

Luckily, Cecilia Ordoñez has nothing to do with Ai Weiwei, the Chinese artist who achieved celebrity status by deliberately dropping a 2000-year-old Han Dynasty urn in his study and before a photographer in 1995. He had previously painted the Coca-Cola logo on other rare urn of the same dynasty. Clearly, the famed Chinese says he is influenced by Duchamp – Ah, Duchamp! As all the foolish Post-Modernist would observe.

I have followed Cecilia Ordoñez's work for a long time. Her studies at the Universidad Nacional in Bogotá, in Paris, in Iowa; her teachings also at the Nacional, her awards, her exhibits –her first solo was in 1971–. Her résumé speaks for itself. Her production has had a consistent evolution and her numerous works demonstrate the seriousness of her work, her progress and her constant pursuit. Cecilia Ordoñez is not just any artist; like those who achieve greatness, she is an artisan –true artists have to be artisans–, a researcher by the minute, a highflying creator.

As many may know, ceramics—clay, potter's clay, porcelain—has been in existence for millennia. It originated in the East, which is why China and Japan still excel in its use. It eventually reached many parts of the world, including pre-Columbian lands. Consolidated as an element from which to craft utilitarian objects, pottery also began to be used for artistic works and soon some sculptors saw its benefit for their three-dimensional works. In the sweeping 1976 exhibition "Two Hundred Years of American Sculpture" organized by the Whitney Museum, New York, to commemorate the United States bicentennial, three sculptors distinguished for their ceramic works were invited: Peter Voulkos, John Mason and Kenneth Price. While Cecilia Ordoñez makes and has made utilitarian pottery, her work, practically since the beginning, has all the makings of a sculpture: according to Werner Hofmann it is "situated between architecture and painting.... It shares, with architecture, existence in space, while the relief comes closer to the fictional world of painting."

The showing in the Galería Alonso Arte ratifies this. Inspired as ever in the physical world, the artist wrote: "I build my truth on appearance, I see the world with a musing eye, compelling it toward the unusual, so that, landscapes, spaces, curves, textures emerge out of this unreality." It is a display of numerous pieces, mainly porcelain. With great imagination, Cecilia Ordoñez shapes the collection called "North Pole," fashioned in translucent 'snow' in varied and odd forms, together with several "Invented Bugs," also with unusual appearance, in addition to many objects (artwork or utilitarian pieces) where the artist shows her mastery of porcelain, mixed with manganese and cobalt, and porcelain in colors, created with pigments or oxides—called 'Neriage'—. Truly a lovely exhibition, where Weiwei is indeed an uninvited guest.

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