

Lion Bite

Sara Mackillop
Rafael Sánchez

Curated by Juf (Bea Ortega Botas and Leto Ybarra)

Next to the storefront sign of Shmorévaz's space in Paris stands a stone lion. The animal holds between its teeth a vegetal garland that forms two circles, one above the other. This strange bite, both delicate and piercing, accompanies, on this occasion, the works of the artists Rafael Sánchez and Sara Mackillop.

A collection of pink disposable razors is kept inside a honey jar. They were used by Sánchez between 1995 and 2005 while preparing his performative and spiritual quest as Dolores, the artist's performance persona that blossomed in Paris in the early 1990s. *Pink Jar* forms a contained scenario of everyday wonder and transformation, in which removal becomes a means of sustenance. Similarly, the black-and-white photograph *Snow Drawing* (1982) documents another frozen scenario set by the artist: surrounded by snow, three cardboard pieces mobilise a minimal theatricality that opens onto a vast, shifting natural space. This photograph is also a visual testimony of how Sánchez has always been drawn to test what happens when an artistic practice is placed outside conventional settings. In an urban green space of New Jersey, *Palisades* (1986) captures a force of discharge: here the artist photographs the surreal union of a bicycle tire and the crutch belonging to a wild sweet-natured kid that lived nearby. Both have been thrown with rage and landed together gracefully on the tree that holds them. Considered along with *Paracaídas (estudio)* (2006), where a delicately drawn semicircle outlines this artifact for slowing down a fall, these two works call for an understanding of the gestures and swirling currents through which things come into existence.

In another work, the image of *Siddhartha* (2015) is traced from a cover of Hermann Hesse's famous book, and emerges from a paper bag, floating between its fragile edges. By biting into the surface, Sánchez points toward a way of being in the world that remains precarious yet capable of holding magic and humor, even amid grief. Made more than two decades earlier, *Edge of the Sun* (1991) consists of two wooden boards found in the street on which appears the spherical outline of a sun that has become a saw. A group of spinning butterflies attune to the quivering of the toothy solar edges, drawing attention to the shifting ways in which symbols, and the world itself, are interpreted and felt.

Immersed in the world of paper, artist Sara Mackillop boosts the sculptural and poetic potential of office material and ephemera. The direct relationship between visibility, architecture and the concentric runs through all the works the artist has produced for this exhibition. A new series of found paper bags are perforated with circles that reduce the objects to their skeletons, eaten away and turned almost into ruins. Rendered incapable of fulfilling their original function of storing, nonetheless, the perforated bags now hold in a different way: they imply a state of openness to their surroundings, coexistence with what is damaged and circular interrelation. This series is accompanied by another piece in which the circles removed from the bags become glass awareness stickers, an element that supposedly alerts and warns. Yet, placed in the gallery, the circles reveal their decorative character, as do the wrinkles that also constitute them; rather than alarming or putting us on guard, they invite a contemplative ongoing distraction conjuring the interior of the gallery space with a planetary enchantment.

Working in very different formal languages, both artists propose ways of using objects to hold on to that which is cyclically bursting in and out of perception, interpretation and the world itself. Through a scissor cut, a saw-toothed edge, a razor blade, a reflection of the sun, or a snowfall, Sánchez and Mackillop harness the quiet, massive forces of the everyday at their most critical moment, where a gesture is both destructive and generative. The same tension appears in the stone lion on the façade, whose delicate bite joins two stacked circles to form the infinity symbol: nothing other than an endless loop in which rupture and preservation feed each other.

Sara MacKillop is a contemporary artist who lives and works in London. She has developed a practice encompassing sculpture, installation-based work and artists' publications centered on the transformation of everyday objects and materials associated with stationery, archives, administration, and analog communication systems. Her work begins with commonplace materials—paper, envelopes, archive boxes, mail-order catalogues, books, record sleeves, and office supplies—which she subtly alters to create sculptures of remarkable economy and restraint. MacKillop's practice is characterized by a minimalist sensibility and a sustained interest in what often goes unnoticed. Many of her works explore the disappearance of analog technologies and modes of communication, prompting reflection on memory, obsolescence, and the cultural shifts brought about by technological change. Her work has been exhibited internationally in both solo and group exhibitions. Recent Solo Exhibitions include Subplot, Roland Ross Gallery, (2026) Attachments, The Cutaway View Good Weather Gallery (2025), Clages Gallery (2025). Institutional solo exhibitions include Renewals and Returns, PEER Gallery (2020) Haus der Kunst, Munich (2016); Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen (2013); Spike Island, Bristol (2011); White Columns, New York (2011); and Dundee Contemporary Arts, Scotland (2010). Recent Group Shows include, Financial Times, Timeshare (2026) Vanishing Meter curated by Matthew Lawson Garrett, Petrine Dusseldorf (2026), Linienstrasse, Dusseldorf (2025) She has also participated in group exhibitions at institutions including the Serralves Museum, Porto; Artists Space, New York; and the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid. She has produced over 50 publications both self published and published.

