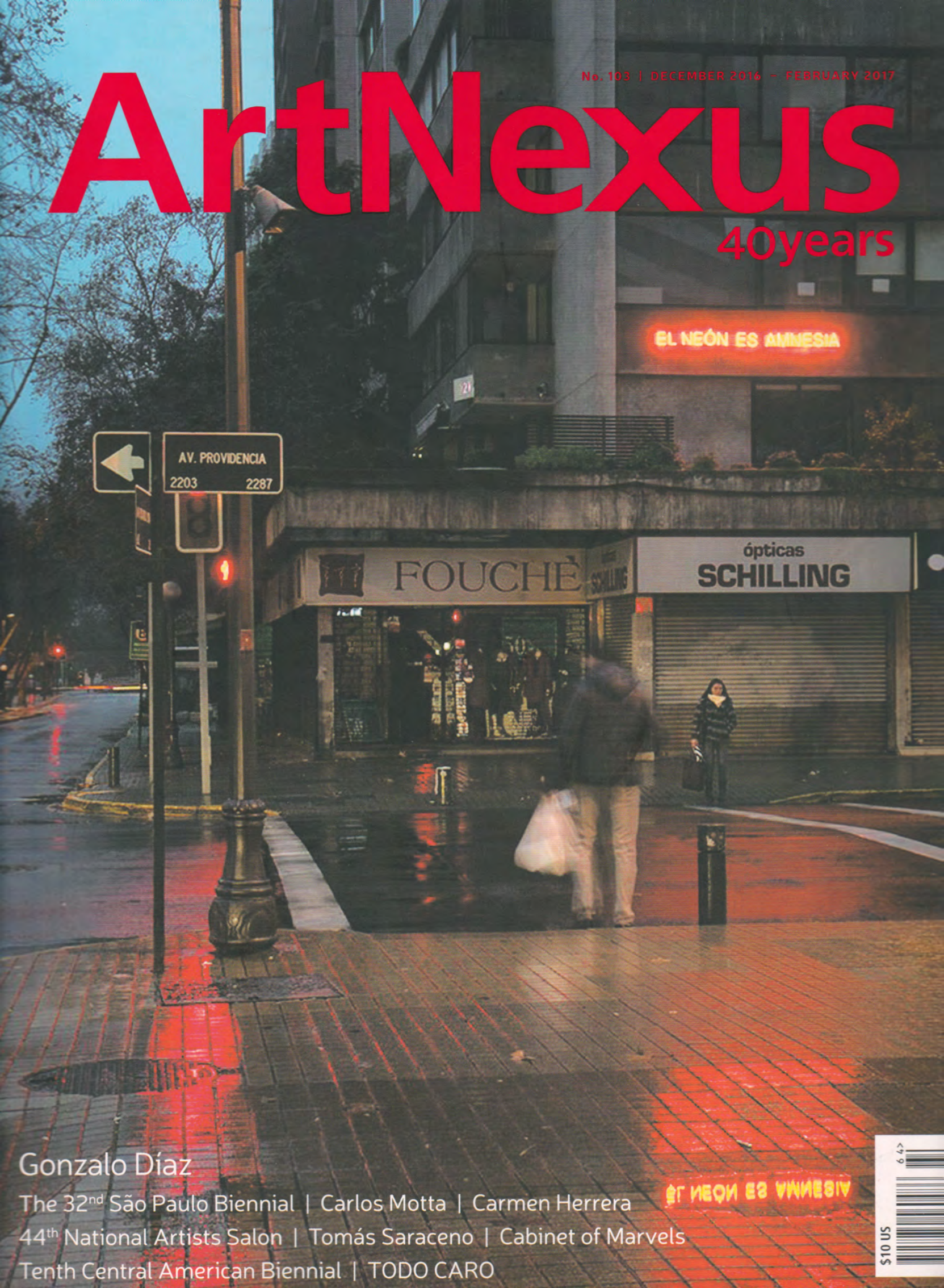


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ArtNexus

40 years



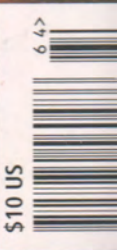
Gonzalo Díaz

The 32nd São Paulo Biennial | Carlos Motta | Carmen Herrera

44th National Artists Salon | Tomás Saraceno | Cabinet of Marvels

Tenth Central American Biennial | TODO CARO

EL NEÓN ES AMNESIA



us, particularly when it becomes a black hole, the vacuum that marks the beginning of time. In Vélez's words, his work connects geometric abstraction with a pre-Columbian imaginary, mainly via the natural oval shape of rocks, eggs, cocoons, and celestial bodies

The exhibition also features a series of works on paper under the title of *Geografías corporales* (Body Geographies). This series allows us to explore Vélez's creative process. *Geografías corporales I - Color blanco* (Body Geographies I – White Color, 2009), for example, is a study of phenomena present in most of the works on exhibit. The presence of grids and geometric projections connects this work on paper with his large-format paintings. Drawing translates and deconstructs three-dimensional structures, and painting complements it with a material presence. Works like *Geografías corporales I - Color blanco* reveal the different instances of this creative process, from draftsmanship to the boundaries of painting

