

Tomás Díaz Cedeño

PEANA



Tomás Díaz Cedeño's (b. 1983, MX) artistic production explores the proportion between the natural and the artificial, as well as the continuous interaction between empirical belief systems and scientific methodologies. His practice examines the expressive range material objects can embody when forced into previously unknown relationships. His physically evocative formal explorations connote an inherent mysticism, recalling alternative representation of the body, nature's organic structures, and amulets of peripheral systems of beliefs. He examines these relations through a delicate, tenuous –even grotesque– visual language rooted in a committed, intimate dialogue with the materials he uses.

Amongst Díaz Cedeño's most recent projects there is "El Ensamble del Ocaso" at Museo Marco, Monterrey, Mx, 2022, "Todos me amarán: Arte de México hoy" curated by Carlota Ortíz Monasterio in Fundación de México in Madrid, Spain, 2022-2023, "Soft Water Hard Stone" with Margot Norton and Jamillah James's curatorship in the New Museum as part of the New Museum Triennial, New York, USA, 2021 and "666" en Galerie Nordenhake in CDMX, Mx, 2021. Previous exhibitions include "Wishing well, dream of permanence" a solo booth presented by PEANA at FRIEZE Art Fair within Indira's Net a project curated by Sandhini Poddar, London, UK; "Soñó con el fuego, soñó con las rocas" a solo booth presented by PEANA at Liste Art Fair, Basel, CH, 2022; "Usando este cuerpo, pensando en la fuente" at PEANA, Monterrey, MX, 2019; "Vessels", at BWS Gallery, CDMX, MX, 2018. Additionally, his latest group exhibitions include "Durian on the Skin" at François Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles, USA, 2022; "El ensamble del ocaso" at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Monterrey, Monterrey, MX, 2022; "Por debajo del árbol" at PRAXIS studio of Architecture Agustín Hernández Navarro, PEANA-Off site, CDMX, MX, 2022; "Soft Water Hard Stone" curated by Margot Norton and Jamillah James at the New Museum, New York, USA, 2022; and "666" a two person show at Galerie Nordenhake in CDMX, MX, 2021, to mention a few. Recent residency programs completed by the artist include LaCasaPark Artist Residency in New York, USA, 2021, and Casa Wabi in Puerto Escondido, Oaxaca, MX, 2020.

LIVES AND WORKS

CDMX, MX

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2022 FRIEZE Art Fair; London, UK.

2022 Liste Art Fair; Basel, CH.

2019 Usando este cuerpo, pensando en la fuente, PEANA; Monterrey, MX.

2018 Vessels, BWSMX Gallery; CDMX, MX.

2015 Wetworks, Yautepec; CDMX, MX.

2014 Dispossessed Souls, No Man Was My Brother, Parallel; Oaxaca, MX.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2022 Todos me amarán: arte de México hoy, Fundación Casa de México en España; Madrid, ES.

2022 Durian on the Skin, François Ghebaly; Los Ángeles, USA.

2022 El ensamble del ocaso, Museo MARCO; Monterrey, MX.

2022 The Beyond, curated by Samantha Ozer; Los Ángeles, USA.

2022 Por debajo del árbol, PRAXIS estudio del arquitecto Agustín Hernández Navarro, PEANA Off-site; CDMX, MX.

2021 Un Lago de Jade Verde, Institute of Post Natural Studies; Madrid, SP.

2021 Soft Water, Warm Stone, New Museum; New York, USA.

2021 666, Galerie Nordenhake; CDMX, MX.