Rafael Sánchez is a Cuban-born visual artist based in New York City. Spanning more than four decades, his practice moves freely across drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, video, performance, street interventions, and elaborate theatrical works. Closely intertwined with his lived experience and frequently developed in collaboration with fellow artists, Sánchez's work explores processes of transformation, animation, and the ways in which the magical and scientific coincide. To do so, his paintings and sculptures often combine traditional techniques with what he calls "conductive" materials—including honey, medicine, dirt, driveway sealer, and foundation makeup. Since his first solo exhibition at Aljira, A Center for Contemporary Art, Newark, in 1985, Sánchez has exhibited at Kiang Malingue, New York (2026); RAINRAIN, New York (2026); Whitney ISP Curatorial at Westbeth, New York (2025); Derosia, White Columns, and Martos Gallery, New York (2023); Fall River Museum of Contemporary Art, Massachusetts (2021); HOUSING and Kerry Schuss, New York (2021); Galerie Max Mayer, Düsseldorf (2019); the Museum of the City of New York (2017); La MaMa Galleria, New York (2014); the Museum of Modern Art, the Center for Book Arts, and El Museo del Barrio, New York (2011); Foundation ELBA, Nijmegen; the Jersey City Museum; Hallwalls, Buffalo; WhiteBox, Participant Inc., and Artists Space, New York; and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, among other venues. His performances have been presented as part of Performa and Whitney ISP Curatorial, and at Soon Is Now, Dixon Place, Artists Space, Participant Inc., Thread Waxing Space, WhiteBox, Jackie 60, the Fruit Farm Festival, and the Armada Festival, among other venues and contexts.

Juf (jufjuf.org) is a curatorial, research, and artistic project founded by Spanish curators and occasional artists Bea Ortega Botas and Leto Ybarra. They have recently collaborated with CARA — Center for Art, Research and Alliances, 99 Canal, and Judson Memorial Church in New York; A Tale of A Tub in Rotterdam; Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary in Madrid; and Gasworks in London. For several years, Juf has been conducting research into the life and work of Fran Herndon, which will be presented for the first time in an exhibition dedicated to the artist at Cushion Works in San Francisco, opening in May 2027.

Sara Mackillop

Record Sleeve Bags (2026)
Commercial paper bags
Variable dimensions

Glass Awareness Stickers (2026)
Glass self cling gloss stickers
Variable dimensions

Rafael Sánchez

From left to right

Pink Jar (1995–2005)
Glass honey jar with used women's razors
11 cm diameter × 21 cm high

Dolores Tracings (2003)
Ink, permanent marker, spray paint, and cuts on layered tracing paper
27.9 × 21.6 cm

Mirror, Jersey City (1991)
Photograph mounted on construction paper with type
27.9 × 21.6 cm

Rain Spiral (2026)
Rainwater on watercolor paper
38 × 28 cm

Double Bridge (*Aljira Arts, Newark, New Jersey*) (1984)
Cibachrome print, unique A/P
27.9 × 35.6 cm

Killer and Killer w/ Combination Lock (*From The Honey Jar*) (2003)
Two C-print photographs
15.2 × 10.2 cm each

Paracaída (*estudio*) (2003)
Pencil and spray paint on tracing paper
38.7 × 31.1 × 3.5 cm

Siddhartha (2015)
Cut paper bag
35 × 31 cm
Collection of Claire Barnier

Palisades (1986)
Gelatin silver print, unique A/P
31.5 × 26.5 cm

Edge of the Sun (1991)
Enamel and vinyl stickers on found wood panels
Each panel: 143 × 31 cm / Overall: 143 × 63.5 cm
Collection of Claire Barnier

Snow Drawing (1982)
Gelatin silver print, unique A/P
32 × 27 cm