

# ISOLATION INTERVIEWS

ALBERTO RÍOS DE LA ROSA





## ISSUE 12

Continuing the Isolation Interviews: a new series of weekly artist and curator profiles highlighting current concerns, accompanied by a selection of available works.

We know that these are precarious and uncertain times for everyone and with so many people staying at home, self-isolating or social distancing, we want to be able to continue sharing some of our favourite art and artists with you. The Isolation Interviews are a weekly series of conversations with artists and curators that will explore how these new circumstances are affecting their practices, projects and productivity. We'll hear how they are finding solutions - and even opportunities - and what their plans and hopes are for the future.

Brooke Benington is committed to supporting and creating opportunities for artists. We believe that this is needed now more than ever. Most artists are self-employed, often supplementing their income by working as technicians, fabricators, assistants, teachers and a whole host of other jobs. Now, many have very suddenly lost a vital source of income. With this in mind, we are accompanying each Isolation Interview with a curated selection of work by that artist, available for purchase.

Thank you for your continued support. Stay safe and look after one another.

Lily & George  
Directors, Brooke Benington





LEFT  
*Untitled* by Jannis Kounellis at Casa Wabi, Puerto Escondido, Oaxaca, Mexico



**You're based in Mexico, currently in Mexico City. How is the artistic community in the city coping? Are there signs of people finding creative ways to be productive, make and share their art?**

The artistic community in Mexico City is both resourceful and resilient. It is a thriving community that has adapted quickly to the hardest circumstances and has learnt to produce in precariousness for a long time. It is also a solidary community that supports itself and others with new initiatives and ways to continue with production, virtual exhibition and selling; fostering the development of new dynamics within these hard circumstances.

Several strategies and actions have been taken by artists groups to support the local society in all possible ways. I can think of Carlos Amoraes' studio that crafted hundreds of face masks in conjunction with his gallery kurimanzutto, these were given to the most vulnerable workers in the city. Other tremendous action came from curator Mauricio Maillé who led a team that organised @fotospormexico, an initiative that sold photographs by more than 150 artists and whose income was donated entirely to the

Instituto Nacional de Ciencias Médicas y Nutrición Salvador Zubirán, one of the hospitals in the city that treats COVID patients.

Likewise, @ObreraCentro and artist Marcos Castro has produced *Dibujes para Colorear*, two colouring books with drawings from both emerging and consolidated artists in the country, a powerful tool to help people with anxiety during lockdown. Besides dozens of creators, curators, academics and galleries that present virtual studio visits as well as online conferences and interviews every day, various artists have organised themselves to sell and promote their work online or via Instagram in enterprises like @sssoporte, @arteporlatangente or @tajotaller with auction schemes and other innovative designs to display and present their work. On the commercial front, nine galleries launched #Plataforma2020, an online selling platform that aims to reduce the negative economic impact of the lockdown by presenting works together and sharing the sales profits while donating 10% to similar initiatives.

The artist community in Mexico is also very active politically. In the last months, some fronts have been created

or activated with all members from the community to demand for better opportunities before the country's Ministry of Culture, an office that has been short in developing a substantial and comprehensive economic contingency aid package to regenerate the creative industry amidst the pandemic.

**Could you tell us a bit about your curatorial practice, how you usually operate and how if at all the current situation has impacted on you and your**

**projects? Have you been able to find ways to adapt and continue despite the restrictions?**

Even though I was trained as an art historian at the highly academic Courtauld Institute of Art in London, I quickly learnt that I wanted to develop my curatorial process hand in hand with the artist's practice.

This process is born directly with the artists' conversation and their work in the studio, studying their approach to both



ABOVE  
*Your age and my age and the age of the sun* by Ugo Rondinone at Casa Wabi, Puerto Escondido Oaxaca, Mexico

LEFT  
 Installation view of *Tepetate* by Francisco Muñoz at Casa Wabi - Santa María, Mexico City





ABOVE  
*Your age and my age and the age of the sun* by Ugo Rondinone at Casa Wabi, Puerto Escondido Oaxaca, Mexico

BELOW  
Installation view of *Silogismos de la Construcción* at StudioBlock M74, Mexico City

the narratives and materials they engage with. Not only I enjoy working with them, I also engage in a professional deeper relationship that allows me to complement the academic reasoning I build around the artwork. I have focused my practice in working alongside emerging artists in the country; first at Fundación Casa Wabi with its space at Santa María la Ribera, where I curated ten solo projects between 2017 and 2018, and later as an independent curator with exhibitions at both commercial galleries and artist-run spaces.

