

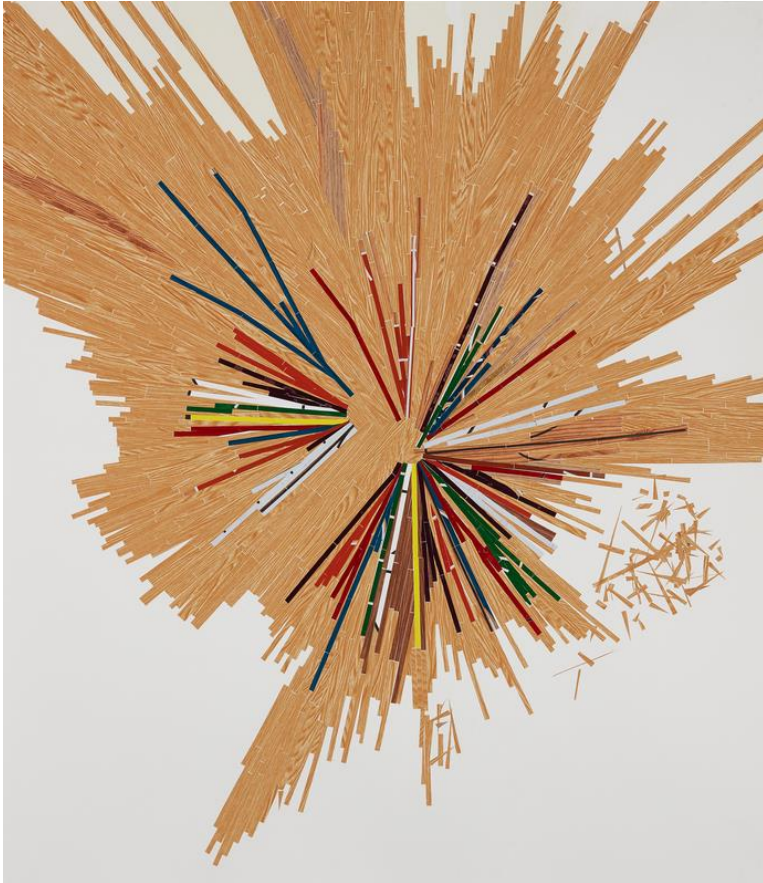
WHITNEY

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PRESS RELEASE



Ronny Quevedo, *quipu*, 2017. Screen print, contact paper, and enamel on paper, 44 × 38 in.
Collection of the artist. Photo credit: Argenis Apolinario.

The Whitney to Present *Pacha, Llaqta, Wasichay*, a Group Exhibition Featuring Seven Mid-Career and Emerging Latinx Artists

NEW YORK, NY, May 31, 2018 — This July the Whitney Museum of American Art debuts *Pacha, Llaqta, Wasichay: Indigenous Space, Modern Architecture, New Art*, an exhibition investigating the complex ways in which Indigenous American notions of the built environment and natural world are represented in contemporary art. The show highlights the practices of seven mid-career and emerging Latinx artists based in the United States and Puerto Rico: william cordova, Livia Corona Benjamín, Jorge González, Guadalupe Maravilla, Claudia Peña Salinas, Ronny Quevedo, and Clarissa Tossin.

This exhibition will run at the Whitney from July 13 through September 30 in the fifth-floor Neil Bluhm Family Galleries, Kaufman Gallery and Outdoor Gallery. Organized by Marcela Guerrero, assistant curator, with Alana Hernandez, curatorial project assistant, the exhibition features approximately 80 works created in the last five years, in a variety of media, including video, sculpture, installation, photography, and drawing. Discrete spaces will be dedicated to each artist, including site-specific commissions that make dramatic use of the Museum's city views and largest outdoor space.

