GALERIE GISELA CAPITAIN

XIMENA GARRIDO-LECCA

Protomorphisms

June 8 - July 16, 2022

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XIMENA GARRIDO-LECCA - *Protomorphisms*

June 8 - July 16, 2022

Galerie Gisela Capitain is pleased to announce *Protomorphisms*, Ximena Garrido-Lecca's second solo exhibition at the gallery.

Through her practice Peruvian artist Ximena Garrido-Lecca explores the impact of natural resource exploitation on different social groups and cultures, with a particular interest in how industrialization and urbanization have historically affected culture, collective memory and the relationship between nature and culture. The division between nature and culture has created a rupture in our previous notions of the natural world, putting nature in the service of human beings and placing it as a mere object to be exploited. These ideas conflict with indigenous Andean cosmology in which nature is intrinsically linked to culture and still venerated through ceremonies and rituals.

The complex Peruvian imaginary, characterized by the clashing between the age-old Andean culture and the contradictions introduced by the process of colonization, are often the basis for Garrido-Lecca's work. While the references are frequently highly local, Garrido-Lecca's work speaks to contemporary global concerns of struggles over natural resources, and private access for those living on its borders.

Equally important to her practice is the memory of artisanal tradition and the abandonment of rural spaces as an aftereffect of the processes of modernization. A recurring theme is the impact of copper exploitation through opencast mining in the countryside of Peru. In Pre-Colombian cultures copper carried a strong religious and ritual connotation. Ximena Garrido-Lecca uses copper as a symbol to reflect on extractivism and the impact this material has on the Peruvian economy and its culture.

Ximena Garrido-Lecca (b. 1980 in Lima, Peru) lives and works in Mexico City.

Recent institutional solo exhibitions include Portikus, Frankfurt, upcoming November 2022, the 34th São Paulo Biennial, 2020, MAC- Museo de Arte Contemporanéo de Lima (together with Ishmael Randall Weeks), 2019, OCMA- Orange County Museum of Art, 2019, Proyecto AMIL, Lima 2019; SAPS- Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, Mexcio City 2017, MALBA- Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires, 2017, MATE- Mario Testino Museum, Lima 2014.

Institutional group exhibitions include Boros Collection, Berlin, DE 2022, Museo MADRE, Naples, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart and Fundacion Jumex, Mexico City, all 2021.

Signal restorations: solar switch
2022
Copper plate, steel, alpaca wool, native copper, amethyst, copal, obsidian, palo santo, ceramic, wax candle, bornite, quartz crystal, sea shell
90,5 x 71,8 cm copper plate

¨In a masterly study, B. Easely traced the erection of this universe from the witch hunts to the constitution of the Victorian woman. He describes how, during the seventeenth century, natural philosophers began to banish life conceptually from the cosmos, and how they minimized the role of women in conception. Step by step, they succeeded to declare matter pure, inert nature -agitated by the vis viva. They succeeded to reduce matter to pure mater, the amorphous mother of things, a pure womb in formless readiness for the conception of paternal powers; a mere framework within which virile force could give rise to all things. Materia/mater in this process became logically unknowable, because amorphous and physically unobservable, nothing but a shape-less presupposition. The study of this necessary and complementary principle of all existence was thus by definition excluded from science. Science became the knowledge of virile forces and the shapes they take. In the 1840s, their complement reappeared as the matrix and the law that exalts the conservation of virile energy as the first law of the cosmos and the foundation of modern science.¨

Ivan Illich, The Social Construction of Energy.

Protomophisms presents a series of works that explore the origins of different data storage devices and the development of early computing systems, technologies which, in early stages, utilized artisanal and manual technics in their fabrication. Weaving practices had a major influence on the origins of computer information storage, and women were essential in the development of these technologies, especially in the process of weaving core rope memory.

As Ivan Illich states in *The Social Construction of Energy*, early modern science divorced itself from the concept of energy as a living force or "vis viva," opening the path to the commodification of energy. Ancient notions of energy as part of mother nature's vital force—or womb—were gradually stripped, not only neglecting our relation and connection to its power but also creating a perpetual economic dependency on it. Throughout my practice, I have always been interested in ideas surrounding our relation to nature and how pre-Hispanic cultures, especially Andean culture, focus strongly on the concept of reciprocity, which is part of their social structure and worldview. Among the many manifestations of this reciprocity lies the idea that if we take something from nature, we must retribute it through rituals and offerings as a way of demonstrating gratitude to the "mother provider."

