

Ambulancia (2020) (Ambulance (2020))

2022–23

Wood armature, car bumpers, loudspeaker, emergency siren light, mattress bed spring, wheelbarrow, shovel, car brake lights, metal chairs, wood bed legs, car radiator, acrylic sheeting, lacquered tree bark, clothing, metal mesh, plastic textiles, hessian cloth, bedsheet, metal fasteners, flexible PVC tubing, metal clips, plastic tubing, shoes, rope, wire

Courtesy the artist and The Ranch

In *Ambulancia (2020)*, created after the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Lind-Ramos remembers and

relays the devastating impact of COVID-19 in Puerto Rico. While the starting point for the sculpture draws from the artists' local experience of the pandemic, it also refers to the global effects which were presented to the world in daily news.

The sculpture incorporates objects such as emergency lights, a mattress, megaphone, and shovel forming a makeshift cart pushed forward by two feet that appear to strain at the burden. Presented alongside *El Viejo Griot* (2022-23) in Gallery 3, both works are based on or utilise parts of vehicles, the boat as a storyteller and the ambulance as a helper. Though the ambulance is a vehicle of aid, it is also one that carries with it a sense of anxiety for the artist and likely many others.

The colouration of the sculpture is also significant.

Drawing from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's book

Theory of Colours (1810), in which blues and especially

purples are counted on the 'minus' side (associated

with darkness, weakness and coldness), Lind- Ramos

has used these hues to represent sickness or illness.

They are also colours often present at Puerto Rican

funerals.

El Viejo Griot (The Elder Storyteller)

2022–23

Boat bow, hessian sacks, plastic lid, hat, wood, bugle,

wood oars, cardboard, painted fibreglass, plastic and

synthetic textiles, dried and lacquered coconuts, PVC bucket, tambourine, conga drum, gloves, wire, metal fasteners, mirror, sewing pins, marine rope, plastic wrapping material, rope

Courtesy the artist and The Ranch.

As a child, Lind-Ramos used to wear the mask of the mythical 'El Viejo', during the Fiestas del Santiago Apóstol (Festival of Saint James the Apostle). The annual festivities bring people together in dance, parade and song to re-enact significant moments from the history of Puerto Rico and the wider Caribbean. The single channel video work *Talegas de la memoria*

(2020), also on view in the exhibition, is inspired by the same festival.

In the festival, the character represents the island's histories and traditions. 'El Viejo' holds special significance for the artist as 'that costume reminded me of many old people in my community – not necessarily one particular person – which I loved. El Viejo, among other things, could be a construction worker, or an old medicine man, or a storyteller.'

El Viejo Griot draws inspiration from this character to invoke critical events from Puerto Rico's history. In the sculpture, 'El Viejo' can be seen riding in a boat, drifting upon gentle waves shaped from a blue FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) tarp. Within

the boat, 'El Viejo' carries a cargo of colourful sacks stacked up behind his back. The dates on the sacks offer starting points to look deeper at the island's history of slavery, invasion, occupation and Black victories over European domination, and Puerto Rico's continued imbalanced colonial relationship with the United States.

Talegas de la memoria (Sacks of memory)

2020

HD video, 16 min 9 sec

Courtesy the artist and Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Puerto Rico

Talegas de la memoria presents an allegory for the history and colonisation of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean, with Loíza in a starring role. Filmed on Vacía Talega beach, the video musically dramatises historical transformations that have taken place in Puerto Rico through improvised performances by members of the artist's community. The participants depict characters linked to Fiestas del Santiago Apóstol, reconciling with past traumas of colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade.

The annual festivities which the work references involve people dancing, singing, and parading in masks and costumes, dramatising moments in Puerto Rican

and Caribbean history. In the film, the character El Vejigante (a mischievous horned trickster), returns to the site of her past enslavement to perform a cleansing act through her movements while 'El Viejo' stands atop a ladder on the the beach calling out key dates from Puerto Rico's history and highlighting Black victories over European domination and occupation. The soundtrack blends Taíno, Spanish, and African styles, acknowledging Loíza's cultural diversity and ancestral ties, much like the assembled form of *El Viejo Griot*.