In the last two years I have been studying the various sculptural methods and narratives that are taking place around the country. I am driven by the direct relationship and experimentation with less orthodox materials like red clay, concrete, aluminium, wax, glass, the organic like



shells or feathers and their interactions with the classical bronze, marble, copper or iron in the search for new discourses that engage with sculpture as a medium and tool related to power, history writing, fetishism and memory. That being said, I was preparing a large emerging sculpture exhibition dealing with these issues together with English curator and historian Isaac Simon that has been postponed to 2021 into a new venue to be confirmed.

**You are a prominent voice advocating for contemporary Mexican artists. Are there any artists who you are particularly excited about right now and what is it about them that has caught your eye and your imagination?**

Following my research on current sculpture related practices in the country, I have been working closely with artists Ernesto Solana, Luis Urculo, Yolanda Ceballos (in collaboration with Pequod Gallery), Tomás Díaz Cedeño (in collaboration with Peana Gallery), Paula Cortazar (in collaboration with Machete Galeria) and Adeline de Monseignat, whose samples of their work you can see with this interview.



ABOVE  
Installation view of *Tepetate* by Francisco Muñoz at Casa Wabi - Santa María, Mexico City

BELOW  
*The Pure Necessity* by David Claerbout at SFER IK Museion, Tulum, Mexico

**You were the curator at the world-famous Casa Wabi residency for several years and you have recently accepted a position as Director of Operations at SFER IK Museion which also has a residency programme at its core. What role do you think residencies can play in contemporary art practice? Are there any other residency programmes you admire either in Mexico or internationally?**

Residencies must be recognised as a crucial growing force in the art professionalisation, production, exhibition

and broadcasting, parallel to other forces like the gallery, the studio, the museum or the university. Residencies have also proven to be powerful tools and centres for social change and community driven actions in the country.

When we began working at Casa Wabi back in 2014 (led by artist Bosco Sodi), we realised we were pioneers in the country in crafting an architecture and arts centre with a program that put together artists from all over the world with members of 12 different towns at the Oaxacan coast. People found hard





to understand that a community project did not involve using the communities as labour force; it has been all about creating new tools via experiences, workshops and a multiplicity of initiatives that have engaged in a cultural exchange but also in a personal and social growth in both sides of these experiences. I am tremendously happy to see the foundation is continuously growing alongside the communities they work with and the artists that enrich their programs.

I am currently working with Martha Pellat in creating a nationwide artistic residencies catalogue, having identified 45 so far, as the first step for a major assembly that would aim to connect these organisations and to support them with major issues regarding fundraising and other development opportunities. I find thrilling to learn from new spaces and new formats like *Lagos* or *Studio Block M74* (where *Brooke Benington Residencies* took place last year creating innovative exchanges between Mexican and UK artists at their space in Colonia Guerrero) in Mexico City. Likewise, the work that *PAOS* and *Taller de los Guayabos* in Guadalajara, *Cobertizo* in Estado de México or *Casa Báanal* in Merida, (to name a few) are doing as privately run spaces represents a major effort for regional art development.



ABOVE  
*I Have Erections Too* by Gwladys Alonzo at El Cuarto de Máquinas, Mexico City, Mexico

BELOW  
*Mother of Pearls* by Merike Estna at Galeria Karen Huber, Mexico City, Mexico

RIGHT  
*Limpieza Karmática* by Renata Petersen at Silogismos de la Construcción at StudioBlock M74, Mexico City

**Have you got any exhibitions or other projects in the works that you would like to talk about?**

I am currently preparing a solo show with Mexican artist Ernesto Solana at the Museo de Geología in Mexico City to open the first week of September. The museum is located in an outstanding early 1900's building that belongs to the National University (UNAM), at the Santa Maria de la Ribera neighbourhood near downtown Mexico City.