2020 La memoria que no recordamos, PEANA & LABOR; Monterrey, MX.

2020 Museo Autoservicio, Off-site curated by Daniel Garza-Usabiaga; CDMX, MX.

2019 Cold Pleasure, Warm Touch, PEANA; Monterrey, MX.

2019 Approaching Abstraction; Blain Southern; London, UK.

2018 Prima Materia, PEANA Off-site; New York, USA.

2018 Pintura Reactiva, Museo Carrillo Gil; CDMX, MX.

2017 The Space Between Us, Torres Gutierrez; Los Ángeles, USA.

2016 This Psychodrama, SME Gallery; San Diego, USA.

2015 Texas Contemporary Art Fair, Yautepec; Houston, USA.

2015 Hotel Londres, Dark Arts International; CDMX, MX.

2015 Under a Thawing Lake, Dark Arts International; CDMX, MX.

2014 USBs, Lodos; CDMX, MX.

2014 Stimulations, GRAVA; CDMX, MX.

2013 Tráfico, Otras Obras; Tijuana, MX.

2013 Dancing in Circles, NO Space; CDMX, MX.

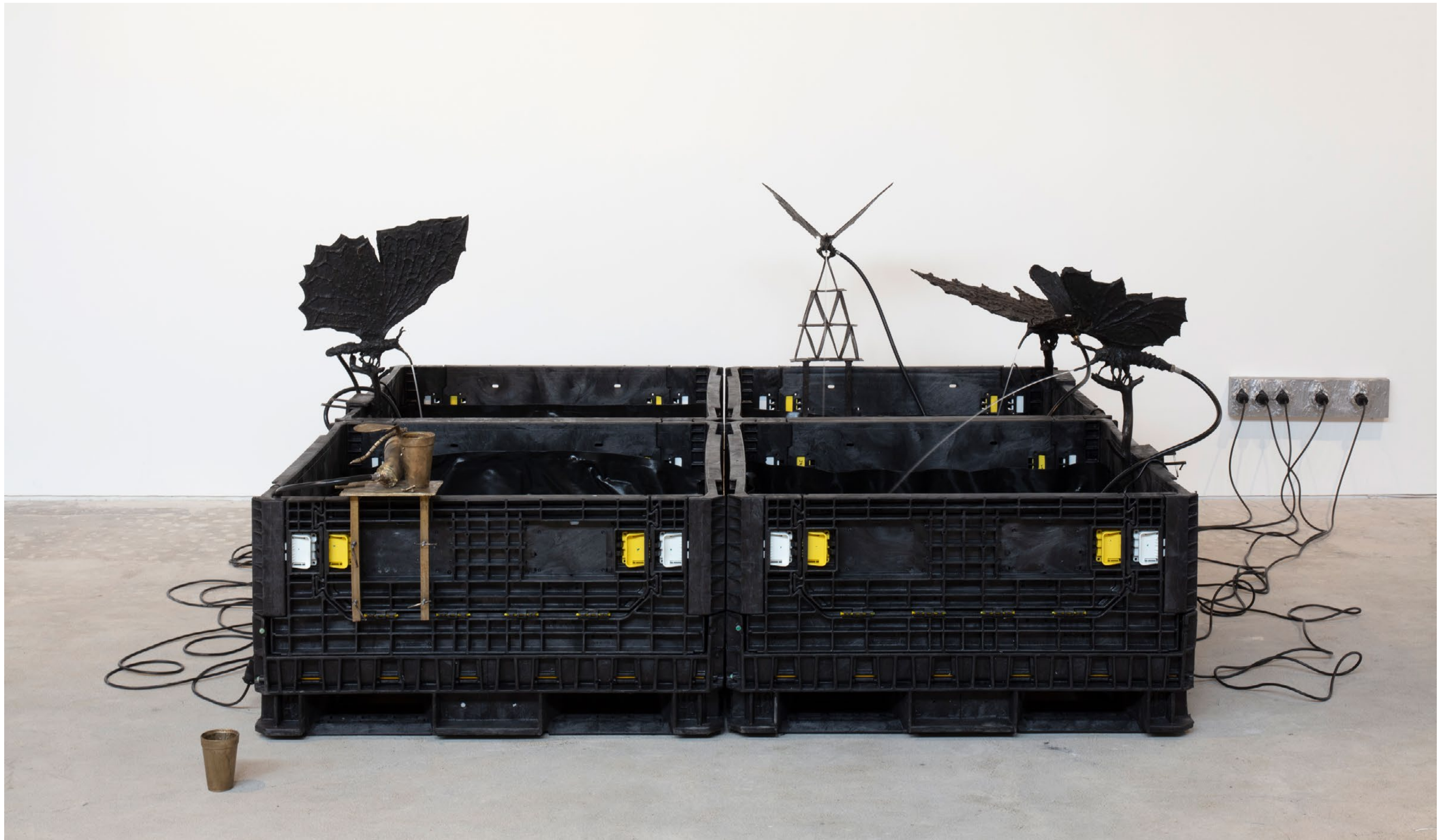
2013 Becas Adidas Border, Museo del Chopop; CDMX, MX.

RESIDENCIES

2021 La Casa Park, Gardiner; New York, USA.

2020 Casa Wabi; Oaxaca, MX.

2018 Residency Unlimited; New York, USA.



Wishing well, dream of permanence I , 2022

Fountain installation: Four collapsible bulk containers, five bronze casted fountain sculptures, two bronze casted sculptures, one electrical outlet made out of aluminum cast from wrecked auto parts and water pumps

Wishing Well, Dream of Permanence

Indra's Net, FRIEZE, London, October 2022

Mexico City-based artist, Tomás Díaz Cedeño's practice in sculpture and installation explores the dynamic cycles and interconnections between the body, objecthood, our built environment and nature at large. Cedeño's ontological probing of the artificial and the organic, through his interests in both the talismanic/ mystical as well as the scientific, allows for an equivocal and nuanced understanding of our contemporary relationships with these subjects.

At Frieze London, the artist states, "Make-a-wish fountains are part of popular culture and tourism. A cultural vestige of symbolizing offering or payment to the gods for the enormous privilege of finding drinking water.

In the future, drinking water used for entertainment or decoration will probably be seen as a characteristic waste of the brutality, ostentation and savagery of a previous time." Butterflies, moth, and axolotls are characterised by transformation and metamorphosis; salvaged metal parts from wrecked cars and buildings in Mexico City transmogrify into cast reliefs, pointing to scarcity, labour and resourcefulness in contemporary urban landscapes.

