

RGR

Galería RGR presents

Spiritual Abstractions

Tania Candiani | Hilma's Ghost | Kati Horna

Magali Lara | France-Lise McGurn

Vibe Overgaard | Salmo Suyo

September 21 / November 18, 2023

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Personal Shopper (Still from video), 2016. Dir. Olivier Assayas. Image from criterionforum.org.

Galería RGR is pleased to announce the group show, *Spiritual Abstractions*, with works by Tania Candiani, Hilma's Ghost, Kati Horna, Magali Lara, France-Lise McGurn, Vibe Overgaard and Salmo Suyu, curated by Gabriela Rangel, which will open to the public this coming Thursday, September 21, during Gama Week, from 11:00 to 19:00 hrs.

The gothic thriller film *Personal Shopper* (2016) by French filmmaker Olivier Assayas, is the starting point for this exhibition that brings together works by women artists of different generations and backgrounds, trans people and fluid identity: Tania Candiani (Mexico, 1976), Hilma's Ghost (Brooklyn, 2020), Kati Horna (Budapest, 1912- Mexico, 2000) , Magali Lara (Mexico, 1956), France Lise McGurn (Glasgow, 1983), Vibe Overgaard and Salmo Suyu (Huancayo, 1989).

The main character of Assayas' film, Mauren Cartwright (Kristen Stewart), embodies the grace and fatality of art and magic projected through psychic attributes assigned to women, such as clairvoyance and intuition. The film also portrays the rapid and inscrutable process of transformation in our times regarding notions of gender and the rise of non-rational thinking promoted by social networks.

The pieces gathered in this exhibition explore from different perspectives how women's struggles affect and matter to the immediate political future of humanity. On the other hand, Assayas' suggestive yet problematic piece of contemporary filmic fiction serves as a pretext to bring together new methodologies and formal strategies deployed by women artists that are to some extent tied to historical spiritual abstraction, which is explicitly invoked by the feminist collective Hilma's Ghost, represented by Galería RGR.

The large-format pictorial drawings of sick or desiring flowers by Mexican artist Magali Lara, represented by Galería RGR, are splendid metaphors that go beyond life into the Orphic mysteries of eroticism and the psyche in their revealing force of dependence and autonomy, as well as of life and death. Lara's flowers show the hyperesthetic condition of feminine desire, equivalent to plants that, according to the words of the poet Anne Carson, *do not sleep, do not lie or bluff, but expose their genitals*. In this sense, Lara has been a pioneer in portraying the b-side of abysmal paradises of feminine subjectivity and the bends of libidinal drive as liberating (and oppressive) manifestations of women in patriarchal society. Her vision of these larval and developed states of desire has been expressed through artist's books and collaborations with poets that later mutate to expand to canvases and papers.

It is in the pulsation between life and death where we find *Oda a la necrofilia*, an important surrealist photographic series made in 1962 by the Mexican photographer of Hungarian origin Kati Horna for the *Fetishes* section of the magazine *S.nob*. This short-lived magazine (7 issues) was edited by writers Salvador Elizondo, Juan García Ponce and Emilio García Riera and included the collaboration of outstanding artists, including Horna. The photographic sequence prepared by Kati Horna for *Fetishes* allowed her to resume her early interest in psychoanalysis, an approach she had left behind for the sake of her anarchist militancy and photojournalism. *Oda a la necrofilia* featured the participation of her close friend, surrealist artist Leonora Carrington, with whom the photographer and her husband José Horna collaborated on other projects. Carrington appears in the nude image as the grieving widow of her beloved, represented *in absentia* with a mask, literally as a fetish.

Tania Candiani is a Mexican artist whose work reveals the contradictions and authoritarian tendencies of global culture in the eagerness to homologate the specificity of social temporalities and the differentiated clamor of minorities. Candiani participates with the single-channel video *La Maringuilla*, a three-minute hypnotic dance from colonial times –La danza de los negritos– in which a man dances dressed in women's clothing, covering his head with a non-wedding veil and spinning on his axis with a snake in his hand. Although this represents the mother of snakes and being the only female character, as in other colonial dances, it is performed by a man; which for some specialists evidences the dual symbolic guiding principle in the Totonaca cosmovision, it can also be attributed to the machismo of the time and region, which prohibited women from participating in the ceremonies and dances. For the artist: "In this piece, we see the image of the dancer, overlaid on his own dance, thus forming the horizontal narrative of the work, where the body itself becomes a ghost".

