

Tepalcates de Sueños

Noé Martínez and María Sosa

May 26 - July 17, 2022

Tepalcates de Sueños is a collaborative, site-specific exhibition by Noé Martínez and María Sosa that features a two-channel video, a musical composition and a cascade of new paintings depicting animals, plants, bodies and landscapes. This exhibition marks a third chapter in the artists' evolving engagement with New York-based arts non-profit Swiss Institute (SI), which commenced in 2020 with a virtual residency that later developed into *El encuentro de los tepalcates*, a performance held on the organization's roof terrace in May 2021.

The artists' dreams inform the sounds and images that populate the ground floor gallery of Seminario 12, a 400-year-old residence in Mexico City's Centro Histórico. Martínez and Sosa, who have lived together since 2010, uphold a longstanding practice of cataloging their dreams and, later, sharing them with one another. The exchange reflects the artists' commitment to investigating and mapping the continuities between pre-Hispanic and present worlds, cultivating such links as acts of healing and resistance towards colonial hegemony. Giving form to their fragmented dreams is an act of both discovery and maintenance in an attempt to resolve the dissonance between dominant historical narratives and embodied memory. Often set in the natural world and guided by familial and ancestral relations, Martínez and Sosa's dreams comprise a transgenerational index of their respective Huastec and Purépecha lineage. For the artists, rather than a departure from "waking" time, their dreams mark a vital extension of it in which knowledge is acquired and tradition is lived.

Twenty paintings appear to float through the gallery in a preternatural arrangement. In Nahuatl numerology, the number 20 signifies the human body. As such, the ten paintings contributed by Martínez measure his height of 1.68 meters, while the ten paintings contributed by Sosa measure her height of 1.58 meters. On the back of each painting, text written in black ink details the dream that precipitated the image. Within these diaristic documentations, residues of history accumulate. Hands cupping a cluster of red beans and an opossum (an important symbol in Mesoamerican cosmology) sitting on stone steps can be traced to the Borbonicus, Tudela and Florentine Codices. Trees, also illustrated in such manuscripts, recur: a spindly forest is cast in a blue haze, a twisted trunk is adorned with hand-carved symbols, bark splits open to reveal a crimson cave. Below, carved volcanic rocks spotlit and filled with water form an archipelago that spans the gallery floor. These luminous pools and their reflections evoke the atmosphere of Tlalocan, an Aztec paradise ruled by Tlaloc, god of rains. Beneath these artworks, beneath the feet of visitors and beneath Seminario 12 lie the ruins of El Templo de Tezcatlipoca. A major deity of the Aztec pantheon, Tezcatlipoca is the omnipotent god of the night sky, under which infinite dreams unfold.

Two performances will be staged during the exhibition. The first, newly developed for *Tepalcates de Sueños*, follows the artists as they improvise movements while recalling the dreams represented in the gallery. A video of Martínez and Sosa's preparatory exercises for this performance is projected near the entrance of the gallery. The second performance is a reprise of *El encuentro de los tepalcates*, now held in the artists' home city. Dressed in handmade garments made from dyed cloth, metal and bone, the artists engage in personal rituals to forge cross-temporal, interspecies connections. Inscribed on their bodies are excerpts from poems, critical theory and ancient texts. Throughout the performance, together, Martínez and Sosa announce themselves in Nahuatl and Purépecha: "Na notokash Noé." "Ji jakánkurinhasĩnk'a María."

Tepalcates de Sueños is made possible by the generosity of Clarice O. Tavares and the support of Credit Suisse. Swiss Institute wishes to thank Carolina Coppel and Aleida Pardo Hernández of Seminario 12. Noé Martínez and María Sosa wish to thank Emanuel Aguilar, Mauricio Cadena, Carlos Arrollo Eloisa, Julia Fischbach, Sergio Molina, Rodrigo Peñafiel, Alberto Rubí Romero, Clarice O. Tavares, Marina Villalobos and Fernando Yañez.

This exhibition is organized by Daniel Merritt, Curator and Head of Residencies at Swiss Institute.

About Noé Martínez & María Sosa

Noé Martínez (b. 1986, lives and works in Mexico City, MX) is a visual artist and filmmaker who graduated from Escuela Nacional de Pintura, Escultura y Grabado ("La Esmeralda"), Mexico City. His work functions as a case study that emerges from personal history, making use of ethnographic methodologies and research of the various histories of indigenous communities of the American continent. His work has been presented at the Orange County Museum of Art, Santa Ana (2020); The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2019); 21 Bienal de Arte contemporáneo SESC Videobrasil, Sao Paulo (2019); FilmFront, Chicago (2019); Native Crossroad Film Festival, Norman (2018); Festival Internacional de Cine, Morelia (2018) Festival Internacional de Cine, Morelia (2018), where he, with María Sosa won the Eye to the Best Short Film of Michoacán Award; and International Performance Art Week, Venice (2016).

