

Contemporary Art Practice 2023
Camila Ospina Gaitán

CAMILA OSPINA GAITÁN

Contemporary Artist

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Camila Ospina Gaitán
Contemporary Art Practice
2023

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Guilherme Vilhena Martins reviews an exhibition in Hamburg by Leith based Camila Ospina Gaitán and friend Juan Ricaurte Riveros’.
MAP MAGAZINE. March 2023

Art Spaces
Arts Spot Korin ([Kyoto- Japan](#))
Orbit ([Hamburg – Germany](#))
Out of the Blue ([Edinburgh – Scotland](#))
Edinburgh College of Art ([Edinburgh- Scotland](#))
Javeriana University ([Bogotá- Colombia](#))

Curator
Scott Hunter- Visual Pleasure and Narrative, Arts Spot Korin Kyoto Japan

Artist Collaboration
Juan Ricaurte Riveros Blur-Borroso, Unshärfe, Orbit, Hamburg, Feb, 2023

Photography by
Esteban Perez- Blur-Borroso, Unshärfe, Orbit, Hamburg, Feb, 2023

Special Thanks to Arturo Salazar

Camila Ospina Gaitán is a Colombian artist. She graduated with merit of Contemporary Art Practice MFA at Edinburgh University. She studied in Bogota at Javeriana University Visual Arts and in 2016 she was awarded the LAP program scholarship from the Japanese government, Studying in Nagoya at Nazan University and in Tokyo at Sophia University. Her projects are developed by different media such as sculpture, installation, and photography. Nowadays, she works with the sexualization and objectification of female bodies. She has exhibited in different cities such as Tokyo, Bogotá, Miami, and Edinburgh. In 2022 she had her first solo show “Thorn in the flesh” at Edinburgh and now (2023) she was awarded The Great Britain Sasakawa Award and had her solo show “Visual Narratives and Pleasure” in Kyoto, Japan.

Camila Ospina Gaitán es una artista colombiana se graduó con mérito de Prácticas de Arte Contemporáneo (MFA) en la Universidad de Edimburgo. Estudió Artes Visuales en la Universidad Javeriana en Bogotá y en el 2016 fue galardonada con la beca LAP del estado Japones para estudiar en Nagoya en la Universidad de Nanzan y en Tokio en la Universidad de Sophia. Sus proyectos son desarrollados en diferentes medios como la escultura, instalación y fotografía. Hoy en día, su trabajo se basa en la sexualización y objetualización de los cuerpos femeninos. Ella ha exhibido en diferentes ciudades como Tokio, Bogotá, Miami y Edimburgo. En el 2022 tuvo su primera exposición individual “Thorn in the Flesh” en Edimburgo y ahora en el 2023 recibió el premio Great Britain Sasakawa y tuvo su primera exposición individual “Placer Visual y Narrativo” en Kioto Japón.