Additionally, many anthropologists have observed that the conception of numerical and mathematical values in pre-Hispanic cultures are intrinsically linked to the cultures' social relations and world-views. These relations are mainly expressed through weaving, in which colours, patterns and knots have symbolic meaning and become a three-dimensional data storage system dependent on touch and sight. In the Andes, weaving is viewed as equivalent to creating a living being (vis viva) from head to toes. Each part of the loom has a special significance and is part of this creation.

The works intend to subvert notions of the patriarchal origins of knowledge as well as the universal bias toward the supremacy of Western knowledge, which rejects other forms of understanding and relating to the world and considers them inferior or primitive. The exhibition celebrates these "protoforms" or original forms, exposing their influence on the development of science and many Western cultural movements—including in the arts, which have been constantly overshadowed.

For example Gary Urton in *The Social Life of Numbers, A Quechua Ontology of Numbers* and *Philosophy of Arithmetic* and Denis Y. Arnold in her book *Hilos sueltos: Los Andes desde el textil.*

- Ximena Garrido-Lecca

Heliomorphisms
2020/2021
Series of 10 ceramic vases made with recycled silicon
from solar panels
dimensions variable

Heliomorphisms, 2020/2021

The vases of Heliomorphisms replicate pre-Columbian designs found in the Temple of the Sun in the ruins of Pachacamac, an old site of pilgrimage on the outskirts of Lima, Perú. These early ceramics originated between AD 600 and 1500 and were used by various pre-Columbian cultures as ritual offerings to the sun. Ximena Garrido-Lecca worked in collaboration with both the museum of Pachacamac in Lima and the Penn Museum in Philadelphia, which kindly provided her with all the information available on the vases, including details regarding their exact provenance within Pachacamac. Garrido-Lecca used silicon recycled from defunct solar panels to reproduce the vases, transforming industrialized material into an offering, or a sort of gesture of retribution, to the sun. Garrido-Lecca has been working with silicon for a while; it interests her how the second most abundant element in the Earth's crust is one of the most important materials in the development of technological devices. It has been used as a semiconductor since the invention of the integrated circuit in the 1950s, defining how we relate to technology in the contemporary world.

Heliomorphisms
2020/2021
detail
Series of 10 ceramic vases made with recycled silicon
from solar panels
dimensions variable

Heliomorphisms
2020/2021
details
Series of 10 ceramic vases made with recycled silicon from solar panels
dimensions variable

Signal Restorations, 2022

For the Signal Restorations series, Ximena Garrido-Lecca asked a group of electronics engineers to assemble a series of circuits on perfboards (sheets used for prototyping circuits). The circuit boards had sensors that used elements from nature—fire, water, air, and earth—to perform different tasks. Garrido-Lecca used these circuit boards as the basis of her series, replacing their components (resistors, capacitors, etc.) with objects used as ritual offerings to the elements in Perú and Mexico.

Signal restorations: air, flame, rain and soil sensors
2022
4 copper plates, steel, wool, ceramics, leather, candles, copal, beans, salt, charcoal, miniature straw brooms, sponge, palm fibre, volcanic rock, corn, hammered copper vase, volcanic stone bowl, silver and gold powder, green quartz, pick
56,7 x 44,5 each copper plate

Protomorphisms: AGC Rope driver module
2022
Steel structure, copper plates, steel plates, terracotta, rubber, alpaca wool, sheep wool, cotton
223 x 310 x 60 cm

Protomorphisms: AGC Rope Driver Module, 2022

The piece Protomorphisms: AGC Rope Driver Module is based on the structure of an engineering prototype for the Apollo Guidance Computer. The AGC was one of the first computers to use silicon as a semiconductor for integrated circuits and was essential to the space travel and moon landings of the late 1960s; its Rope Driver Module enabled the operation of its core memory. Garrido-Lecca worked with engineers to translate the wiring schematics of the Rope Driver Module from the AGC manual, replicating the routes and connections of each cable with hand-made ropes of natural fibers (alpaca, cotton and sheep wool).

The piece contrasts modern technology with pre-Hispanic data storage systems. At the same time, it contraposes contemporary conceptions of space to pre-Columbian cosmovisions and mythologies, in particular those represented by figures of moon goddesses and defenders of women: Mama Killa in Inca culture, Coyolxauhqui for the Aztecs, and Ixchel (a goddess of both the moon and textiles) in Mayan culture. While the sky was a place of philosophical contemplation in ancient times, the space race transformed this source of wonder into a realm of political power and games of conquest.

