

**Lucas Cantú**

**PEANA**

## ABOUT

Lucas Cantú (b.1982, Monterrey), lives and works in Mexico City. Trained as an architect, he uses sculpture, installation and experimental architecture to develop projects that are firmly grounded in expansive material exploration and construction processes. Through his works, Cantú conducts research into his self-developed concept *Sinseñalismo* (life without signal), questioning the interrelation between human experience and the outdoors. These projects arise from a formal and personal language through which Cantú generates utopian and dystopian scenarios.

Cantú was a tutor at the AA Beton Machine satellite school. The program took place at Edward James' surrealist garden in Las Pozas, Xilitla S.P., and served as a platform to investigate the empirical techniques of concrete, as well as to draw connections between the site and the layered history of monumental sculpture in Mexico. Cantú, together with Matos Carlos H. Matos, formed *Tezontle* in 2016, a collaborative project which produces research-lead work based on an array of aesthetic and historical references. With intensive material experimentation, they have constructed a distinct imagery which refers to a bucolic utopia, at once modernist, pre-Hispanic and primitive.

His works as part of *Tezontle* have been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions in places such as Friedman Benda in New York, Museo MARCO in Monterrey, LIGA in Mexico City, Museo Tamayo in Mexico City, and PEANA. Public works include 'Tenaza' a monumental sculpture commissioned by the XIII Havana Biennial in Havana and 'Terma El Papelillo' a sculptural sauna located on the coast of Oaxaca. *Tezontle* has participated in different residencies including Casa Wabi, Centro Experimental Chullima Wilfredo Prieto Studio in Havana and 'Tu casa es mi casa' at the Richard Neutra VDL House in Los Angeles, amongst others.

## LIVES AND WORKS

CDMX, MX.

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS

**2023** TEA AHORITA, Studio IMA; CDMX, MX.

**2022** Untitled (awareness artifact for a small room), Soundplus; CDMX, MX.

**2022** Retrato de Un Artista / Portrait of an Artist, PEANA; CDMX, MX.

**2022** Por debajo del árbol, PRAXIS Studio of Architect Agustín Hernández, PEANA Off-site; CDMX, MX.

## RESIDENCIES

**2019** Persona; New York, USA.

**2018** Centro Experimental Chumilla Wilfredo Prieto Studio; Havana, CU.

**2017** Fountainhead Residency; Miami, USA.

**2017** Tu casa es mi casa, Richard Neutra's VDL House; Los Angeles, USA.



## Selected Projects

### **Infusion Game**

Studio IMA, CDMX, MX. 2023

### **Retrato de un Artista / Portrait of an Artist**

PEANA; CDMX, MX. 2022

### **Por Debajo del Árbol**

PRAXIS, PEANA Off-site; CDMX, MX. 2022

## Infusion Game

Studio IMA, CDMX, MX. 2023

The steeping artifact re-imagines the Gong-Fu Tea ceremony as an infusion game. Sharing a name and principles with the martial art Kung-Fu, each step requires focus, precision and awareness. Stored around the base of the sculpture there are eight canisters, each containing a different Tea hand picked by curator Su Wu. Commencing the game with the lighting of the fire and a roll of the dice, the guest allows luck to decide their tea. Each tea has a distinct steeping process and series of surprises, relating to the story of the leaves. Throughout the ritual, small moments invite us to slow down, centring our awareness on the details of the artefact, and the subtlety of the tea.





## Retrato de un Artista / Portrait of an Artist

PEANA, CDMX, MX. 2022

Reatrato de Un Artista / Portrait of an Artist is the first exhibition in PEANA's new space in Mexico City with the participation of Adrián S. Bará, Ana Mazzei, ASMA, Carlos H. Matos, Manuela de Laborde in collaboration with Luis Orozco Madero, Manuela García, Lucas Cantú, Rodrigo Hernández and Ximena Garrido-Lecca. Each artist presents a different strategy that responds to the concept of the portrait, linked to the space and its architecture. By definition, Portrait, means to retract or to bring something from the past into the present - like a memory - in order to describe a person or a place. The exhibition seeks to break down the portrait format and to rethink it from a new standpoint.