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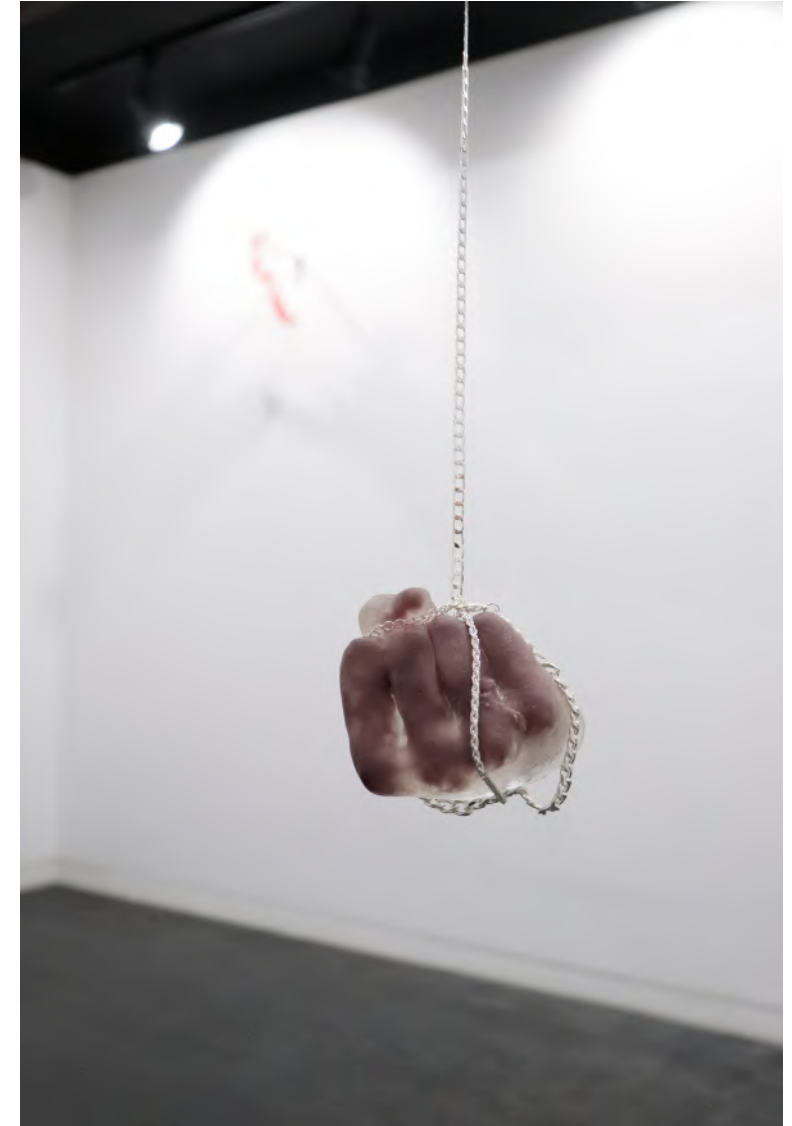
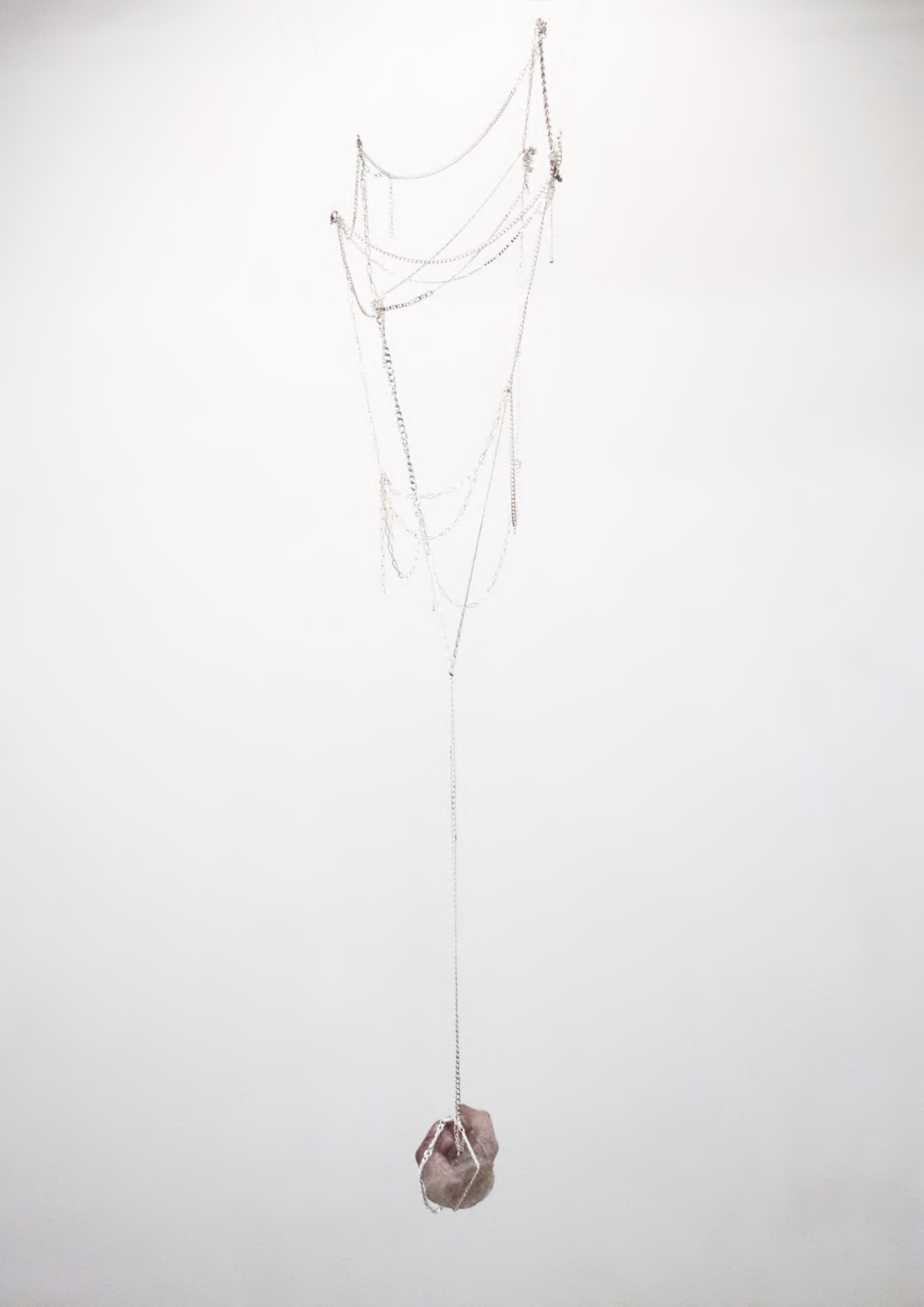
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Edinburgh-based artist Camila Ospina Gaitán exhibits her dazzling sculptures in Kyoto, Japan

Katie Cutforth

Published on Breakthrough Press (Glasgow- Scotland) June 15, 2023

The Colombian contemporary artist used sculpture to explore representations of female bodies in historical and modern Japanese media. We caught up with her about her experiences in Japan and the process behind her work.

For some years now, Camila Ospina Gaitán has been using her art to explore the sexualization and objectification of female bodies. Her interest in the topic was sparked by her experiences as a Latino woman living and working in the UK.

“I do not look like the stereotype of a Colombian woman,” explains Camila. “Often when I said I was from Colombia, there were certain reactions and comments, along with references to narcotráfico and drugs. I became aware of the UK’s construction of other countries; the sexualisation of and stereotypes about Latino women”.

“This was difficult for me and it made me quite angry. From that anger, that’s where I started working with the male gaze and deconstructing a lot of how we are socially constructed.”

