

José Eduardo Barajas

PEANA

José Eduardo Barajas (b. 1990, Mexico City). Barajas approaches painting and drawing as a discipline to monitor luminous atmospheres, color patterns, and emotional climates. Referencing various pictorial traditions, popular motifs, and technical processes, he reconstructs fragments of collective memory and personal memories. His work is based on contrasts such as, abstraction and figuration, panoramic views and close-ups, dynamism and stillness.

He is a graduate of the bachelor's degree program at the National School of Painting, Sculpture, and Printmaking "La Esmeralda" in Mexico City, MX. He has exhibited individually and collectively in Mexico and abroad, some of his recent exhibitions include: El Fin de lo Maravilloso, Cyberpop en México; Museo del Chopo, Mexico City, MX; Saliva at PEANA, Mexico City, MX; Es ist nur eine Frage der Zeit at Echo Cologne & Lodos in Cologne, DE; Mnemósine at Proyectos Multipropósito, Mexico City, MX; Equator at Estrella Gallery in New York, US; Spookie butt at Terén CED in Brno, CZ; ¿Por dónde sale el sol? at Jardín de casa Barragán, Mexico City, MX; Campamento para jóvenes Naturalistas at Museo de la Ciudad de Querétaro, MX; and Ajuscos_Expo at Charim Galerie in Vienna, AT.



LIVES AND WORKS

CDMX, MX.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITION

2023 SALIVA, PEANA, CDMX, MX.

Mnemosine, Proyectos Multipropósito; CDMX, MX.

2021 Mecánica Celeste Luis Galería; Guadalajara, MX.

2020 ¿Por dónde sale el sol?, Jardín 17 Barragán; CDMX, MX.

TIERRA-TIERRA, Neo-tortillería; Guanajuato, MX.

2019 House painting tips, Galería la Esperanza; CDMX, MX.

2018 Hommies Paradise & Motorcraft, LADRÓN galería; CDMX, MX.

IQ Test, YOPE PS; Oaxaca, MX.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2024 Casa Ideal, curated by Enrique Giner, Proyectos Multipropósito; CDMX, MX.

2023 El Fin de lo Maravilloso, Cyberpop en México; Museo del Chopo, CDMX, MX.

Es ist nur eine Frage der Zeit; Lodos at Echo, Cologne, DE.

Las Estrellas me iluminan al revés; No Man's Art Gallery, Amsterdam, NL.

2022 Paisaje, Proyectos Multipropósito; CDMX, MX.

Amateur amantes in their dark fantasies, WAF Galerie; Viena, AT.

B4_ITS_2_L8, Bexpo; CDMX, MX.

RAM, Relaciones públicas; CDMX, MX.

Era de acuario, Trinidad; Oaxaca, MX.

Equator, Estrella Gallery; New York, US.

2021 This (supposedly) must be the place, Visa Proyects; New York, US.

Untitled Art Fair, Miami, LUIS Galería; Miami, US.

XtremeMixologists, Erratum Galerie; Berlín, DE.

Spooky butt, Tèren, CED Brno; Brno, CZ.

2020 Sin novedad bajo el sol, LUIS Galería; Guadalajara, MX.

To defeat the purpose, Aoyama Meguro; Tokio, JP.

Campamento para jóvenes Naturalistas, Museo de la Ciudad de Querétaro;

Querétaro, MX.

Ajuscos_Expo, Charim Galerie; Viena, AT.

2019 Selva de los Momentos, Room 2.27, Parallel; Viena, AT.

Ebullición, Kunstraum Am Schauplatz; Viena, AT.

Material Art Fair, Proyectos section, Ladrón Galería; CDMX, MX.

2018 Ch.ACO, Planta section; Santiago, CL.

2018 La raza, Aa collections; Viena, AT.

Nøche de Veranø, Centro Cultural & Cinematográfico del Consulado General de México; Los Ángeles, US.

Jamás imaginé, YOPE PS; Oaxaca, MX.

Nuevo manifiesto del cine mexicano, Lodos; CDMX, MX.

Sterling/Jose Eduardo, Antes de Cristo, Frikiplaza; CDMX, MX.

¿Qué es lo que se aprende sobre el canto de los pájaros y la naturaleza cuando se pinta encerrado en un cuarto de concreto, edificios y automóviles?, POOR FARM; Manawa, US.