Centinela de la luna negra (Sentinel of the black moon)

2023

Glass tabletop, green kayak, fibre rope, PVC tubing,
four table legs, blue jerry can, metal piping, two new
hoses, plastic flipper, shellac varnished branch, hessian
sacks, shellac coconuts, rhinestone studs, FEMA tarp,
painted tarp, painted stove, shellac coconut tree
branch, saucepan, various metal studs, canvas, metal
wiring, painted plywood, binder clips, cast iron cooking
pot, wood, cutting board, painted textile, camouflage
pants, car conditioning exhaust system, clamps, shellac
burlap sack, painted rain jacket, burnt plastic,
handwoven plastic sacks

Courtesy the artist and The Ranch

Centinela de la luna negra, the second work produced in Lind-Ramos' mangrove series suggests a sense of alertness within the mangrove as it watches for harmful decisions made in the darkness that may affect the beach community of Piñones in Puerto Rico. The work also considers the mangroves' cultural, spiritual, and ecological importance as a protector against erosion and the effects of climate change. As with the first work in the series, *Centinelas de la luna nueva* (2022- 23), this work also alludes to the history of women's labour in relation to the mangroves.

This work is a tribute to the female activists who now protect the mangroves. With an increasing drive for

development in Puerto Rico, the mangroves are often targeted as prime locations due to their proximity to the sea which makes them ideal locations to build for tourism. Plans for development are regularly met with resistance as the loss of the mangroves would ultimately destroy the natural beauty of the coastline by leaving it more susceptible to coastal erosion.

This sculpture is also a symbol of the mangroves as a form of sustenance for communities. Rather than development, local activists are looking at alternative ways to support tourism, such as kayak tours, to celebrate the mangroves for their own beauty and safeguard them for the future.

Centinelas de la luna nueva (Sentinels of the new moon)

2022–23

Wood, metal pulley, metal, metal chairs, plastic, found textile, acrylic sheet, rope, metal mesh, shovel, tape, metal fasteners, wire, drum, shovel, found pots, tarp, dried coconut inflorescence, machete, tripod, electric fan parts, wood crab trap, cardboard mask, welding mask, dried and lacquered coconuts, boxing bag, metal drum, metal box, clamps, concrete, metal construction hardware, metal hoe, 5 gallon PVC bucket, wood base, mirror, glass, pitchfork

Courtesy the artist and The Ranch

In *Centinelas de la luna nueva*, environmental concerns circulate through the monumental sculpture made up of an arrangement of masked figures composed from materials associated with agriculture, cooking, and fishing. The title invokes the time when mangrove roots are planted and signifies interconnection and harmony between humans and the mangroves.

Historically, a lot of the labour associated with the act of planting and harvesting the mangroves has been undertaken by women in the community, and this sculpture seeks to honour that labour.

The figures in the sculpture are arranged in a circle as a form of protection. At its centre are the remains of a

cut mangrove tree which the figures watch over to safeguard its regrowth. In recent years, the mangroves of Piñones in Puerto Rico have increasingly fallen under activist protection. *Centinelas de la luna nueva* underscores the importance of these trees to the local ecosystem and the need for their preservation.

The Green Guardian

2024

Green Kayak, fan, mixed fabric, rope, wood, plastic, crystal, sleeping bag, water hose, acrylic, iron rod, root, wooden trunk, iron disc, aluminium, plastic tubes, air filters, wire mesh, iron pipe, hessian

Courtesy the artist and The Ranch

The Green Guardian is the latest in Lind-Ramos' series of mangrove works and has been produced over the past year for this exhibition. This new work continues the themes of the earlier mangrove works, but this time the sculpture has been given a masculine persona. The starting point for the work was the cover of an old fan, which has been used to create the large eye, which the artist found caught in the branches of the mangroves during a walk after Hurricane Maria in 2017. Often Lind-Ramos begins his sculptures this way, selecting an item or object which corresponds to a certain memory or feeling, sometimes holding onto items for years before they are used.

With its large eye, and upright posture supported with half a green kayak, *The Green Guardian* represents the mangroves themselves. Set along the coast, they watch the coming and going of the sea and protect communities and ecosystems that depend on them from coastal erosion and extreme weather. The materials used, such as the fan cover, also connect to ideas around purification and health. When the mangroves are protected, their vascular systems carry out processes of filtration, keeping the local ecosystem healthy. The upright vertical position of the kayak is significant to the artist as it embodies a position of alertness, rather than horizontality which might instead represent rest. This alertness embodies the

mangrove as it pays attention to the community and
watches for environmental changes.