

Julia Isídrez

Mud is Everything

09.10.26 – 10.01.27

When Julia Isídrez (b. 1967, Paraguay) goes out and gathers clay, when she reaches down and scoops it from the earth with hand or spade, she is not holding a singular thing. Earth is many things - sediment and minerals, microorganisms and insects, mycelia and plant roots. It is full of our ancestors, and so it might be said that earth, or clay, or mud, has a soul. As Isídrez has said - “mud is everything”.

All mud used to be something else, and it will be something else again. Mud is malleable but also holds memory. It can be squeezed and shaped, hardened and dried, fired and transformed.

Isídrez grew up in Itá, Paraguay, where Guaraní ceramic techniques have been passed down through generations and are amongst only a few practices that can be traced back to pre-Hispanic times. Through this inheritance, Isídrez learned under the guidance of her mother, the renowned artist Juana Marta Rodas, who in turn learned from her own mother. This mode of sharing passes on a knowledge not just of making, but of being – with clay and the memories it holds of people and more-than human lives, grounded in reciprocity between people, territory, ancestors, plants and animals.

Like mud, Guaraní ceramic traditions used to be something else, and will be something else again. They have shifted alongside turbulent times and changing pressures – Spanish colonialism,

sociopolitical shifts, globalisation, and destabilised climates and ecosystems. As specific forms and functions declined from daily use, replaced by objects made from glass, plastic or metal, the nature of the ceramics evolved. The spout of a water jug transformed into the gaping mouth of a lizard; a handle morphed into the elongated neck of a llama. Guaraní practice has continued not because it has remained rigid, but because it has continued to transform.

This exhibition brings together key examples of Isídrez's work across forms and scale, made over the course of her practice. The exhibition has been designed to present a chorus of creatures meandering on forest paths.

This exhibition was made possible thanks to the support of:

Headline Supporters: Gomide&Co, Olney Gleason, and Jessica Silverman. The Julia Isídrez Exhibition Circle: ANTESALA / Flavia Nespatti, Hanneli Rupert and the Embassy of the Republic of Paraguay to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The accompanying publication Julia Isídrez Mud was generously supported by Fundación Itaú.

Exhibition graphics by Waste Studio.

We would like to extend our deepest thanks to all the lenders who have supported us in bringing together this selection of Julia Isídrez's works: Gomide&Co, Olney Gleason, Jessica Silverman, Ary Perez, Fernanda Feitosa and Heitor Martins, Isabel Ralston, Livia Debbane, Jorge Enciso, Cleusa Garfinkel, Elisa Mofarrej and those lenders who wish to remain anonymous; to the

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Nottingham Contemporary is a registered charity and dependent on the generosity of our visitors, partners and supporters.

If you would like to use any alternative forms of interpretation, we have a range of accessible

versions on our Access Wall beside Reception or alongside the wall text in the exhibition.

RELATED EVENTS

WALKTHROUGHS

Wed 21 Oct, 1pm Curators' Walkthrough

Join Nottingham Contemporary's curators for a tour of our autumn exhibitions.

Wed 2 Dec, 1pm

With Dr. Sofia Gotti, Lecturer in Curating at the Courtauld Institute.

Wed 16 Dec, 1pm

With Sophia Mena, Somos The Podcast founder and host.

12.30 Talks

**12.30pm every Tue, Thu, Sat, and Sun, starting
Tue 20 Oct**

Join one of our friendly Gallery Assistants for a short exploration of one of our current exhibitions.

WORKSHOPS

**Sat 31 Oct, 2pm Workshop on speculative
design histories by Pina and Biblioteka**

An interdisciplinary workshop exploring the design histories of exhibitions and libraries as worldview machines.

Sat 21 Nov & Sun 13 Dec, 1pm

**Unearthing: a workshop in story and clay by
Ruby Daley**

Explore your personal histories and our collective dreams of a life lived closer to clay in this hands-on making workshop.

PERFORMANCES

Fri 13, Sat 14 & Sun 15 Nov, 12pm-2pm & 3pm-5pm

Bar Tango by Beni Bosetto

Join us for this new production exploring the corporeality of love through stage objects and a surreal choreography in which tango dancers inhabit costumes inspired by animals, plants, and minerals.

CONTEMPORARY X ART HISTORIES

A collaborative strand of programming between the University of Nottingham and Nottingham Contemporary.

Wed 25 Nov, 3pm

Ways of Seeing, Learning and Making: With art historian, Dr. Lara Pucci (University of Nottingham), in conversation with ceramic sculptor, Irina Razumovskaya (Royal College of Art).

Wed 9 Dec, 3pm

Ways of Seeing, Learning and Making: With Backlit Gallery Co-Director, Matthew Chesney.

For more information about the exhibition, related events and learning programmes, visit nottinghamcontemporary.org or scan here:



Curated by: Salma Tuqan and Niall Ó Faircheallaigh, assisted by Klara Szafrńska

Curatorial Admin: Xin Chen and Caitlin Irwin

3D Design and Exhibition Build Lead: David Thomas

Exhibition Build and Installation: Helen Bartholomew, Jon Chambers, Jack Narewski, Craig David Parr, Emily Stollery, and Hannah Templeman
Condition Checking: Jenna Jones, Lara Mattinson, and Simon Withers

Development: Emma Graves and Antonia Seroff

Marketing: Catherine Masters and Holly Nowak

Learning Programme: Sandra Austerfield, Amelia Daiz, Chan Hyacinth Fagan, Pasha Kincaid, Susannah Lambert, Milee Lee, Ursula Rae, Peter Rumney, Rachel Scanlon, Amanda Spruyt, Andrew Martyn Sugars, Holly Tea, Charlotte Tupper, Stephanie Wardle and Sian Watson Taylor

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