We have been planning this exhibition for over a year, working with the museum's historical archive and particularly with a book that documents the birth of the Paricutin volcano in Michoacán in 1943 from the volcanologist experience; this was a unique event that brought the attention of scientist and artists from the country and around the world in the midst of the SWW. A larger section will be dedicated to Solana's photography, installation and sculpture that explore the consequences of the *Anthropocene* in nature while problematizes the way colonialism, industrial development and capitalism have shaped the methodologies to catalogue the natural realms and its relationship with the human-made. A third

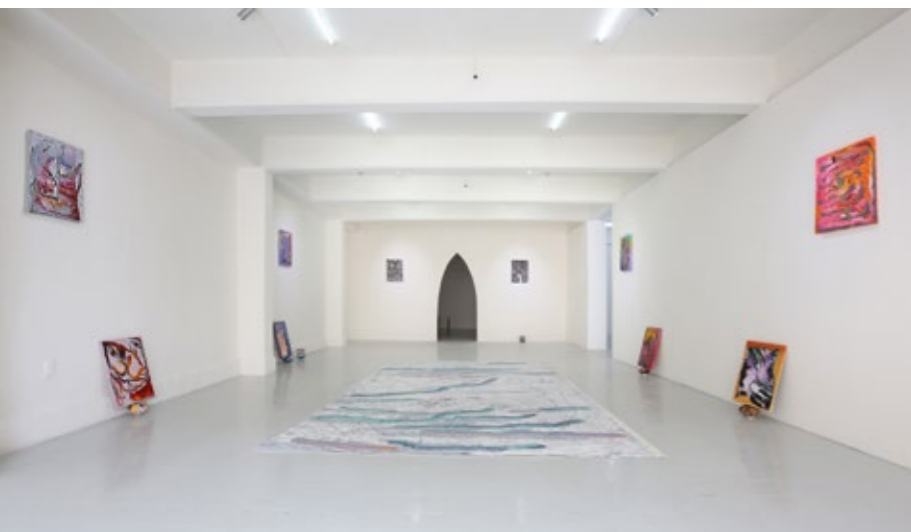
section will intervene the palaeontology hall with 3D printing technology sculptures.

Over the past months we have seen communities - both artistic and otherwise - coming together (while apart) and finding new ways to collaborate, cooperate and rise above the difficulties. Are you hopeful for a post-COVID-19 world where we might see this spirit continue? Are there things about how the art world has operated historically that you would like to see change?

I was recently reading an article that discussed the term *chronocentrism*, which essentially implied "our own time is paramount and other periods being more pale in comparison". The term was created in 1976 by the sociologist Jib Fowles and I think it clearly describes the way humanity feels today. Without diminishing the impact and transformation the pandemics

is causing and will continuously cause in all social, economic and cultural aspects of society in the nearby future, we must also recognise our aptitudes as a species to overcome these challenges, learning from our own history and memory.

During this contingency we have all turned to art, music, theatre, dance and literature, attesting their inner quality as catalyser for social regeneration. I trust in the arts and culture strength to lead the way for a spiritual and creative renovation after this "great pause". But before that, society and politics must recognise and understand the arts as a pivotal social and economic sector. Germany, the UK and other countries are leading the way with substantial and integral aid packages, but we need more nations and their governments (like my own Mexico), to follow that path so the creative industry can nurture innovative and critical dynamics for society to get back on its feet.



## ALBERTO RÍOS DE LA ROSA

Alberto Ríos de la Rosa (Mexico City, 1988) is a contemporary art curator with a master in art history from The Courtauld Institute of Art, London. As chief curator at Fundación Casa Wabi (2014-2018) he worked on individual exhibitions by Daniel Buren, Michel François, Harold Ancart, Jannis Kounellis and Ugo Rondinone; developed the residencies program in Oaxaca and Tokyo and promoted emerging Mexican artists through its exhibition platform in Santa María la Ribera. Previously, he worked on the curatorial teams of the Museo Tamayo in Mexico, the Minneapolis Institute of Art and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice. He is currently director of operations at SFER IK Museion and a contributing researcher and writer for CIAC A.C.