Camila Ospina Gaitán was born in Bogotá, Colombia and is now based in Leith, Edinburgh. She graduated with an MFA in Contemporary Art Practice at the University of Edinburgh, having previously studied in Bogotá at Javeriana University Visual Arts.

She has exhibited across the world, including in Tokyo, Bogotá, Miami and Edinburgh. In 2022 she received the Radcliff Trust Award that allowed her to do a residency at Northlands Creative (Scotland) and she had her first solo show, Thorn in the Flesh, in Edinburgh in 2022.

Fast forward to May 2023, Camila completed her first solo show in Japan, which she titled Visual Pleasure and Narrative.

The opportunity was provided by The Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation, a collaboration between the UK and Japan that aims to create cultural exchanges and spaces.

“I felt really honoured to be able to receive this award,” says Camila. “As an independent artist I make a lot of applications and maybe receive one for every ten I make. I compare it to like a sport – training for the Olympics, you train every day of your life, trying and trying and trying, and if you make it to the Olympics, it’s your one moment to show your training and your work.”

Camila’s exhibition was held at Art Spot Korin in Kyoto, Japan, curated by Scott Hunter. The title, Visual Pleasure and Narrative, references the work of British feminist and film theorist Laura Mulvey who has been credited with coining the term ‘male gaze’. It comprised three delicate, translucent and vividly coloured sculptures, crafted in resin, which were presented alongside a talk in English and Japanese that sought to contextualise the visual creations.

“My project was about female representation sexualisation and objectification in Japanese historical and contemporary iconography,” explains Camila. “I was interested in premodern Japanese prints of onna-musha (female warriors/samurais) – huge figures in history and are represented spectacularly, with all these patterns and strength, fighting and in combat. I compared these with the contemporary Japanese iconography of anime and manga, where (I will dare to say) the majority shows hypersexualised female bodies.”

While in Kyoto, Camila visited the International Manga Museum with hopes of tracing this shift to over-sexualisation of bodies in the imagery.

“I found it began to happen since the 1980s when the female characters started to be based on their bodies,” she says. “From then, they are not powerful, they are ‘damsels in distress’. They are constrained into the ideas that a Japanese woman ‘needs’ to be.”

The concepts that run through the pieces are representations of femininity, power, fragility. For Camila, it’s crucial to question female representations in media that we grow up alongside.

“Even though we are not Japanese, people around the world grow up with Japanese culture and media. For me, it’s really important to question culture as a media that represents female bodies. We have to consider how the female characters are being represented.”

However, Camila emphasises the importance of being respectful and delicate when taking a critical view of another culture with her art. **“My way of approaching the experience was careful and open,”** she explains. “I did not want to enter a culture that is not my own only to criticise it.

“I was worried about how the Japanese audience was going to feel because it was critical of female representation in anime and manga, but it was really well taken and they did understand my questions. So, I think it was well received.”

So, what’s next for Camila?

“I still have the question of how to approach that representation and how to make different connections between the contemporary and the historical. I’d like to continue that research, asking questions about how female bodies are being represented. I still have that question in my mind.”

“When I was exhibiting in Hamburg there was a spectacular exhibition in the museum of art called Femme Fatale, which had a huge influence on me. It combined historical paintings and roles and characters and how they represent females. In one of their pamphlets they mentioned social media and I decided I really wanted to explore social media as the new male gaze. Are we being hypersexualised and almost merged through social media? Are we women falling into this trap? Is the phone working as a mirror? I thought this is the next step for me – to analyse Instagram through this lens of the ‘new male gaze’.”

To see more of Camila’s work and find out about upcoming shows, visit her website or follow her on Instagram.

Visual pleasure an Narrative

Japan Kyoto 2023

Exhibition curated by Scott Hunter in Arts Spot Korin
and possible thanks to *The Great Britain Sasakawa Award*

Artwork exhibited:

p. 3

External Body

2023

Resin and metal structure

165 cm x 40 cm x 65 cm

p. 4-5-6-7 (Detail)

