

Berenice Olmedo

*Aithér*

October 15 – November 25, 2023

Berenice Olmedo explores the realms of diseases, bodies, and assistive technologies with the devices and apparatuses designed to aid human bodies as a central tenant to her artistic discourse. Her approach, however, goes beyond merely presenting and showcasing these devices in their already uncanny and hallucinatory material forms—apparatuses inherently possessing an eerie quality. Olmedo's objective is to intervene in these objects, infusing them with a sense of movement and robotisation.

Within her work lies an inherent tension revolving around the contrast between artefacts and living bodies, which are entities in perpetual motion, encompassing translational movement and growth and metabolic processes. As Aristotle noted, life itself is characterised by its intrinsic motion. Regardless of the state of vitality, whether afflicted by disease or diminished capacity, all living things are in constant motion, even if such motion is partially impaired. Thus, one of the defining features of the living is their ability to move.

Conversely, machines, products of artifice, are inherently static entities. They do not possess an innate capacity for self-movement, at least not until the advent of robotics and the automation of motion.

Olmedo's work thrives within this realm of tension—the interplay of movement. The machines and artefacts she presents originate from the field of medicine and are designed to assist and facilitate the movement of human bodies. These devices undergo technical modifications in Olmedo's work to enable them to move autonomously. The human bodies are conspicuously absent, referenced only through their afflictions and represented through depictions of their illnesses and diseases.

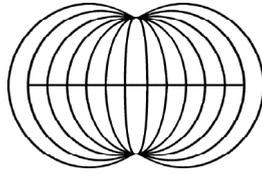
Sickness is an undeniable and intrinsic aspect of life. It's a fundamental facet of the human condition, and not a single lived experience has been spared from suffering, pain, or illness. Human life is uniquely aware of its mortality and can sometimes receive medical assistance. This feature does not extend to wildlife, which remains on the periphery of technical remedies to continue being wild.

A life that undergoes medical intervention becomes a body interpreted through various techniques and devices, subjected to the influence of machines and different medical procedures. These bodies, transformed through such interventions, take on new forms and give rise to alternative perspectives and imaginings: reformed bodies.

Olmedo's latest exhibition, *Aithér*, features sculptures inspired by the CircOlectric hospital bed and the gyroscope. CT scans of patients with internal prostheses, cancers, or tumours serve as the foundation for her inventions. With Z-brush software, each sculpture is generated and 3D printed, while surgical tools from traumatology are used to create unique supports. The sculptures are made of Orfit Colors NS, a low-temperature orthotic plastic that becomes malleable when immersed in water, allowing them to mimic the human body's adaptability.

Berenice Olmedo's work delves into the interplay between the animate and the artificial, exploring the profound contrast between life's dynamic nature and machines' static essence through the fact that both the body and the machine have been reformed through technology.

— María Antonia González Valerio



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Berenice Olmedo (b. 1987 in Oaxaca, Mexico) lives and works in Mexico City, Mexico.

Berenice Olmedo is known for her sculptures and kinetic objects, in which she often integrates prostheses and orthotics. Her fusions of body parts challenge the notion of human wholeness and draw attention to the political dimensions of disability, illness and care. The artist engages with standardized expectations of our bodies and explores the extent to which external aids are essential to human existence. By reusing forms and materials from the medical field, she challenges the pursuit of efficiency and seamless perfection in favor of a more physical, political, and existential contemporary experience.

Her works have been exhibited at the Kunsthalle Basel; the ICA Boston, Boston; the Boros Collection, Berlin; the Dortmunder Kunstverein; the TEA Tenerife Espacio de las Artes, Tenerife; the Eres Foundation, Munich; the Museum of Contemporary Art of Monterrey; the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts; the Krannert Art Museum, Chicago; the Museum für moderne Kunst (MMK), Frankfurt; the Simian, Copenhagen; the Museo Tamayo, Mexico City; the Haus Mödrath - Räume für Kunst, Kerpen and the Museo Universitario de Ciencias y Arte (MUCA),