Como mi boca que ha quemado el cielo, Galería La Esperanza; CDMX, MX.

Nøche de Veranø, Tropical Storm; Screening at Filmfront, Chicago/

Microlights, Millwaukee/ AbarCalledMary, NYC, US.

MADEINCHINA; LADRON galería; CDMX, MX.

Hago trabajo honrado; YOPE PS. Oaxaca, MX.

Mutualistic symbiosis; Frontera 112; CDMX, MX.

Capital capital; Galería la libertad; Querétaro, MX.

2017 Instrucciones para caminar de espaldas; Ex Teresa Arte Actual; CDMX, MX.

A nuestros amigos; Museo de Historia de Tlalpan; CDMX, MX.

Asunciones; Arte Obrera; CDMX, MX.

2016 Shampoo, Platoon global alliance; Galería Marso; CDMX, MX.

RESIDENCIES

2021 Casa Brasil; Guadalajara, MX

2019 LAGOS; CDMX, MX

2015 La Ceiba Gráfica; Xalapa, MX

PUBLICATIONS

2018 SKY ,Vacaciones de trabajo (realizado con el apoyo del fomento a proyectos y co-inversiones culturales FONCA 2017)

2020 ¿Por dónde sale el sol?, Jardín 17 Barragán; CDMX, MX.

EDUCATION

Licenciatura en artes plásticas y visuales en "La Esmeralda", CDMX (2013-2017)

Selected Projects

El fin de lo maravilloso | Cyberpop en México

Group show, Museo Universitario del Chopo; CDMX, MX. 2024

SALIVA

PEANA; CDMX, MX. 2023

Mnemosine

Proyectos Multipropósito; CDMX, MX. 2023

¿Por dónde sale el sol?

Jardín 17 Barragán; CDMX, MX. 2020

TIERRA -TIERRA

Neo-tortillería; Guanajuato, MX. 2020



El fin de lo maravilloso | Cyberpop en México

Group show, Museo Universitario del Chopo; CDMX, MX. 2024

Wonder is a category that has fulfilled different functions over time. Its etymology in Spanish is derived from the word *mirabilia*, comprised of the Latin *mir*, which implies something visual (*miror*, *mirari*). It was originally associated with supernatural situations and objects. In today's hyperreality, wonder has been secularized to designate an admirable quality, something capable of surprising or amazing us.

Since the 1980s, Vilém Flusser recognized what he called technical images in the new visuals created by technology. He proposed differences between reproductions —as in the case of photographs, film, video, or television— and productions —as in computerized creations. Within this duality, a growing new wave of artists born in and around the decade of the 1990s has revisited technical images such as animated cartoons —by Disney, Looney Tunes, Neon Genesis Evangelion, Pokémon, or Sonic the Hedgehog—, corporate and advertising imagery of the 1990s and early 21st century, and memes like Pepe the Frog, among other references to cyber and consumer culture.

This generation of artists has fluidly incorporated into their praxis certain creative strategies, such as digital montage, circuit bending (or manipulation of low-voltage electronic circuits), virtual reality, and artificial intelligence. With the objective of delving deeper into these manifestations, this exhibition revisits the term cyberpop as a way to reference the kind of human beings who integrate technologies and visuals that circulate within the current popular imagery, in order to expand their biological functions. It also designates those cultural products that use images from digital pop-culture as a reference.

The exhibit *The End of Wonder* is organized into three sections that explore how this cybernetic imagery has been gradually introjected. The first, “Desolation,” brings together works that with a sense of social critique, point toward certain survival hacks and distortions amid consumer society.

The second, “Memory,” gathers this pop iconography in the essence of remastered phantoms, using strategies such as circuit bending, artificial intelligence programs, rendering, 3-D printing, and even a deck of Pokémon trading-style cards. The third section, “Loop,” creates a dialogue between different themes such as the tropicalization of memes, the globalization of cultural products via social networks, and the implications of collective self-management amid contemporary hyper-connectivity.

