

Jessica Kairé

Press

(2021)

Jessica Kairé, 22 Bienal de Arte Paiz

<https://22bienal.fundacionpaiz.org.gt/2020/02/18/jessica-kaire/>

////////////////////////////////////

Jessica Kairé

Guatemala

Su obra oscila entre la escultura, la comida, el performance y las obras participativas. Los temas que aborda van desde la violencia de género, las violencias en Guatemala y Latinoamérica hasta tropicalismos, subdesarrollos y su ascendencia judía. La interacción con el público ha sido una constante en varios de sus proyectos. En algunos casos su trabajo buscaba a través de la escultura un confort histórico ante la contemplación de la violencia política. En otros trabajos ha esculpido con chocolate y pan, tomando como molde partes de arquitectura, para saborearla.



Monumento plegable (Monumento a Juan Jacobo Árbenz Guzmán), 2021. Foto: Byron Mármol.

Pérez Diez, G. (2018, August 21)
20 artistas iberoamerican@s trabajando con cerámica (20 Ibero-American
artists working with ceramics)

Arteinformado

[https://www.arteinformado.com/magazine/n/20-artistas-iberoamericans-
trabajando-con-ceramica-6022](https://www.arteinformado.com/magazine/n/20-artistas-iberoamericans-trabajando-con-ceramica-6022)

////////////////////////////////////

CREACIÓN

20 artistas iberoamerican@s trabajando con cerámica



(https://static.arteinformatado.com/resources/app/docs/noticia/22/6022/sin_t_tulo.jpg)

Miquel Barceló posando delante de sus creaciones. Cortesía de la Galería Elvira González (Madrid)

Emplean este material milenario bajo muy diversos prismas artísticos, estéticos y conceptuales, pero teniendo como base de sus prácticas artísticas constantes procesos de investigación en torno a esa materia.

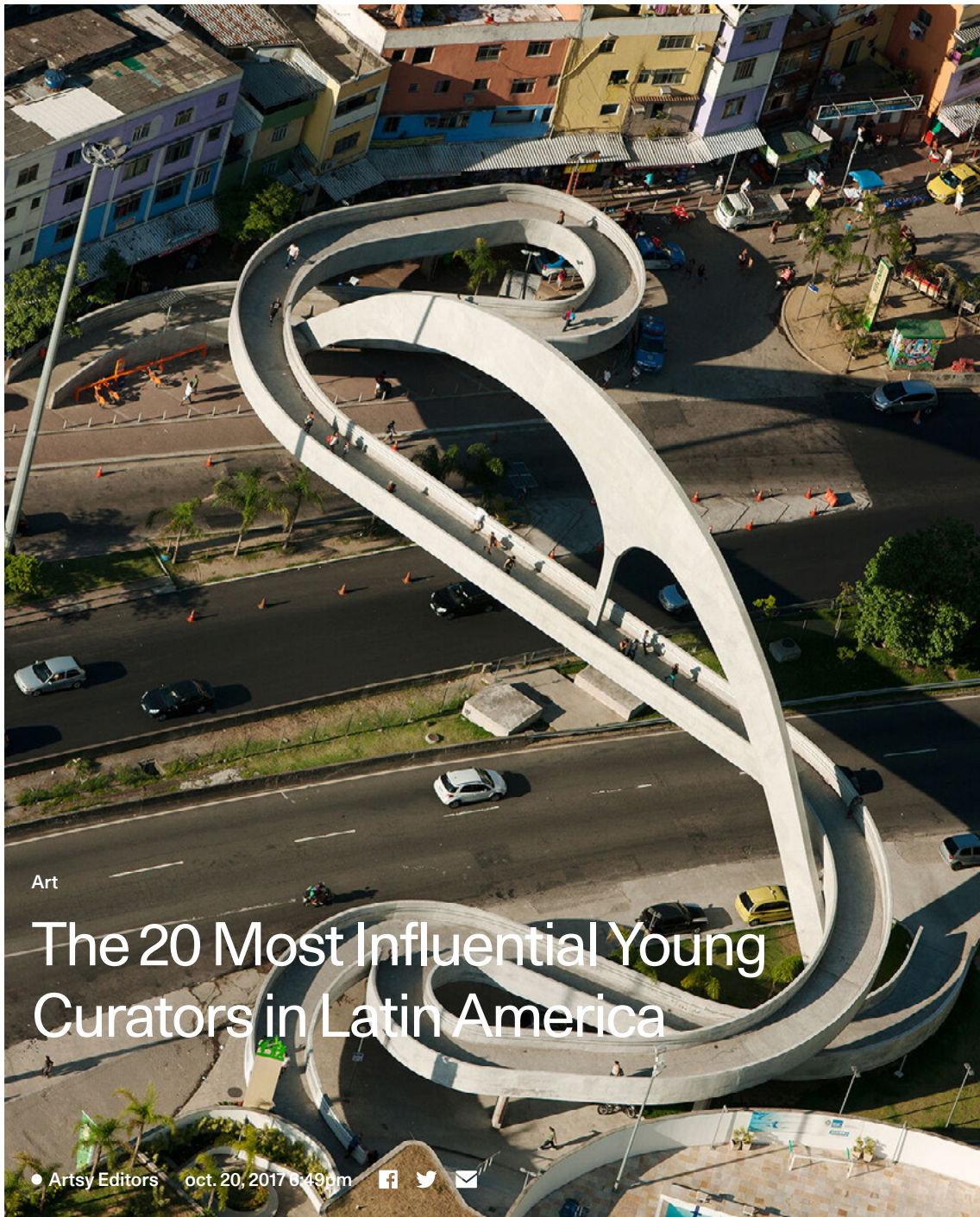
Muchas de las obras ejecutadas a lo largo de los años por estos artistas son próximas a las artes decorativas por la belleza que atesoran y han pasado a formar parte de importantes colecciones públicas y privadas.

La irrupción de la cerámica como medio escultórico constituye uno de los recorridos más estimulantes para la historia de la escultura. Esto se ha podido comprobar durante más de 3.000 años, desde el Antiguo Egipto, Mesopotamia, Grecia, la Antigua Roma o Bizancio; pasando por los grandes creadores del siglo pasado, donde ocupa un lugar destacado [Picasso \(.../guia/f/pablo-picasso-2317\)](#), cuya llegada al mundo de la cerámica fue totalmente casual, sin embargo, una vez que estuvo en contacto con ella, se convertiría en una obsesión consiguiendo en poco tiempo realizar más de seiscientas piezas; y llegando hasta nuestros días, con otro de los artistas españoles de mayor proyección y prestigio internacional como es [Miquel Barceló \(.../guia/f/miquel-barcelo-1415\)](#), de quien como no citar su piel cerámica que recubre una capilla de la catedral de Palma, y quien es uno de los 20 artistas iberoamericanos de distintas generaciones y nacionalidades que hemos seleccionado por sus sólidas e interesantes propuestas artísticas las cuales tienen como resultado creaciones que son objeto de reclamo por parte de prestigiosas colecciones públicas y privadas.

Marti, S. (2017, October 20)
The 20 Most Influential Young Curators in Latin America
Artsy

<https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-20-influential-young-curators-latin-america>

////////////////////////////////////



In recent years, a spotlight has been trained on the art communities of Latin American countries, with the Western world increasingly looking south (reflected in major solo shows for artists like Joaquín Torres-García and Carmen Herrera at New York institutions, as well as an ever-increasing interest in Cuban and Caribbean artists).