External Body

2023

Resin and metal structure

165 cm x 40 cm x 65 cm

p. 8-9

Internal Body

2023

Resin and metal structure

36 cm x 26 cm x 34 cm

p. 10-11

Battlefield

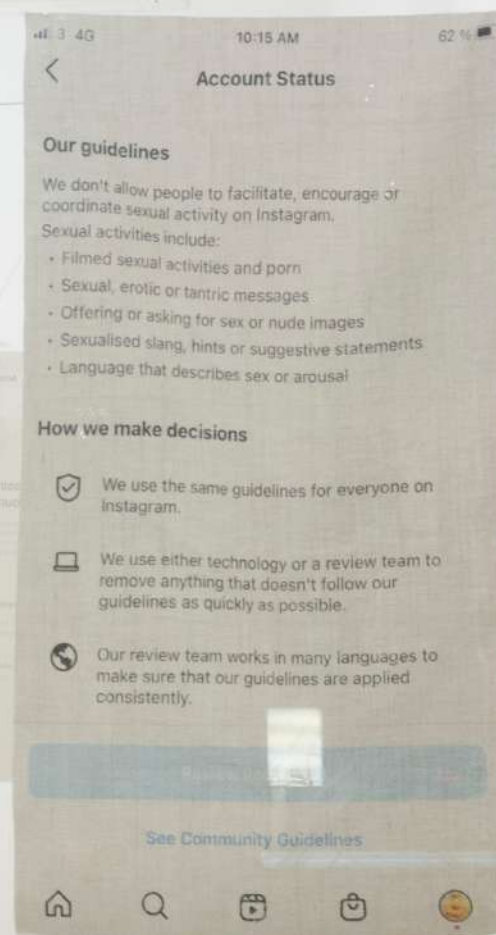
2022

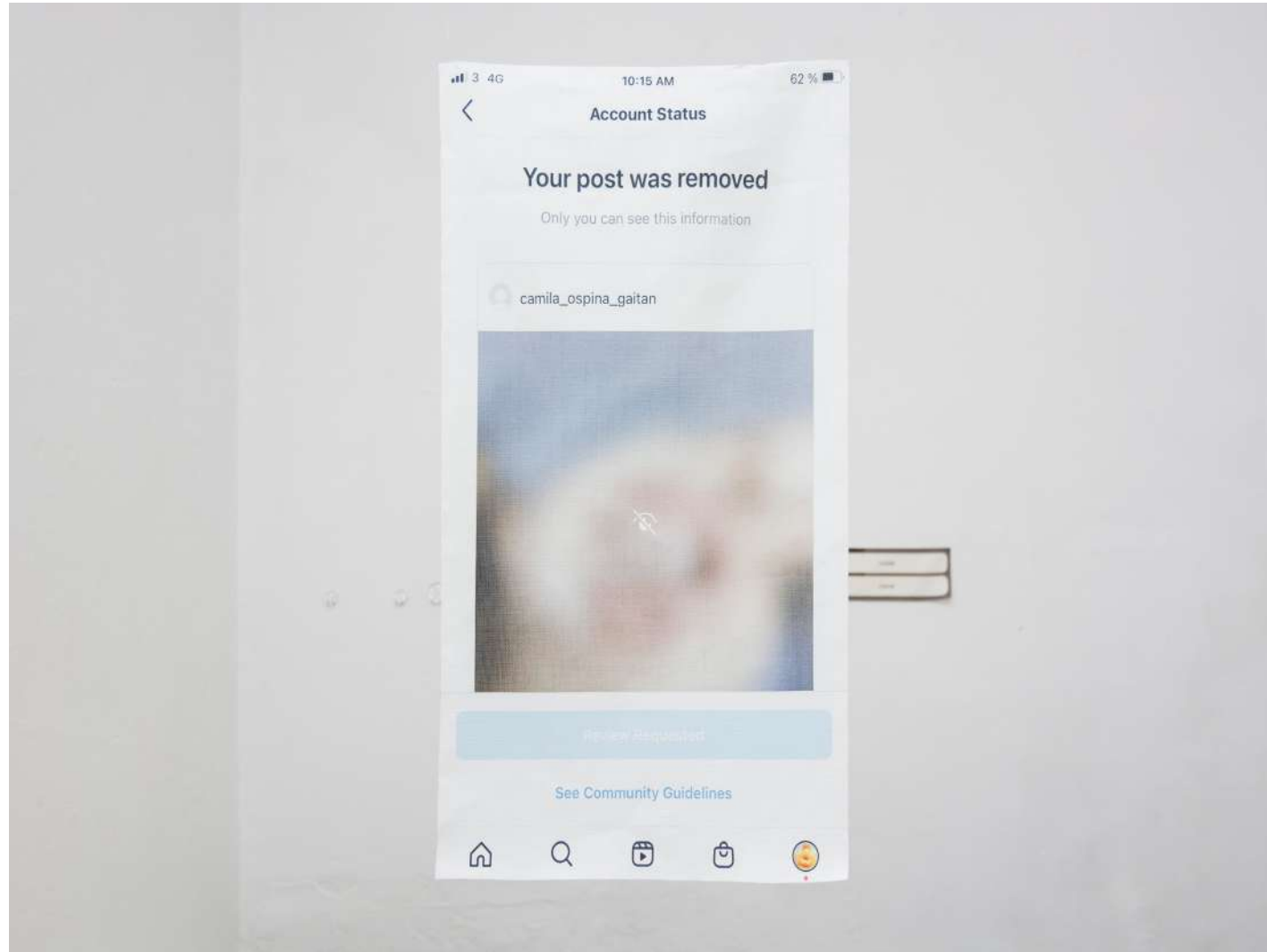
Glass fist and necklaces

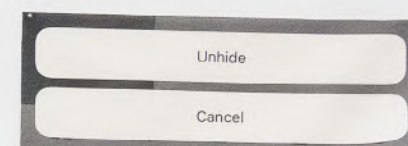
90 cm x 30 cm x 40 cm

Height can vary depending on location











AS RIVERS FLOW AND CITIES BLOSSOM

Guilherme Vilhena Martins

**Guilherme Vilhena
Martins reviews an
exhibition in Hamburg
by Leith-based
Camila Ospina Gaitán
and friend Juan
Ricaurte Riveros**

*Published on MAP MAGAZINE
67 THE WIND ROSE- REVIEW
March 2023*

Even if only passing or looking through the window, *Blur—Borroso, Unshärfe* by Camila Ospina Gaitán and Juan Ricaurte Riveros at Orbit in Hamburg, is hardly discrete. Screenshots of an Instagram warning, printed on fabric and hung from the ceiling, announce hostile dialogue. Just behind, bulky pieces covered in golden foil float on the floor and blur with an immanence of aggression. Plunged in a white frame, swinging in metallic reflections, its tips light and tense, ‘Garment No. 1’ and ‘Garment No. 2’, both by Juan, appear suspended. Underneath, might there be a body sustaining the shape of this sheet?