The three words in the exhibition's main title are Quechua, the Indigenous language most spoken in the Americas. Each holds more than one meaning: *pacha* denotes universe, time, space, nature, or world; *llaqta* signifies place,

country, community, or town; and *wasichay* means to build or to construct a house. Influenced by the richness of these concepts, the artworks in this exhibition explore the conceptual frameworks inherited from, and also still alive in, Indigenous groups in Mexico and South America that include the Quechua, Aymara, Maya, Aztec, and Taino, among others.

Scott Rothkopf, Deputy Director for Programs and Nancy and Steve Crown Family Chief Curator, remarked, “Through our exhibitions and collection, the Whitney is committed to showcasing the variety and complexity of work by Latinx artists born and living in the United States and Puerto Rico. I’m thrilled that our curator Marcela Guerrero’s first exhibition at the Whitney brings her expertise in Latinx art to our vital emerging artists program. The artists in *Pacha*, *Llaqta*, *Wasichay* take inspiration from Indigenous concepts of the natural world and built environment, arguing that these ideas are very much alive in the present.”

“While conceptually linked, each artist’s contribution to the show references a specific Indigenous group. As visitors move through the show, they will be asked to think about the relationship between Indigenous and Modern art practices through different modes of engagement,” explains Marcela Guerrero, assistant curator. “By preserving and foregrounding ancestral ideas that transcend the Western concept of *architecture*, and offering alternate ways to understand the environment around us, the artists in the exhibition challenge colonial legacies and the belief in modernism as the ultimate paradigm of development in the Americas.”

Accompanying the show will be an essay by Guerrero to be published on the exhibition’s webpage. Her research and exposition will bring the seven artists into the current scholarship on Latinx art, which is quickly growing and revising many mainstream art historical narratives. *Pacha*, *Llaqta*, *Wasichay* will feature wall text and labels in both Spanish and English throughout the exhibition, as well as an exhibition webpage and audio tours in both Spanish and English.

Along with *Flatlands*, *Mirror Cells*, and *Between the Waters*, *Pacha*, *Llaqta*, *Wasichay* is the fourth in a series of group shows focused on critical themes in contemporary art.

About the Artists’ Contributions

For the exhibition, **william cordova** (b. 1971, Lima, Peru; lives Miami) will design a new, site-specific work on the Museum’s fifth floor terrace, titled *huaca (sacred geometries)*. He will construct a large scaffolding made of wood inspired by a site he visited often as a child in Lima: the pre-Columbian temple built by the Ichma people called Huaca Huantille. Visitors will be able to enter the structure and walk around it as well. The installation will also feature a gate made of stainless steel with decorative elements taken from Ichma and Inca cultures, as well as from a number of religious traditions practiced in Latin America, including Catholicism, Candomblé, and Santería. At the same time that the scaffolding will make a direct reference to the makeshift dwellings used by squatters before the Peruvian government restored the temple in the 2000s, the gate will also echo the vernacular architecture of wrought-iron windows found on many contemporary homes in the South of the U.S. and the Caribbean. Indeed, cordova chose to construct the entryway out of stainless steel to reference the material used in Bauhaus modern architectural design in many countries in Latin America in the 1940s through 1960s.

Livia Corona Benjamín (b. 1975, Ensenada, Mexico; lives New York) will contribute a series of newly created black and white photographs, ten photograms from her ongoing series *Infinite Rewrite*, and a single-channel video. The works stem from her long-term, ongoing project exploring the conical grain silos in rural Mexico known as *graneros del pueblo* that were built under the now defunct government program CONASUPO (Compañía Nacional de Subsistencias Populares). In 1962, CONASUPO commissioned Mexican architect Pedro Ramírez Vázquez to design an architectural template that farmers could build themselves using the construction materials they had at hand. The conical shape of the silos is reminiscent of pre-Hispanic pyramids but the adaptation of the blueprint by local farmers make the more than 4,000 grain barns an example of vernacular architecture in Mexico. The CONASUPO grain project was a failed government program that left behind thousands of these structures in disuse. Accompanying the photographs of the grain silos will be her documentary video *Nadie Sabe, Nadie Supo / Graneros del Pueblo*, which investigates the public policy and associated political complications behind the government’s large-scale initiative to construct the silos.