In a territory where borders are not as porous as they may seem, and where the power dynamics still hinge on the interest and approval of big art world centers, a new generation of Latin American curators has made strides in shedding light on artists from diverse regions. They have placed a curatorial lens over the fraught political histories and experimental cultures common to their countries.

Here, we gather together 20 individuals who are making an impact. These Latin American curators are amplifying the voices of local artists, engaging in cultural dialogue with other parts of the world, and often taking a revisionist approach—filtering the past through the present in order to shape the future.

Stefan Benchoam and Jessica Kairé

Co-founders of El Nuevo Museo de Arte Contemporáneo (NuMu),
Guatemala City, Guatemala

Recent career highlight: “Paisaje Sonoro,” an exhibition by avant-garde Guatemalan composer Joaquín Orellana, which traveled in a replica of NuMu to LACMA as part of Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA

In a minuscule, egg-shaped building in Guatemala City, artist duo Jessica Kairé and Stefan Benchoam created the first and only contemporary art museum and artist-run space in the Central American country. Since its inception five years ago, NuMu, or new museum, has indeed become a powerful and quirky vitrine for some of the most innovative and expressive artistic projects in Guatemala’s blossoming art scene. Local artist Regina José Galindo, Mexican artist Mario García Torres, and Argentine Amalia Pica are some of those that have occupied this tiny space with their artworks and performances.

—Silas Marti

A



Zara, J. (2017, September 26)
Art Over Easy: Guatemalan Avant Garde Arrives in la Disguised as an Egg
The Guardian
<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2017/sep/26/art-lacma-guatemala-nuevo-museo-egg-stefan-benchoam-jessia-kaire>

////////////////////////////////////



Art

Art over easy: Guatemalan avant garde arrives in LA disguised as an egg

Janelle Zara in Los Angeles

Tue 26 Sep 2017 17:00 BST

One of the biggest museums in the United States is now home to one of the world's smallest. Following a Kickstarter campaign and two weeks on the road, a life-sized replica of Guatemala City's Nuevo Museo, an egg-shaped former kiosk that now shows contemporary art, has arrived on the [Los Angeles](#) County Museum of Art's campus for a six-month stay.

Standing in the shadow of Lacma's mammoth Renzo Piano-designed Resnick Pavilion at just 8ft tall and just over 6ft wide, the egg has finished a long journey that began four years ago. Three LA-based curators, Rita Gonzalez, José Luis Blondet, and Pilar Tompkins Rivas, had been traveling to Central America in preparation for the Getty's current Latin American art-focused initiative, [Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA](#). In Guatemala City, they met Stefan Benchoam, and later in New

York Jessica Kairé, the two Guatemalan artists who in 2012 had the idea to turn the egg into a museum.

Recognizing the lack of local institutional support of the arts, they and a few artist friends had set out to launch Guatemala's first and only contemporary art museum. "It seemed so abstract and in a way very absurd," says Kairé. "We wondered how we would get the resources to run a museum, which in our minds then was a white cube." By chance, they came across a "for rent" sign on a former egg-selling kiosk, and paid the first three months' rent with the combined stipends they received for participating in a Guatemalan art biennial.

"We produced the cheapest work possible; she made hers with \$50, I produced an iPhone video for \$5," says Benchoam. "And then we took the money and ran." They called the museum Nuevo Museo, a misnomer, they say, since there was no old museum. As a cheeky reference to major art institutions, they shortened the name to NuMu, borrowing Moma's typeface.



▲ NuMu founders Jessica Kairé and Stefan Benchoam. Photograph: photo © Museum Associates/LACMA

On a shoestring budget, they've averaged three or four shows per year, but never of their own work. "Our interest is in giving visibility to others," says Benchoam, "a

balance of Guatemalan artists and international artists who would resonate locally.” Exhibitions so far have featured the Guatemalan artist Regina José Galindo, Mexico City-based Pia Camil and LA-based Carolina Caycedo. The space comfortably fits one to four viewers at a time.

“The ambition was so big, even though it’s so small,” says Gonzalez. “I was really moved by these two young artists attempting to fill a void; where in Europe and Canada you tend to have state-run institutions, in Guatemala, there is such a lack of support or infrastructure for contemporary art. They basically took it on as an artists’ project to start this museum. Here we work for this behemoth, yet we really wanted the energy and dynamic that they were producing.”

Lacma invited NuMu to collaborate in *A Universal History of Infamy*, on view now until 18 February, at first with the idea to replicate its previous exhibitions. “When we said we could make a replica, and that we would love to drive it up ourselves,” says Benchoam, “they kind of looked at each other in silence.”

“That was the constant throughout this relationship,” says Kairé. “Although we’ve presented challenging situations, they’ve never said no.”

Through Kickstarter, the artists surpassed their \$75,000 fundraising goal to hire a local architect to build a fiberglass replica, and loaded it on to a trailer. After some confusion at the Guatemalan-Mexican border, and stops at Museo Jumex in Mexico City and the Ballroom Marfa gallery in Texas, the gallery passed across the US border, and opened to the public at Lacma on 13 September. It will run until February, and afterwards, continue on as a roving American museum, or potentially stay put. “It’s been a dream,” says Benchoam, “but the dream within the dream would be to become a permanent pavilion at Lacma.”

The show on view now resounds with the sound of marimbas, the instrument of choice of Joaquín Orellana, the 86-year-old Guatemalan experimental composer whose five decades of avant garde work has been largely underappreciated in his home country. “In Guatemala, people thought he was crazy to call what he was doing music,” Benchoam says, comparing Orellana to John Cage. “Now that he’s in his 80s, we realized his whole legacy would fade if it wasn’t properly documented and archived.”

Through Kickstarter, they raised the funds to properly record Orellana’s work, restore his so-called “sound utensil” instruments, and teach young musicians how to build and play them. The exhibition on view now, *Paisaje Sonoro* (Sound Landscape), plays the music Orellana composed on his hacked version of the marimba and displays the invented musical notation. It’s also emblematic of NuMu’s overall mission.

“We’re going to present, support and document contemporary artists, and now the preservation of artist legacies have come into play,” says Kairé. “We’re replacing the institutional support that’s not there,” and introducing the avant garde to places where it’s still a foreign concept.

Haigney, S. (2017, June 9)
*Los Angeles Museum Starts a Kickstarter
Campaign for a Travelling Egg-Shaped Gallery*

The New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/09/arts/design/los-angeles-museum-starts-a-kickstarter-campaign-for-a-traveling-egg-shaped-gallery.html>

////////////////////////////////////

Los Angeles Museum Starts a Kickstarter Campaign for a Traveling Egg-Shaped Gallery

By Sophie Haigney

June 9, 2017

If all goes as planned — that is, if online backers collectively contribute \$75,000 by 12:55 p.m. on July 7 — a tiny egg-shaped museum will be hitched to the back of a truck and make its way from Guatemala City to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, with stops along the way.

The Los Angeles museum embarked on its first Kickstarter campaign on Wednesday with the goal of funding the unconventional journey of a reproduction of the Nuevo Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, a roughly 8-foot-by-6-foot gallery space in Guatemala City that was once a drive-through kiosk that sold eggs. Since 2012, it has been a center for exhibitions, public programs and community projects — all in a space with a total capacity of four people. The model will be part of the Los Angeles museum’s exhibition “A Universal History of Infamy,” opening Aug. 20 (though it will likely still be on its journey when the show opens). The exhibition is part of the Getty Foundation-sponsored “Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA,” an exploration of Latin American and Latino art by way of Los Angeles.