In contrast, as you make your way through the space, small, delicate pieces of nipple-shaped blown glass rise subtly into focus. These are held by thin pieces of metal. *Glass Nipples*, a series of sculptures by Camila, may at first be unnoticeable among the massive golden bodies and fabric. But the physicality, and reflections, of these modest glass objects pierce the room uncompromisingly. It is clear that the initial impact of the flamboyant scenario is a game of illusion—as these lascivious surfaces draw our attention, over-riding more subtle works, we’re quickly entangled in a question of objectification.

Knowing previous work by these artists, this is hardly surprising. Camila’s series focusses on the sexualization and objectification of the female body, questioning its ongoing colonial perception. Her response is to invest the body with a direct communication as a site of politics, history and resistance. Juan’s work stems from a year-long obsession with a popular colonial syncretism in South America, particularly in Colombia, where the Virgin Mary is often associated with the Cordilleras, an extensive network of mountain ranges that is also an important symbol of worship for indigenous native groups.

This tension, and its contrary playfulness, illustrates colonial strategy in Latin America, which allowed evangelical missionaries during the 1500’s to frame a more relatable approach to christianity. What both Camila and Juan attempt to show—in a quite different manner—is that the importance of this approach lies beyond symbolism—these strategies served above all as economic proxies.

Associating the divine to a figure rather than to a place overshadowed the holy protection previously ascribed to the land in South America. This, in turn, allowed for exploitation of the mountains where gold and silver were found and then mined. If a saint, rather than a mountain, was to be worshipped, then there were neither religious nor economic obstacles to exploitation. Could we ask the same question about bodies in general? What about sexualised bodies in particular?

These questions at the threshold of Camila’s and Juan’s work, lie in the trigger of immediate recognition, contrasting with the realisation that what is made visible is the fragment of a body, scattered and reproduced as endless commodity. As structured as it is violent, this key shift in the relation between bodies and nature marked the foundation of a colonial project still stirring and promoting violence today. It might as well be the moment when bodies became a symbol of resistance.

As cities sprawled and forests shrank, fueled up by a mirage of progress and wealth, people accumulate, surrounded by concrete and blood, standing as a contrasting element of strength traversing centuries of violence. Blossoming once again, the witnesses become an open archive. *Blur-Borroso, Unshärfe* is shaped to put forward a critique of how such symbolic decisions have spanned into dimensions of violence—attempting to reveal what is hidden beyond immediate recognition in order to underline the body revealed from underneath that same violent gesture.

Guilherme Vilhena Martins (Lisbon/ Berlin) is a writer and curator. He has curated several exhibitions in Portugal and Germany and published two books, as well as texts, chronicles and reviews written for several editorial projects in Europe. He is one of the co-founders of the EGEU project in Lisbon.

Camila Ospina Gaitán is a Colombian artist. Her work attempts to reveal identities through ordinary aesthetics. It started with her own identity as a Colombian woman, deconstructing the sexualization and stereotyping of Latino women and transformed into a more global understanding of the sexualization and objectification of the female body. Juan Ricaurte Riveros’ practice is driven by his interest in the imprint of life, under the principle that bodies belong with other bodies, as well as a constant identity search of what it means to be South American. His work spans performance, social feasts, sculpture, and installation.

Blur-Borroso, Unshärfe, Orbit, Hamburg, 23-26 Feb, 2023



Handwritten graffiti on the wall to the left of the door, consisting of several loops and lines.

Handwritten graffiti on the door frame, consisting of a vertical line of characters.

Account Status
Our guidelines
We don't allow people to harass, intimidate or...
How we make decisions
We use the same guidelines for products as...
We use active technology to protect our...
We have been really trying to improve the...
We have been really trying to improve the...

Handwritten text on a piece of paper hanging in the window, possibly a menu or poster.

Vertical text on a pipe or pole to the right of the window, possibly a brand name or address.

Handwritten graffiti on the ground in front of the store, consisting of a few letters.

Artwork exhibited:

p. 17
A. “Susanna and the Elders No.1”
2023
Print on fabric
70 cm x 39 cm
36 cm x 33 cm

B. Garment No. 1
2022
Safety blankets and thread
Juan Ricaurte Riveros

C. Garment No. 2
2022
Safety blankets and thread
Juan Ricaurte Riveros

p.18
D. “Susanna and the Elders No.2”
2023
Print on fabric
70 cm x 39 cm
70 cm x 39 cm

p.19
E. “Susanna and the Elders No.3”
2023
Print on fabric
36 cm x 33 cm

p. 21-22-23
F. Unhide/Cancel
2023
Fabric and glass installation
167 cm x 45 cm

It includes:

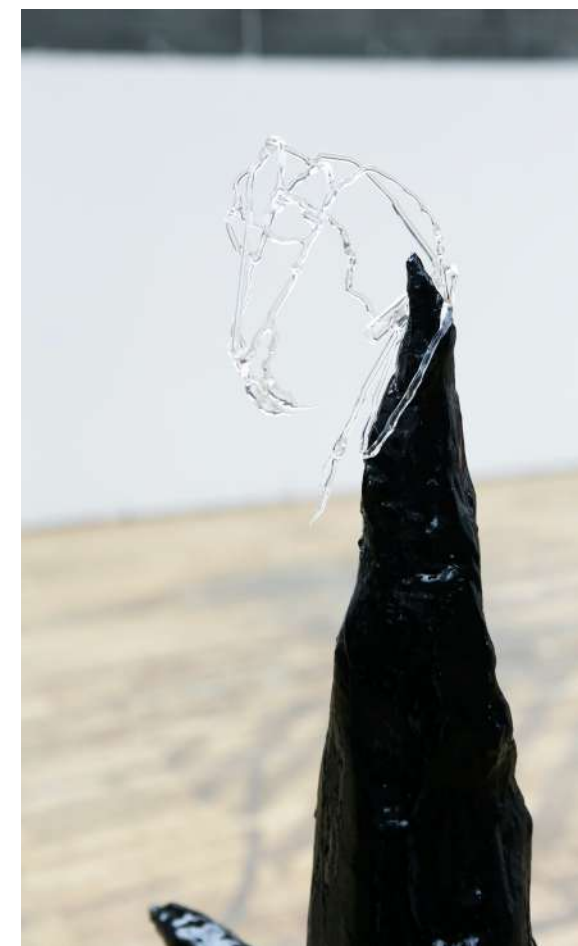
Glass Nipples
2021
Dropped glass
Variable dimensions depending on the pair
Maximum diameter 9 cm

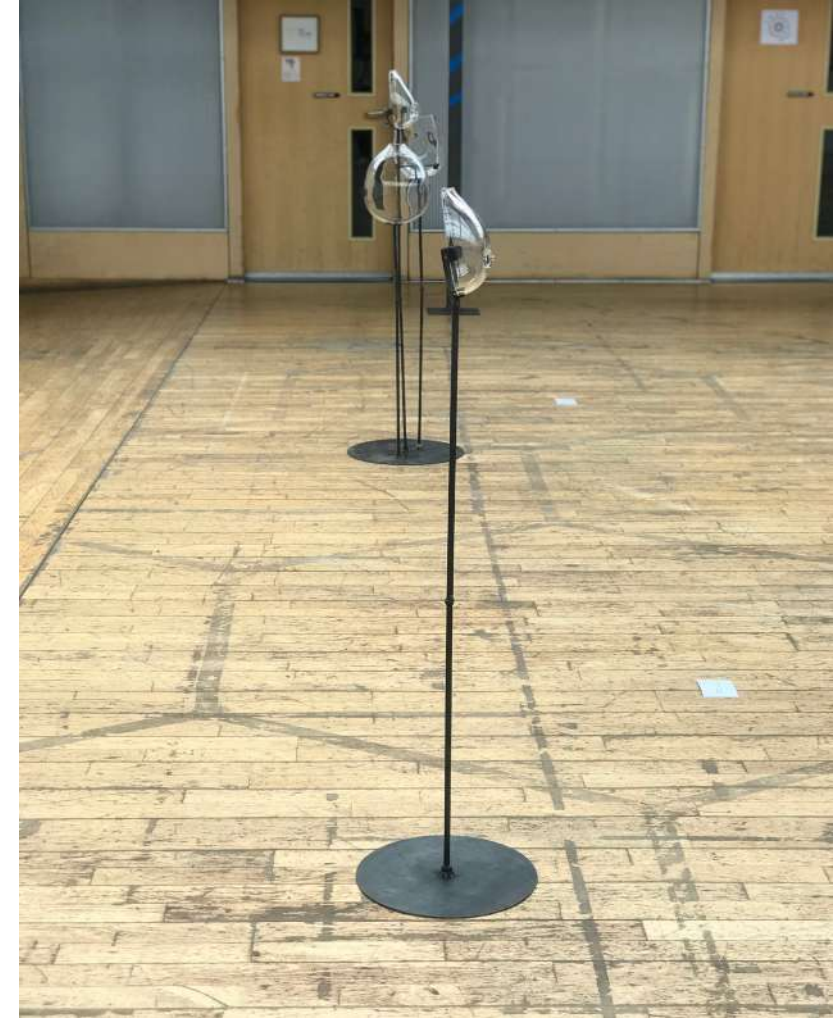
















Edinburgh art review: *Thorn in the Flesh* at Out of the Blue is bold and powerful

Alexander Smail

Published on Edinburghlive August 2022

Camila Ospina Gaitán's challenging 24-hour exhibit at Out of the Blue considers the female body as a form of communication a site of politics, history and resistance.

Thorn in the Flesh at Out of the Blue is a powerful examination of the sexualization and objectification of female bodies.

The 24-hour solo show by Camila Ospina Gaitán is bold and uncomfortable in equal measure. Consisting of a series of aggressive and dominating structures, the exhibition evokes a visceral reaction that lingers with you.

In the artist's own words, Thorn in the Flesh began life in 2019 as an examination of the "sexualisation of latino women".

Gaitán states she initially explored "the fragility of a sexualised body". This is candidly captured through intricate glasswork, with the artist creating curved sculptures that look like they might shatter at the slightest of touches.

