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Ocultismo y barro

Daniel Barragán, Karla Ekatherine Canseco,
Dolores Furtado, Rodrigo Angel Jimenez-Ortega,
André Magaña, Andres Monzón-Aguirre,
Tamen Pérez, Adrian Edgard Rivera

Curated by ACOMPI

February 4–April 3, 2022

Opening: Friday, February 4, 2022, 4–8PM



Ocultismo y barro presents artworks made with or about clay that embody the medium's mystical qualities. The title invokes occultism, the broadest sense of supernatural beliefs and spiritual practices, which contrast the scope of science and religion imposed on the Caribbean and Latin America through western imperialism. The artists in the exhibition speak to both the mysticism involved in transforming clay into art and the rendering of ancestral influences across the Americas, often in dialogue with the contemporary mythology of pop cultural iconography.

Barro has been used as a material in Latin America and the Caribbean for over 10,000 years to incarnate spirituality. Through effigies, ceremonial vessels, utilitarian objects, and dwellings, it has persisted as a material known for its malleability, durability, and availability. However, its cultural value has been largely contested. Clay objects from Latin America and the Caribbean have been disregarded in the art sphere as archeological relics that are often only discussed ethnographically. Occultism, as a lens, has additionally been dismissed by many critics for its emphasis on the power of the individual.¹ However, understanding the *fuera* of these artists' works—personal, material, and mystical—through occultism underscores their spiritual potential and disrupts cyclical deprecations of clay into craft or artifact.

Andrés Monzón-Aguirre, Tamen Pérez, and Daniel Barragán's practices animate the inherited forms of vessels with restored energy, queering the static nature in which we encounter these traditional forms in the present. Barragán's hybrid collages such as *Water Jug O2* cross objects and eras—from traditional ancient pottery shapes to 70s and 80s rock and pop culture ephemera—drawing parallels of idolatry and vitality. Implicating the colonial violence of western structures, Pérez' paintings reinstate the internal verve of ceramic objects lost to the vitrines of museology by anthropomorphizing their disposition in works such as *Reclining Monkey-form Jar...* Similarly, Monzón-Aguirre, who is based between Brooklyn and Medellín, envelopes replicas of Tumaco-La Tolita objects in their *Veiled Alcarraza* series to allude to the opaque expressions of that which is subcultural and deviant under traditional frameworks, through gestures of queer, occult care and protection.

Rodrigo Angel Jimenez-Ortega, André Magaña, and Adrian Edgard Rivera parallel historical forms with present-day pop culture iconography to draw connections between devotions. In his work *Dogs and Nintendo Switch*, Jimenez-Ortega fuses pre-Colombian imagery with fictional characters from popular media, considering video games as forms of occult spirituality for US youth. Rivera's *Goku-Ehecatl* parallels a basalt sculpture representing the Aztec god Ehecatl-Quetzalcoatl with a 3D-printed copy of a bootleg Dragon Ball Z toy, questioning if transformation mimicking traditional craft is able to fully engulf this foreign media into the local cultural canon through two hero-myth journeys. In his series of *jarrones*, large vases, Magaña uses digital fabrication tools to render recognizable consumables, such as cazuelas and liter bottles, with imagery inspired by Colima Ceramics to spawn spirituality with the very hyper-capitalist tools designed to eliminate it.

¹ Such as [Theodor Adorno's 1974 essay "Theses Against Occultism"](#)

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Karla Ekatherine Canseco and Dolores Furtado emphasize the alchemical properties of clay in their work, which harnesses energy as a form of healing. Inspired by ancestral Mexican cultures that would involve clay effigies and vessels in sacred elements and processes, Canseco uses ceramics as performative tools. Bearing witness to the mystical symbols—such as the number 8, infinity, and crowns—that emerge in working with clay and across media, Furtado’s recent works—with titles such as *Power, Templo, and Magic*—explore the relationship between matter and spirit, creating talismans for new worlds.

The artists in *Ocultismo y barro* reanimate the material with mystical qualities of clay to breathe life into new possibilities with humor and healing, care and conviction. They join an international discourse of artists—from Ai Weiwei to Roberto Lugo—utilizing clay in anti-imperialist gestures that bridge cultural clashes; together, the works in this exhibition underscore how these themes persist amongst a new generation of Latine makers.² By engaging the rhetoric of pop culture, many of these folkloric manifestations of ancestral Latine cultures refute capitalism, the spirit of the modern world whose way of understanding life, reason, and purpose obstructs the mysticism at the heart of the works in the exhibition.

