flags, books, through to full architectonic spaces.

Textiles have a long tradition in art history. Hand-made textile objects have existed for thousands of years. The objects provide a sense of well-being in daily life, as well as a symbolic and aesthetic lifestyle. However, textiles have a shorter history in contemporary art. Contreras' artworks fall within this conceptual field, which follows painting and drawing practices. This handcraft combines a narrative with contemporary topics.



Sandra Contreras completed a B.A. in Art History and an M.A. in Art Studies at the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City and an M.A. in Art in Context in Berlin. She has presented more than thirteen individual exhibitions and artistic actions in Germany, Mexico, and Greece, for example, the Textile Museum, Oaxaca, Mexico as well as multiple group exhibitions, for example in Spazju Kreattiv, Museum St. James Cavalier, Valetta, Malta. Likewise, for twenty years she has been conducting artistic mediation activities and giving workshops on this subject in museums, schools and communities in Mexico and Germany.

Anselmo Fox's interest is in settings in whose processes traces of self-behaviour are expressed, which refer to the actual medium, the body. His work explores plastic, installations, digital media, drawing, and aesthetic theory. Anselmo Fox studied art and education at the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts and education at the Basel University of Art and Design, interdisciplinary cultural studies at the Humboldt University of Berlin and product design at the Potsdam University of Applied Sciences.

BEATRIZ MORALES

Born 1981, CDMX (Mexico City)

Lives in Berlin, DE and Hidalgo, MX

Beatriz Morales' fibre art installations float in the room like giant hides of mystic creatures. Frayed and wild, they are created from an unusual material: agave fibre. Drawing from her biography and experience as a Berlin-based, Mexican artist with a Lebanese background, her work is an exploration of the many facets of multinational, multilayered identity. In her oeuvre, she contrasts urban and natural influences, whereby nature is not only the source of pigments and fibres, but is also understood as a natural habitat for her large, often monumental textile installations. Art and nature reflect and complement each other, to the point that the boundary between organic presence and abstract composition dissolves.

Beatriz Morales' work *Ts'ul* is a large conceptual installation consisting almost entirely of variously processed agave cactus fibre. Historically, agave fibre was a widely used raw material in pre-Columbian Mexico, until its economic importance shrank with the onset of the industrial revolution and the appearance of synthetic materials. Like bursts of raw nature, Morales' fibre art works are draped in the exhibition space like gigantic, floating hides of untamable, mythical creatures. The immediate aesthetic impact of this work paves the way to Morales' deeply rich, conceptually charged visual and haptic language, which confidently integrates the archaic and the refined.



Ts'ul

2020, Agave fibre, acrylic, natural pigments, ink on cotton and jute fabric, 550 × 210 × 10 cm

The artist thus creates a symbiosis between fibre art, with its echoes of local artisanal traditions, and a compositional gesture in the tradition of abstract expressionism and its focus on pure correlations of colour and texture. Morales draws on historical aspects of her chosen material as well as biographic reflections. Both perspectives are present in the title of her work series: *Ts'ul*, a word from the indigenous South-Mexican Maya language, means "the other", "stranger" and "foreigner". It is yet another clue to the conceptual subtext in Beatriz Morales' art.

Born and raised in Mexico City, Beatriz Morales left her native country in 2001 to pursue largely autodidactic studies in painting, pottery and fashion design. Morales combines an investigative, abstract-expressionist approach, at times combined with figurative and illustrative components, creating a concretely conceptualised body of work. One major strand of her work is fibre and textile art, often drawing on agave fibre as a raw material.

Morales creates her work in contrasting scenes between the pulsating urbanism of the German capital and Mexico City, as well as the rough nature of rural Hidalgo, where her Mexican studio is located. She explores questions of identity—personal and societal—on small to medium sized canvases, as well as large to monumentally sized installation pieces, often presented in natural contexts.