The sculptural character and the material experimentalism of Vélez's productions (from his works on paper, through his paintings, to his three-dimensional works) make them particularly relevant in the landscape of contemporary Latin American art. Vélez is part of a generation of artists interested in exploring the materiality of painting and who experiment with materials and techniques in order to find an essence that frees the genre from the weight of representation. Since early on in his career, in the 1990s, Vélez has been interested in the abstract-expressionist movement; he has incorporated and translated many of its tenets for a contemporary moment and a highly specific visual imaginary

In recent interviews, Vélez defines himself as a "painter, basically a painter." This exhibition reveals his most recent finds in a constant and disciplined process of experimentation, not only in terms of his images but also in terms of his materials and pictorial techniques. In that sense, and echoing the titles of several works on display at Elena Shchukina, his intention to go *beyond limits* is clear

RODRIGO ORRANTIA

MADRID / SPAIN

Glenda León Galería Juana de Aizpuru

Traveling. Sightseeing. Thinking. Uploading a picture to social media. Getting paid. Paying. These could be some of the "transitive states" that give Glenda León's exhibition at Juana de Aizpuru Gallery its title. Like a kind of futuristic archaeology, the exhibition shines its spotlight on some moments or features of contemporary life, from money, politics, personal relationships, through travel and religion.

The exhibition begins with the video *Inversión III* (Inversion III; note that the Spanish word *inversión* also means *investment*), where a locked-down high-angle camera shot shows a pair of hands scratching a one-dollar bill with a knife. The resulting dust is rolled into a cigarette, which is then lit. The metaphor leaves no room for doubt: the subject is capital, investments, and financial movements in their most bald-facedly consumerist aspect, connected to the culture of leisure and the destruction of the body. The hands in the shot carry out a ritual, with the patience and attention required for such processes. The paradox is that they do this with something as noteworthy as a dollar bill.

Along similar lines, the collage *La Internacional III* (The International III) mixes cotton paper with fragments of different banknotes from around the world, to trace the musical notes of *The Internationale*. This visual synes-

thesia makes the message perfectly clear: internationalism, seen in its day as a unifying movement able to articulate the entirety of the working-class around the world, has now been reduced to a single melody, comprised by different currency signs. Right across from it is *La Santa Biblia* (The Holy Bible), a small volume formed by one-dollar bills. Once again we see an unambiguous connection between faith and economic philistinism, between the "spirit of capitalism" mentioned by Weber and religious practices. Thus a line is traced between morality, success, and financial comfort

One of the exhibition's subtlest works is *El mundo* (The World), featuring a world map made using ink and hair. The figure is flat, devoid of color, shadows, or volume, and it rests quietly among other, much "louder" works. The hair alludes to the fragility of a world that contemplates, in silence, the events of the era. Next to it, in strong contrast, is *Juegos carnales* (Carnal Games), composed of two silicon dice set on what appears to be a casino table cover. This presented sexual relations as a game of chance, the casino may be a symbolic allusion to a space that is the radical opposite of intimacy. The silicon of the dice is striking, as it emulates human skin in an artificial, industrial way. Across the gallery, on the opposite wall, rests *Campo de juego* (Playfield), a mattress in the shape of a soccer field, where the relationship between bodies is to be negotiated as a combat, a struggle, a competition

In *Estados transitivos. Mundo religioso* (Transitive States. Religious World) we are presented with five pendants representing five different religions and the way they fuse to produce a single piece. The exhibition includes, along with the video about the foundry process, the new item produced, displayed with a documentary intention. Immediately next comes *Estados transitivos. Mundo político* (Transitive States. Religious World), following the same logic, this time with the flags of different countries. Here the video depicts the process of recycling these flags in order to shape a new one, combining politics, abstract terms like *nation* and *identity*, and serial production

The journey—that which is transitory, the continuous displacement of bodies and meanings—is a central idea in Glenda León's exhibition. Her triptych *Viajar viviendo* develops the concept on the basis of an iconographic motif that multiplies—an airplane—on the outline of something that resembles an airport. The sensation of length, repetition, and even a certain degree of weariness fills one of the gallery's walls

But perhaps it is *Viajar ligero* (Traveling Light) that best summarizes the exhibition's proposal. This installation features a conveyor belt carrying a tea bag that appears already weathered by time and use. On the tea bag is the following message (in English): "Live light. Travel light. Spread the light. Be the light". A forceful observation about the ephemeral character of philosophy—where has philosophical reflection ended up, if not in marketing and merchandising messages?—knowledge as consumption, the politics of the body and of health, as well as about our nomadic, constant-motion lives represented by the conveyor belt (of the kind used in luggage carousels.) In sum, an exhibition about the different moments that comprise the (bewildering) landscape of the contemporary world

