

Sicardi |  
Ayers  
Bacino

***Touch me***

Jorge Eduardo Eielson,  
Arturo Herrera, Sandra Monterroso,  
Miguel Angel Rojas, Melanie Smith,  
Ana Maria Tavares, and Marina Weffort

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Jorge Eduardo Eielson  
*Amazonia XXXV*, 1980  
Felt and burlap on board  
18 ½ x 18 ½ x 4 ¾ in

## Touch me

Gabriela Rangel\*

Sicardi | Ayers | Bacino is pleased to present the group exhibition *Touch me*, featuring works by Jorge Eduardo Eielson (Lima, 1924 - Milan, Italy, 2006), Arturo Herrera (Caracas, 1959), Sandra Monterroso (Guatemala, 1974), Miguel Angel Rojas (Bogotá, 1946), Melanie Smith (Poole, England, 1965), Ana Maria Tavares (Minas Gerais, Brazil, 1958), and Marina Weffort (Sao Paulo, 1978) curated by the independent curator and writer Gabriela Rangel.

Departing from different formations and cultural contexts, the artists selected for this presentation have developed a deep understanding of the relation between fabric and abstraction as a porous transnational language and a source for examining issues of gender, waning creative traditions, and pressing matters on weak ecosystems. The selected works describe a sensuous movement aroused by the haptic condition of the thread and fabric to the eye of the beholder. Such a movement engages her, him, or they in the captivating mysteries of craft and knowledge, manual and conceptual labor, and past and present. *Touch me* presents different perspectives of weaving, fabric making, and embroidery including deconstructive approaches to the history of abstraction as in Arturo Herrera's exquisite cut felt and the outstanding *Amazonia* (1980) by Jorge Eielson, who began his poetic explorations on the *quipu* as early as in the 1960s. Eielson's archaic knot introduced an ancient artifact from the Andean region to the lexicon of modernism, condensing his queer persona on a coded sign that he developed in different media. In tandem with the recovery of the Pre-conquest past, Sandra Monterroso's organically dyed looms and fabrics convey the reverberations of a present that overlaps with ancient indigenous techniques presented as a chain of layered temporalities. Monterroso's archival recovery of Meso-American textile techniques embarks on a generous process of self-recognition and decolonization of the Bauhaus legacy of textile making.

Conceptual artists included in the exhibition renovate a set of formal strategies usually applied from abstract art movements and tendencies to weaving and textile making, featuring issues of gender construction and sexual difference as well as a critique of social and economic inequalities. Arturo Herrera's felt piece completes its meaning through the subtraction of extensive parts of the fabric that were cut to apply a repetition of a pattern: a hunched witch with a

baton. The motif used by Herrera was appropriated from a children's book. Paradoxically, the felt can hang or be presented with no prescribed orientation, which makes the motif of the witch almost illegible. Past works by Herrera recurred to images of this form of massive visual literature through which his work tackled gendered modes of storytelling.

Miguel Angel Rojas' sculptural blankets, silk-screened with geometric patterns used in both popular and indigenous designs, were woven with fibers made of coca leaves. The blankets allude to the conditions of violence and destitution that created a vast population of displaced victims of the war between the State, the drug cartels, paramilitary factions, and the Guerrillas in Colombia. Rojas' blankets represent the people who live in the streets of Bogotá, a city with cold and humid weather as well as other urban centers in Colombia. More importantly, the blankets represent the body of violence in absentia. Melanie Smith, an artist immersed in the imagery of global diversity and its circulating taxonomies, commissioned crochet embroideries during the Covid 19 pandemic lockdown, which compositions are based on the  $\pi$  number. Smith's series consisted of framed circular embroideries handwoven in cotton made in collaboration with the feminist Mexican collective Lana Desaste (Yarn Bombing). Departing from a similar strategy of production, Ana Maria Tavares' soft sculptures also made in collaboration with craft women of the Brazilian Northeast, deploy embroideries treated as precious indigenous artifacts, which titles refer to rivers in the region of Ceará devastated by different agents of destruction. By contrast, Marina Weffort's elegant white fabrics with geometric patterns inscribe her work into the vocabulary of modern art. Weffort's delicate abstractions and the subtle use of the grid as a matrixial structure bring together a feminist gesture of appropriation rather than a canonical undertaking of a cornerstone of modernism. Her textile works, which employ sculptural procedures, are made by hand using scissors and tweezers only. The fabric is made up of a structure of threads that intersect neatly, the horizontal and the vertical lines.

*Touch me* features groundbreaking work by artists who have often crossed paths between disciplines and genres, refusing the compartmentalizing and hierarchical logic of fine and applied arts of modern art. The works invite us to touch with the eyes what the hand created as an open-ended source of analogical creativity made with digital tools.

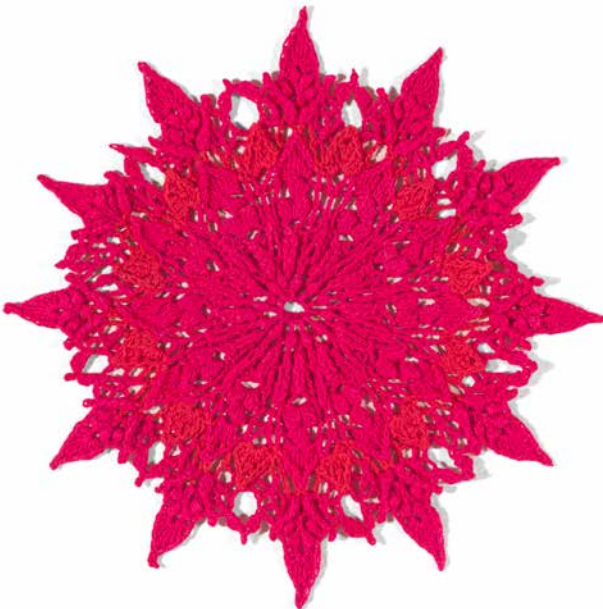
\*Independent Curator and Writer



**Sandra Monterroso.** *Puntos en resistencia azul*,  
Edition. 7/13, 2019. Setail. Installation Indigo dyed yarn, loop,  
steel rope, 13 knots 58 × 10 × 7 in.



**Arturo Herrera.** *Felt #30 Blue*, 2012  
173.25 × 59 in. Courtesy of Sikkema Jenkins & Co, NY



**Melanie Smith.** *Pi (Pond 5) 6*, 2022  
Cotton. 24 3/4 × 24 3/4 in



**Marina Weffort.** *Untitled [Grey mapa mundi]*, 2021. Detail.  
Fabric and pins 35 3/4 × 51 1/2 × 1 1/2 in.





**Miguel Angel Rojas.** *Sin frio permanente* (Without a constant chill), 2012  
Impression with coca leaf powder on jute. 96 ½ x 56 ½ in



**Ana Maria Tavares.** *Victorias Regias for Purus and Negros Rivers [Euryale Amazonica]*, 2014  
Various fabrics, yarn, acrylic, and stainless steel. Variable dimensions