## YOLANDA CEBALLOS

Yolanda Ceballos studied Architecture at the Technological Institute of Monterrey (ITESM). Worked with the architects Mauricio Rocha in Mexico City and with Agustín Landa in Monterrey. Was beneficiary of the FONCA Program for Young Creators 2018 - 2019 in sculpture. In 2013 and 2017 she received the Programa de Estímulo a la Creación Artística (PECDA) fellowship in Nuevo León, for the young creators category. Participated in the 5th edition of the Bancomer MACG program. Her last solo show was *Cinco de Septiembre de Dos mil Dieciseis* (Galería Hilario Galguera, 2019). She has participated in different exhibitions like: *Modos de ver*, (Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, Mexico City, 2018); *La nueva onda del silencio* (El cuarto de máquinas, Mexico City, 2017); *XII Bienal FEMSA, Poéticas del decrecimiento*, *¿Cómo vivir mejor con menos?* (CONARTE, Monterrey, 2016); *Arte Emergente*, Bienal Nacional de Monterrey (CONARTE, Monterrey, 2015).

## TOMÁS DÍAZ CEDEÑO

Tomás Díaz Cedeño is a Mexico City-based artist whose practice focuses on questions relating to the body, how the body is or how it can be represented. Díaz Cedeño probes the limits between object-hood and humankind by examining the expressive range

of material objects can embody when forced into previously unknown relationships in an obsessive artistic encounter. Although his work has a reflective quality they are not mirrors but are intended to meaningfully reflect varied – and often repressed – human desires and fears. Formally, the sculptures are intended to evoke, frontally, the scale and presence of large human bodies; that the pigmented plaster of the sculptures suggests a white flesh is also no accident. The artist examines these questions through a delicate, tenuous–even grotesque–visual language rooted in a committed, intimate dialogue with the materials he uses.

## PAULA CORTAZAR

Paula Cortazar (b.1991 in Monterrey, Nuevo León). In 2014 she graduated with honours from the University of Monterrey's BA in fine arts. In 2012 she studied in the Lyon Superior National School of Fine Arts in France. In 2013 she was selected to participate in the Contemporary Photography Program (PFC), an educational project of the Nuevo León photography library. She was selected in 2019 to participate in the Visual Arts Production diploma of the Art Center of San Agustín in Etna, Oaxaca, Mexico. She had solo shows in 2015 and 2017 at Machete Galería in Mexico City. Her work has also been part of many group shows, such as Inner Landscapes, Anna Marra Gallery in Rome (2019), *Así Sucesivamente* in Center of the Arts of San Agustín Etna, Oaxaca (2019), the first edition of United Mexican Projects [Proyectos Unidos Mexicanos] (2015) in Brooklyn, New York, *Other(s) Drawing(s)* [Otro(s) Dibujo(s)] (2014) in the Nuevo León Picture Gallery, PFC'13 (2014) in the Center of the Arts, among others. Her work was selected to participate in the contest Paper / Support [Soporte / Papel], 2015 Bernardo Elisúa Farías Award. She has been honoured with several awards, the most notable ones being the 2015 - 2016 Young Creators Grant, the first prize of the 5th Photography Contest (2013) organized by the University of Monterrey library, and an honourable mention in the exhibition No Category [Sin Categoría] (2012), awarded by the San Pedro House of Culture. She participated in 2018 in two group exhibitions, Register 05 at MARCO (Contemporary Art Museum of Monterrey) and One In a Million in

Gallery Nosco, Marseille. Her work can be found in the permanent collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art of Monterrey and Fundación Alumnos 47 collection in Mexico, as well as in the Schöpflin Stiftung collection in Germany.

## ADELINE DE MONSEIGNAT

Adeline de Monseignat (b.1987) is a sculptor who lives and works between London and Mexico City. Her work translates an interest in psychology, mythology, urban legends, anthropology and other literary sources which refer to birth, fertility, anthropomorphism and the uncanny. Through the process of sculpting, the artist aims to provide physicality and functionality to such intangible concepts. Adeline works primarily with organic, mineral, sensual, strong yet vulnerable materials such as fur, glass, textiles, steel and marble that aim to echo the human body's qualities, vulnerabilities and potentialities.