Contrasting this are jet black and imposing structures that Gaitán states are a reaction to and a rejection of the previous fragile and vulnerable glass depictions.

Jagged and alien, these obelisk-like constructs evoke feelings of power and hostility. Using the metaphor of a plant developing thorns as a defence mechanism, the sculptures offer a brutal and challenging symbol of strength.

Thorn in the flesh is raw, uncomfortable, and devastating. And yet it's also defiant, commanding, and beautiful. It may be Gaitán's first solo show, but Thorn in the flesh proves the artist has a promising future.

The exhibit has now ended its run at the Out of the Blue Drill Hall. For more information, you can visit Camila Ospina Gaitán's website here.

Thorn in the Flesh, Scotland - Edinburgh 2022

Camila Ospina Gaitán: Cuando los Cuerpos Tienen Espinas

Daniela Cristancho

Published on El Espectador September 2022

La artista colombiana se refiere a su presentación en solitario, "Thorn in the Flesh", en Edimburgo (Escocia), donde mostró sus esculturas en vidrio, producidas desde el 2019 hasta el 2021.

Hablemos de la transición que supone pasar de hacer delicadas piezas en vidrio, como había hecho antes, a realizar robustas esculturas negras...

La transición surge como necesidad. Yo estaba molesta conmigo misma por quedarme en una representación del cuerpo femenino desde lo frágil, que son mis primeras esculturas en vidrio hechas entre el 2019 y 2020, como Glass breast/Teta de vidrio o Male gaze/Mirada masculina. Yo quería construir un cuerpo fuerte, presente, denso, pesado, que luego contrasta con las cabezas en vidrio que van encima o las palabras en vidrio, insultos que hacen referencia al cuerpo de la mujer o a los roles femeninos. El contraste de ambos materiales era esencial para avanzar en esa búsqueda escultórica de cómo representar un cuerpo sexualizado sin que implique ser débil, sino desde la fuerza de la defensa o la reacción.

Ahondemos en el concepto detrás de "Thorn in the flesh". ¿Por qué hablar de espinas cuando se explora el tema de la sexualización de los cuerpos?

Las espinas son una metáfora: las plantas desarrollaron espinas como mecanismo de defensa y de conservación. Como te digo, estaba molesta conmigo misma por representar esos cuerpos femeninos quedándome en lo frágil, entonces tenía que haber un cambio en cuanto a que el cuerpo femenino sexualizado también es poderoso, es reactivo, agresivo y tiene distintos mecanismos de defensa y supervivencia.

¿La reflexión sobre la sexualización de la mujer latinoamericana está directamente ligada con su propio proceso de migración?

Sí, la migración es lo que me pone en esas situaciones y lo que dispara la necesidad de búsqueda y respuesta por medio de mi práctica, que comienza con la sexualización de la mujer latina, en donde se analizó la construcción de

identidad por medio de objetos cotidianos. Asimismo, como la representación de íconos como Sofía Vergara y la construcción de estereotipos como su personaje Gloria y cómo eso repercute hoy en día. O el caso de Carmen Miranda en los años 30-40, que también fue muy famoso en Hollywood, pero tiene un total rechazo por la población de Brasil. Ahora lo abordo de manera más general, no basado en mi identidad específica, sino en la diversidad de cuerpos femeninos y su sexualización.

¿De qué otras formas el hecho de vivir en otro país ha marcado su obra?

En el 2016 y 2017, por medio de una beca japonesa tuve la oportunidad de hacer un intercambio cultural y esto tuvo una influencia enorme en mi investigación de pregrado (La casa en 2018). Yo estaba trabajando con una casa colonial en Cundinamarca que tenía una falla geológica. La casa misma contaba una historia de lucha y de abandono. Yo intento sanar desde el territorio (literalmente con tierra) uniendo conceptos japoneses como el wabi-sabi. Sin embargo, concluye en la idea de incluir el vacío y la ruptura.

¿Cómo se inició su trayectoria artística?

Creo que el inicio es pura terquedad, con un poquito de ingenuidad y unas ganas inmensas por decodificar el mundo y el vivir y crear. Yo estudié artes visuales en la Javeriana. En el 2016 tuve la oportunidad de ganarme la beca LAP para ir a Japón con un intercambio cultural en donde estudié en la universidad de Nanzan, en Nagoya, y luego en la Universidad Sofía, en Tokio. En el 2019 arranqué a hacer mi maestría en la Universidad de Edimburgo, un MFA en Contemporary Art Practice, y a principios del 2020 me gané un premio que me permitió hacer mi primera residencia en el norte de Escocia. Ahora en el 2022 sucedió mi primer solo show, que se llamó Thorn in the flesh .

¿Cuáles son sus referentes en el mundo del arte?

Tengo muchos, entre esos Luz Lizarazo, Sarah Lucas, Feliza Bursztyn, Ana Mendieta, Alberta Whittle, o Miguel Ángel Rojas.