Salmo Suyo, a young Peruvian artist based in Switzerland, has focused his artistic research on the mechanisms of sexual dissidence present in trans masculinities. His research addresses the radical representation of the queer body in transformation, as a kind of overflowing and corrosive lava that spills into heteronormative circuits. In his work, the biological concept of sexual difference as used by feminism in the 1970s reaches a blind spot in the face of the relevance of an alternative trans discourse shaped by dysphoria, an aesthetic theoretical operation that he uses to question the medical-pharmaceutical market. Likewise, Salmo develops from the technique of object production the exploration of materials that reflect trans subjectivities and the concomitant political debates from the use of medical pigments and silicones. Also, the artist vindicates ceramics as an ancestral Andean practice that is updated in the encounter with 21st-century technologies.

The treatment of the human figure in the paintings of Scottish artist France-Lise McGurn is associated with female archetypes. Likewise, it has been argued that they constitute allegorical spirits or muses usually linked to models of femininity constructed by pop culture and contemporary fashion, both spheres portrayed in the film *Personal Shopper*. McGurn's approach to the sexuality emanating from these flat, static figures highlights the artist's punk attitude, enunciated in the paintings' titles. This is McGurn's second participation in RGR's program.

Vibe Overgaard, a young Danish artist, presents delicate ceramic, metal, wood and thread sculptures conceived for her recent show at ISCP, Brooklyn. *Spindle City* –which refers to this site in Fall River, United States– embodies the ruins of the textile industry and the type of manufacturing that created a model of productivity that remains a ghost in the collective imagination. Her sculptures reflect the idea of decaying circuits and are presented as phantasmatic vestiges of industrial capitalism replacing the corporate and masculine optimism of minimalism.

About Gabriela Rangel

— Gabriela Rangel is an independent curator, writer based in Brooklyn, New York. From 2019 to 2021 she was artistic director of the Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (MALBA). Prior to that she was visual arts director and chief curator at Americas Society from 2004 to 2019. She holds an MA in curatorial studies from the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, an MA in media and communications studies from the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, Caracas, and film studies from the International Film School at San Antonio de los Baños, Cuba. She has worked at the Fundación Cinemateca Nacional and the Museo Alejandro Otero in Caracas, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Rangel have curated and co-curated numerous exhibitions on modern and contemporary art as well as monographic shows of Elsa Gramcko, Erick Meyenberg, Sylvia Gruner, Carlos Cruz-Diez, Marta Minujín, Gordon Matta-Clark, Gego, Arturo Herrera, José Leonilson, and Xul Solar. She has written for *Hyperallergic*, *Letras Libres*, *Revista Ñ*, *Art in America*, *Parkett*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, and *Art Nexus*, edited numerous books, and contributed texts to such publications as *Emily Mae Smith* (Petzeld Gallery, New York); *Pedro Reyes: Sociatry* (Museum Marta Hertford, Hertford, Germany, 2022); *Rosangela Renno* (Pinacoteca de SP, 2021); *Erick Meyenberg: D Major Isn't Blue* (Museo Amparo, 2020); *Lydia Cabrera: Between the Sum and the Parts* (Americas Society/Koenig Books, London, 2019); *Contesting Modernity: Informalism in Venezuela 1955–1975* (Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2018); *Marta Minujín, Minocodes* (Americas Society, 2016); and *A Principality of Its Own* (Americas Society/Harvard University Press, 2006). She is currently working on her book *Strategies of Self Sabotage: Art and Politics in Venezuela 1959-1973*.

About Galería RGR

— Galería RGR was founded in 2012 and established in Mexico City by its founder Ricardo Gonzalez Ramos in November 2018. The gallery promotes critical dialogues around modern and contemporary art production through its exhibition program and publications, exploring abstraction as an avant-garde language as well as a process of thinking rather than a style.

RGR represents modern artists with historical trajectory and global relevance such as Jesús Rafael Soto, Carlos Cruz-Diez, Julio Le Parc, GEGO, and Oswaldo Vigas, and contemporary artists from Asia, Europe, North and South America, working with issues of time, space, and color as well as race and gender and sexual equality. The relationship between spectatorship, social interactions and meaning is also relevant to create a conversation about the present and the past.

Notes for editors

— **Title:** *Spiritual Abstractions*
Artists: Tania Candiani, Hilma's Ghost, Kati Horna, Magali Lara, France-Lise McGurn, Vibe Overgaard and Salmo Suyo
Opening: September 21, 11:00 - 19:00 hrs.
Exhibition dates: September 21 - November 18, 2023.
Gama Week: September 21 - 24, 2023.