About the artists

Daniel Barragán (b. 1988, Brooklyn, NY) Barragán’s paintings, sculptures, and artifacts concern the detection of cultural wealth and cultural mobility. His work is research based in Indigenous and Chicano studies with a regional scope on the American Southwest—the region of his birth. Barragán has exhibited throughout New York and Texas and has curated several exhibitions including, “Down to Earth”, Head Hi, NY (2019) and “The Watering Hole”, Pfizer building, NY (2018). Barragán was a Smack Mellon - Hot Pick (2020) and was the recipient of the Stutzman Family Foundation Fellowship (2019). He received a BFA (2013) and an MFA (2019) in Painting and Drawing from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY.

Karla Ekatherine Canseco (b. 1995, San Fernando Valley, California) is an interdisciplinary artist based in Los Angeles. Her practice explores the nuances of identity through different mediums, particularly clay and performance. She interrogates the body knowledge, such as epigenetics, that she has inherited from her family in her work and as an access point to interpret the body as a vessel with the ability to transform and mimic. She is interested in how matter carries information that has been passed down and is present; Our corporealities collapse conceptions of time and hold stories in the same manner clay transcribes its composition and impression. In making she invites her history within, daydreams, and poetics to materialize into sculptures.

Dolores Furtado (b. 1977, Buenos Aires, Argentina) lives and works in New York. Her latest solo exhibitions include: “Supernatural”, Kingsborough College Museum, Brooklyn (2019), “Lo nube”, Vasari Gallery, Buenos Aires (2018) and “Ultimate Nature”, duo show with Cecilia Biagini, Clemente Soto Cultural Center, New York City (2017). Recent groups shows include: “Greater New York 2021”, MoMA PS1, Queens (2021); “Ceramics now”, Greenwich House Pottery; “Paper Routes—Women to Watch 2020”, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington DC, (2020); “Human expectations”, Hub Robeson Gallery, Penn State University (2020); “La trama y lo diáfano”(2018), Vasari Gallery, Buenos Aires, Argentina ; 4th AIM Biennial, Bronx Museum of the Arts (2017); A.I.R. Gallery Biennial, A.I.R. Gallery, Brooklyn (2017); Epsilon, abstracciones descentradas, MACBA, Museum of Contemporary Art of Buenos Aires (2016); Governors Island Art Fair (2015 and 2016); Arcos de Conexión, Museum of Contemporary Art of Bahía Blanca, Argentina (2014); Una persistente forma de estar en el mundo, Casa de la Cultura del Fondo Nacional de las Artes, Buenos Aires, Argentina (2014); among others. She completed the following residency programs: Greenwich

² Latine (pronounced la- ti-ne) is a gender-neutral term for the word “latino,” created by queer and feminist communities in Spanish-speaking countries. Latine is a sequel term of “Latinx” and “Latin@” that further prioritized the conjugation and use of the term in spoken and written Spanish.

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House Pottery Residency Program, NYC, USA (2020); Oak Spring Garden Foundation 2019 Artist in Residence Program, Virginia, USA (2019); 2018 FSP/Jerome Fellowship, Franconia Sculpture Park, Minnesota, USA (2018); Bronx Museum of the Arts AIM Program, Bronx, NY, USA (2017); NYFA Immigrant Artist Program, Brooklyn, NY, USA (2016), among others.

André Magaña (b. 1992, Lagunitas, CA) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Recent solo and duet presentations include Kings Leap, New York, NY; Prairie, Chicago, IL; Holding Contemporary, Portland, OR; and American Medium, New York, NY. He was a resident at Triangle Arts association in the Fall of 2020. In 2021 he presented new work in Sculpture Center's in "You may go, but this will bring you back" curated by Katherine Simóne Reynolds at Sculpture Center, Queens, NY. Recent group presentations include Magenta Plains (New York), In Lieu (Los Angeles), PUBLIC Gallery (London, UK). Forthcoming, he will present a solo exhibition of new work at Gallery Kendra Jayne Patrick.