Beatriz Morales' recent installation work "Zarcillo", extending to a height of 14 metres, is currently on view at Frieder Burda Museum in Baden-Baden. Her painting *Wonderland II* was presented at the Museum of Contemporary Art Rufino Tamayo (Mexico City and Oaxaca) as part of the Mexican Painting Biennial 2017.



Morales made her major art fair debut at Zona Maco in 2018. Her work has since been shown at numerous art fairs and several galleries across Europe and in North America. Beatriz Morales' recent exhibitions include major solo exhibitions at Circle Culture Berlin and Hamburg, as well as several institutional exhibitions including the high-profile show *The king is dead, long live the queen* at Frieder Burda Museum Baden-Baden, solo exhibitions at the Chancellery Museum in Mexico City and the Museo MACAY in Mérida. She published her first solo major monograph *Color Archaeology* on Kerber Publishing in December 2021, available now in bookstores internationally.



NAOMI RINCÓN GALLARDO

Born 1979, CDMX (Mexico City)

Lives in CDMX and Oaxaca, MX

Alexander von Humboldt “discovered” the axolotl in his expedition through the Spanish Colonies, and took with him a couple of specimens to Europe in order to deliver them to French naturalist George Cuvier for further research. The axolotl became raw material for scientific inquiry, an object to be classified, described and categorised with necrophilic accuracy. Towards the end of his expedition in the Americas, Alexander von Humboldt visited the United States, and was hosted by President Thomas Jefferson. Humboldt shared his detailed description, maps of natural resources and his political analysis of the Colonies.

The enlightened transatlantic friendship between Humboldt and Jefferson provided the later with strategic information to fuel his expansionist will, while contributing to the expansion of racialized political systems of Western modernity over the colonies through the appropriation/violence paradigm that marks abyssal global lines between metropolitan societies and colonial territories.

In *Alex(ander) and Axol(otl)*, *Alex(ander von Humboldt)* poses like he would do for a painter like Friedrich Georg Weitsch or Eduard Ender in the early nineteenth century, whose paintings would depict the nobleness of an Enlightened European explorer with unruly hair, spotless outfit, sweat-less white skin free of mosquito bites or sunburns, in an imagined landscape of the Southern territories of the American Continent, maybe surrounded by lush flora, wild animals and naked innocent natives. Once on his* still pose, Alex opens his mouth, as if he would be ready to sing an operatic song or to offer a fellatio. From behind the curtain Axol(otl) caresses and holds Alex’s body against his/hers. Alex(ander von Humboldt) appears as the subject of action, discovery, exploration and knowledge production; he* exists in time, while Axol(otl) only occupies space having no world-making-effects. They encounter each other within the logic and structure of racist practices, which arrange the world under a particular racial ordering within which Axol is supposed to respond to Alex’s needs and commands. Yet, their fleeting encounter is intimate, poignantly charging the surface of contact between the two of them with desires situated on the edge of the dominant orders of belonging and subjugation.

Alex(ander) and Axol(otl) is a chapter from *The Formaldehyde Trip*. In this psychedelic speculative fiction, Naomi Rincón Gallardo has written and directed a cycle of songs and videos dedicated to murdered activist Alberta “Bety” Cariño, who defended indigenous territorial rights. The work has also been performed live with idiosyncratic and ornate props and costumes that echo Mexican B-side Sci-Fi films of the 60s and 70s, weaving together Mesoamerican cosmologies, decolonial feminist and queer perspectives, and lyrics addressing indigenous women’s struggles against the background of the dispossession of their bodies, cultures, and territories. On an imagined journey through the underworld, Cariño encounters women warriors, witches, and widows, the dual-gendered goddess of death, and animals preparing her rebirth party. An axolotl, or Mexican salamander, in formaldehyde is the storyteller, agitating between fact, fiction, and friction as sounds and voices from the past lurk into the future.