María Sosa (b. 1985, lives and works in Mexico City, MX) holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolas de Hidalgo. Her work develops from research about colonial pasts and how they shape contemporary racial, sexual and social dynamics in the American continent. Throughout her practice, Sosa pays particular attention to the eradication of knowledge surrounding non-western ways of life and prehispanic cultures. Her work has been exhibited at Fundación Casa de México, Madrid (2022); Laboratorio de Arte Alameda, Mexico City (2021-2022); Tale of a Tub, Amsterdam (2021); Arewá, Madrid (2021); Servais Family Collection, Brussels (2020); Lasécu Artothèque, Lille (2019) FilmFront, Chicago (2018- 2019); Native Crossroad Film Festival, Norman (2018); Festival Internacional de Cine, Morelia (2018), where she won the Eye to the Best Short Film of Michoacán Award; and International Performance Art Week, Venice (2016).

About SI Residencies

Swiss Institute offers up to eight residencies per year in an effort to support artists from around the world beyond the parameters of commissions and exhibition making. For three months, residents are provided with an apartment with studio space two blocks away from Swiss Institute's galleries in the heart of the East Village. Through weekly meetings with the organization's curatorial team, artists can consult on various aspects of their practice, conduct research and develop new work. The residency is unique in that there are no deadlines and no production requirements. With Swiss Institute serving as a liaison between the artist and the city, residents are given a rare opportunity to live, learn and work in an independent and generative environment. Residencies are currently supported by an international council including ProHelvetia, Clarice O. Tavares and Balkan Projects. Artists include: Heman Chong, Lidija Delić, Guillaume Dénervaud, Gina Folly, Jan Kiefer, Miriam Laura Leonardi, Lorenza Longhi, Noé Martínez & María Sosa, Christof Nüssli, Ceylan Öztrük, Abigail Reyes, Sabrina Röthlisberger, Alan Schmalz, Dardan Zhegrova and Julia Znoj.

About Swiss Institute

Swiss Institute (SI) is an independent non-profit contemporary art institution dedicated to promoting forward-thinking and experimental art making through innovative exhibitions, education, and programs. Committed to the highest standards of curatorial and educational excellence, SI serves as a platform for emerging artists, catalyzes new perspectives on celebrated work, and fosters appreciation for under-recognized positions. SI is committed to being an organization that is diverse, equitable, and accessible in its work, structure, and programming. Open to the public free-of-charge, Swiss Institute seeks to explore how a Swiss context can be the starting point for international conversations in the fields of visual and performing arts, design, and architecture.

SI Programming is made possible in part with public funds from Pro Helvetia, Swiss Arts Council; the New York State Council on the Arts, with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature; and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council. Main sponsors include LUMA Foundation, Friends of SI and the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation. Exhibitions are made possible in part by the SI Annual Exhibition Fund with leadership support provided by the LUMA Foundation, Michael Ringier, Olivier Audemars, Philippe Bertherat, Max and Monique Burger, the Garcia Family Foundation, Florian Gutzwiller, Dominique Lévy, Susanne von Meiss, Iwan Wirth, Ghislaine Brenninkmeijer, the Kevin Wendle Foundation, and the Freedman Family Foundation. SI gratefully acknowledges Swiss Re as SI ONSITE Partner, Vitra as Design Partner, Crozier Fine Arts as Preferred Shipping Art Logistics Partner, and SWISS as Travel Partner.

Critical operating support has been provided to SI in 2020-22 as part of a collective fundraising effort. We thank the following supporters: The David Teiger Foundation, The Willem de Kooning Foundation, The Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, The Cy Twombly Foundation, The Stavros Niarchos Foundation, The Destina Foundation, Henry Luce Foundation, The Arison Arts Foundation, The Fox Aarons Foundation, The Jacques and Natasha Gelman Foundation, David Rockefeller Fund, Sotheby's, Blavatnik Family Foundation, Robert Lehman Foundation, The Jill and Peter Kraus Foundation, The Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, and The Richard Pousette-Dart Foundation.

Seminario 12
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