

Press Release

Munich, 9 August 2022

when there were more donkeys than icosahedrons

Gabriel Rico

9 September – 20 October 2022

In his sculptures and installations, Mexican artist Gabriel Rico combines natural materials and industrial products and places them into an interactive context, questioning the ambivalent relationship between natural environments and man-made principles of order. max goelitz presents his first solo exhibition in Germany in collaboration with OMR as part of Various Others 2022.

Rico's works are created from found materials and collected objects of everyday life. The artist expands the concept of objet trouvé, in that his sculptures and installations only find their exciting and playful completion through selected combinations of diverse objects and their contrast in color, form, material, time of origin. The evocative title *when there were more donkeys than icosahedrons*, with its intertwining of time horizons, contrasts and balances between the organic and the geometric, refers to a fundamental principle underlying most of his works. An icosahedron is a geometric solid based on 20 equilateral triangles and is important in mathematics, cluster physics, and for the structure of viruses.

As in Arte Povera, Rico utilizes stones, wood and bones in his work, combining them with industrially manufactured materials. His wall sculpture *XLV from the series -More robust nature... more robust geometry-* (2021) consists of a stone, a starfish and a branch, the triangularly arranged composition is connected by a blue and white glowing neon tube. In *Cantidades salvajes (afección)* (2021), he uses pure neon to represent a mathematical equation, where the letters look as if they are composed of bones. The five components in the equation stand for a personal theory describing the human approach to reality, according to which it can be explained through the body, its existential needs and drives multiplied by the factor of time.

The large-scale wall piece *Because Nothing is More Pleasant to the Eye Than Green Grass Kept Finely Short* (2022) is composed of 41 knives arranged in a loose circle. The circular shape is based on the human habituation towards geometric shapes and is completed in the imagination. On display is a typology of different knives, each used and with its own story. Rico enacts a playful composition of dangerous objects, individually combined to form a collective, thus allowing associations to modern society.

For the spatial installation *Polimerycene from the series - Freedom of manoeuvre-* (2020), Rico stretches threads diagonally across two walls with objects hanging over a mirror: a horseshoe, the foot of a wild animal and fishing lures. Invisible yet connecting all natural and artificial objects, the artist utilizes gravity to create a balance within the narrative composition. The cycle of nature and human intervention through domestication is further complemented by a small group of figures that can be read as a reference to the biblical story of creation.

Rico's wall relief *X from the series -Unity & Uniformity (La Mitla de hérétiques)-* (2022) features both post-minimalist references and references to the ornamental fields of the Mitla archaeological site in Oaxaca, Mexico. The work consists of two bird feathers and their multiplied, abstracted replicas of brass, rhythmically articulated to form a square. In addition to the contrasting materials, the artist reflects on contemporary technologies in the manufacturing process of the

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metal plates with laser cutting and serial duplication.

For the exhibition, Rico has created a new augmented reality work to introduce a further metaphysical level of meaning. A digital sculpture, a human organism, devoid of skin and defying any social attributions, interacts with the real artworks in the space. In the process, its organs grow into tumor-like growths, until finally taking on the shapes of icosahedra.

The assemblages of Mexican artist **Gabriel Rico** (b. 1980 in Lagos de Moreno, MX) are composed of natural and industrial objects, exploring the relationship between man and nature while developing a new and individual narrative. Fascinated by philosophy and science, Rico investigates form and space, using anthropological and physical models as metaphors for collective memory. He sees himself as a collector of fragments of contemporary existence. Through deconstruction and recontextualization, he refers in an ironic and poetic way to the ambivalence between natural environment and man-made principles of order. Gabriel Rico participated in the 58th Venice Biennale in 2019. His work has been featured in numerous solo exhibitions including Power Station in Dallas (2017), Aspen Art Museum (2019), and Beiqiu Museum of Contemporary Art in Nanjing (2022).

For Various Others 2022, max goelitz presents, in collaboration with the guest gallery OMR, a solo exhibition of the Mexican artist Gabriel Rico. OMR has been one of the leading galleries for international contemporary art in Mexico City since its foundation in 1983.

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