## ERNESTO SOLANA

Ernesto Solana (b. 1985, Guadalajara) is an artist based in Guadalajara. He works in different mediums like photography, sculpture and installation. His artistic practice is parallel to his research and explorations around the suburban belts of different cities in the US, Mexico, Northern Africa and the Netherlands. In his works, Solana discusses the tensions between natural and artificial realms and the way in which urbanization and colonialism have clashed both categories. He leaps from prehistorical fossil deposits; to early notions of biological nomenclature and display; to the normalization of industrialized waste within marginalized urban landscapes. Solana recently presented his solo show *Primal Reflex* in PEANA Gallery, Monterrey, MX, and has been part of groups show like *As to Be Inaudible* at C/O Berlin, Berlin, Germany curated by Jörg Colberg; *El castillo de los ladrillos rotos*, in Mexico City, and *Prima Materia* in New York. He recently published his book titled "Systema Artificialis" where he explores the consequences of the Anthropocene and the new forms of relationship between the notions of humanity and nature. Solana studied at

ICP in New York and got his MFA in Photography at the University of Hartford, in Hartford, Connecticut.

## LUIS URUCULO

Luis Urculo lives and works between Madrid and Mexico City. His practice takes anthropology, archaeology and criminology as a main reference of phenomenology to create lines of investigation based on the idea of reconstruction of timelines, interpretations, uncertain materiality, imprecise descriptions, ambiguity and interpretations of reality. Fiction and representation of diverse domestic geographies have been language and scenarios to create diverse video works, using amateur choreographies with objects to represent his ideas as manifestos. Works exhibited in The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), The Art Institute (Chicago), MAXXI (Rome), MAC Museum of Contemporary Art of Santiago (Chile), Tokyo Wonder Site (Japan), Storefront for Art & Architecture (New York), XIth Venice Biennial – Spanish pavilion, Lisbon Triennale, La Casa Encendida (Madrid), Centro Pecci (Prato), Matadero (Madrid), Arredondo/ Arozarena (Mexico DF), Max Estrella (Madrid), The Popular Workshop (San Francisco), Montevideo Biennial, Parque Cultural Valparaíso (Chile), National Glyptoteque (Athens). Also has been invited as visiting professor and lecturer in Columbia University (New York), UCLA (Los Angeles), HEAD (Geneve), Danish Center for Architecture (Copenhagen), Vitra Design Museum at Boisbuchet, Graham Foundation (Chicago), Universidad de Talca (Chile), INDA Chulalongkorn University (Bangkok), Universidad Anahuac (México DF), Umeå University (Sweden), SOMA (Mexico), Kent State University (Florence), Tokyo Wonder Site (Tokyo), ENSAG (Grenoble), LIGA (Mexico), Istanbul Biennial, Espacio Monte (Buenos Aires), Elisava (Barcelona), ETSAM (Madrid) and EPS (Alicante). Award-winning short films at Transfer Architecture video awards and winner at EVA Experimental Video Architecture Festival. Art Residency at PIVÔ (2019), Casa Wabi (2018), Tokyo Wonder Site (2015), El Ranchito Matadero (2015) and Macdowell Colony (2012). Since 2010 is the co-director & curator of Living room Festival together with Maria Jerez, Juan Dominguez and Cuqui Jerez.