In today's world, the unit used to measure time is not seconds, minutes, or hours, but scrolls: we are constantly meandering. This may lead to a sensation of anxiety or individualism. *The End of Wonder* is the title of a chapter from *Flatline Constructs*, a book by Mark Fisher in which he approaches how history has absorbed all that may be considered as unreal into hyperreality: today, it is possible to embody realities that we once thought took place only in animations, or in video games. Hence wonder, with its current iconography of fantasy, has been absorbed by the flow of audiovisual content that we produce and consume.

This exhibition reflects a generational approach to imagery flooded by fantastical iconography. The audiovisual saturation allows us to question the sense of distinction between reproductions and productions, both of which predict and self-regulate their virtual potential. The works assembled here register the blurring of borders between reality and fiction, propitiating a hollowing which allows for the falling out of wonder. Revisiting the Latin root of *mirabilia*, we may state that the gaze of our era thirsts for more and more sensorial stimulation. An intense immersion in the flow of the audiovisual exists where, in the current state of the world, what we find wonderful no longer surprises us: hyperreality has absorbed itself.



SALIVA

PEANA; CDMX, MX. 2023

Titled Saliva, the exhibition features sixteen new paintings and a site-specific mural accompanied by a sound piece created in collaboration with Moisés Sacal. The concept for the sound piece originated from the study of light in space and the monitoring of applications to predict the weather.

In this new body of work, José Eduardo Barajas showcases moments derived from various exercises involving memory and imagery, drawing from memories, cell phone photographs, stock images, AI, and a certain time of the day. He translates these into snapshots on canvas, practicing his role as a painter while simultaneously creating a poetics that oscillates between painterly accidents and the quest for imagery. In his words:

“They are about the light in the summer, the flooding of the studio, the shadows of trees at 3 pm, the blinding sun that hinders work, trips to Cuemanco, my cats’ paws, nature images from Google search, very diluted paintings, particle simulators from Blender, humid atmospheres, landscapes painted by my grandmother, the sound of a branch hitting my window every night, and above all, about drool.”

The result is a collection of images that might be dismissed or seemingly lack any particular value; they capture fleeting moments, brief instances difficult to quantify, memories and recollections. Barajas offers us a synesthetic experience that uses sight as the point of entry, allowing us to simultaneously smell, hear, and feel as we view. These images arrive as we’re about to fall asleep or in a daydream, coinciding with the onset of drooling – moments of safe places in a world we sense is ending.

The reconstruction of reality is pivotal to Barajas’ work, whether virtual or tangible; the origin isn’t crucial. In his essay “The Dawn of Endcore,” Shumon Basar coins the term that gives its English title: Endcore. This term seems to encapsulate a complex blend of cultural, historical, and philosophical shifts marking a new phase in human experience stemming from climate change and technology that shape our reality. This reality is characterized by uncertainty, rapid change, and a challenge to previously held assumptions about the course of history.

Taking the premise of Endcore, the different pieces comprising Saliva could be seen as a multiverse in which various realities coexist, providing a platform to imagine diverse outcomes and possibilities. This offers an escape from the overwhelming complexities of the present through exercises in memory, imagination, and an aesthetic defined by this new understanding of reality. “We recreate the horizons we have abolished, the structures that have collapsed. And we do so in terms of the old patterns, adapting them to our new worlds.” Barajas creates his patterns, his realities, from these “new worlds,” reconstructing them through different layers of fiction to give rise to a new narrative.

The titles of each painting provide a narrative for each piece that shapes this multiverse, reality, present, or however one might label it, offering a glimpse into these fleeting moments. The piece titled Picacho Ajusco emerges from the artist’s memory of going to school as a child by car. More aqueous paintings like Reflejo Twisted, Piedra Muralla, or Baba originate from the comparison between the artist’s studio flooding after heavy rain and the liquid particle simulators used by 3D software. There’s a poetics that emerges from the everyday and how we remember it. Fixating on these imperceptible instants transforms the paintings into almost meditative acts.