Thorn in the Flesh

Scotland - Edinburgh 2022

Artwork exhibited:

p.39

Glass Breast

2020
Blown glass and metal structure
101 cm x 30 cm x 30 cm

p.38

Male Gaze

2021
Blown glass and metal structure
156 cm x 50 cm x 50 cm

p.32

Splinters

2022
Blown glass and rubber band
22 cm x 24 cm x 24 cm

p.43 (Detail)

Battlefield

2022
Glass fist and necklaces
90 cm x 30 cm x 40 cm
Height can vary depending on location

p.35

Seating Llike a Lady

2022
Necklaces, glass and mirror
90 cm x 30 cm x 30 cm
Height can vary depending on location

p.36-37-41 (Detail)

Snarl I

2022
Plaster sculpture and glass snake head
136 cm x 70 cm x 48 cm (including spikes)

p.33-42-43 (Detail)

Snarl II

2022
Plaster sculpture and glass words
156 cm x 60 cm x 60 cm (including spikes)

p.34-40

Snarl III

2022
Plaster sculpture and wolf/bear glass head
160 cm x 40 cm x 59 cm (including spikes)











Great Britain

2021

Digital painting on silk with metal infrastructure.

Great Britain consists of a combination of medieval iconography and contemporary situations, its main purpose is to question if the UK has retained some traits and practices of a medieval state, especially when it relates to female bodies.

The project consists of 3 parts:

Sky 1/10 (head): The idealization of it. It is pure magic with a more classical perspective but you start to notice that there is the blood of a lamb that might be caused by these beautiful angles.

Garden 1/10 (body): The elegance of all these royal gardens. It is the modification of the landscape to prove a status quo. However, when you look closer, you notice that the garden is full of monsters that have to mutilate other cultures and humans to generate their own beauty.

Hell 1/10 (shadow): The materialization of a shadow, of darkness and the unseen. It is the place where there is no idealization or elegance. In hell, you can see things the way they are. It is the truth of a colonial present that is alive. It holds grotesque scenes of power-sucking and the oppression of the Other, truly how things might not have changed from medieval times.







FARRRA

Pieces and projects produce during the MFA in Contemporary Art Practice
Scotland - Edinburgh 2019- 2021 (Pandemic times)

Artwork :

p.51-52
Glass Breast
2020
Blown glass and metal structure
101 cm x 30 cm x 30 cm

p.50
Male Gaze
2021
Blown glass and metal structure
156 cm x 50 cm x 50 cm

p.48-49
Splinters
2022
Blown glass and rubber band
22 cm x 24 cm x 24 cm

p.43 (Detail)
Glass Breast and Farrra Experience
2021
Glass fist and necklaces
Variable dimension
[Photo of city poster in front of Waldorf Astoria Hotel Edinburgh](#)

p.55-56-57
Great Britain
2021
Digital paint printed on silk Viscoe Satin
165 cm x 350 cm x 110 cm

p.58
Sky
2021
Digital paint printed on silk Viscoe Satin
37.5 cm x 60 cm

Garden
2021
Digital paint printed on silk Viscoe Satin
37.5 cm x 60 cm

Hell
2021
Digital paint printed on silk Viscoe Satin
34 cm x 94 cm

p.59 (Final Display)
Final Display: A dialog between “ I don’t twerk for you motherfucker” and “Great Britain”.
2021
[Check video on web page](#)

p.60
FARRRA1
2019
Participatory performance
Variable dimension

It includes:
Guaro
2021
Plaster sculpture
Variable dimension

Poker
2021
Plaster sculpture
Variable dimension

Shots
2021
Plaster sculpture
Variable dimension

p.62
FARRRA Process Photo
2019
Digital photography
Variable dimension

Work from 2019 to 2023

If you want to see previous work done in Colombia please contact the artist.

Artist Statement

I am a Colombbian Visual artist. It started with my own identity as a Colombian woman, deconstructing the international sexualization and stereotyping of Latino women. Nevertheless, the investigation has transformed into a more global understanding of the sexualization and objectification of the female body. This body of work questions the ongoing colonial perception of the female body and works as a decolonization response where the body is thought of as a form of communication, a site of politics, history, and resistance.

My research process starts in different ways. Sometimes it arises from a personal experience an example is “I don’t twerk for you motherfucker” 2021. In other cases from an idea; and in some instances from a technique or a specific material “Glass Breast” 2020. I work with sculpture, installation, and mix media. I look for a dialogue between form and content. Each piece employs specific techniques that develop in accordance with what projects seek to express. In general, there is a weaving of different cultures: Japanese, Colombian, and the UK —places where I have lived for different periods.

Declaración de Artista

Soy artista visual colombiana. Todo comenzó con mi propia identidad como mujer colombiana, deconstruyendo la sexualización y estereotipación internacional de la mujer Latina. Sin embargo, la investigación de este fenómeno se ha transformado en una deconstrucción más global de la sexualización y objetualización de los cuerpos femeninos. Esta serie de obras cuestiona la continua percepción colonial y busca ser una respuesta de descolonización donde el cuerpo es pensado como una forma de comunicación, un lugar político, histórico, y de resistencia.

Los procesos en mi practica inician de diferentes formas. A veces a partir de una experiencia personal como lo es “Yo no twerkeo para usted malparidohioeputa” 2021. En otros casos de una idea; y en otros momentos desde una técnica o un material específico, como “Teta en vidrio” 2020. Trabajo con diferentes medios como la escultura, la instalación y el mixed media. Busco que exista un diálogo entre la forma y el contenido. Cada pieza es construida por medio de diferentes técnicas que se desarrollan dependiendo de lo que el proyecto necesita expresar. En general, hay un tejido de diferentes culturas como la japonesa, la colombiana, y la británica—lugares donde he vivido por diferentes periodos.