Alex(ander) and Axol(otl)

2017, HD Video, 31'37" (extended version)

Performers: Marie Strauss and Naomi Rincón Gallardo

Lyrics: Naomi Rincón Gallardo

Music: Federico Schmucler

Vocals: David Katz

Cinematography: Gabriel Rossell

Photo documentation: Kathrin Sonntag

Naomi Rincón Gallardo is a visual artist living and working between Mexico City and Oaxaca. From a decolonial-cuir perspective, her research-driven critical-mythical dreamlike worldmakings address the creation of counter-worlds in neo-colonial settings. In her work she integrates her interests in theatre games, popular music, Mesoamerican cosmologies, speculative fiction, vernacular festivities and crafts, decolonial feminisms and queer of colour critique.

Naomi Rincón Gallardo completed the PhD in Practice Program at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Recent shows and performative screenings include: 59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia (2022), 34th Bienal de São Paulo (2021), Una Trilogía de Cuevas (A Trilogy of Caves), 2020 (Solo Show) Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Oaxaca, May your thunder break the sky, 2020 (Solo Show) Kunstraum Innsbruck, 11 Berlin Biennale, 2020 Berlin, Heavy Blood, 2019, (Solo Show) Museo Experimental El Eco, Mexico City, Opossum Resilience, 2019, (Solo Show) Parallel Oaxaca, 2019, Stone Telling, 2019, (Collective Show) Kunstraum Niederösterreich Vienna, *En Cuatro Patas*, 2018, (Performative Screening) *Pacific Standard Time. L.A.L.A.* The Broad Museum, L.A., *Prometheus. Four Artists from Mexico Revisit Orozco.* (Collective Show), 2018, Pomona College Museum of Art, L.A., FEMSA Biennial. *We have Never been Contemporary*, 2018, Zacatecas; *Odarodle, An imaginary their_story of naturepeoples, 1535-2017*, 2017, (Collective Show) Schwules Museum, Berlin, and Nicaragua Biennial, 2016, Managua.

The Formaldehyde Trip has been shown at: SF MOMA, San Francisco CA (2017), The Broad Museum, LA, California, USA (2018); Academy of Fine Art, Vienna, Austria (2018); the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, USA (2020); The New Museum NYC, New York, USA (2022); amongst others.

GABRIEL ROSSELL SANTILLÁN

Born 1976, CDMX (Mexico City)

Lives in Berlin, DE and Taupurie-Sta. Catarina, MX

Gabriel Rossell Santillán's work shows an engagement with images which give centrality to the process of memorial reconstruction. In this way, the topic of "return of memory (memories)" is at the centre of his work. Since the artist first engaged with the Wixárika Indigenous community in Mexico in the Proyecto Wixárika, a thorough thinking about the return of the "order of the things" was set in motion. [This is connected to ancestral fathers and mothers, as well as to their relations to offerings and elements of ceremonies such as non-human subjects, rivers and mountains.] Regarding this project, it is important to stress the return of the "order of things" (which can be represented in an image) and not the return of the objects themselves. [For the Wixárika, what we call "ethnological objects" are, in fact, offerings and ceremonial utensils.] In this way, the Wixárika project has the aim to develop a method – a way – to return knowledge and memories of sacred ceremonies to Wixáritari communities in Mexico.



Beyond this project, the topic of the "relation of things" – the reconnection of offerings and ceremonial utensils with the community – has always been present and has continued in his most recent work.(...)

(...) The video „Los Lobos. Zweites Zusammentreffen und Befragung der Wixárika Opfergabe in Berlin“ (2017 - 2022), shows conversations between Mara'akate, the artist and staff of the Museum in Dahlem – after having engaged in two ceremonies. At the museum, where every participant was re-named, the Mara'akate looked for images of extinct animals and plants as well as ceremonial utensils with drawings, patterns and/or techniques carrying information about textile methods which do not exist in the Wixárika communities anymore. This resulted in the project of a booklet about these extinct animals and plants as well as the offerings (which are in Berlin) and the extinct methods, for the younger generations. Further, the video shows how the Mara'akate reordered ceremonial utensils at the museum and explained the importance of maintaining a correct order of (material) things. According to their knowledge, this order is important for the wellbeing of humanity.

