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Chance Encounters With Tania Pérez Córdova's Art

Poetic and subtle, her work invites viewers to contemplate each material as it changes, or stays the same, over time.



SculptureCenter

Tania Pérez Córdova, "Live Chat" (2012), glass, highlighter, dimensions variable (courtesy the artist, photo Hyunjung Rhee)

Tania Pérez Córdova: Generalization at SculptureCenter spans a decade of the Mexican artist's career. Her first solo institutional survey in the United States, it illustrates Pérez Córdova's interest in materiality, the gaze, the passage of time, negative space, and the shortfalls of discourse. Elegantly displayed across the spartan, industrial interior of SculptureCenter, the exhibition brings together sculptural bodies of work she is known for, such as large artificial leaves punctuated by delicate gold chains that recall glistening streams of rain, as well as new pieces made specifically for the show. The latter group includes an architectural intervention entitled "Name, Phone, Email, Postcode" (2023), a diaphanous veil

made of anti-hail mesh (netting to protect crops) and industrially destroyed confidential documents draped across the gallery entrance.

Activation and encounter are crucial to Pérez Córdova's practice. "You, Me, Us, You, Them" (2022), for example, consists of a large, flat circle of marble. Subtle indentations in the surface hold individual, color contact lenses suspended in liquid. The work is activated by chance encounters with people in the space wearing matching-colored contacts, in a performative moment. Similarly, "Portrait of an Unknown Person Passing By" (2019), a ceramic vase decorated with a floral pattern, is in dialogue with a person wearing a dress with the same design, whom visitors may or may not notice. The participants in these activations are subtle and unannounced; viewers will see them only by chance. With these works, Pérez Córdova nods to the potential that objects and materials hold to stir a memory or spark a connection.



Installation view of *Tania Pérez Córdova: Generalization* at SculptureCenter, New York. Pictured: "Strelitzia reginae (20% chance of rain)" (*Strelitzia reginae* (20% posibilidad de lluvia)) (2022), artificial plant, epoxy clay, gold-plated brass chain, 57 x 36 3/4 x 27 1/2 inches; "Amoena (90% chance of rain)" (*Amoena* (90% posibilidad de lluvia)) (2022), artificial plant, epoxy clay, gold-plated brass chain, 76 3/4 x 30 3/4 x 39 1/2 inches (courtesy the artist, photo: Charles Benton).

The artist also explores negative space and time, often by employing the physical qualities of water. In "All Our Explanations" (2022), she sourced 3-D models of human heads from an

anonymous online bank to create concrete molds. Each mold is filled with water and frozen daily so that the ice slowly melts down the plinth. Eventually, an empty cavern of the mind is revealed, symbolizing the many thought processes that take form in one's head.

Likewise, "A Speech of 5,200 Words" (2022) is inspired by a statistic the artist discovered that the average modern-day political speech spans 5,200 words. The work uses artificial saliva that drips out of one copper bucket into another over a duration determined by the length of time it takes to read 5,200 words to symbolize the process of disseminating ideas. The piece draws attention to the power of words, both individually and as part of larger messages. Each drop of water, like a word, contributes to the overall content of the bucket, but each one, in theory, has the power to overflow and therefore alter what is communicated.

Poetic and subtle, Pérez Córdova's work invites viewers to contemplate each material as it changes, or stays the same, over time. What memories are sparked or encounters occur is entirely up to chance.



Tania Pérez Córdova, "All Our Explanations" (Todas nuestras explicaciones) (2022), concrete, melting ice, carbon steel, various materials, dimensions variable, commissioned by Museo Tamayo, Mexico City (courtesy the artist, photo Charles Benton)



Tania Pérez Córdova, "A Roof Into a Roof" (Un techo en un techo) (2018), aluminum fragment of a roof that was cast, melted, and recast into its own mold, installed at SculptureCenter, 2 x 33 1/2 x 22 1/4 inches (courtesy the artist and Galerie Martin Janda, Vienna, photo Charles Benton)



Tania Pérez Córdova, "You, Me, Us, You, Them" (Tu, yo, nosotrxs, ustedes, ellxs) (2022), marble, personalized cosmetic contact lenses, one or more people wearing contact lenses of a color different from their natural eyes, 1 x 64 x 69 inches, commissioned by Museo Tamayo, Mexico City (photo Annabel Keenan/Hyperallergic)



Tania Pérez Córdova, "A Chandelier Into a Chandelier" (Un candelabro en un candelabro) (2023), brass chandelier that was cast, melted, and recast into its own mold, 33 x 34 x 34 inches, commissioned by SculptureCenter, New York (courtesy the artist and Tina Kim Gallery, New York, photo Charles Benton)



Tania Pérez Córdova, "Philodendron Monstera Deliciosa," detail (2022), pierced synthetic leaves, 14k-gilded silver chain, steel. 126 x 11 3/4 x 15 3/4 inches (courtesy the artist and Galerie Art: Concept, Paris, photo Charles Benton)



Installation view of *Tania Pérez Córdova: Generalization* at SculptureCenter, New York (courtesy the artist, photo: Charles Benton)



Installation view of *Tania Pérez Córdova: Generalization* at SculptureCenter, New York. Pictured: “Fog” (Niebla) (2018/2023), volcanic ash, sealer, dimensions variable, Museo Tamayo, Mexico City; “They Say It’s Like a Rock” (Dicen que es como una roca) (2015), glass from a window facing south, Nag Champa incense, 8 1/4 x 11 1/2 x 9 1/2 inches, Private Collection (courtesy the artist, photo: Charles Benton)

Tania Pérez Córdova: Generalization continues at SculptureCenter (44–19 Purves Street, Long Island City, Queens) through December 11. The exhibition was organized by Museo Tamayo, Mexico City, and curated by Humberto Moro, Deputy Director of Program, Dia Art Foundation.

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