



Exhibition *Returning to the Maloca*

Miguel Ángel Rojas

Exhibition cycle MAMBO 2021-1 /Landscape, Nature and Territory

25th of March 2021 - 8th of August 2021

Bogotá, 2021. The exhibition *Returning to the Maloca* focuses on the effects of colonial rule on indigenous civilizations in the Colombian Amazon and their present consequences. Heavily affected by armed conflict, drug trafficking, political insensibility, displacement, and environmental exploitation.



Photography. Courtesy of the artist.

Caption:

Restitution (2009). Miguel Ángel Rojas.
Digital print in cotton paper. 80 x 120 cm. c/u 2 units.
Exhibition *Returning to The Maloca*.
Museum of Modern Art Bogota - MAMBO (2021).

- With a trajectory of more than 50 years, Miguel Ángel Rojas (Colombia, 1946) is a pioneer of experimental visual art practices in Colombia. His work has always provocatively addressed identity, gender, and politics, focusing on marginalized populations and minorities, like LGBTI+ and indigenous communities.
- Since the mid-1990s, Rojas introduced in his work dollar clippings and coca leaves. Initially, he explored stories of indigenous life in Colombia (*Sueños Raspachines*, 2007-2021). Over time, he started to use them to comment upon the production of cocaine for the so-called first world's consumption, as in the *Nupcias* series (2021).
- The exhibition opening will be on thursday the 25th of March at 5 p.m. in the Museum of Modern Art of Bogotá-MAMBO. Press appointments with the artist and the Curator of the exhibition, Eugenio Viola, Chief Curator MAMBO will be from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The journalists and media should have an appointment¹.

Exhibited are three new site-specific commissions and pieces developed over the last 25 years. Additionally, for the first time in the artist's career, highlighting specific working materials which will show the process behind Rojas' work.

The first inedit work is *Yari Yaguará. Regreso a la Maloca* [Yari Yaguará. Returning to the Maloca] 2021. It references the land where the Indigenous community of Pijao was relocated in the 60s by the government. They were moved from the native Tolima in the Andes to the Amazons and displaced in 2004 by the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia).

¹ Appointments with Paola Guzmán Romero. paola.guzman@mambogota.com Cel: 312 5484 177



The second one is *Aquí estamos*, [We Are Here] 2021, is a monumental stone that resembles the cliff where Neolithic rock frescoes were recently discovered in the Colombian Amazon. It's a piece conceived to be intervened through an action of hand printing, organized in collaboration with children from the Muisca indigenous community of Sesquilé.

The third new site-specific commission is *Territorio de poder*, [Territory of Power] 2021, which references the Neoclassical floor of the National Statuary Hall Collection in the recently assaulted United States Capitol in Washington D.C. The floor is a recurrent element in Rojas' visual language. *Grano* [Grain] 1980, was the first one he made, and right here at MAMBO, reconstructing the pattern of Mozarabic tiles from his native home as a tribute to his mestizo origins.

Among other works displayed, *Economía salvaje* [Savage Economy] and *El nuevo dorado* [The New Dorado], 2018. These two pieces were produced for the 12th Shanghai Biennale; in *Returning to The Maloca* they will be exposed for the first time in Colombia. Rojas uses coca leaves, and layers of clay pitted against gold leaf to reference the impact arid deforested land has on global climate change. The actual 'nuevo dorado' is the world's natural resources: air, water, and the rainforest, which are the planet's lungs.



Photography: courtesy of the artist.

Caption:

The New Dorado / Savage Economy (2018). Miguel Ángel Rojas.
Coca leaves' powder, serigraphic neutral base, clay, mineral pigments, gold and silver fiber over foam board.
400 x 1800 cm - 400 x 1500 cm.
Exhibition *Returning to The Maloca*.
Museum of Modern Art Bogota - MAMBO (2021).

"The main topic of the exhibition refers to the destruction of the ecological equilibrium in the Amazonas, which includes the well being and the development of indigenous communities that inhabit the area. The west economy moves forward in massive steps, appropriating this global natural resource: the felling and the burning of the soil are part of the first stage. Then, these lands - that were stolen from the jungle- are growing monoculture crops of coca leaf and superficial mining, which destroys nature completely and alters the rivers into mud torrents. Industries are violating, more and more, the territories that once were full of life and favorable for human life. The conquest continues, from there one of the titles of an artwork of the exhibition, *El nuevo dorado* [The New Dorado], 2018. I do not find any difference between the plundering and the expropriation that started five centuries ago with the european conquest in America; it continues beyond the limits that marked the established nations putting at risk the future of humanity. All the situation makes me think that there is



no comeback, that in some way we have to integrate the communities, their territory and their traditions with the global contemporary culture. There is no returning to the Maloca." Explains Miguel Ángel Rojas about the exhibition.

In *Returning to the Maloca*, Rojas addresses the production, trafficking, and consumption of coca and the double-moral related to its use and abuse: demonized in Colombia and often associated with a glamorous tone in European and North-American countries.

Miguel Ángel Rojas biography.

Miguel Ángel Rojas is one of the most influential artists in the Colombian art context. Pioneer in the use of photography as an artistic medium since 1970, his artistic practice analyzes topics as identity, politics, marginality, gender, sexuality, population displacement, violence, war, extractivism, drug trafficking and the production and consumption of drugs. He uses materials that acquire symbolic and historical value as coca leaves, gold and dust.



Photography by: Juan Felipe Echeverria and Esteban Suarez.

Miguel Ángel Rojas (1946, Bogotá). His work is based on the exploration of the real world. With a critical sense he questions the prevailing morality and status quo. He understands the processes in the construction of the work as the very essence of it. Concepts such as style and technical skill are secondary to him, sense and communication are important in his work, therefore he ventures into various means that he considers tools but not the goal itself.

He has participated in exhibitions such as, XI International Engraving Biennial, Tokyo, Japan (1979), XVI São Paulo Biennial, São Paulo, Brazil (1981), Latin American Artists Of. The Twentieth Century, Museum of Modern Art, NY, U.S.A. (1993), V Havana Biennial, Museum of Fine Arts, Havana, Cuba (1994), Re-Aligning Vision, Museo del Barrio, NY, U.S.A. (1997), The American Effect, Whitney Museum of American Art, NY, USA, Colombia 2003, Museo de Arte Moderno Mamba, Buenos Aires, Argentina (2003), Cantos, Cuentos Colombianos, Daros-Latinoamérica, Zurich, Switzerland (2004), For you / For you. Video exhibition of the Daros Latin America collection. Zurich, CH (2009), 12Th Shanghai Biennale, Proregress, Power Station of Art (PSA), Shanghai, China (PRC), 2018.

His work is part of collections such as Daros Latin America-Zurich, Banco de la República-Bogotá, Musac-Castilla y León, La Caixa – Barcelona, Twenty 21c Museum Foundation – Kentucky, Tate Modern-London, Art Institute of Chicago-USA, MOMA -NY, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco.



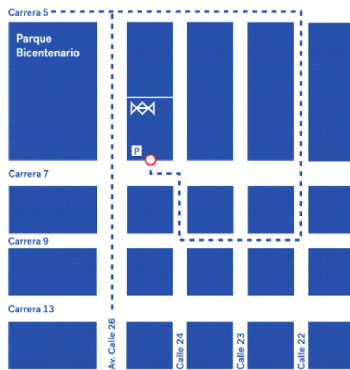
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Where is MAMBO? How to arrive at the museum?

MAMBO is located in the Street 24 #6-00 in Bogotá, Colombia. More information:
<https://www.mambogota.com/visitanos/>



www.mambogota.com



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