ANA FOLGUERA

Armando Andrade Tudela Galería Elba Benitez

As Barack Obama said on his visit to Cuba, "it is not easy" to establish communication with a certain sector of contemporary art. Cryptic turns of meaning, scarce sensorial stimuli, and an excess of "art world" in the arts are but a few causes of this realm often being impenetrable for non-experts. Painting and sculpture, the supports that, histori-

cally, best interacted with the widest audiences, have obliterated their borders from within, and today, freighted with “concept”, have become the new opaque tropes of unending reflections. Seen that way, matter, color, form, and space could seem terms in an outdated lexicon that are nevertheless reincorporated often into artistic practice and force us to theorize. We slide back, and it is not too much of a surprise, since many “unresolveds” remain, some of them inexhaustible.

Speaking of sculpture, the eponymous exhibition of works by Armando Andrade Tudela (Lima, 1975) focuses with absolute intensity on objects. Andrade manipulates, melts, and reassembles materials in order to explore the autonomy of form and strengthen its meanings. The exhibition features three new series: an untitled triptych comprised of large-format black mirrors, *Vuscohh Vohhlver*, comprised of plaster assemblages arranged on iron rods, and, finally, *Canon*, where some utilitarian articles have been transformed into sculptural shapes.

The mirrors’ irregular outlines contrast with the industrial imprint of their surfaces, so that the seemingly minimalist aesthetic clashes with the specter of figuration (the almost imperceptible reflection on the glass.) The disturbance caused by these anti-mirrors or subverted mirrors is due in good part to their unusual aspect (they are asymmetrical, semi-opaque, gigantic, and have a hole at their center), but also to the projection that, perhaps because of the impossibility of mirror-image reflection, we impose on them: what is disturbed is our naturalized perception mirrors, as we are confronted with these objects that, despite being precisely that, do not work in that way. The deeper issue is not, then, the mirror as a concrete object, but reflection as a poetic principle. This is one of the formal and philosophical lines along which Andrade Tudela has been working for years. In 2010, for example, as part of the *ahir, demà* exhibition at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo in Barcelona, another untitled work featured a fiberboard plank covered by five large pieces of transparent glass that covered almost the entirety of the surface. As Chus Martínez, the project’s curator, put it, this work served as a border between two images of a single space: on the one hand, the old Renaissance chapel and its ceremonial function; on the other, the current gallery—and its similarly ceremonial function, I dare add. This operation, however, was only made possible by the fact that the image was duplicated by its reflection on the glass. Along Martínez’s lines, the glass was limited to speak of the space—formerly a religious building and an arms depot during the Spanish Civil War—only on the

basis of its materiality: “all that is left of all that [the space’s past] are the materials and the shapes that signify it.”¹

Seen in that light, the formalist reduction functions as a stimulus for reflections of all kinds, prompted by the shapes and the materials. *Vuscohh Vohhlver*, another series in this show, seems to indeed move in that direction. Featuring small- and medium-format works, it explores textures and volumes in suggestive ways. These works are plaster assemblages on metal-rod bases, and some molten-aluminum objects displayed on metal shelves. Andrade Tudela explores shifts in scale, material, format, and use in order to enhance shifts in meaning, but also to disrupt the processes of aesthetic perception and reception. Finally, in *Canon 1*, the exhibition presents prefabricated objects that the artist intervenes and transforms into sculptural entities. What is interesting in this case is to ask: What is it that transforms an object into sculpture, and who can or cannot operate that shift?

Form, matter, texture, and autonomy operate in this exhibition not only as starting ideas and communicative possibilities, but as a complex conceptual field we use to reactivate debates and stories, including those of the arts. In an enlightening essay about mirrors and self-portraits, James Hall narrated the mirror fever experienced in Fifteenth Century Europe after the introduction of those magical reflecting glasses. It was, he asserts, “as though artists were suddenly able to see themselves.”²

Such an optical feat allowed people (not only artists) to for the first time look inwardly and not outwardly. Perhaps in today’s art world what we need is fewer mirrors.

NOTE

1 “El tiempo aprieta”, in *ahir, demà*, Barcelona: MACBA, 2010, p. 13.

2 James Hall, *The Self-Portrait: A Cultural History*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2014, p. 31.

DIANA CUÉLLAR LEDESMA

David Lamelas

Parra & Romero

Art is a body that emerges from language, time and space. David Lamelas proposes with his recent exhibition at the Galeria Parra & Romero, in Madrid, a meticulous observation of the temporal experience, words and narrative. Titled “Territorial Intimacy,” the show

Glenda León. *Viajar ligero* (Light Travel), 2016. Stainless steel, rubber and tea bag. 13 5/8" x 66 7/8" x 33 1/4" in. (35 x 170 x 85 cm). Courtesy: Galeria Juana de Aizpuru.



Armando Andrade Tudela. *Untitled*, 2016.

