

*Arlette*

*'José'*

*28 Sep - 4 Nov 2023*

*Rose Easton*

"I asked Isaac de Reza to write the text for my first show, as my father once told me there is no stronger bond than the one of honesty. Isaac is not only an artist that I deeply admire but also someone with whom I share my place of birth, part of my journey, a friendship, loyalty and love."

– Arlette

Text by Isaac de Reza

*José* embodies a journey of love and grief. The exhibition is a heartfelt tribute to Arlette's father José; it unfolds as a love letter to him, the profound connection they share and the special bond with his roosters and horses. *José* is also about a girl being raised by a man, about friendships, God, faith, innocence and the intricate meanings that reside beneath the surface of all symbols.

The shining of metal reveals a noble intensity. A material that refuses to break, defying the force applied through hours of intensive physical labour. Its strength promises an everlasting existence, therefore the final forms become relics. Metal has a multitude of religious meanings in Mexican society; believed to haunt vampires, to protect children and ultimately to make spirituality tangible. Metallic possessions are a social imaginary that link us to our loved ones. Minerals are hyper conductive of energy, and in a hypothetical sense, of feelings too.

Working with metal and volcanic rock is often perceived as hyper-masculine, something Arlette continues to scrutinise. Her own hand gestures become tangible through the considerate process of subtraction on rock, which invites us to conceive a space of ancient origins. Arlette creates territories that resemble models for portals. The material is a sub-product of the organic processes of the planet, and through this porous mineral she conceives a personal cosmology that links us all through spaces of spirituality.

Faith is the key subject matter of this exhibition. Love letters are embossed into metal works surrounding the walls of the gallery space. Some phrases are left untranslated, which imbues a sense of emotional depth through a language and a form that are foreign, these decisions are to be accepted, to understand that language escapes us. Within the gallery space, Arlette creates a sanctuary of holy forms that refuse rationalisation through language, a realm of reflective mirrors in which she confronts her dreams and demons and, in turn, invites us to confront our own.

Roosters and horses are symbols that appear within this imaginary space, giving us an insight into the artist's relationship to her father through the contemplation and care of these animals. The energy that revolves around a mechanical horse reminds us of a girl that wants to become a "charro", be one with her horse and reunite with the landscape. A hyper-aestheticised rooster elicits ideas of competition and challenge. At times of crisis these symbols appear as whispers, reminding us to pray, and that our yearning for spirituality does not always need a religious form.

For Arlette, innocence is a strategy where one has no constraints, and so the realm of what is imaginable expands. The birth of her first niece has brought up questions about her own innocence. As she transitions into adulthood she preserves a childlike wonder, in which desire plays a definitive role in her process of making. A vending machine might initially relate

to commerce, yet this element contains playfulness, a fantasy that transforms desire into entertainment; art becomes an exciting game where victories can be attained, and so these symbols are now in our hands.

Pain is inevitable to life, as are traumatic experiences that at times appear to erode our faith in what is good and noble. While innocence may be lost in the face of these trials, it also has the potential to be reclaimed and reshaped. The phrases in the artworks that rhythmically move through the show remind us not to lose a sense of wonder.

Arlette (b. 1998, Mexico City, Mexico), lives and works in Mexico City. She received her BA from Central Saint Martins, London in 2022. Recent exhibitions include *On the edge of fashion*, Rose Easton, London (2023); *WORLD FAMOUS BABYLON*, Barbican Arts Group Trust, London (2022); *Auftrebende Kunstler*, Proyecto Paralelo – Recorrido Zona Maco, Mexico City (2022); *Talabarteria Malcriada 2021*, Espacio Union, Mexico City (2021); *Sonic Event*, Lethaby Gallery, London (2019); *Without Maiz There is no Pais*, Tate Modern, London (2019); *Metaphonica IV*, Central Saint Martins, London (2018) and *Art Park*, LUX, London (2018). Arlette's work straddles the boundary between fashion and art, creating wearable sculptures for Kendrick Lamar and Travis Scott, with the latter wearing one of her buckle belts on the front cover of his new album, *UTOPIA* (2023).

## List of works

Arlette

*José*, 2023

Metal

111 × 92 × 3 cm

Arlette

*Holy Water*, 2023

Metal, volcanic rock

80 × 52 × 30 cm

Arlette

*Testicle 1*, 2023

Volcanic rock

34 × 29 × 10 cm

Arlette

*Testicle 2*, 2023

Metal, volcanic rock

32 × 29 × 6 cm

Arlette

*Caballo Prieto*

*Azabache*, 2023

Acrylic on canvas,  
metal frame

116 × 99 × 6 cm

Arlette

*Trapichero*, 2023

Metal, fibreglass, resin

100 × 80 × 57 cm

Private View, Wednesday 27 September, 6 – 8pm  
Open, Wednesday – Saturday, 12 – 6pm

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