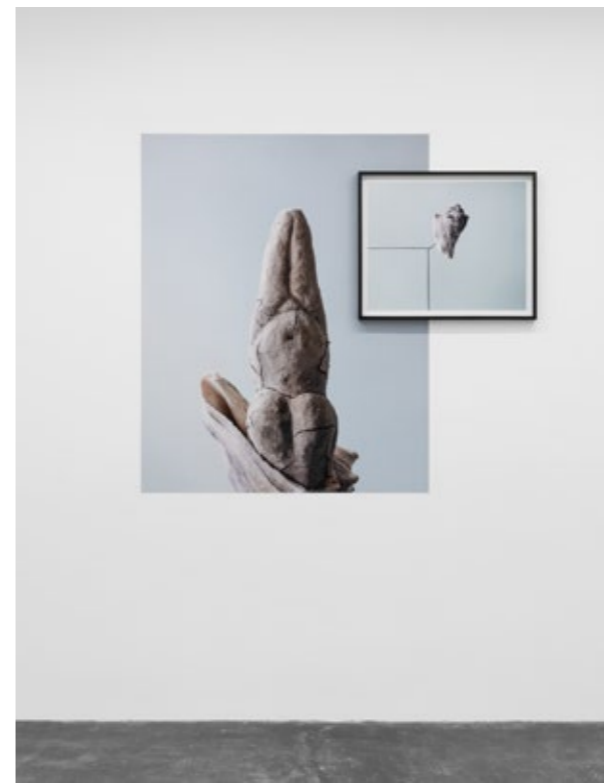




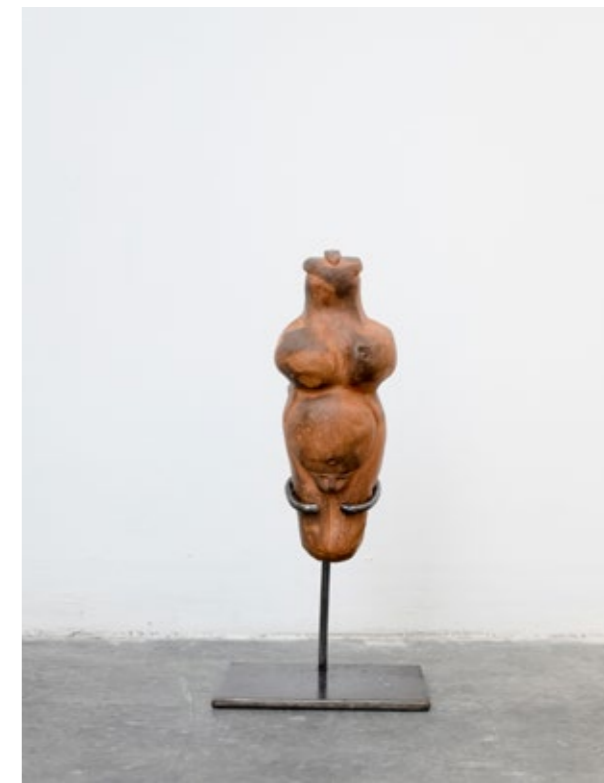
YOLANDA CEBALLOS  
*Reconstrucción 3/14*, 2019  
 White cement, marble powder, construction rod, steel and water  
 210 x 42 x 42 cm  
 82 3/4 x 16 1/2 x 16 1/2 in.



YOLANDA CEBALLOS  
*Habitación #1*, 2018  
 Graphite on tracing paper  
 180 x 220 cm  
 71 x 86 3/4 in.



ERNESTO SOLANA  
*Totemic Composite III*, 2019  
 Archival pigment print, alucobond, frame  
 132.5 x 106 cm  
 52 1/4 x 41 3/4 in.  
 Edition of 3 + 2AP



ERNESTO SOLANA  
*Venus III*, 2018  
 Clay, steel base  
 32.5 x 20 cm  
 13 x 8 in.



ADELINE DE MONSEIGNAT  
*Demeter's Pods*, 2017  
 Negro Querétaro marble, painted steel and brass-plated steel  
 360 x 360 x 360 cm  
 142 x 142 x 142 in.



ADELINE DE MONSEIGNAT  
*Seed Stack*, 2020  
 Dorado Tepexi marble  
 218 x 218 x 46 cm  
 86 x 86 x 18 in.



LUIS URUCULO  
*NO HACER NO ESTAR*(on *PRECOLUMBIAN ARCHITECTURE* - Donald Robertson), 2018  
 Book pages, red clay from Oaxaca  
 12 pages group  
 Variable dimensions



LUIS URUCULO  
*Untitled (Folded Map), Untitled (Internet) and Untitled (VCR)*, 2018  
 Fired red clay from Oaxaca  
 Variable dimensions



TOMÁS DÍAZ CEDEÑO  
*Strap On*, 2019  
Soil, plaster, brass powder, leather, thread  
172 x 40 x 50cm  
68 x 16 x 20 in.



TOMÁS DÍAZ CEDEÑO  
*Camina*, 2018  
Pig leather, snake skin, pigment, hemp, fabric, plaster  
155 x 70 x 26cm  
61 x 27 1/2 x 10 1/4 in.



PAULA CORTAZAR  
*Órganos*, 2017  
Engraving on granite  
193 x 94.50 x 1.80cm  
76 x 37 1/4 x 3/4 in.



PAULA CORTAZAR  
*Rio*, 2020  
Engraving on river stone, alabaster and stainless steel bolt  
64 x 38 x 30 cm  
25 1/4 x 15 x 12 in.



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