Installation view
SALIVA
PEANA; CDMX, MX. 2023





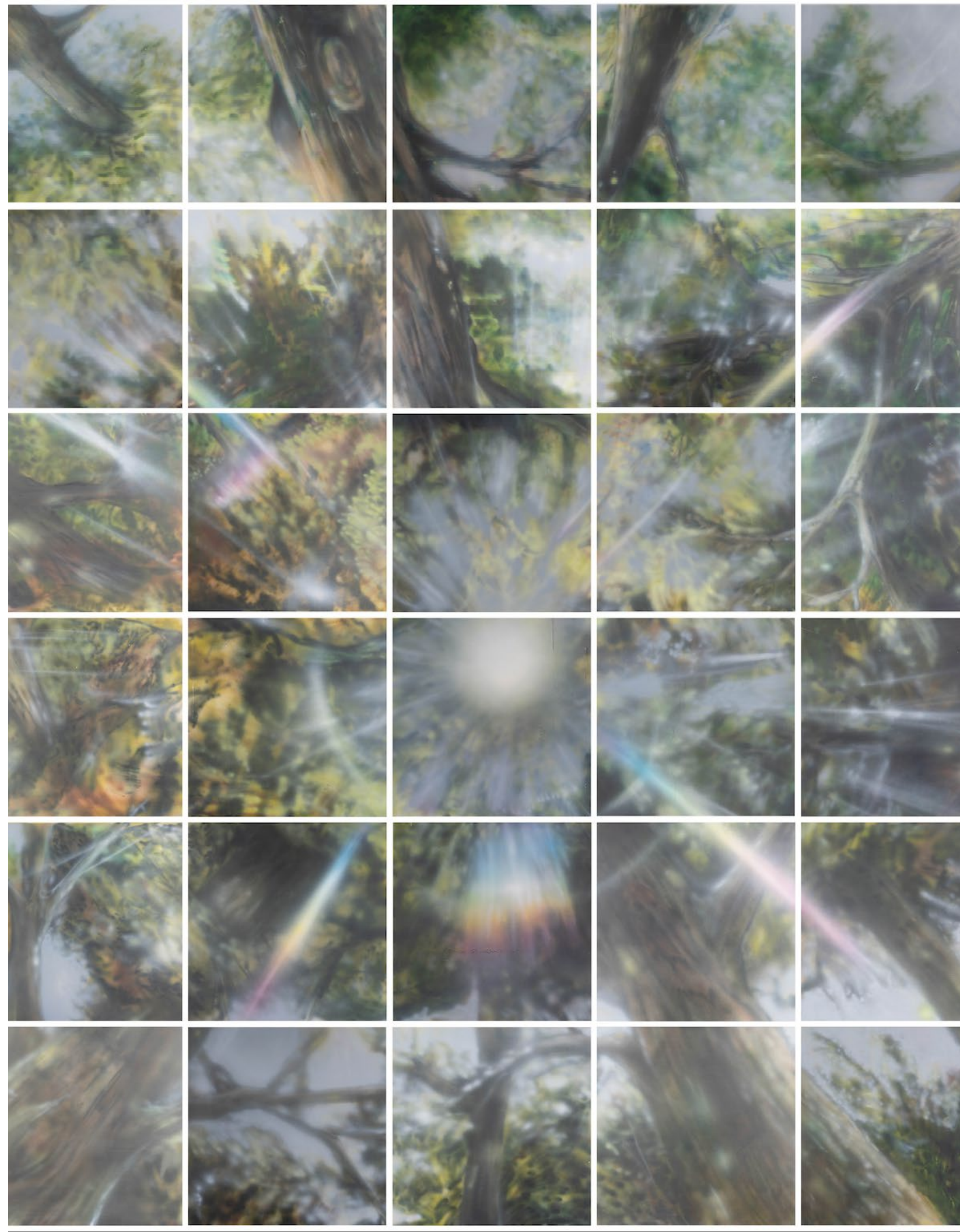
Exhibition view
SALIVA
PEANA; CDMX, MX. 2023



Mnemosine

Proyectos Multipropósito; CDMX, MX. 2023

José Eduardo Barajas transformed an office space in Mexico City's Juárez neighborhood into a captivating mural. The neighborhood, once a hub for call centers, has undergone changes due to the pandemic. The project by Barajas reflects the complex social dynamics and shifting economy of Juárez. Today, Juárez is a mix of foreigner-oriented bars and Airbnbs, struggling businesses, street vendors, and impoverished residents. Barajas' artwork brings artistic significance to this landscape, combining elements of traditional and unconventional natural scenery. While influenced by various artistic traditions, it is important to avoid viewing Mexican art solely through a Eurocentric lens. Barajas subverts nineteenth-century academicism, both thematically and iconographically. His meta-pictorial exercise draws inspiration from artists like Eugenio Landésio, known as a theorist of the Mexican landscape. Barajas engages with Landésio's techniques while incorporating his own unique vision. The resulting paintings capture the essence of Juárez, showcasing the complexities of the neighborhood's history, urban architecture, and transience.