An exercise in attention is present in Lucas Cantú's Llama Ahora / Call Now, an electromechanical bell at the entrance to the gallery. Its three buttons arranged in a triangular shape detonate different sound sequences. The translating instrument of this call, located inside, is a hybrid sculpture, installation and artifact, made of glass bells and an aluminum mechanism. On the one hand, it has a utilitarian purpose that announces one's arrival, but it also seeks that in the emission of sound and light, it is a call to register one's presence.





## Por Debajo del Árbol

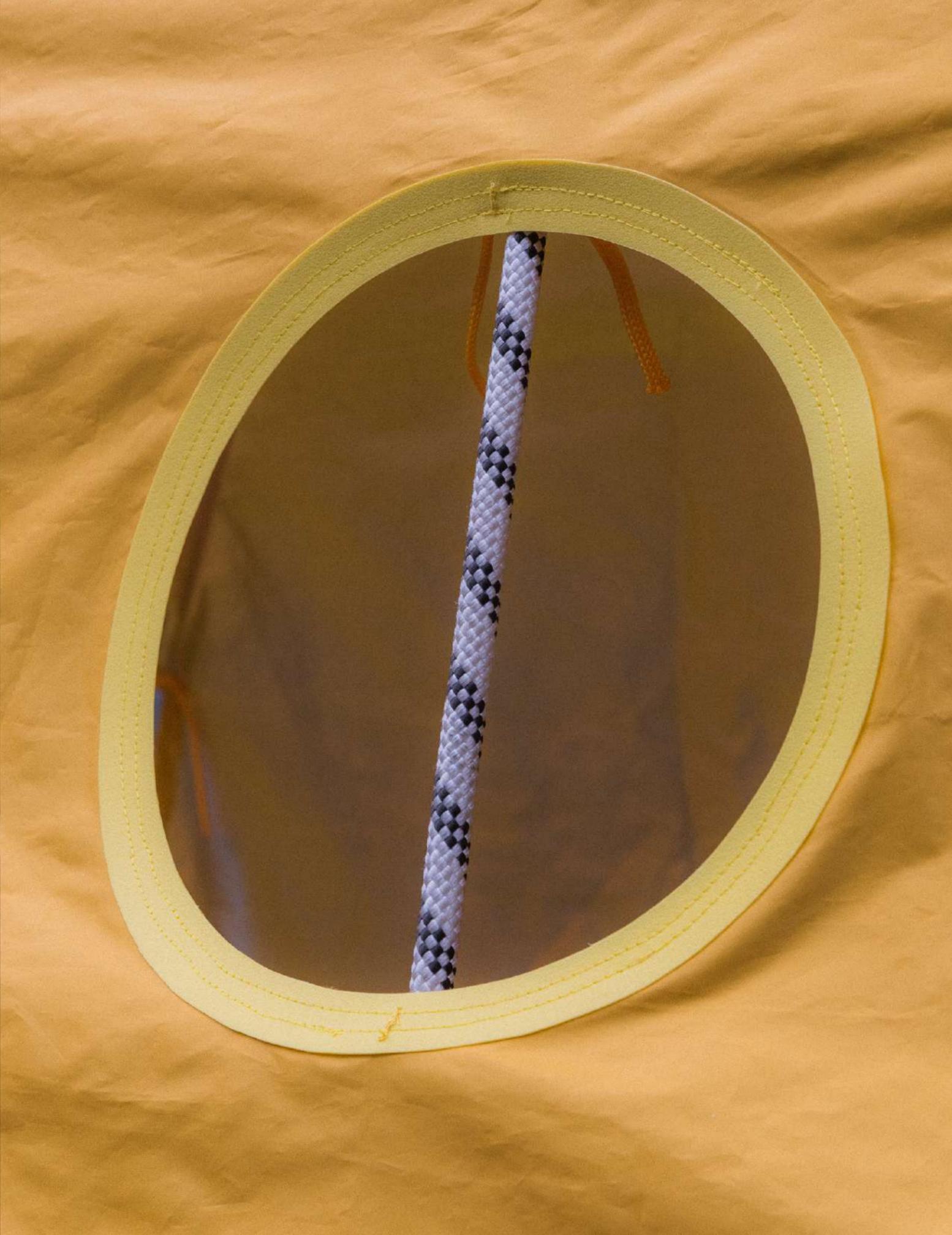
PRAXIS, PEANA OFF-SITE; CDMX, MX. 2022

PRAXIS Taller de Arquitectura Agustín Hernández opened 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.

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.







# PEANA

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