Protomorphisms: AGC Rope driver module
2022
Steel structure, copper plates, steel plates, terracotta, rubber, alpaca wool, sheep wool, cotton
223 x 310 x 60 cm

Archival images from the original Apollo Guidance Computer

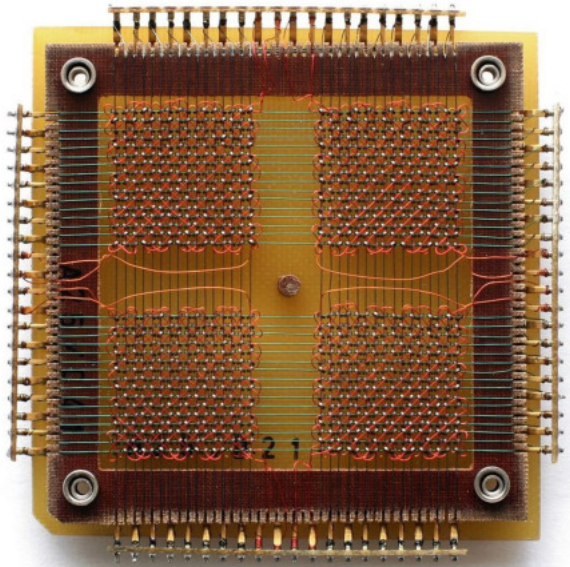
Signal restorations: time keeper
2022
Copper plate, steel, wool, ceramics, native copper, peanuts, sea shells, copal, corn, palm broom, ayoyote rattle, palo santo, dried potato, confetti, gold and silver powder, dried flowers, tule stands
179 x 88,5 cm copper plate

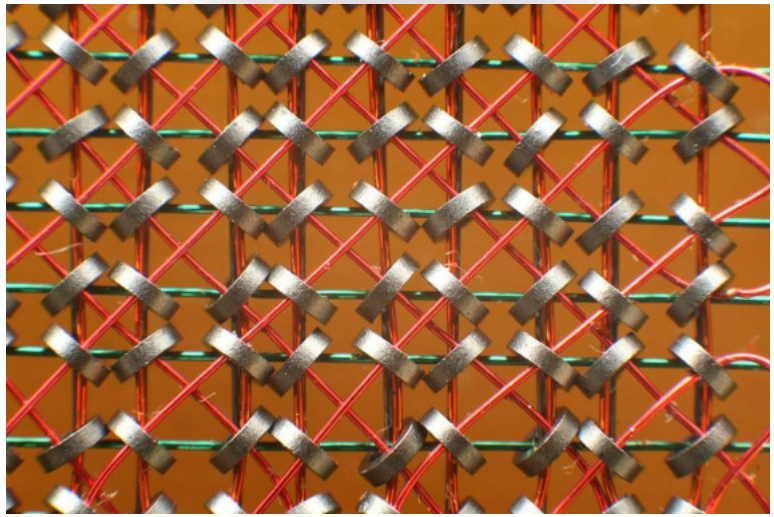
Signal restorations: time keeper
2022
details
Copper plate, steel, wool, ceramics, native copper, peanuts, sea shells, copal, corn, palm broom, ayoyote rattle, palo santo, dried potato, confetti, gold and silver powder, dried flowers, tule stands
179 x 88,5 cm copper plate