Installation view
Mnemosine
Proyectos Multipropósito; CDMX, MX. 2023

¿Por dónde sale el sol?

Jardín 17 Barragán; CDMX, MX. 2020

Barajas's art challenges traditional landscape painting in Mexican art history. Influenced by the neo-avant-garde movement, his work explores narrative and pictorial experiments in public art. He draws inspiration from José María Velasco, who was influential in the genre, as well as other political artists like Dr. Atl, Diego Rivera, and Juan O'Gorman. Barajas's paintings break away from symbolic representations and introduce alternative perspectives, featuring vibrant colors and the intrusion of various objects. His series "Golden Shower" incorporates elements of contemporary popular culture, revealing the economic conditions of the region. Through his art, Barajas connects with the history of landscape painting while pushing the boundaries of digital painting and reflecting the reality of his context.

José María Velasco's painting *Valle de México desde el Cerro de Santa Isabel* (1877) offers insight into constructing historical meaning through landscape painting. It represents a country and contributes to the concept of a "national landscape" that connects different historical periods. Barajas's drawings on Pellon paper, particularly the *Perspectiva aérea* series, explore the relationship between technology, nature, and a posthuman understanding. These drawings, influenced by Landesio and Velasco, use personal methods and filters to create outdoor scenes and reject the dominance of nature. The fragmented composition in Barajas's series is reminiscent of Landesio's approach, which emphasizes the importance of elements like clouds, foliage, terrain, and history in landscape paintings. Considering the concept of visibility, Barajas's drawings challenge linear perspective and incorporate a dynamic perspective influenced by the baroque era. They combine natural elements from Velasco's paintings, chromatic tests, and graffiti-like calligraphy to create montages that critique homogenized virtual images and interpretations of nature. The artist's process involves using a cellphone as a tool for research and creation, reimagining public art and the light of painting. This series connects to a tradition of language-based experiments in landscape art, but also highlights the material conditions and context of its creation.

Barajas's landscape compositions, linked to technology and data production, challenge traditional notions of murals. Drawing inspiration from Constable and Dr. Atl, Barajas uses color to decompose and vary pictorial space, reflecting the power and energy of the sky. He delves into the behavior of light in different natural strata, emphasizing the study of the atmosphere. Barajas's work combines urban elements with graffiti techniques, representing collective identities. Through his series "*Perspectiva aérea*," he constructs an architectonic pictorial space that unfolds dynamically and can be transformed into stained-glass windows, creating a new role as a mural or sculptural environment. Barajas's art challenges conventional political and digital painting, occupying a unique space that manifests a reformulated orientation and resists Western dichotomies.



Installation view
¿Por dónde sale el sol?
Jardín 17 Barragán; CDMX, MX. 2020



TIERRA - TIERRA

Neo-tortillería; Guanajuato, MX. 2020

By incorporating the mountainous landscape that surrounds the space, a panoramic view is generated, combining nature and its pictorial representation through the artist's gesture of filling in sections traced. (SEARCH) (IMITATE) (SIMILAR) forms and sections of the landscape, studies of light and time, particles suspended in the atmosphere within the exhibition space.

Nature and the different forms that an (ECOSYSTEM) (ENVIRONMENT) can take are reimagined, showcasing new possibilities (COMPOSITIONS). In the scenes recreated by the artist, it becomes evident to (CREATE) an order of artificial growth, (EMULATE) a fluid and organic journey, resulting from the observation and manipulation of elements through drawing.

Earth is a region. Exploration is a principle for recognizing (TRAVERSING) the space, the room, the wall. Building a dictionary-library-bank-archive of forms to understand it.





Installation view
TIERRA - TIERRA
Neo-tortillería, Guanajuato, MX. 2020

PEANA

Tlaxcala 103, 06760, CDMX, Mexico | peana.co | +52 (55) 9039 6247