Artists have used websites like Kickstarter, Indiegogo and GoFundMe to raise money for projects since the inception of digital crowdsourcing. But art institutions, too, are turning to these platforms at a time when many are squeezed for capital.

The Louvre has used such crowdfunding platforms to raise millions of dollars for particular acquisitions. The Queens Museum surpassed a Kickstarter goal on Wednesday for an exhibition titled “Never Built New York.” It’s a gamble, though. While the Smithsonian raised more than \$125,000 for a yoga-themed exhibition at the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in 2013, it raised only \$555 of its goal of \$35,000 to bring an Ai Weiwei sculpture to the Smithsonian’s Hirshhorn Museum in 2012.

Kickstarter in particular is a risk, because if campaigns don’t reach their goal by the appointed deadline they don’t keep any of the pledged donations. The Los Angeles County Museum of Art was up for the risk, José Luis Blondet, a curator of the upcoming

exhibition, said, because it was aligned with the spirits of Nuevo Museo and the exhibition.

“We thought that a Kickstarter might be a way to generate a sense of belonging,” Mr. Blondet said.

Rita Gonzalez, who also organized the exhibition, said the curators had originally planned to bring the reproduced museum the conventional way: in a crate, by air. But the artists who founded Nuevo Museo — Jessica Kairé and Stefan Benchoam — had another idea. Ms. Gonzalez said, “They wanted to turn it into a kind of nomadic museum.”

The artists have planned stops in Guatemala, Mexico and Southern California before it will come to rest on a lawn at the Los Angeles museum for six months.

Of course, this roughly 3,000-mile trip will run up a sizable gas bill (not to mention costs for permits, insurance, accommodations, exhibitions and other programming). The museum organizers are betting on internet users — possibly tempted by prizes that include an egg-salad picnic with a curator-led tour and egg-printed tote bags — to raise the funds.

Garnica, D. (2017, June)

Contra la violencia: Jessica Kairé (Against Violence: Jessica Kairé)

Magis

<https://magis.iteso.mx/nota/contra-la-violencia-jessica-kaire/>

////////////////////////////////////



Although it seems that there is little to do in the face of violence when in the middle of a war, Kairé devised multiple discourses to contradict it in a more poetic than political way, when deciding to create spaces for coexistence, dialogue and for art



There are two biographical data of Jessica Kairé that are essential to understand her work: she was born in 1980 in Guatemala, 16 years before the end of the Civil War that killed at least 200,000 people. Kairé, in addition to living in the midst of war and daily violence, grew up in a Jewish family, conditions that marked her creative interests when she decided to dedicate herself to art and curation.

The data is relevant to, for example, his piece *Shiv'ah* (Seven), from 2008, in which he decided to cover all the mirrors, including those in the bathroom, of some spaces in the Historic Center of Guatemala for seven days, in a recreation of Jewish tradition, such as a shared mourning during the course of a festival; or when in 2014 and 2015 he decided to build edible replicas of some colonial and Sephardic buildings in Guatemala and New York, so that viewers could taste elements of architectural icons: in Guatemala you could taste the colonial in chocolate and in eida (a collaborative space of technology and new media), in Brooklyn, the buffet consisted of Sephardic items made from bread (*Tastings*).



Chaco-bananas made in the Such is Life in the Tropics workshop, in 2013.

And it is that, although it seems that there is little to do in the face of the violence that eats away when one is in the middle of a 36-year war, Kairé devised multiple discourses to contradict it in a more poetic than political way, when deciding to create spaces for coexistence, of dialogue and for art, from the monumental to the everyday. The artist co-founded and now co-directs the New Museum of Contemporary Art of Guatemala (NuMu), born in 2012 with extraordinary measures: barely two by eight meters of an egg-shaped kiosk (where eggs were previously sold) for works of art Contemporary created *in situ*, due to these dimensions, and that has already received 14 artists since its opening.

In 2015, the artist created other spaces for dialogue and coexistence, breaking geographies: with *¿Me listechas?*, achieved that, via Skype, dinners and lunches were held between Guatemalans and New Yorkers.



One of the meals of the project *¿Me listening?*, 2015.

Between 2012 and 2013, Kairé dedicated herself to her most recognized work, *Así es la vida en el tropico*, a multidisciplinary project that included workshops, sculptures and videos to represent, once again, a political and poetic stance against violence, especially that exercised against women. To do this, he invited the participants to transform fruits, vegetables and other foods - bananas, ice cream, chocolate, cherries, oranges or peaches - into articles of personal defense. Thus, a banana took the shape of some chacos, or the peel of an orange, that of a slingshot.

The art critic Suely Rolnik explains that the difference between the pamphlet and the art of denunciation is the poetry that resides between these manifestations. While the pamphlet "forces" you to think in a certain way, art asks you more questions, questioning you about what you believe, what you think and what you live. The art of Jessica Kairé, without a doubt, is a poem full of questions, but also of sensations. **m.**



Pieces of Comfort, a 2008 project that recreated grenades and bullets.

To learn more

:: **Official site** < <http://www.jessicakaire.com> > .

:: **NuMu site** < <http://www.elnuevomuseo.org> > .

:: **Interview with Jessica Kaire** < <http://www.artishockrevista.com/tag/jessica-kaire> > .

:: **Interview (in English)** < <http://www.youtu.be/nHLIb91Oqf4> > .

Villasmil, A. (2017, January 27)
Arte, playa y economía de la amistad. La segunda gran bienal tropical
(*Art, Beach and the Economy Of Friendship.*
The Second Great Tropical Biennial)

Revista Artishock

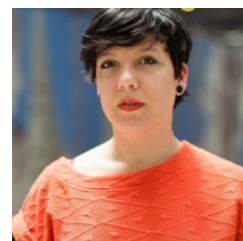
<https://artishockrevista.com/2017/01/24/segunda-gran-bienal-tropical/>

////////////////////////////////////

Por: Alejandra Villasmil • 24.01.2017



Cortesía: Segunda Gran Biental Tropical, Puerto Rico, 2017



Alejandra Villasmil

Nace en Maracaibo (Venezuela) en 1972. Es Directora y Fundadora de Artishock. Licenciada en Comunicación Social, mención audiovisual, por la Universidad Católica Andrés Bello (Caracas, Venezuela, 1994), con formación libre en arte contemporáneo (teoría y práctica) en escuelas de Nueva York (1997-2007). En Nueva York trabajó como corresponsal sénior para la revista Arte al Día Internacional (2004-2007) y como corresponsal de Cultura de la agencia española de noticias EFE (2002-2007). En Chile fue encargada de prensa y difusión para el Museo de Artes Visuales (MAVI), Galería Gabriela Mistral, Galería Moro y la Biental de Video y Artes Mediales.

Más publicaciones

Artículos

ARTE, PLAYA Y ECONOMÍA DE LA AMISTAD. LA SEGUNDA GRAN BIENAL TROPICAL

Históricamente, las bienales en Puerto Rico han sido boicoteadas, canceladas, retrasadas, convertidas en trienales y vueltas a posponer. Exitosas, desacertadas, pertinentes o controversiales, la constante ha sido su carácter interrumpido, dependiente del vaivén político, la militancia de los artistas y el presupuesto disponible.

Quizás no hubo entonces mejor momento que el décimo aniversario de la recesión económica en Puerto Rico para -a cinco años de su primera edición- realizar la **2da Gran Biental Tropical**, un evento lúdico pero pertinente en estos tiempos de mercados, financiado a través de la economía de la amistad. Una bienal desplegable y versátil, adaptable, sin presupuesto y sin cargos por envío de obras.