– Andrea Meza Torres, originally for "Die Vibration der Dinge" at the 15. Triennale Kleinplastik Fellbach 2022.



Los Lobos: Second meeting and questioning of the Wixárika offering in Berlin

2017 – 2022, HD Video, 16' 18"

El Cajón

2014–2019, Video Mini DV and audio reconstruction (2019) of Nik Nowak’s concert at the Berghain Kantine in 2014, with texts as a tribute to Aimé Césaire’s “Discourse on Colonialism”, in collaboration with Nik Nowak, 17’38”



Installation

2023, Printed plastic curtains, variable dimensions



Gabriel Rossell Santillán (*1976 in Mexico City) lives and works in Berlin, Germany and Taupurie/Santa Catarina, Mexico. In his work he uses drawing, performance, photography and video in order to stage narratives that provide an epistemology towards shared authorships, feminists of colour, critical indigenous theory, and queer thinking. These explore the transfer of subaltern and alternative forms of knowledge and focus on the body—for example, in the interaction with smell, heat or humidity.

Gabriel Rossell Santillán attended the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, UNAM, in Mexico City, as well as the Universidad Complutense in Madrid, Spain and the Universität der Künste (UdK) in Berlin. He graduated as Master Student of Prof. Lothar Baumgarten. In 2008 he was awarded the DAAD-Preis for foreign students’ outstanding achievements. 2009–2010 he was promoted with the NaFöG grant for visual arts. 2010–2012 he had the Atelier fellowship from the Karl Hofer Gesellschaft. 2017 the book fellowship from the Stiftung Kunstfond “de todos colores menos plomo”. 2020/21 and 2022 NEUSTART KULTUR from Stiftung Kunstfonds. Rossell Santillán has presented his work in numerous exhibitions in Germany, Europe, Mexico, Latin America and Asia.

CO-PRODUCTION

lagos

Art Studios and Residencies

LAGOS

www.artelagos.mx

LAGOS is an artist studio and residency space in Mexico City dedicated to the production and development of contemporary art projects and their exhibition. LAGOS is an organization that supports artists and promotes the intersection of art professionals. Lagos seeks to support artists at crucial moments in their careers in three ways: by offering workspace, facilitating collaborations with specialists in various disciplines, and promoting new audiences through a diverse program that includes open studios and exhibitions. One of the first of its kind in Mexico City, the LAGOS Studios & Artist Residencies, is open to artists, curators, writers, editors and cultural agents, offering them opportunities, networks, professional connections and curatorial support to engage in the rich creative panorama of Mexico City.



MOMENTUM

www.momentumworldwide.org

MOMENTUM is a non-profit platform for time-based art, active worldwide since 2010, with headquarters in Berlin at the Kunstquartier Bethanien Art Center. MOMENTUM's program is composed of local and international Exhibitions, Artist and Curator Residencies, Video Art in Public Space Initiatives, a Performance Archive, an Education Archive, and a growing Collection. Positioned as both a local and global platform, MOMENTUM serves as a bridge joining professional art communities, irrespective of institutional and national borders. MOMENTUM is dedicated to providing a platform for exceptional artists with a program focused on the growing diversity and relevance of time-based practices, continuously seeking innovative answers to the question 'What is time-based art?'



Next page

LUIS CARRERA-MAUL

Bosque de Chapultepec II [Cat.4]

LIST OF WORKS & EXHIBITION MAP

JULIETA ARANDA

- 1 *Regresando un Regalo / Returning a Gift*
2023, Performance, video, audio recording, music box, paper, wire, cardboard, paint, charcoal, vinyl, variable dimensions

LUIS CARRERA-MAUL

- 2 *STRATUM / Wasteland*
2023, Installation, soil, ceramic paste, recycled material, geomembrane, drip irrigation system, 300×400 cm
- 3 *Reminiscences*
2017–2023, 12 Glass bottles filled with water from rivers in Germany: Neckar, Rhein, Lahn, Mosel, Wupper, Wesser, Fulda, Elbe, Spree, Donau, Saalach, Isar
- 4 *Bosque de Chapultepec I*
2014, Digital print, 50×70 cm
- 5 *Bosque de Chapultepec II*
2014, Digital print, 50×70 cm

MARIANA CASTILLO DEBALL

- 6 *UMRISS*
2014, Two laser chrome prints mounted on dibond, 270×180 cm
Courtesy Kurimanzutto Gallery

EMILIO CHAPELA

- 7 *Río Revuelto*
2023, Six paintings polyptych, acrylic on canvas, each 140×140 cm.