Andrés Monzón-Aguirre (b. 1987, Medellín, Colombia) has exhibited and screened artworks through diverse platforms including Manifesta 13, Marseille, France; Museo de Arte Moderno de Medellín, Medellín, Colombia; Centrum Voor Fotografie, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Alfred Ceramic Art Museum, Alfred, NY; Capacete, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; dOCUMENTA(13), Kassel, Germany; Fisher Press, Santa Fe, NM; Villegas Editores, Bogotá, Colombia; Museo de Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia; and Museo de Arte Moderno, Bucaramanga, Colombia. Monzón-Aguirre received their BFA in painting from the Rhode Island School of Design (2009) and an MFA from New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University (2019). They have been resident artist with the Museo del Norte de Santander, Villa del Rosario, Colombia, and Fundación Casa Tres Patios Medellín, Colombia. Amongst their recognitions, Monzón-Aguirre represents Colombia at the International Academy of Ceramics. They are recipient of City Artist Corps Grant, New York, NY, Apoyos Concertados Para el Arte y La Cultura, Medellín, and Prince Claus Fund Travel Award. Monzón-Aguirre is Founder Director of Campos de Gutiérrez, an organization of international scope that has served diverse audiences since 2011, facilitating educational and artistic projects, cultural exchange, and exhibitions in Medellín.

Rodrigo Angel Jimenez-Ortega (b. 1994, San Diego, CA) received his BFA in Painting from San Diego State University and his MFA with an emphasis in Painting from Pratt Institute. He has exhibited work in San Diego, Tijuana, Mexico City, and New York City. His paintings position the culture he comes from (Mexico), in relation to the culture he grew up in (United States), in relation to the culture he's chosen (video games and cartoons). Images, objects, or symbols are removed from their original context and placed in new ones to create compositions that mirror the blending of aesthetics and cultures that he experienced throughout his upbringing in both San Diego and Tijuana.

Tamen Pérez (b. 1987 San José, Costa Rica) lives and works in New York. Her work has been exhibited internationally in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Costa Rica, Argentina, Germany, and The Netherlands. Recent exhibitions include solo presentation "Who's Counting?" at Y2K Gallery in New York City (2021); and group shows Stampede at Horse and Pony Fine Arts, Berlin, DE. (2021), "In Praise of Shadows" curated by Ebony L. Haynes at Lyles and King, New York (2021), Re-run, at Rootcanal, Amsterdam, NL. (2019), "Emic-Etic" at Between Bridges, Berlin, DE. (2018) and "Host" at Stadium Berlin, DE. (2018). She completed her MFA in Painting at Yale University (2021), participated in the Berlin-based residency Berlin Program for Artists, DE. (2017), and received her BFA in Painting at Rhode Island School of Design (2010).

Adrian Edgard Rivera (b. 1991, Austin, TX) is an artist living and working in Brooklyn, New York. Raised in Yautepec de Zaragoza in the Mexican state of Morelos, Rivera's work employs new technologies and sculptural assemblage to explore the manufacturing and reproduction processes of cultural materials such as archeological relics, mass-produced toys, and folk art objects. Rivera received his BFA in Computer Art from Northern Michigan University and is a co-founder of R.I.C.O. R.O.B.O. (The Research Institute On Cannibal Opportunism & Repository Of Obsessive Bobo-lutionary Obsolescence).

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About ACOMPI

Founded by Constanza Valenzuela and Jack Radley, ACOMPI is a curatorial project based in New York City. ACOMPI derives from the Spanish word “acompañado,” meaning “in company”, foregrounding community, interdisciplinary practice, and collaboration. ACOMPI serves as a youth-oriented, community-ingrained platform to highlight and expand the intersection of independent curatorial practice and site-specific public engagement. ACOMPI’s recent projects include: “Mateo Arciniegas Huertas: Domingo a las 4”, “Transient Grounds” on Governors Island (NARS), “Diana Sofia Lozano: Suspended in the Iris” at Home Gallery, “Shanzhai Lyric: Canal Street Research Association”, and the colloquium “What Can NYC Art Museums Do For Immigrants?” at NYU Steinhardt. Their projects have been featured in *The New York Times*, *New York Magazine*, *Artforum*, *artnet*, *Elephant*, *Hyperallergic*, and *The Brooklyn Rail*, among other publications. @acompi.nyc

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open hours: thurs-sun; 12-6pm
by appointment during non-open hours



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Dolores Furtado
Power, 2020

André Magaña
Verolotemacetazadora Maguebretemaricerola, 2019