Entre palmeras, fritanga y salitre, este ejercicio colaborativo-artístico-tropical se llevó a cabo del 7 al 10 de diciembre en varias localidades de Puerto Rico, bajo la curaduría de **Marina Reyes Franco**, **Radamés "Juni" Figueroa**, **Jesús "Bubu" Negrón** (ganador de la *Piña de Oro* en la 1ra Gran Biental Tropical), **Stefan Benchoam** y **Pablo León de la Barra**.

Después de una pausa de cinco años, la segunda edición de la Gran Bienal Tropical volvió a Puerto Rico para revivir la experiencia del libre hacer y retomar lo que como proyecto único en su tipo había dejado inconcluso. “Es una especie de ejercicio de trabajo colectivo e investigación donde la estrategia principal es crear una bienal seria y avanzada, basada en la economía de la amistad y la autogestión. Busca también desarrollar proyectos fuera del cubo blanco e insertarse en la selva y paisajes tropicales de cualquier parte del mundo”, dice Ramadés “Juni” Figueroa.



Cortesía: Segunda Gran Bienal Tropical, Puerto Rico, 2017



Cortesía: Segunda Gran Bienal Tropical, Puerto Rico, 2017

La exhibición principal de la 2da Gran Bienal Tropical duró sólo un día, el sábado 10 de diciembre, en las inmediaciones del **Kiosco La Comay** (Carr. 187, Km. 13), en Piñones, y contó con la participación de artistas de latitudes caribeñas, tropicales y del más allá, unos invitados, otros seleccionados a partir de una convocatoria abierta (algunas obras se realizaron por instrucciones, en el caso de los artistas que no estuvieron físicamente presentes).

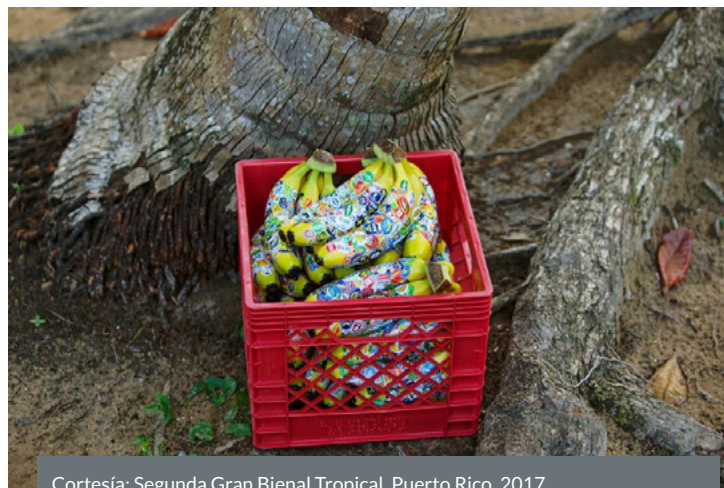
Esta edición también rindió homenaje a dos secretos a voces de la escena artística local: **Zilia Sánchez** (La Habana, 1928) y **Esteban Valdés** (Ciudad de México, 1947). Contó, además, con una presentación de trabajos de maestros artesanos y una gran fiesta de cierre con música que incluyó la ceremonia de premiación con la *Piña de Oro* al mejor artista de la bienal, que esta vez recayó en cuatro: **Vivian Suter**, **Jorge González**, **Alice Chéveres**, y **Daniel Lind-Ramos**. Los *Cocos de Oro* (menciones de honor) fueron para **Jessica Kairé**, **Nicolás Robbio** y **Engel Leonardo**.

“Es evidente y placentero ver cómo la Bienal Tropical no sólo une a la comunidad artística local e internacional, sino que también une a la comunidad de Loiza. Fuimos recibidos por el Kiosco La Comay, que siempre nos brinda un menú delicioso y un ambiente de unidad y reflexión. Hubo una gran participación de artistas de diferentes generaciones, otro elemento que vemos como un gran logro de esta

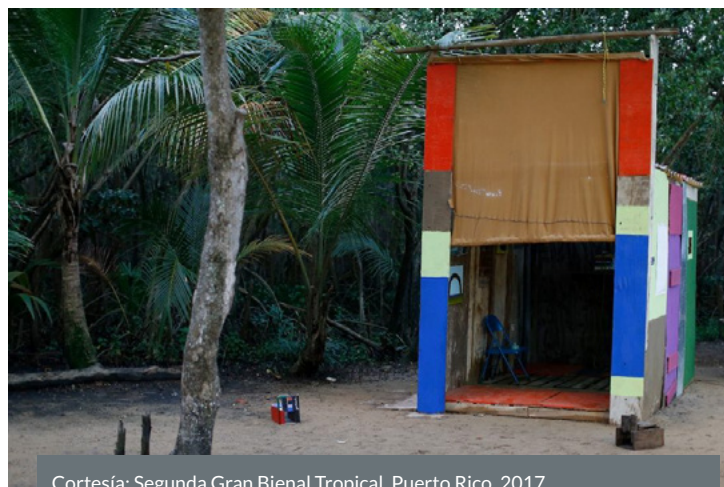
edición de la bienal, y para nuestra sorpresa uno de los ganadores de la *Piña de Oro* fue Daniel Lind-Ramos, un artista local, nacido en 1953 en Loiza", agregó Figueroa.



Cortesía: Segunda Gran Bienal Tropical, Puerto Rico, 2017



Cortesía: Segunda Gran Bienal Tropical, Puerto Rico, 2017



Cortesía: Segunda Gran Bienal Tropical, Puerto Rico, 2017



Cortesía: Segunda Gran Biental Tropical, Puerto Rico, 2017



Cortesía: Segunda Gran Biental Tropical, Puerto Rico, 2017



Cortesía: Segunda Gran Bial Tropical, Puerto Rico, 2017

Artistas participantes en la exhibición de la 2da Gran Bial Tropical

Adriana Lara, Adriana Martínez, Andrés Pereira Paz, Beatriz Santiago Muñoz, Bhakti Baxter, Blue Curry, Brandon Cannon, Caribbean Backbone Research Institute, Carolina Caycedo, Chaveli Sifre, Cecilia Jurado, CoCa, Cristina Tufiño, Dalton Gata, Daniel Lind-Ramos, Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, Donna Conlon & Jonathan Harker, Edgardo Larregui, Eduardo Navarro, Engel Leonardo, Esteban Valdés, Felipe Mujica, Flurina Badel & Jeremie Sarbach, Gabriel Maldonado Andreu, Gache Franco en colaboración con Awilda Sterling-Duprey y Luis Alonso, Gala Berger, Gregory Thielker, Irene de Andrés Vega, Iván Sikic, Javier Barrios, Jessica Kairé, Joao Mode, Jorge González, Juan Alberto Negroni, Juan Sebastián Peláez, Jun Martínez, Karlo Andrei Ibarra, Kcirred Reswob, Kent Chan, Laura Castro con Máximo Del Castillo y Quisqueya Henríquez, Lino Divas, Lionel Cruet, Luis Santiago Rivera, Manuel Mendoza Sánchez, Manuela Viera-Gallo, Marcelo Cidade, Melissa Raymond & René Sandín, Mónica Rodríguez, Opavivará, Nicolás Robbio, Ricardo Morales-Hernández, Rita Indiana y Raul Recio, Roberto Yiyo Tirado, Vivian Suter, Zilia Sánchez.