For the exhibition, **Jorge González** (b. 1981, San Juan, Puerto Rico; lives San Juan) will develop a site-specific installation titled *Ayacabo Guarocoel* along the east side windows of the Whitney that draws inspiration from Puerto Rican vernacular traditions, modernist architecture, and Taíno art and cultural expressions. The two main elements that will greet viewers—the accordion-like roof and the the *enea* (cattail) walls—represent the meeting of two vernacular traditions on the island. On the one hand, *enea* was used in pre-Columbian *bohíos* (huts) and is still used in the making of chairs and mats, and on the other hand, the roof represents a modernist design popularized in the architecture of the island after the mid-twentieth century. Additionally, a number of Taíno objects and furniture pieces newly made by González and local artisans in Puerto Rico will be displayed. Each object present in his space will be made with locally sourced materials, using traditional weaving and construction methods. The installation will bring forth ideas of collective learning and the sharing of Indigenous craft methodology across generations, and will also serve as a tribute to the families that have preserved and disseminated the use of materials, techniques, and designs native to the island. As part of the installation, González will also invite the public to activate the space by engaging in readings and performers will lead formal readings throughout the duration of the exhibition. With the Education department, González will also lead a ceramics workshop.

In this project, **Guadalupe Maravilla** (formerly known as Irvin Morazán; b. 1976, San Salvador, El Salvador; lives Brooklyn) will exhibit his recent series of works on paper developed from maps published in the *Historia Tolteca Chichimeca*—a sixteenth-century colonial manuscript written in Nahuatl, the Indigenous language still spoken in central Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala as well as in the United States. For his drawings, Maravilla has reproduced some of the pictographic symbols used in the manuscript's maps and has drawn lines that are meant to be interpreted as immigration routes not unlike the one he traveled when he immigrated alone from his native El Salvador to the US when he was a child. Maravilla, who recently readopted his birth name Guadalupe and his undocumented father's pseudonym as his last name, collaborates with undocumented immigrants by playing the Salvadoran game *Tripa Chuca*, a game in which two players take turns drawing lines that do not intersect. Maravilla gives historical importance to undocumented people's experiences of immigration and his own displacement while simultaneously connecting them to the history of the Toltecs and the Chichimecs in the sixteenth century.

Claudia Peña Salinas (b. 1975, Montemorelos, Mexico; lives Brooklyn) will enlarge upon a series that she has developed out of her travels and investigations into the stone sculpture to Tláloc, the Aztec deity representing rain. She has repeatedly gone back to her native Mexico in search of the original site of the ancient Tlaloc monolith, which was found in Coatlinchan, Mexico and is now installed in the National Anthropology Museum in Mexico City. The visual layout of Peña Salinas's installation is imagined as Tlalocán, the mythical paradise known to the Aztecs and ruled by Tláloc and his consort the water goddess Chalchiuhtlicue. Peña Salinas's resulting series brings together sculpture, images, installation, and video to tell a poetic narrative that simultaneously unites modern and minimalist lines with Aztec mythology. This will be the artist's first presentation in a major museum in the United States.

Ronny Quevedo (b. 1981, Guayaquil, Ecuador; lives New York) will display a number of his recent works on paper that allude to everything from real structures such as gymnasium flooring to more abstract depictions of Incan constellations. All, however, can be interpreted as maps tracking the trajectory of stars or the migratory movement of people, such as the artist and his family, who came from Ecuador to the Bronx in the early 1980s. The works—which involve a range of different artmaking techniques and media, including screen printing, embossing, and silver and gold leaf overlay—are schematic (and often times highly abstracted) renderings of the markings and lines made on both contemporary playing fields and pre-Columbian ballgame fields. They suggest the quick movement of people, weather athletes or immigrants, and in many ways, resemble migration maps. The abstraction also detaches the works from their references to a real physical space, associating Andean ancestry and contemporary culture to a wider cosmos. Quevedo has also been working with the Museum to develop gold tiles to be placed on the gallery floor throughout the interior portion of this exhibition.