Sandhini Poddar





Eating you, 2022
Bronze

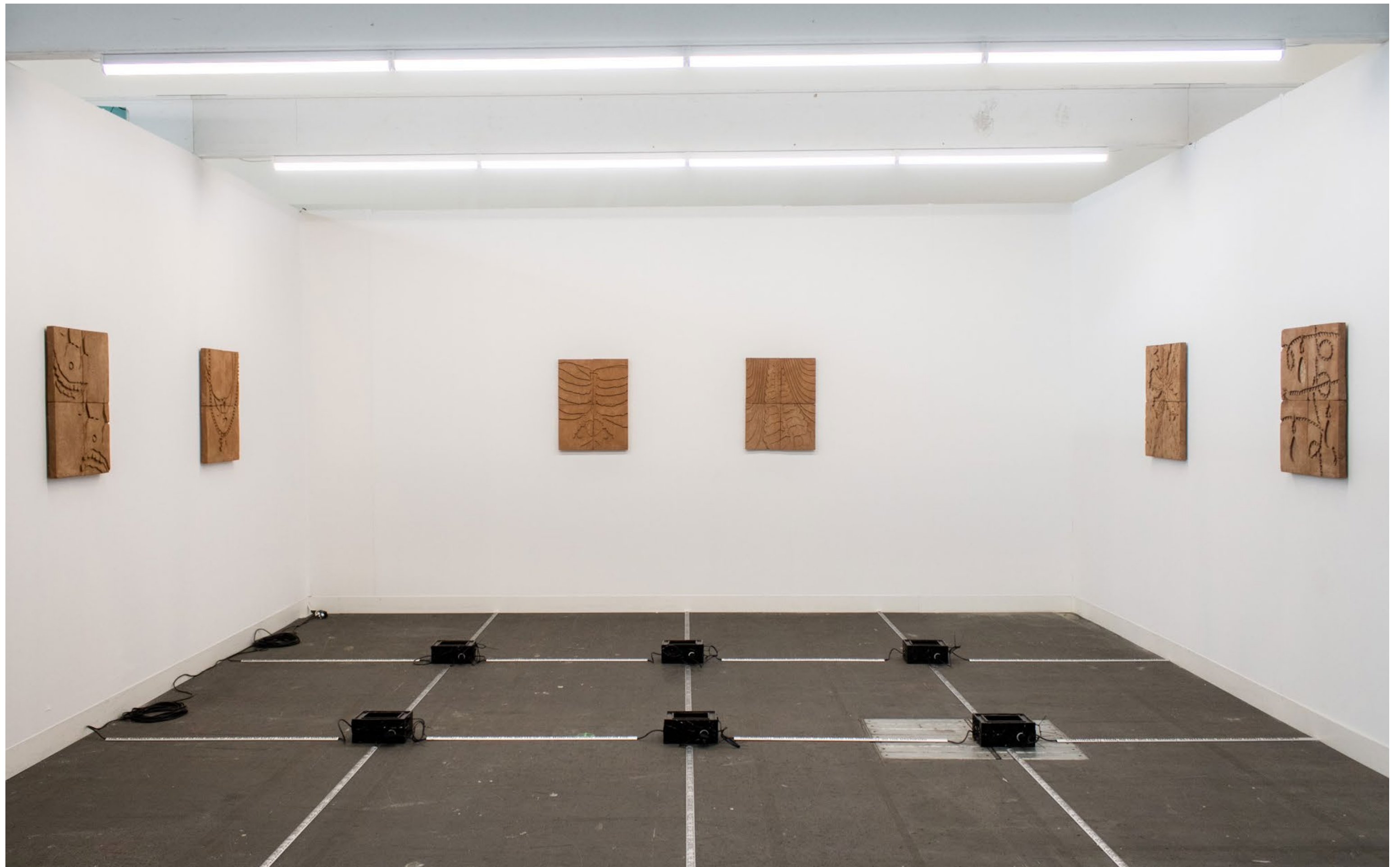
Soñó con el fuego, Soñó con las rocas

LISTE, Basilea, June 2022

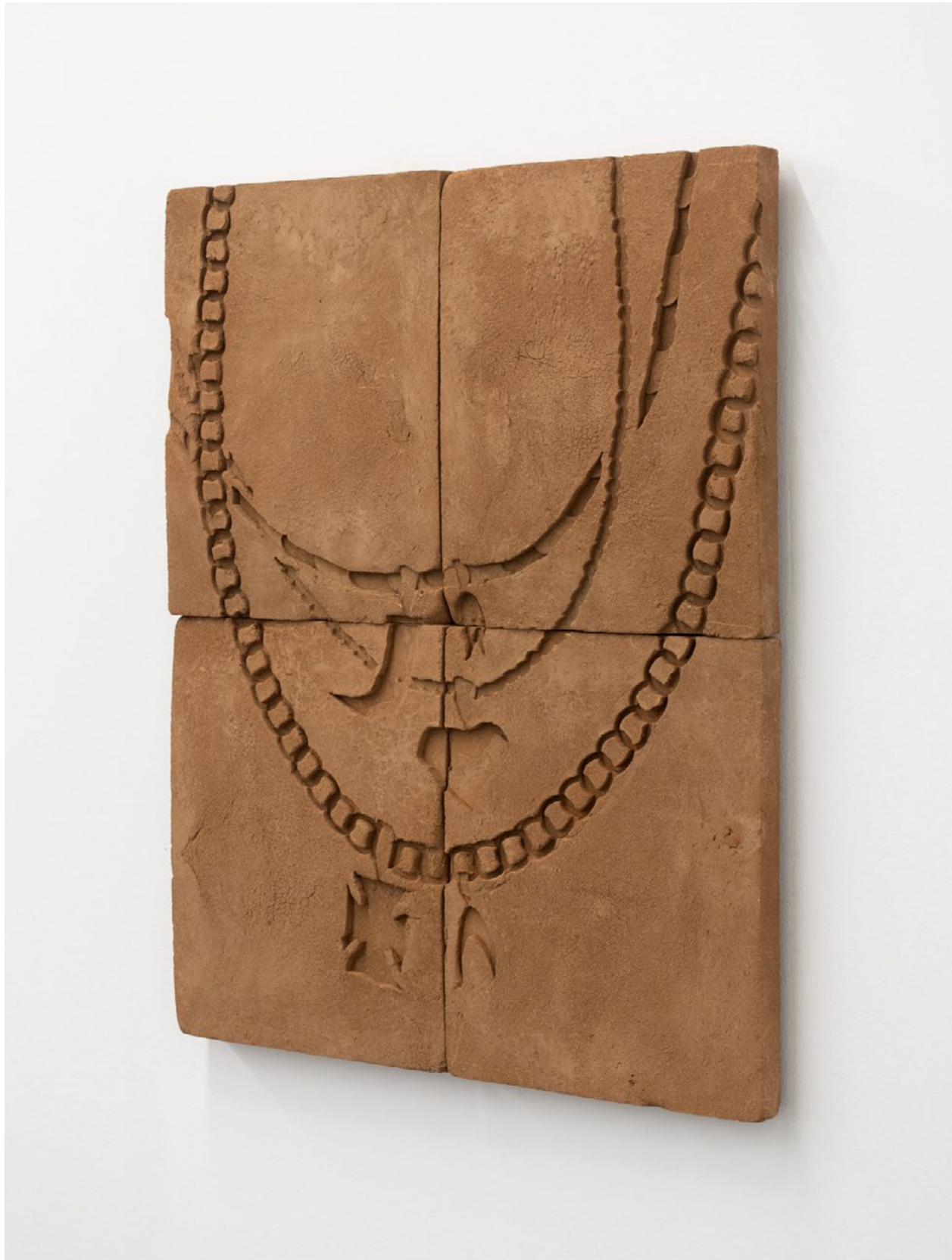
“Soñó con el fuego, soñó con las rocas” by Tomás Díaz Cedeño was a solo booth presented by PEANA at Liste Art Fair 2022 in Basel. This exhibition showcased a series of base-relief panels made out of terracotta from Michoacán. The panels shown on the three walls of the booth act as fictional portraits of the local landscape and personal stories. Accompanying the panels, an aluminum grid installation consisted of six glazed ceramic sculptures; each displaying a video depicting subtle actions of the body coming into contact with the ground and merging with layers of previous industrial interventions in the landscape. Along the grid, extracts of a poem referencing a myth of creation are inscribed, attesting to the naturalness of the synthetic in which rituals of preservation and survival are carried out. This body of work by Tomás Díaz Cedeño asks that we rethink and question the concepts of nature, body, and landscape.

