

Rodrigo Hernández
Conchita
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A coat of arms changes over time with new elements being added or others being dropped. In addition, the meaning of one or various of the parts can be modified. And sometimes all these things happen at the same time, and can be repeated several times over the course of the years, without there always being a record to clearly explain the reasons behind these changes. By the same token, it is almost impossible to know the real meaning of what we see, or, even more so, what it originally intended to mean. And so, when we look at a coat of arms, we look at an image that has accrued a number of transitions that have become progressively more opaque and, to a certain degree, contradict themselves. At the same time, the biggest surprise is that the images you can see are elementary, almost archetypal: a tree, a tower, a bridge, two wolves, a mountain.

A while ago I came across this sentence in a novel I was reading: “memory is like a stray dog that follows no rules and does exactly whatever it pleases, refusing to be domesticated.” I would say it is more like a wolf: a wild creature that stalks the human world and infiltrates it with fears, conjectures and endless questions.

I adored my grandmother Conchita. She lived with me and my mother for a number of years and when I came home from school she was always waiting for me. She would prepare lunch and we would sit down together to eat. During those years and later on as well, I learned things about her past; the few things she wanted to or was able to share; like the fact that she was born in Durango, a few kilometres from here, where this exhibition is taking place. Did she really remember so little? What was it that undermined this narrative and made it so wanting? What is it that prompts us to remember certain snippets of the past and, when it reappears, why does it take on the specific form in which it is rebuilt? I stored up these details without any specific purpose in mind, never realizing that in the future I would need more elements to tie them together and give them a

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certain coherence and allow me to form some kind of more or less overall image of her life, which I am still unable to form. The little I have been able to salvage of Conchita's life story are isolated scenes, flashes of bits and pieces that come to mind and leave me with a sensation of discontinuity, very similar to when you try to remember a dream, with the same fear that its memory is erased forever, and hidden in a far away corner of your mind.

Rodrigo Hernández (Mexico City, 1983). Studied at the Akademie der bildenden Künste in Karlsruhe, and at Jan Van Eyck Academie in Maastricht. He has been a fellow of the Laurenz-Haus Stiftung in Basel (2015), Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart, Cité International des Arts in Paris (2016) and Istanbul Modern (2019). His recent solo exhibitions include: Wattis Institute, San Francisco US; Kestner Gesellschaft, Hannover, D; Museo Jumex, Mexico City, MX; Swiss Institute/Offsite, New York, US; Museo de Arte Moderno, Medellín, CO; Kunsthalle Kohta, Helsinki, FI; CIAJG, Guimaraes, PT; Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam, NL; SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, Georgia, USA; Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, Mexico City; Pivo, São Paulo;

Kunsthalle Winterthur, CH; Midway Contemporary, Minneapolis; SALTS, Basel; Kim?, Riga ; Heidelberger Kunstverein, Heidelberg; Kurimanzutto, Mexico City; Museo Universitario del Chopo, Mexico City; Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht; Parallel Oaxaca, Oaxaca, MX. His work has been exhibited in venues such as: Göteborgs Konsthall; Istanbul Modern; PinchukArtCenter, Kiev; GaMec, Bergamo; ZKM Museum für Neue Kunst, Karlsruhe; Kunstverein Nürnberg; Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht; Gladstone Gallery, Brussels; Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City; Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Moscow; Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zürich;, Kunsthalle Basel, Basel.