Cortesía: Segunda Gran Bial Tropical, Puerto Rico, 2017



Cortesía: Segunda Gran Bial Tropical, Puerto Rico, 2017

(2015, March 6)

Contemporary Art in Guatemala

Curators International

<https://curatorsintl.org/events/contemporary-guatemalan-art>

////////////////////////////////////

INDEPENDENT CURATORS INTERNATIONAL events

Contemporary Art in Guatemala



Image: NuMu is a collaborative project between Guatemalan artists Jessica Kairé and Stefan Benchoam. The images above show an exhibition by artist Federico Herrero. Guatemala City, July 2012. This was also the inaugural exhibition at NuMu.

**Celebrating Contemporary Guatemalan Art:
Conversations with Artists & Curators
Friday, March 6, 2015**

6:30–9:30pm

The New School

Theresa Lang Community Center

55 West 13th Street (2nd floor)

FREE and open to the public

This event will be live streamed; food and drinks will be served.

Follow the live stream [HERE](#).

In recent years Guatemalan artistic production has been extremely powerful, with an emergence of critical artistic practices responding to the violence, repression and historical memory of the previous decades in Guatemala, but also its unique sense of contemporaneity, indigeneity, and radical urban imagination. Contemporary Guatemalan artists such as Regina José Galindo, Benvenuto Chavajay, Jorge de León and many others are recognized widely not only in the context of Central/Latin America, but receive much acclaim on the world stage, while contemporary urban art spaces like NuMu and Proyectos Ultravioleta are notable for their inventive curatorial practices and creative public engagement.

Showcasing the exciting energy around contemporary artistic and curatorial practices emerging in Guatemala today, this event features artists including: Jessica Kairé, Terike Haapoja, and Jaime Permuth, who will present recent projects conducted in Guatemala; curators Anabella Acevedo and Pablo José Ramírez (joining remotely from Guatemala); and Prof. Nitin Sawhney from The New School Media Studies program. Sawhney, Acevedo and Ramírez are co-organizing the exhibition initiative [Guatemala Después](#) which will open this April (on view April 9-29) at The Sheila C. Johnson Design Center at Parsons/The New School and at Ciudad de la Imagination in Guatemala this June, featuring the work of over 40 Guatemalan and US-based artists.

Please see the recently launched [Kickstarter Campaign for Guatemala Después](#) to learn more and contribute to this exciting new project.

The conversation will be moderated by María Del Carmen Carrión, ICI's Director of Public Programs & Research, followed by an informal mixer with Guatemalan food and drinks, and a performance by Guatemalan musician Isabel Ruano.

Organized in collaboration with [Ciudad de la Imagination](#) as well as [The School of Media Studies](#), [Sheila C. Johnson Design Center \(SJDC\)](#), and [Vera List Center for Art and Politics](#); it is co-sponsored by the University Student Senate (USS) at The New School.

This event is free and open to the public. To attend, please RSVP to rsvp@curatorsintl.org with **GUATEMALA** in the subject line.

March 6, 2015

The New School

Theresa Lang Community Center

55 West 13th Street (2nd Floor)

New York, NY 10011

presenter



Terike Haapoja

Terike Haapoja is a Finnish visual artist. With a specific focus in encounters with nature, death and other species, Haapoja's work investigates the existential and political boundaries of our world. Haapoja's work raises questions about the existential basis radical otherness provide for being, and about how different structures of exclusion and discrimination function as foundations for identity and culture. Haapoja approaches the previously mentioned themes by building up large projects, often realized in the forms of installations, related publications and participatory acts. Haapoja contributes regularly to Finnish and international art publications. She was the editor of mustekala.info issue "After the Animal" (2013), co-editor of special issue "Animal" of Esitys-journal (2013) and co-editor of the Finnish Bioart Society's publication Field_Notes: From Landscape to Laboratory (2013). Haapoja represented Finland in the Venice Biennale in 2013 with a solo show in the Nordic Pavilion.



Jessica Kairé

Jessica Kairé (Guatemala, 1980) is a Guatemalan artist based between New York and Guatemala City. She is also the co-founder and co-director of the Nuevo Museo de Arte Contemporáneo – NuMu – in Guatemala City, an egg-shaped museum that aims to satiate the lack of other contemporary art institutions in the country. Her work deals with the Guatemalan and Latin identity in general and specific subjects of her native country: violence, underdevelopment, and tropicality as well as gender issues and her Jewish background. She has participated in exhibitions at local and international venues including: La 2nda Gran Bienal Tropical, Puerto Rico; 18th Street Arts Center, Los Angeles, CA; Proyectos Ultravioleta, Guatemala City, Guatemala; NY; XVII Paiz Art Biennale, Guatemala City, Guatemala; SOMA Centro Cultural, Guatemala City, Guatemala; Sheila C. Johnson Design Center, Parsons The New School for Design, NY, USA; El Museo del Barrio, New York City, Museum of Contemporary Art and Design (MADC), Brooklyn International Performance Art Festival, Brooklyn, NY; Plato's Cave at EIDIA, Brooklyn, NY, USA; San Jose, Costa Rica; Christinger de Mayo Gallery, Zurich; Sol del Río, Guatemala City, Guatemala; Concepción 41, Antigua Guatemala; Centro Cultural de España, Guatemala City, Guatemala and Museo Nacional de Arqueología y Etnología, Guatemala City, Guatemala.



Jaime Permuth

Jaime Permuth is a Guatemalan photographer living and working in New York City. In 2014, he was awarded with a Smithsonian Institution Artist Fellowship and was also nominated for a 2014 USA Artists Fellowship. In 2013, his first monograph *Yonkeros* was published by La Fabrica Editorial (Madrid). Also, in 2013 he was nominated for the Prix Pictet and awarded an NFA Fellowship from the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures. His photographs have been shown at several venues in New York, NY, including: The Museum of Modern Art, The Queens Museum of Art, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, The Museum of the City of New York, The Jewish Museum, El Museo del Barrio, and The Brooklyn Museum of Art. He has also exhibited internationally at the Museo Nacional de Arte Moderno in Guatemala, Ryugaheon Gallery (Korea) Casa del Lago in Mexico City, and the Israeli Parliament. Permuth is a Faculty Member at the School of Visual Arts, where he teaches in the Master of Professional Studies in Digital Photography program curating and hosting their i3 Lecture Series.



Anabella Acevedo

Anabella Acevedo is Executive Director of Ciudad de la Imaginación. She is an independent academic; she has resided and worked in Quetzaltenango since 2005. She holds an undergraduate degree in Literature and Philosophy from the Rafael Landívar University. She obtained her Master's in Latin American Literature in 1989 and a doctorate in Latin American Literature from the University of Georgia in 1994. She was the Director of the Ford Foundation International Fellowship Program in Guatemala, from 2001 to 2013, when she worked at the Centro de Investigaciones Regionales de Mesoamérica (CIRMA). She has co-curated several exhibits, such as *Estados de Excepción (States of Exception)* in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. In 2001 she was the recipient of a Rockefeller Foundation research grant for the project "Marginalidades, transgresiones y negociaciones. La violencia en Guatemala a través de las prácticas culturales de los jóvenes." Acevedo curated the XVII and XIX Bienal de Arte Paiz in Guatemala (2012 & 2014). In 2013 she formed part of a research team for the "The curvature of time, Art and Women." She has published several essays about literature and Guatemalan Art.