This installation expands on a body of work developed by Díaz Cedeño, where he works with site-specific materials to create objects integrated within the landscape that evoke fictional settings and whose temporal origin cannot be clearly identified, as well, as a continuation of his investigation of natural cycles, as seen on his installation 1000 years (2021 New Museum Triennial, New York). This body of work by Tomás Díaz Cedeño is informed by the idea that ecology is ‘dark’ as proposed by Timothy Morton. It demands that we rethink and question the concepts of nature and ecology and our intimate interconnections with them.











El ensamble del ocaso

MARCO – Contemporary Art Museum of Monterrey, MX, March 2022

“Because of the wide sky and lack of tall objects, I become quickly aware of any visitors in the Yard. I spot their figures even if they are far in the distance and only small shapes moving among the rows. But visitors aren’t frequent, and when I hear human voices, they most often belong to the yardmen calling each other.”

Klara and The Sun, Kazuo Ishiguro

El ensamble del ocaso [The Sunset Ensemble] is an exhibition organized by Ana Pérez Escoto and PEANA for the Sculpture Patio at MARCO. The show places the work of artists Ana Mazzei, Berenice Olmedo, ektor garcia, Federico Pérez Villoro, Gordon Hall, Rodrigo Hernández, Sites, Tezontle, and Tomás Díaz Cedeño at a crossroad of common temporal and spatial conditions. Enclosed by the museum’s outer walls and allocated under open skies over the Patio’s stone carpets, this exhibition summons a grid of signs related to the landscape’s structures, as well as to the position and balance of the discrete energies traversing it. These directions activate and deactivate through fields, or stations—places not exactly inhabited, but not impersonal either, that we will use to encounter each artist and their subtle or sharp material transformations for this particular region of the museum.

As a result of its exterior condition, the exhibition is put into proximity with the central blocks of the city of Monterrey and, to the east, under the lines of one of the city’s most important mountains and natural monuments. El ensamble del ocaso [The Sunset Ensemble] shares its phenomena with this same eastern sun and its movement as the day passes, sharpening the architectural shadows that resonate through several works. This magnetic environment has also facilitated the infiltration of a context and a life for these structures. Indications of materials and societies whose operations take place in diverse temporalities: structures for stillness and repose, but also for memory and storytelling: structures that emit signals and symbols, but also those that accept the body, making it go through histories that are both intimately personal and anonymously institutional. El ensamble del ocaso [The Sunset Ensemble] appraises these structures and their functions in a shared territory. Appearing as a river whose bed has dried, the Sculpture Patio reveals to us instruments, vessels, and emitters that are now visible: works that speculate with an energy whose availability is uncertain but capable of influencing, from a deliberately ambiguous moment in time, the imagination of our surroundings.

Christian Camacho







Semillas, 2022
Low temperature clay and steel



Camino a Senguio, 2022
Low temperature clay and steel

Background Foreground

Casa Wabi, Oaxaca, MX., November 2020

During his residency at Casa Wabi, Tomás Díaz Cedeño worked with soil from the locality to produce a new body of work that resorts to bas-relief mosaics to explore natural and organic motifs typical of the region's landscape and their link to architecture.

Clay used for the elaboration of mosaics is generally associated with the decorative arts, as well as with the forms of artistic representation of antiquity. In these, the differentiation between artistic objects and architectural objects is blurred in order to represent certain specific motifs. The 15th century grotto style, the 19th century decorative arts and crafts movements, as well as the previous systems of antiquity all resorted to this format and medium to construct a representation of nature.

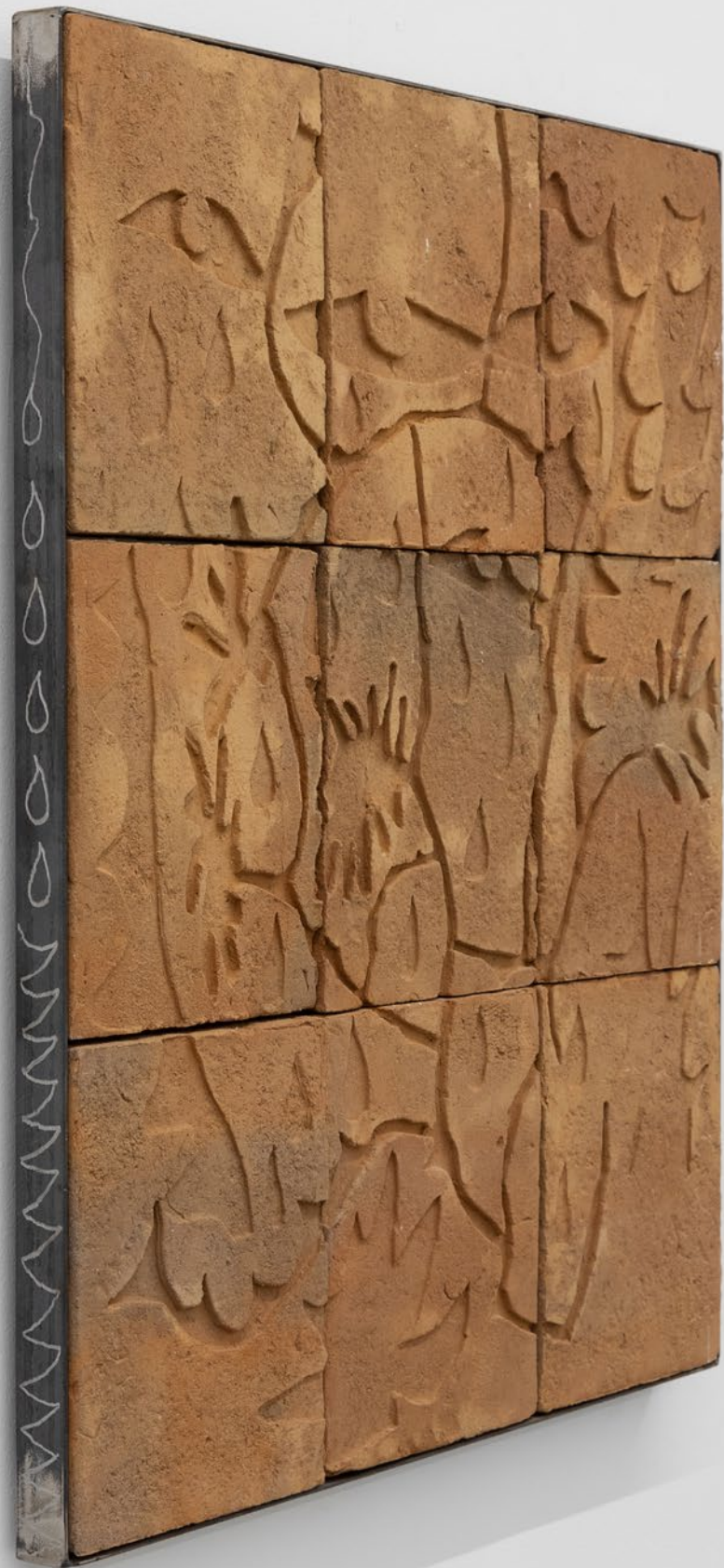
Díaz Cedeño is interested in the idea of the parasitism of an object integrated into the architecture, rethinking the representation of nature and landscape no longer as external or alien to the human body, but as a system incorporated into it; intrinsic and interdependent.