SANDRA CONTRERAS & ANSELMO FOX

- 8 *intervene / negotiate*
2023, Wood, cotton rope, plaster, furniture, dimensions variable

BEATRIZ MORALES

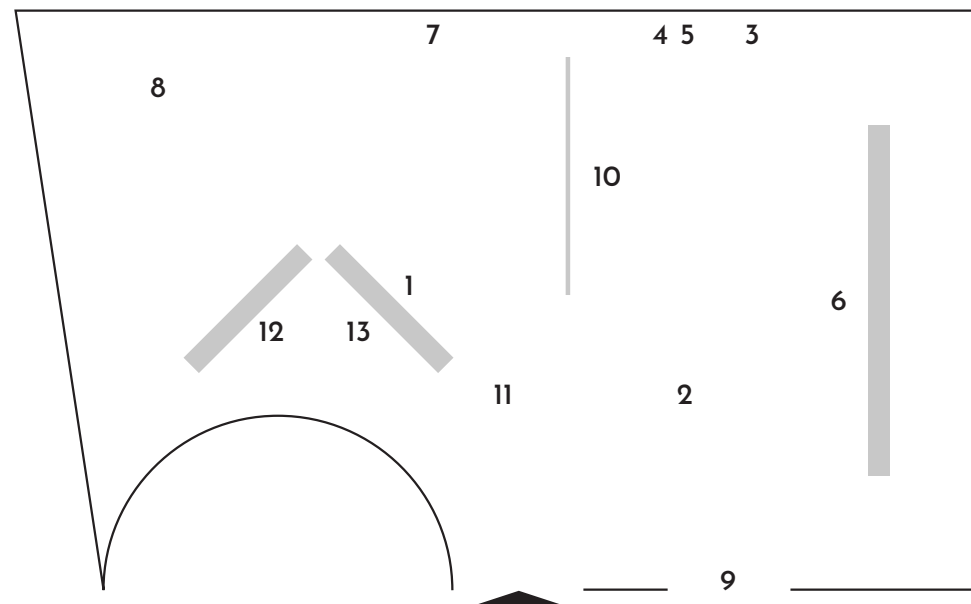
- 9 *Ts'ul*
2020, Agave fibre, acrylic, natural pigments, ink on cotton and jute fabric, 550×210×10 cm

NAOMI RINCÓN GALLARDO

- 10 *Alex(ander) and Axol(otl)*
2017, HD Video, 31'37" (extended version).

GABRIEL ROSSELL SANTILLÁN

- 11 *Installation*
2023, Printed plastic curtains, variable dimensions
- 12 *Los Lobos: Second meeting and questioning of the Wixárika offering in Berlin*
2017–2022, HD Video, 16'18"
- 13 *El Cajón*
2014–2019, Video Mini DV and audio reconstruction (2019) of Nik Nowak's concert at the Berghain Kantine in 2014, with texts as a tribute to Aimé Césaire's "Discourse on Colonialism", in collaboration with Nik Nowak, 17'38"



EXHIBITION PHOTOS





COLOPHON

Published on the occasion of the exhibition
In weiter Ferne, so Nah! – Mexiko in Berlin
[Far Away, So Close – Mexico in Berlin]

Mexican Cultural Institute in Germany
in the Mexican Embassy
Klingelhöferstraße 3, 10785 Berlin
6 July - 23 August 2023

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Mexiko in Berlin

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