Pablo José Ramírez

Pablo José Ramírez is a curator, art writer and cultural theorist who splits his time between Guatemala and London. He is the Adjunct Curator of First Nations and Indigenous Art at Tate Modern. His work revisits post-colonial societies to consider non-western ontologies, indigeneity, forms of racial occlusion, and sound. He holds an MA in Contemporary Art Theory from Goldsmiths, University of London. In 2015 he co-curated with Cecilia Fajardo-Hill the 19th Bienal Paiz: Trans-visible. He was a Guest Curator at Parsons/The New School in New York and at the CCA in Glasgow. Ramirez was the recipient of the 2019 Independent Curators International/CPPC Award for Central America and the Caribbean. Among his recent exhibitions are *La Medida del Silencio*, Lawrence Abu Hamdan, NuMu, Guatemala (2020); *The Shores of the World: on communality and interlingual politics*, Display, Prague (2018); *Guatemala Después*, co-curator, Sheila C. Johnson Design Center, Parsons School of Design, New York (2015); *This Might be a Place for Hummingbirds*, co-curator, Center for Contemporary Arts, Glasgow (2014). Ramirez is the Editor in Chief and co-founder of Infrasonica.



Nitin Sawhney

Nitin Sawhney, Ph.D. is Assistant Professor of Media Studies at the New School. His research, teaching and creative practice engages the critical role of technology, civic media, and artistic interventions in contested spaces. Nitin previously taught at the MIT Program in Art, Culture, and Technology (ACT) and conducted research at the MIT Media Lab. He examines social movements and crisis contexts, through forms of creative urban tactics, participatory research, performance and documentary film. He is the co-curator of the Guatemala Después exhibitions to be held in New York and Guatemala in 2015. He previously co-curated the participatory exhibition #SearchUnderOccupy at the New School to showcase creative responses to the Occupy Movement in New York City in 2012. Nitin is currently completing a documentary film, *Zona Intervenida*, focusing on genocide, memory and body through site-specific performance interventions and documentary film in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala.

(2013, March 21)

*Special Report: With a Professional-Development
Seminar in Guatemala, NYFA Goes International*

The New York Foundation for the Arts

<https://www.nyfa.org/iap-newsletter-issue-43-69199324811>

////////////////////////////////////

Con Edison Immigrant Artist Program Newsletter, Issue No. 43

March 21, 2013

Special Report: With a Professional-Development Seminar in Guatemala, NYFA Goes International

This month's Immigrant Artist newsletter focuses on a special event in NYFA's 42-year history with our first International Professional Development Program taking place in Central America, Guatemala. From February 28, 2013 through March 3, 2013, the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA), [Instituto Guatemalteco Americano \(IGA\)](#), [Universidad Francisco Marroquín \(UFM\)](#), and [La Fototeca](#), collaborated to produce an intensive 4-day seminar entitled "El Artista Como Emprendedor."

The purpose of the seminar was to teach the principles of entrepreneurship in the arts, with the curriculum based on NYFA's widely-used book, "[The Profitable Artist](#)."

Over seventy artists—from all artistic disciplines— participated in this event, and included artists and arts organization representatives from Guatemala, Costa Rica, Honduras, El Salvador, Mexico, Colombia, and the United States. NYFA's curriculum focused on strategic planning in the arts, basic financial and budgeting techniques, fundraising, legal issues for artists, marketing, and candid discussions about surviving in today's art marketplace. These topics were adapted to fit the unique needs of artists in Guatemala and Latin America, and local experts were invited to present on certain core topics where relevant. Participants were also given the chance to complete a customizable "action plan," that would serve as a blueprint for their careers, to present on their goals and plans, and to receive feedback.

[-"El Artista Como Emprendedor" Boot Camp participants on the final day, March 3, 2013. Photo Credit: Waseem A. Syed.](#)

This was the first time in the region that such a large group of artists had come together to create a community based on shared interests and goals. With a strong emphasis on creating a supportive network, the participants began by creating a "virtual community" through a vibrant and active

Facebook group. That has already moved from the virtual to the physical, as the participants (with IGA facilitating) have held follow-up meetings, with more planned for the near future. The program's impact provided in the words of artist Waseem A. Syed "shared inspiration and opportunities for interdisciplinary cooperation." Each partner hosted a session of the program allowing participants to gain familiarity with the organizations and each bringing a unique perspective to the experience.

Through the IAP Con Edison Newsletter's [featured organization](#) articles, NYFA had been introduced to [El Nuevo Museo de Arte Contemporáneo](#), Guatemala (NuMu), a collaborative project between Stefan Benchoam and 2010 Mentee alum Jessica Kairé. NuMu is first museum dedicated to contemporary art in Guatemala whose physical space is the shape of an egg as it was originally built for an egg-selling street vendor. NYFA was able to visit the space in person and see their current exhibition "Jardín de esculturas", curated by Emiliano Valdés, which featured site-specific and sculptural works by Bhakti Baxter (Miami), Gabriel Lester (Amsterdam/Shanghai), Federico Herrero (San Jose) and Rodrigo Hernández (Mexico City/ Maastricht). Stefan is also co-director of [Proyectos Ultravioleta](#) in Zone 1, an area where galleries have become more prominent since the introduction of 6ta avenida, the City's first pedestrian street. Founded in 2009, the artist run space has a new and unusual location inside a bustling mall that seems appropriate for the experimental and multidisciplinary focus of their programming that also provides a platform for local and foreign projects, workshops, screenings, concerts, and lectures.

As NYFA continues its work fostering communities abroad, with programs such as the recent [International Composers Exchange](#) with artists from the Netherlands, the organization looks forward to deepening the relationship with Guatemala and the region, and to providing resources to these artists while linking them with their international counterparts.

Images: Top, La Fototeca Co- Director Juan José Estrada presents on marketing at the "El Artista Como Emprendedor" Boot Camp, March 2, 2013. Photo Credit: Alejandro Alonzo. Middle, "El Artista Como Emprendedor" Boot Camp participants on the final day, March 3, 2013. Photo Credit: Waseem A. Syed.

(2012, August 21)

Featured Organization: El Nuevo Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Guatemala

(Featured Organization: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, Guatemala)

New York Foundation for the Arts

<https://www.nyfa.org/iap-newsletter-issue-39-69200037304>

////////////////////////////////////

Con Edison Immigrant Artist Program Newsletter, Issue No. 39

August 21, 2012



Featured Organization: El Nuevo Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Guatemala (NuMu)

This month we feature [El Nuevo Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Guatemala \(NuMu\)](#), a collaborative project between Stefan Benchoam and [Jessica Kairé](#) (Alum of the 2010 NYFA Mentoring Program for Immigrant Artists) that has emerged as a result of the lack of museums in Guatemala that support, exhibit and document contemporary local and international art. NuMu is the first museum in Guatemala exclusively dedicated to contemporary art. NYFA IAP Program Officer Karen Demavivas and Intern Aya Sato asked Kairé about the birth and direction of the museum.

You developed El Nuevo Museo de Arte Contemporáneo (NuMu) with Stefan Benchoam. “Over three years ago, a series of repeated conversations took place between us, after realizing the need of a museum in Guatemala that would promote, exhibit and document contemporary local and international art.” How did those conversations come about, and what do you share with Stefan that allowed you to go into this venture together?

Stefan and I grew up together, but I think we found new common grounds when getting involved with the local art scene, around the same time. We share similar intentions for art-making, and our approach is very much influenced by multidisciplinary practices, collaborations, and new technologies, like the internet. In several ways, this approach is quite different from the previous generation of Guatemalan artists.