Lodo de ciénaga, arena de río, 2020
Low temperature clay and steel



Hay un fantasma, 2020
Low temperature clay and steel



Agua zarca, 2020
Low temperature clay and steel





Background foreground, 2020
High temperature ceramics and aluminum



Bosque, 2020
High temperature glazed ceramics and aluminum



Cruzando los dedos, 2020
High temperature glazed ceramics, aluminum and ribbons

Por Debajo del Árbol

PRAXIS Studio of Architect Agustín Hernández Navarro,
PEANA Off-site, CDMX, MX, February 2022

PRAXIS Taller de Arquitectura Agustín Hernández opens its doors for the first time to the public with the exhibition *Por debajo del árbol* (What Lies Under the Tree); a project presented by PEANA and curated by Ana Pérez Escoto and Carlota Pérez-Jofre, bringing together contemporary works of fifteen artists in dialogue with Agustín Hernández's universe.

Our evolutionary nature has forced us to seek a psychological sense of security and protection -and to build spaces that allow it- in order to put aside our vigilant instinct and reach deep states of sleep. Built from a set of prisms and pyramids that seem impenetrable, Agustín Hernández's workshop, known as PRAXIS (1975), floats among the trees at a height of forty meters. With steel roots that go underground and replicating the principles of compression and tension of the branches of the ocotes, the Mexican architect built the perfect sanctuary to be able to "dream his research out loud". Given the opportunity to observe his private world, his discordant ideas become heartfelt confessions. Monumentality breaks down into vulnerabilities. What universes unfold behind these secret passageways? What creatures inhabit this unique tree house? How has the passage of time revealed certain flaws in the matrix? matrix? It is here that reality becomes dreamlike.

In dialogue with the traces left behind in Agustín's workshop at Praxis, *What Lies Under the Tree*, begins with sculptures that draw lines with architectural representation, approaching the model as a field of speculation. The pieces by Carlos H. Matos, Pedro Reyes and Agustín Hernández himself, despite their diverse references and techniques, find common ground in the use of pre- Hispanic language as the foundation of modern identity in Mexico. Rodrigo Hernández sets aside earthly heaviness with the sculpture *¿Qué escucho cuando escucho el discurrir del tiempo?* (2019), which from the visual synthesis makes an invitation to play, imagination and explore the most private corners of the house-studio. François Halard presents a series of photographs taken in 2020, as an intimate glimpse into the studio when it was still in use. Ryan Lowry's photographs capture spontaneous moments he shared with Agustín recently, though their retro look lends them the same nostalgic air as the accompanying images of the architect as a child, as well as the blueprints and models of projects that, unfortunately, were never constructed.

One floor up, Mario García Torres presents a series of bronze sculptures that replicate pieces of parquet rescued from the Meditation Center that Hernández made for his sister, Amalia, in 1984; today a ruin. *Space and Thought: New Perspectives on the Tree House* (2022) is a phenomenological project by Lucas Cantú that seeks to dialogue and overlap with the architect's archive, as well as to question the possibilities of inhabiting the uninhabitable: camping in mid air, suspended from a concrete tree to visualize the world through a disconnected retreat. Tania Pérez Córdova's work is based on everyday objects and explores the implicit narratives of her materials; her series *Contenidos de bolsillo* (2021) is an attempt to recover vanished moments, while *Escena para un baño* (2022) responds to the space itself as if it were a theatrical set, designed to tell stories. *Clocks* (2022) by Ghislaine Leung and *Pieza mural* (*Hoy si hubo, mañana quien sabe*) (2022) by **Tomás Díaz Cedeño**, operate as interventions in a system that goes beyond the immediate space: Leung's piece makes each electrical outlet visible, shining a subtle light on details that would otherwise go unnoticed, while Díaz Cedeño replaces the electrical switches with small pieces that put into perspective the concept of the mural in relation to monumentality. *All at Once* (2021) by Lila de Magalhaes uses as medium scraps of dyed bed sheets to immerse us in a world as delicate as it is psychedelic, where a pair strange insects smile tenderly.

The highest part of the tree serves as both a lookout and a lighthouse, illuminating through a skylight the three internal levels of the house-studio. Already in this alternate reality, *El niño y la serpiente* (2020) and *Vampiro frente al espejo* (2020) by the artistic duo ASMA, explore transformation as a place of endless possibilities. Stella Zhong's *satellite* presents itself as a failed attempt to connect us with the infinite, with that world of ghostly appearances that glimmers in Santiago Licata's series images on graphite. And, on that plane where incoherence reigns, Louis Eisner pays homage to the collective psychosis with a portrait of a tormented baboon.

At first glance, Agustín Hernández could be placed in the cult-like category of "men who fell to Earth", his work seemed alien, always breaking with the norm; materializations of the utopian. However, reviewing in detail his almost one hundred years of life—his emotional architecture, his poetry, his drawings, his memories and his unrealized projects—it becomes clear that his sensibility could not be from another world. His tireless pursuit for novelty, always based on historical and scientific knowledge, is reflected in the spaces he has built, which to this day are meeting points and intergenerational references. *What Lies Under the Tree* is but one example of the multiple worlds that can exist within the universe of Agustín Hernández.