Clarissa Tossin (b. 1973, Porto Alegre, Brazil; lives Los Angeles) will present the East Coast debut of her recent single-channel film *Ch'u Mayaa*, originally commissioned for the exhibition *Condemned to Be Modern* at the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery in fall 2017. The 18-minute video features dancer-choreographer Crystal Sepúlveda moving through Frank Lloyd Wright's Hollyhock House in Los Angeles, which was constructed between 1919 and 1921 and contains several Mayan design and architectural elements. The title of the piece, *Ch'u Mayaa* or *Maya*

Blue, refers to the ancient azure pigment found in Mayan pottery. One of the most durable pigments, Maya blue is oftentimes the only color that remains on the surface of ancient artifacts. In the Whitney's exhibition, the film will be installed alongside five sculptures by Tossin that are based on the decorative elements found in Francisco Cornejo's sculptural figures for Los Angeles's Mayan Theater. While thematically linked, this will be the first time that the video and sculptures are presented together.

Curatorial Credit

The exhibition is organized by Marcela Guerrero, assistant curator, with Alana Hernandez, curatorial project assistant, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

Exhibition Support

Pacha, Llaqta, Wasichay: Indigenous Space, Modern Architecture, New Art is part of the Whitney's emerging artists program, sponsored by

NORDSTROM

Significant support for this exhibition is also provided by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and by the Whitney's National Committee.

Additional support is provided by the Garcia Family Foundation and an anonymous donor.

Curatorial research and travel were funded by the Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation.



About the Whitney

The Whitney Museum of American Art, founded in 1930 by the artist and philanthropist Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney (1875–1942), houses the foremost collection of American art from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Mrs. Whitney, an early and ardent supporter of modern American art, nurtured groundbreaking artists at a time when audiences were still largely preoccupied with the Old Masters. From her vision arose the Whitney Museum of American Art, which has been championing the most innovative art of the United States for more than eighty years. The core of the Whitney's mission is to collect, preserve, interpret, and exhibit American art of our time and serve a wide variety of audiences in celebration of the complexity and diversity of art and culture in the United States. Through this mission and a steadfast commitment to artists themselves, the Whitney has long been a powerful force in support of modern and contemporary art and continues to help define what is innovative and influential in American art today.

Current and Upcoming Exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art

Mary Corse	June 8 – November 25, 2018
Pacha, Llaqta, Wasichay: Indigenous Space, Modern Architecture, New Art	July 13 – September 30, 2018
David Wojnarowicz: History Keeps Me Awake at Night	July 13 – September 30, 2018
Eckhaus Latta: Possessed	August 3 – October 8, 2018
Andy Warhol – From A to B and Back Again	November 12, 2018 – March 31, 2019
Kevin Beasley	Opens Fall 2018
Juan Antonio Olivares: Moléculas	Until June 10, 2018
Zoe Leonard: Survey	Until June 10, 2018
Grant Wood: American Gothic and Other Fables	Until June 10, 2018
Nick Mauss	Until May 14, 2018
Between the Waters	Until July 22, 2018
An Incomplete History of Protest: Selections from the Whitney's Collection, 1940–2017	Until August 27, 2018
Flash: Photographs by Harold Edgerton from the Whitney's Collection	Ongoing
Where We Are: Selections from the Whitney's Collection 1900–1960	Ongoing
Christine Sun Kim: Too Much Future	Ongoing

The Whitney Museum of American Art is located at 99 Gansevoort Street between Washington and West Streets, New York City. Museum hours are: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Sunday from 10:30 am to 6 pm; Friday and Saturday

from 10:30 am to 10 pm. Closed Tuesday. Adults: \$25. Full-time students and visitors 65 & over: \$18. Visitors 18 years & under and Whitney members: FREE. Admission is pay-what-you-wish on Fridays, 7–10 pm. For general information, please call (212) 570-3600 or visit whitney.org.

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