

**INTERVIEW: MARIBEL LÓPEZ, CO-DIRECTOR, ARCOMADRID**

# LOOKING FORWARD IN MADRID

The co-director on what makes it a reference fair to learn about art trends in the Spanish-speaking world

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AFTER WORKING FOR a decade and a half at the ARCOmadrid fair in various capacities, its current director Carlos Urroz will be moving on to other engagements after the 2019 iteration that takes place from February 27 through March 3. Maribel López, currently his co-director, will be taking over the role on her own. With a degree in art history from the University of Barcelona, López brings rich experience to the role as she has worked with a variety of galleries throughout her career.

Some key highlights of the fair this year include a curated section of works by Peruvian artists (Peru is the guest country at the fair), bringing focus on Contemporary art from an important part of the Hispanic world. Featuring works by 23 Peruvian artists, the section is curated by Sharon Lerner, Contemporary art curator at the Lima Art Museum.

A few weeks ahead of the 2019 ARCOmadrid fair, López answered a few questions for BLOUIN ARTINFO. Following are excerpts from the interview:

**You have been associated with the ARCOmadrid fair for nearly a decade now and will head it independently after the 2019 edition. How do you see this change affecting your position with the fair? And what is going to be your vision for the fair's future?**

I have been working in ARCO since 2010 in different positions, first as curator of Opening, the Young galleries sections; then as commercial manager/deputy director. This new position is the possibility to work at the fair from yet another angle. But ARCO is team work and I will continue, with all my colleagues, working for a high-quality fair.

I will continue working to maintain and increase ARCO as a reference fair to discover new artists, and to learn more about art from Spain, Latin America and all over the world.

**How has the Contemporary art scene in Spain evolved in the time that you have been with ARCOmadrid?**

I have seen the Spanish art scene go from a non-confident place, very much related to the economic crisis, to a moment now, where we can see new galleries opening and Spanish galleries and artists having a wider international presence.

**Could you share your thoughts on its position as a premier fair of the Spanish-speaking world, and whether it has succeeded in integrating the physically widespread Hispanic countries?**

In my opinion, yes, it has over the years. The investigation on the cre-



Diana Policarpo, "Beating Back Darkness," 2014-19. Installation of multichannel sound, vessels and acoustic panels. Dimensiones variable.



Maribel López



Above: Carmen Argote, "Arrangement of Contained Energies," 2018. Flower of Jamaica, avocado seed, onions and iron sulfate on watercolor paper, 218 x 108 cm.

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ation in the Latin American countries has reached the point of ARCOmadrid being the reference both for European collectors interested in Latin American art and Latin American artists and galleries interested in opening to other contexts.

**ARCOmadrid is one of the premier Contemporary art fairs of the world, yet it is very different from the other top fairs such as Art Basel, Armory and Frieze, to name a few. What do you think makes ARCOmadrid different and is there a conscious attempt to keep it different?**

Yes, ARCO has always been an art fair with a strong will of introduc-



Liset Castillo, "Pain is Universal But So is Hope," flex print, 122 x 153 cm.

Aldo Urbano and Anna Dot, "Gran Panorama visual, sonor, real!," 2018.



Right: Magdalena Jitrik, "Cruz Rojo," 2007. Oil on canvas, 24 x 29 cm.



Below: Joseph Montgomery, "Image Three Hundred Sixty Six," 2016. Pigment transfer, oil, acrylic, pastel, linen, paper, fiberglass, felt and rubber on canvas, 51 x 41 x 13 cm.



Lorenzo Sandoval, "Shadow Writing (Tokapu/Quipu)," 2018. Wrought iron, car paint on epoxy base, textile, dimensiones variable.

Is there a plan to have an ARCOmadrid branch in any of the Central/ South American cities? Not at the moment.

What are the highlights of the upcoming fair that one should not miss?

The selection of Peruvian artists made by Sharon Lerner and the architecture developed by Mariana Leguía & Maya Ballén. The investigation of Ilaria Gianni and Tiago de Abreu Pinto of the new galleries in Opening. The dialogues selected by Agustín Pérez Rubio and Catalina Lozano between artists from different generations, paying special attention to those who have not been the mainstream voices in art. The one-artist projects in many of the galleries such as Hauser & Wirth, Chantal Crousel, Continua, etc. The new architectural distribution by Burgos & Garrido. Last but not the least, the possibility of tasting Peruvian gastronomy at the fair site.

*A key highlight is a section featuring works by Peruvian artists, curated by Sharon Lerner of the Lima Art Museum.*

ing new information, presenting new artists and working very closely both with the participating galleries and with the guests to create a climate of complicity and professionalism. I think all that together is still only part of what makes ARCO a different experience.