Aída Cantú Artigas



Pieza de mural (hoy si hay, mañana quien sabe), 2022
Aluminium cast and electrical switch



Pieza de mural (hoy si hay, mañana quien sabe), 2022
Aluminium cast and electrical switch

Soft Water, Warm Stone

New Museum 2021 Triennial, New York, US. October 2021 - January 2022

The title of the 2021 Triennial, “Soft Water Hard Stone,” is taken from a Brazilian proverb, versions of which are found across cultures: *Água mole em pedra dura, tanto bate até que fura* (Soft water on hard stone hits until it bores a hole).

The proverb can be said to have two meanings: if one persists long enough, the desired effect can eventually be achieved; and time can destroy even the most perceptibly solid materials. The title speaks to ideas of resilience and perseverance, and the impact that an insistent yet discrete gesture can have in time. It also provides a metaphor for resistance, as water—a constantly flowing and transient material—is capable of eventually dissolving stone—a substance associated with permanence, but also composed of tiny particles that can collapse under pressure.

In this moment of profound change, where structures that were once thought to be stable are disintegrating or on the edge of collapse, the 2021 Triennial recognizes artists re-envisioning traditional models, materials, and techniques beyond established paradigms. Their works exalt states of transformation, calling attention to the malleability of structures, porous and unstable surfaces, and the fluid and adaptable potential of both technological and organic mediums. Throughout the exhibition, artists address the regenerative potential of the natural world and our inseparable relationship to it, and grapple with entrenched legacies of colonialism, displacement, and violence. Their works look back at overlooked histories and artistic traditions, while at the same time look forward toward the creative potential that might give dysfunctional or discarded remains new life. It is through their reconfigurations and reimaginings that we are reminded of not only our temporality, but also our adaptability—fundamental characteristics we share, and that keep us human.

“Soft Water Hard Stone” is curated by Margot Norton, Allen and Lola Goldring Curator at the New Museum, and Jamillah James, Senior Curator, The Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (ICA LA), with Jeanette Bisschops, Curatorial Fellow, and Bernardo Mosqueira, ISLAA Curatorial Fellow.





1000 años, 2019
Five concrete sculpture installation, floor, water pump, glazed stoneware, ceramic, aluminum, hoses





Tomás Díaz Cedeño
Usando este cuerpo, pensando en la fuente
Marzo 27 - Mayo, 2019

PEANA

Usando este cuerpo, pensando en la fuente

PEANA, Monterrey, MX. March - May 2019

The new monuments seem to cause us to forget the future.
Robert Smithson

The proportion between the natural and the artificial, as well as the continuous interaction between empirical belief systems and scientific methodologies, constitute the central axis of the artistic production of Tomás Díaz Cedeño (Mexico City, 1983). "Using this body, thinking of the fountain." is part of this dichotomy, providing a compendium of seven sculptural installations whose physical approach is based on the artist's drawings and studies, transformed through the use of different materials, textures, objects and images that offer keys to reflect on the artist's relationship with three main arguments: landscape, architecture and textiles.

What circumstances and attitudes can be adopted in favor of the guarantee of nature from the perception of the creative genesis? What relevance does this interaction acquire in the current local and international production? Díaz Cedeño appropriates these questions as a starting point for an analysis of the artist's relationship with the landscape. From a formal approach and with an emphasis on the sculptor's craft, the artist transforms the exhibition space into a sort of underground cave. Five structures made of concrete poured into the ground form the basis of the sculptural installation "1000 years". In a kind of energetic union that complements the biological-mineral cycle, an irrigation system activates and connects each sculpture, allowing drops of water to fall from the upper part and onto ceramic bases at their end. The relationship with the formation of stalagmites is not casual, the title refers to the time it takes these unique mineral structures to grow 10 cm. The artificial manufacturing cycle is complemented by the vaporization of essences from four trees: capulin, ahuehuate, tepozan and white willow. The metamorphosis of the gallery is fine-tuned with the piece "Usando este cuerpo", an anthropomorphic arrangement that contends the position of the human being as part of a complex system of matter and energy.

The maquette, a meta-artificial and abstract model of the space, exposes the construction of systems that attest to the naturalness of the synthetic. In this context, architecture is inscribed as a theatre in which rituals of preservation and survival are carried out. "Paisaje" proposes the construction of a ceramic model of the gallery as a partial reality in which the underground cave completely takes over the space and in which the environment is complemented face-to-face with the anthropocentric construction.

In a symbolic language, the formation of these hybrid beings goes back to the intervals of the psyche. In "Powers of Horror", Julia Kristeva defines abject as a state in which everything that encompasses identity and systemic order is disturbed. A "primordial order" that explores the transgressive and threatens our definition and sense of property and hygiene. While abjection is generated in the perception of human fluids, it also involves the use of akin materials such as water (as a biotic activator) or objects that provoke a physical and mental reaction of horror and desire altogether. "Strap On" and "Camino con varas de huizache" become abject objects that reflect the vulnerability of human beings in the face of pain and pleasure, the limits between the animal and the cognitive. In these, Díaz Cedeño continues with previous lines of work in which he analyzes the fetishism of everyday objects and proposes the deconstruction and neutralization of these through their symbolic and material transformation.

Finally, textile is proposed as an extension of the body in the same measure that landscape and architecture generate new dynamics with other elements of their surroundings. "Petate I-IV" is a set of pieces made of recycled aluminium that present the act of sewing in the pattern of the textile's own palm fibres. The petate and other traditional utilitarian textiles have a close relationship with the identity of their communities not only because of their traditional use but also because of the origin of the material with which they are made. Palm, jute, henequen and other natural fibers are linked both to a specific landscape and to an industry that allows or allowed their exploitation. It is in these industries that a dynamic with bodies subordinated through labour is inscribed, acquiring a specific political and economic context.

Díaz Cedeño's atmosphere is constructed between reality and science fiction, in a timeless space in which scientific references intertwine with those of alternative belief systems. However, the formation of these objects is based on rituals closer, more real and essential for the understanding of the relationship between human beings and their environment.