Memory module: H316
2021
Copper, wicker and rubber
228 x 234 x 1 cm unfolded

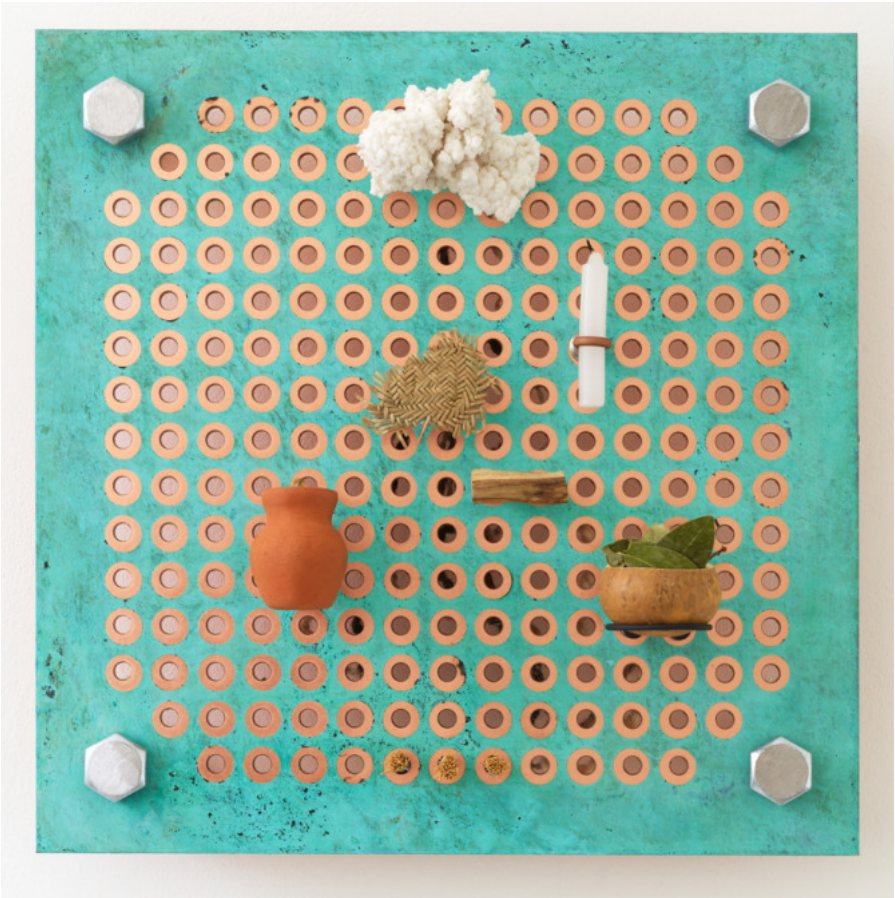
Memory module: H316, 2021

The work *Memory Module: H316* echoes the memory design of the Honeywell Kitchen Computer, a variant of the Honeywell 316 computer that was marketed to women rather than businesses. In 1969, it became the first computer advertised as a consumer product. Its memory system stored binary information in a grid of magnetic ferrite rings held together by wires like the threads of a weave. Binary numerals were determined by interactions with ferrite rings: a cable passing through a ring represented 1; a cable bordering a ring represented 0.

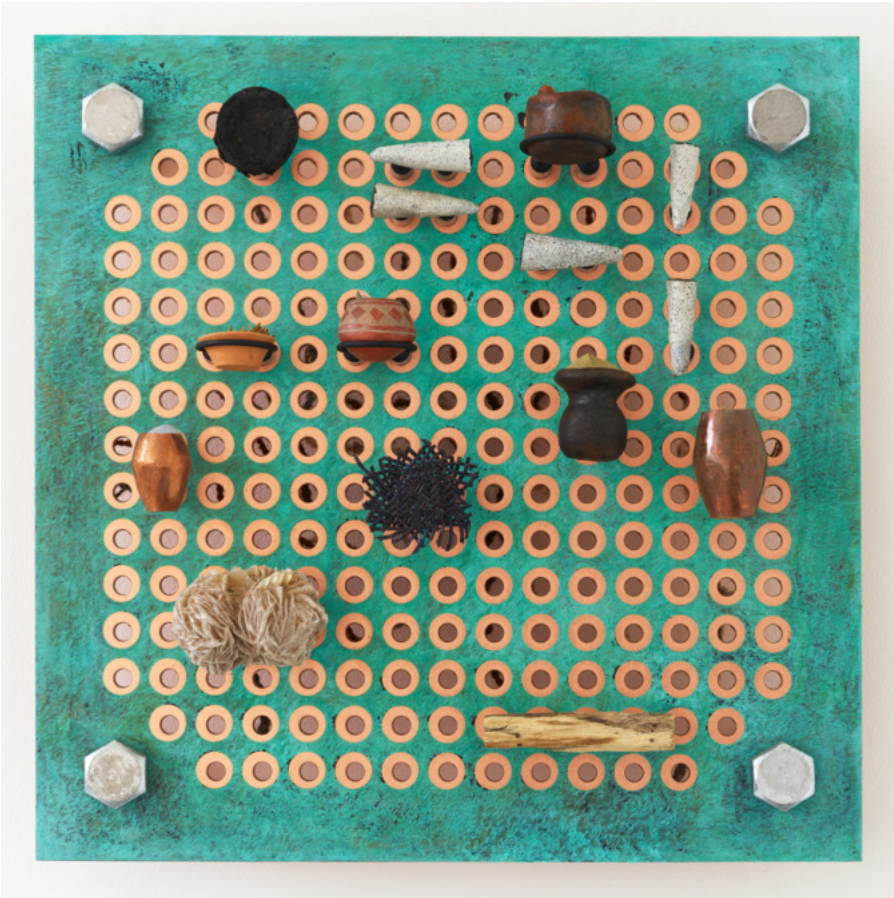




Archival images of a core memory unit and the weaving process of the core memory



Signal restorations: energy sensor
2022
Copper plate, steel, wool, ceramic, aragonite, miniature straw brooms, palm fibre, palo santo, candle, coca leaves, gourd vessel, dried potato
44,5 x 44,5 cm



Signal restorations: energy regulator
2022
Copper plate, steel, wool, ceramics, hammered copper vase, copal, charcoal, cacao, tobacco, sage, palm fibre, silver, gold and copper powder, desert rose crystal, palo santo
44,5 x 44,5 cm