We've often discussed the richness of the local (Guatemalan) art community versus the shortage of institutions that can offer the necessary support to realize possible artistic projects of great value. We began talking about the need for a new museum in Guatemala, the very first that could showcase contemporary art and fully support artists. We were also interested in documenting and archiving Guatemalan art, and making it accessible to everyone.

Could you explain your journey in finding the location for this museum?

When we first conceived the idea for a museum, we considered creating a museum based solely on the web, to defray costs, but our conversations gradually diminished. After some time passed, we came across a sign that read "for rent" across the unique space that now hosts NuMu. We signed a one-year lease right away.

NuMu's physical space, located in Guatemala City, measures approximately 2 x 2.5 meters and has the shape of an egg, since it was originally designed for an egg-selling business express style. Over the years, this structure has become iconic within the city and it's probably the only one of its kind in the world.

Could you talk about who is exhibited at NuMu? How do you split your programming between local and international art? What do you find is important about having both?

Currently on view is the first exhibition of the season, Federico Herrero's wonderful site-specific pictoric intervention, that expands in and out of the incredible egg-shaped structure of tropical design (that hosts our small yet grand museum), and then extends towards the neighboring public spaces. Herrero (Costa Rica, 1978) is considered one of the most important artists in Latin American contemporary art. In 2001, he received a Golden Lion Award for Best Young Artist at the 49th Venice Biennial.

More than anything, we are interested in exhibiting the most challenging and exciting work currently being made out there. We believe that by strategically combining local and international projects, we are creating opportunities for exchange and fruitful collaborations to take place. It's important to point out that the museum allows for the artists, curators, movers and shakers invited to the space to have absolute freedom to realize their projects as they desire. Our job is to make them feel at home, and support them throughout the process. For us, this is about uniting forces, experimenting, questioning and sharing.

NuMu's 2012-2013 Program will include four main exhibitions, at least two interdisciplinary activities in between exhibitions and an educational component paired up with each event. All of the activities are free and open to the public, thanks to the kind support of Los Amigos del NuMu.

In what ways has the local community around the museum responded so far, in relation to the appearance of the museum, especially considering its unusual shape and high visibility?

We welcome people to question and challenge our unusual approach. As both museum and artwork, it re-evaluates the general meaning of a museum, and what it means to be a contemporary art museum in the 21st century in both the local context of Guatemala City and the international art scene.

In general, the response has been outstanding, from both the local and international art communities, as well as the neighboring local businesses. NuMu represents a fresh approach to the artist-institution relationship, as well as cultural and employment benefits for the neighborhood. This is an opportunity for those who are unfamiliar with contemporary art to experience it first-hand, any given day of the week. We have a small, yet wonderful staff who live in the neighborhood, including Onelia, a restaurant owner and neighbor, who is responsible for keeping the museum open at its regular hours. We view these neighboring local businesses, cafes and restaurants in particular, as extensions of the museum itself.

Furthermore, we give much thanks to Los Amigos del NuMu (Friends of NuMu) who are a group of people who have supported the project from day one and are generously providing us with not only moral and emotional support but monetary resources as well.



Do you have any plans of cultural exchange between your community of artists in NYC and the community of artists connected with NuMu in Guatemala?

Definitely. Even though our main exhibitions program is set for the current season, we are interested in inviting people from different backgrounds to take part in our interdisciplinary events. These include performance, video and other time-based projects and will be either within the physical space of NuMu, web-based or otherwise site-specific.

Can you share with us any current or upcoming projects you have in relation to the museum?

We are very excited to announce that our second main exhibition of the season will be headed by Emiliano Valdés, who returns to Guatemala after being part of the curatorial staff of dOCUMENTA (13) in Kassel, Germany. Valdés is an architect, curator, co-director of Proyectos Ultravioleta and director of Visual Arts at Centro Cultural de España in Guatemala.

Additionally, as part of this month's programming, NuMu will present Daily No. 2, a collaborative, web-based project realized between artists, curators, and academics who have been invited by three art spaces: Beta-Local (Puerto Rico), Soma (Mexico) and Proyectos Ultravioleta (Guatemala). This event will take place during the Guatemalan photography festival Foto30 and for one night only through a projection at NuMu. To learn more about Daily, please

Cotter, H. (2011, June 16)
Artists Whose Vitality Flows From the Streets
The New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/17/arts/design/el-museos-bienal-the-s-files-2011-review.html>

////////////////////////////////////

ART REVIEW

Artists Whose Vitality Flows From the Streets

By Holland Cotter

June 16, 2011

Because of a long renovation of El Museo del Barrio's Fifth Avenue building, four years have passed since the museum's last "bi-annual" survey of new Latino, Caribbean and Latin American art. As if to make up for lost time, the new edition is the biggest so far. It includes work by 75 artists spread over seven shows in four boroughs, with the main event at El Museo itself.

The title for the whole shebang is "El Museo's Bienal: The (S) Files 2011," with the S standing for "Street," as in street art. It's a baggy theme, encompassing everything from graffiti to junk sculpture to painted cityscapes, and some of the work has problems with focus. Yet taking the street as a subject opens the possibility of at least thinking about other subjects, like money, and the lack of it.

Although the market keeps crowing about how auctions and fairs are booming even in a ruinous economy, the exhibition catalog points out that the average artist is having a tough time, scrounging for the odd job, for a place to show, even for materials — all things that the street has helped provide in hard times past. The show itself also suggests an alternative definition of "average artist." Scan the résumés of participants in mainstream roundups like the Whitney Biennial or "Greater New York," and you'll find lots of Ivy League M.F.A.'s and out-of-the-gate Chelsea debuts. Collectively the artists in "The (S) Files" tend to have somewhat different credentials in biology, sociology, mathematics and telecommunications, earned at institutions that range — and I restrict the range to New York City — from Columbia University to Apex Technical School.

As for prestige galleries, some are represented. But far more of the artists here show in places like Splatterpool, Helenbeck, TT-Underground, Buzzer Thirty, Monkeytown and Sacred, not to mention in hardscrabble alternative spaces like Tribes on the Lower East Side and Taller Boricua in East Harlem, a few blocks from El Museo.

In short, the "The (S) Files" confirms what should be obvious but rarely is in the art world: there are scads of artists out there with careers and lives that don't, whether by chance or by choice, revolve around a few square blocks of mid-Manhattan art real estate. At the same time another truth is demonstrated: In a highly competitive market that turns art schools into art mills, a lot of art, no matter where it comes from, looks like a lot of other art everywhere.

The show starts off with a pair of cityscapes that give contrasting urban views. The first is a panoramic mural — part painting, part collage, part sculpture — by the young Brazilian Priscila de

Carvalho, of tiny figures dwarfed by towering buildings and a toxic-looking sky. The second is a set of photographs by Daniel Bejar, a Bronx native, documenting a kind of guerrilla project that had him replacing regular, multicolored New York City subway maps with new ones featuring boroughs colored entirely green to evoke the pristine forestland the city once was.

From this we move to another history, that of a specific urban art, graffiti — or rather to recent work by three of its pioneers, all immigrants: Lady Pink (Sandra Fabara), born in Ecuador; Mösko (Alvaro Alcocer), born in Mexico; and Lee Quinones, born in Puerto Rico. (A fourth artist, Cope2, aka Fernando Carlo Jr., born in New York City, has a piece in El Museo's cafe.) All these artists started painting in the streets as teenagers in the 1970s and '80s but have since shifted much of their activity to the studio.