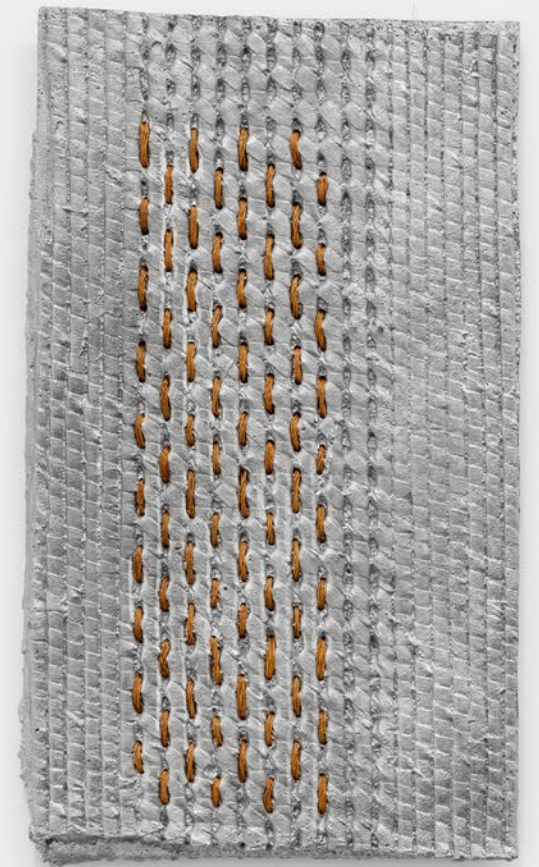
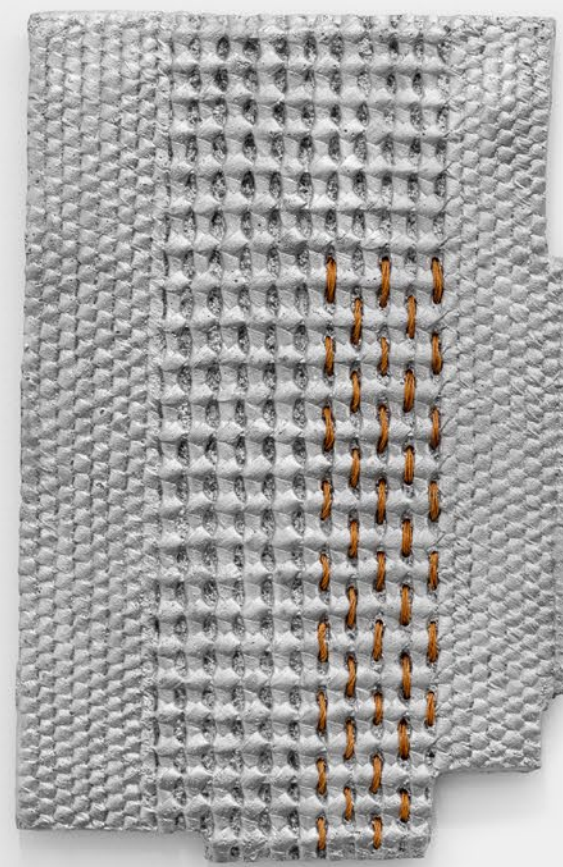
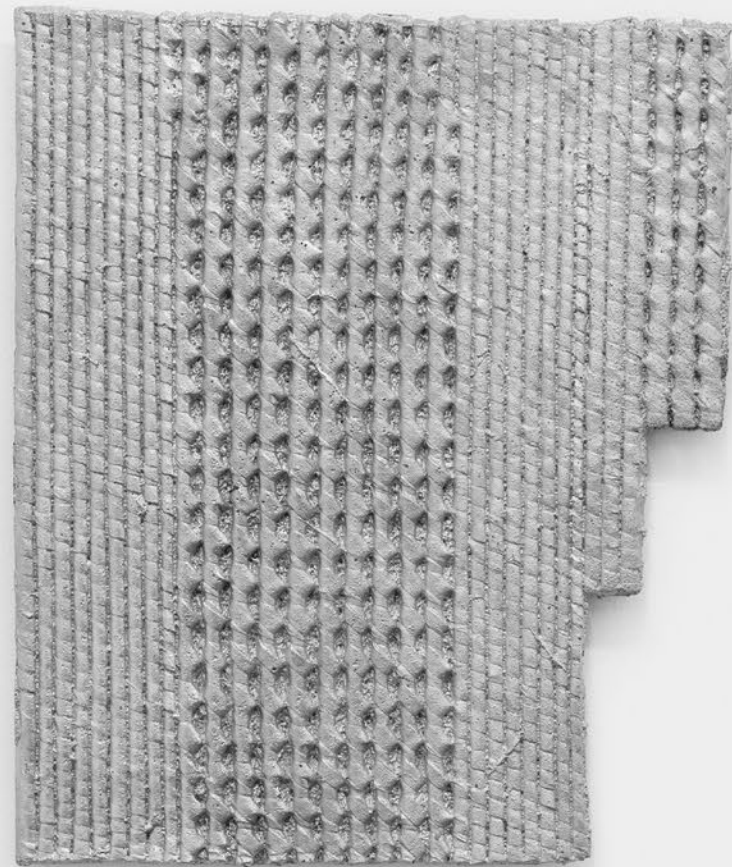
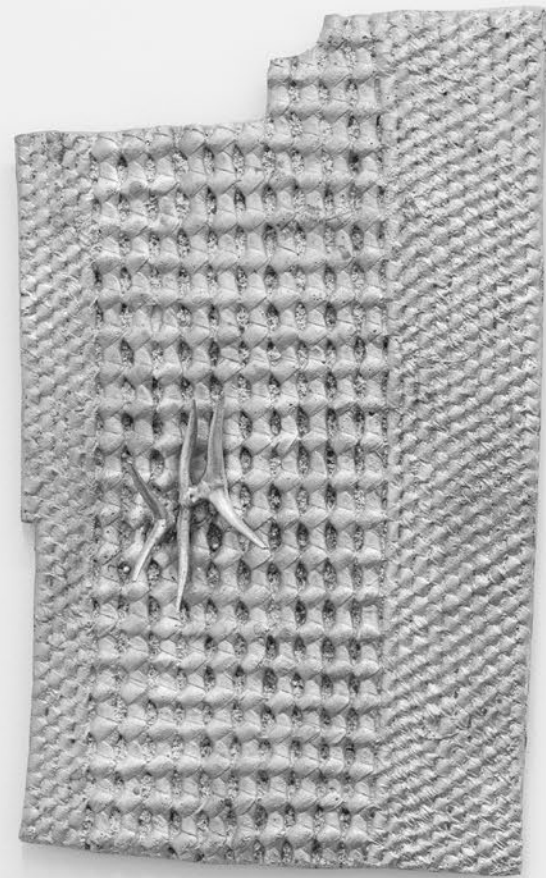
Alberto Ríos de la Rosa



Usando este cuerpo, 2019
Concrete, copper



Strap on, 2019
Soil, plaster, brass powder, leather, thread



Petate I - IV, 2019
Aluminum



Piensa en mí, 2019
Ceramics, aluminum, seeds, leather



Camino con varas de huizache I y II, 2019
Glazed stoneware ceramic, aluminium

Sobre Tierra Roja

2020

In his latest body of work titled "Sobre tierra roja", Tomás Díaz Cedeño continues to explore his interest in navigating the relationships between the natural and the artificial, landscape and architecture, resorting to his distinctive and idiosyncratic formal vocabulary. Comprised of sculptures executed in clay and steel, this body of work evokes an inherent mysticism characteristic of the artist's interest in peripheral belief systems whose syncretism intertwines and incorporates vegetal, animal and anthropogenic motifs. Echoing this notion of a totality composed of a multiplicity of elements, the artist formally constructs the pieces as structures made up of a number high-temperature glazed clay units stacked vertically. In both cases, a metallic "skeleton" makes possible the conjunction of the individual elements, thereby rendering them into a single "body".

As a whole, the works present imagery that is at once familiar and strange: the evocative organic forms present themselves to the viewer with a multi-directional ambiguity that simultaneously references vertebrae, flowers, spikes, branches, thorns, claws, jewelry, or bodily extremities, without allowing for their precise identification. This perceptual shift of the elements that make up Díaz Cedeño's works inevitably results in an invitation to contemplate the vegetal, animal, and human worlds as inextricably linked, with the corresponding mystical, political, and ecological connotations that this entails.





Sobre tierra roja, 2020
High temperature glazed ceramic and steel



Terreno baldío, atardecer, 2020
Glazed high temperature ceramic, steel



Alrededor del cuello, 2020
High temperature glazed ceramic and steel



Holding Hands, 2020
High temperature glazed ceramic, steel and ribbons

Vessels

CDMX, MX. February - April 2018

Tomás Díaz Cedeño has a fixed set of concerns. Through his work as an artist has asked how the body is or can be represented; he has probed the limit between objecthood and humankind; and he has examined the expressive range material objects can embody when forced into previously unknown relationships in an obsessive artistic encounter. He examines these questions through a delicate, tenuous—even grotesque—visual language rooted in a committed, intimate dialogue with the materials he uses.

In *Dispossessed souls, no man was my brother* (2013), his sculptures took on an overt eroticism; splayed and penetrated, they hung on whip-like structures, exposed as they crumbled to the floor. In *Wetworks* (2015), Díaz Cedeño restricted his sculptures to a more established form of restraint: the frame. However, the works were equally rebellious. Removing the frames from the wall and standing them around the gallery floor, in a more confrontational relationship with the viewer, Díaz Cedeño imbued his nearly two-dimensional sculptures with a third dimension. Their backsides exposed, Díaz Cedeño's works ignited in the show's visitors the feeling of doing something illicit.

In *Vessels*, Díaz Cedeño leaves behind a more intellectual relationship with abstraction—in which his works defied concrete objectivity through their monochromatic, iterative language—and instead embraces a vocabulary rooted in daily Mexican life. Monstrous, uncouth, beastly, the “amulets,” as Díaz Cedeño describes them, replicate popular, peripheral systems of belief.

In what he calls a “morphological remodeling,” Díaz Cedeño's sculptures have taken on the material and symbolic language of witchcraft. Mounted on the wall, the protective, mystical structures encase organic and inorganic materials representative of popular ritual—objects one finds wandering the markets of Mexico City. By repurposing his treatment of materials like gesso and plaster applied now to natural materials like vegetable fiber or organic fabric, Díaz Cedeño reinvigorates the unique approach to materials he has mastered in previous works. The result is a sort of uncanny synthetic skin that envelops each sculpture's precarious, ritualistic landscape: a jagged support, coarsely stitched, that wavers between organic and inorganic consistencies.

Sculptures that once dwelled on an otherworldly coming-to-life of objects, conjured by an intimate relationship between object and body, now incorporate a visual idiolect with superstitious, salvific characteristics typical of Mexico City, where Díaz Cedeño is from and continues to work.

A nail, a crown of thorns, seeds, skins, furs. In *Vessels*, these materials are suffused with a sense of urgency—the result of an individualistic spiritual aspiration and the associated anxiety, of a yearning for contentment. This form of object-driven occultism—what Díaz Cedeño has characterized as a material-based questioning of the object as a representation of the body's inherent mysticism—obtains a newfound complexity. The sculptures in *Vessels* reframe Díaz Cedeño's examination of fragility, weakness, desire, and representation, within the social and economic structures that govern the contradictory and bizarre business of salvation.

Nika Simone Chilewich



Tierra y Pasto Seco, Luz Rasante, 2017
Huizache branches, concrete, pigment, hemp, fabric, plaster



Piel de vaca, aluminio, yute, acanto, poliuretano y pigmentos, 2017
Mixed media



Protección, 2017
Vegetable Fiber, hemp, fabric and plaster





Camina, 2018
Pig leather, snake skin, pigment, hemp, fabric, plaster



Untitled, 2019
Iron oxide, hydro cal, plastic mesh, and thread



7, 2018.
Cow skin, branches, seeds, roots, salt, soil, concrete nails, waxed thread



Say the words, 2018
Steel, concrete nails, seeds, pigment, waxed thread, fabric and plaster

PEANA

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