Mr. Alcocer transmutes a tradition of aerosol calligraphy into fluid oil-and-acrylic abstract paintings. Mr. Quinones keeps the anti-authoritarian impulse of old-style street art alive in a figurative painting, framed as if for a baronial hall, of a wolf dressed in a red hunter's jacket and stalking the viewer through trees with dollar bills for foliage.

Ms. Fabara's "Women Breeding Soldiers," with its images of embryos and falling bombs, cuts right to the political chase and is painted, at least in part, on the wall.

Some younger artists are tackling topical content in direct ways too. Geandy Pavón, who was born in Cuba, has a masterly trompe l'oeil portrait of Barack Obama in the show, or rather a painting of the president's face as if seen in a crumpled-up photograph. Last month, however, Mr. Pavón took portraiture straight out to the street when he projected an image of the Chinese artist Ai Weiwei onto the facade of the Chinese Consulate on West 42nd Street in Manhattan.



Visitors to El Museo del Barrio look at "Honest George" (2009), a painting by Lee Quinones, who is one of 75 artists featured in "El Museo's Bienal: The (S) Files 2011." Librado

Mr. Obama appears again in a sequence of paintings by Joaquín Rodríguez del Paso, where his melting face is paired with the image of a dish of vanilla ice cream dripping with chocolate sauce. Race, as fiction and reality, is one of the show's recurrent subjects. In a photographic narrative by Rachelle Mozman, one Latin American actor — the artist's mother — plays the roles of aristocratic twin sisters, one light-skinned, one dark, as well as a family maid.

And in a series of silhouette self-portraits, Firelei Báez, who is Dominican by birth, simultaneously asserts and cuts through what she calls an Afro-Latina identity. Her hairstyle changes from portrait to portrait — from curly to straightened, and so on — but her staring eyes, her only visible facial features, remain the same in each picture.

Ethnicity as a performance is at its most theatrical in Irvin Morazán's fantastically costumed performances, in which he wears towering masklike headdresses that mix references to pre-Columbian and contemporary hip-hop cultures. In a 2009 video made in his homeland, El Salvador, Mr. Morazan wears his "Ghetto Blaster Headdress" as he presides, like a Mayan potentate, over a break-dancing display.

The headdress, on view in the gallery, is basically an assemblage of found odds and ends: a tape deck, feathers, tons of gold chains. And the show — organized by Rocío Aranda-Alvarado, Trinidad Fombella and Elvis Fuentes, all curators at El Museo, and a guest curator, Juanita Bermúdez — devotes quite a bit of space to work made from recycled objects and materials, with uneven results.

Alberto Borea makes something purposeful — a wall-size diversity rainbow — from hundreds of plastic shopping bags.

But Abigail DeVille's grotto of amassed found paper and plastic just looks like a pileup of debris, despite a highfalutin title.

In the end the most satisfying work is the most visually unassuming: a beautiful abstract wall relief made of stretched inner tubes by Adán Vallecillo; an ingenious sound installation by Thessia Machado, with two turntables tripping off miniature percussive devices; three small object-video sculptures by Marcos Agudelo; and Jessica Kairé's stuffed-and-stitched soft-sculpture weapons: like morally slippery toys, they render aggression harmless but also make it O.K.

I like the two moody photographic self-portraits by Sol Aramendi, an artist who came to New York from Argentina several years ago and created a photographic program called Project Luz for new immigrants to the city. And I like the fact that many of the exotic props surrounding her in her pictures were borrowed from a friend, the artist Juan Betancurth, who has an installation that doubles as a performance space near the entrance to the exhibition.

Born and educated in Colombia, Mr. Betancurth describes his performances as being inspired by the lives and deaths of Roman Catholic saints; his stagelike installation, filled with mementos he associates with his mother, has the subdued air of a shrine. To some degree his work is "Latin American" in a way that's unfashionable in these supposedly post-identity days, when everyone is

being urged to leave geography and ethnicity behind.

Some of the artists in this show simply don't do that, nor does the show itself. Is this a problem? Not at all. As long as the names that flash across the global art world radar continue to be generated by a blinkered Euro-North American art establishment, exhibitions with ethnic handles like "The (S) Files" will remain a practical necessity.

So will institutions like El Museo del Barrio, which is not attached to a "barrio" at all, yet continues to serve an indispensable role as a showcase for Latino art in this Latino city, which otherwise finds little place for such work. (And, by the way, to get a clear sense of the intense social and psychological conflicts that still keep identity politics on the boil, you need only study this institution's fraught history.)

Of course there are other reasons for savoring El Museo and its biennial: namely visual and intellectual stimulation, which promises to be multiplied several times in the months ahead as "The (S) Files 2011" gradually opens at other locations: Socrates Sculpture Park in Long Island City, Queens, on Sunday; Lehman College Art Gallery in the Bronx on Wednesday; the Times Square Alliance in Manhattan on July 14; the Northern Manhattan Cultural Alliance on Sept. 13; and the BRIC Rotunda Gallery in Brooklyn on Nov. 9.

(2010, February 19)

Con Edison Immigrant Artist Program Newsletter, Issue No. 4

New York Foundation for the arts

<https://www.nyfa.org/iap-newsletter-issue-4-69124070294>

////////////////////////////////////

Con Edison Immigrant Artist Program Newsletter, Issue No. 4

February 19, 2010



Featured Artist: Jessica Kaire

Immigrant Artist Project had the chance recently to interview Featured Artist Jessica Kaire. Here's what she had to say:

IAP: Tell us a little bit about yourself

JK: I'm the product of immigrant Syrian Jews, the Guatemalan civil war of the '80s and a North American education. The role of art has transformed from an instinctive language into an engine for revisiting my background as well as a means to break free from my comfort zones. I explore basic needs such as esteem, love, belonging and safety through an object-body relationship. Currently, my main focus is transforming art spaces and artworks into therapeutic ones for myself and the viewers, who in turn become users.

IAP: What's the story behind the "Confort" series? What does it have to do with Guatemala, where you're from, and New York, where you live and work?

JK: "Confort", pure anglicism, represents a fictional brand of objects that are meant to offer a sense of protection for the user/buyer, the same way a safety blanket does for a child. The project speaks of a culture that has learned to adapt to violent climates instead of reacting against them. Even though New York's issues about safety are of a different character from those of my hometown, I begin to see a strong resemblance in regards to people's response and how easily, say a year from now, walking through a full-body x-ray machine at the airport may become as casual as breathing.

IAP: Describe the experience of moving to the US: When and why did you come? What were your initial impressions? What was most difficult? Did you know you wanted to work as an artist here in New York?

JK: After interrupting my education and leaving New York in 2003 due to a raise in tuition at Hunter College, I returned to Guatemala. I began to get involved in the local art scene and to develop close relationships with other Guatemalan artists as well as showing my work at spaces such as 9.99/proyecto, XVI Bienal de Paiz and Centro de Formación de la Cooperación Española. These experiences and connections became a strong platform for maturing as an artist.

In 2008, I became a US resident and relocated to Brooklyn. I chose New York because of its urban infrastructure and high rate of artistic activity. Having been raised in an environment with strong influences from the US, the cultural shock was somewhat less intense. My struggle has been most related to maintaining the strong bond that I have with the Guatemalan community through live chats on skype and facebook while building new relationships here.

Visit Jessica's website: www.jessicakaire.com

Images: Top, Jessica Kaire, *Plush Knuckles* (from the CONFORT series). Photos by Eduardo Benchoam.

Proyectos Ultravioleta

<http://uvuvuv.com/>

21 calle 11-09 zona 1

Guatemala City, Guatemala, 01001

+502 2253 9288

hola@uvuvuv.com