

Gabriel Orozco

Partituras

October 20 — November 22, 2025



Gabriel Orozco, *Partituras*, exhibition view, Galerie Chantal Crousel (2025), Photo: Jayun Deng.

Galerie Chantal Crousel is pleased to present *Partituras*, a new exhibition by Gabriel Orozco, featuring a selection of recent works on paper and paintings created between Paris, Tokyo, and Mexico City.

This body of work deepens Orozco's exploration of rhythm and abstraction through a process where music becomes method, structuring each composition. The *Partituras* unfold gradually: from improvisation to recording, then drawing, and finally painting. Titled with the location, date and time each melody was recorded on the piano, the works hold a quiet code, where sound is translated into shape and colour.

Art historian Briony Fer observes, "there's something deliberately out of sync—even improbable—about the way Gabriel Orozco's new paintings recall abstraction's original alliance with music—one clearly articulated by painters like Kandinsky and Kupka who were both interested in the sound of colour and the possibilities of chromatic vibration in painting."*

This tension between structure and intuition is at the core of *Partituras*. The project begins not in the studio, but at the keyboard. Fer explains: “This is a part of the process Gabriel Orozco associates with particular feelings as he ‘draws’ with his hands on the keys. When he played the piano for this project, he recorded his improvisations, usually lasting only a few minutes; the recordings were then sent to a professional musician to be transcribed and printed as a piano score. Each short piece that he makes was rendered in this way, with the notes distributed across the five horizontal lines of the stave—pentagram—according to the traditions of musical notation. Next, the score was translated into a diagrammatic drawing and only then into a painting. Based on the system Orozco has created using the four colours—red, white, blue, gold—each painting corresponds to a particular piece of music, but has been highly mediated and transformed along the way.”*

These are not literal transcriptions nor traditional notations, but layered structures where gesture and colour resonate together. *Partituras* also gestures toward broader, more complex histories of abstraction. Briony Fer notes how the project reactivates not only the spiritual affinities between music and painting but also their more critical and transgressive intersections: “There’s a certain symmetry in the way Barthes describes sitting and playing the piano as the most ‘muscular, manual’ part of music and the way Orozco likens playing to drawing, which is arguably also the most ‘manual’ part of art.”*

Drawings punctuate the project. They are made “independently of the process as ‘fictions’ because they do not have a one-to-one relation to the sound or melody of his piano pieces. They are more improvisatory, detached from the stricter rules of codification of the paintings.”*

In several works, circles, standing in for musical notes, appear as miniaturised constellations, suspended between the five lines of the stave. Briony Fer describes them as: “a *mise en abyme*, where familiar elements within his geometric language are dispersed across and ‘float’ in the spaces between the lines [...] driven by the horizontal lines of the pentagram – or what Orozco neatly calls the ‘linear horizon’. The bands of colour invoke textiles and thread, rather than revolving circuits. Paradoxically, despite what might be seen as a surfeit of intricacy filling the pictorial surface, they interrogate very basic semiotic questions about how to make paintings at a time when that seems a very improbable question to be asking. [...] As paintings, then, they are unpredictable and entirely susceptible to their surroundings and the passing of time.”*

In *Partituras*, drawing, music, and painting come together as parallel languages, tactile, temporal, and speculative. Each work becomes a surface where a sound once occurred, and where it might, once again, be imagined.

*Selected excerpts from Briony Fer, “Notes on Gabriel Orozco’s *Partituras*,” September 2025.

Born in 1962 in Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico.

Lives and works in Paris (France), Tokyo (Japan), Mexico City (Mexico) and New York (USA).

Gabriel Orozco has emerged from the early 1990s as one of the most important artists of his generation. Constantly on the move, without a studio set, he rejects the national or regional identifications, and draws inspiration from the places where he lives and travel, through photography, sculpture, painting and video.

As the art historian and art critic Briony Fer writes: "Gabriel Orozco makes his work out of where he lives, using local materials and often drawing on traditional artisanal practices but of course art can—and often has—been made in one place but out of another, that is, in imaginary as well as actual dialogues with its own origins.

In one sense Orozco continues to animate precisely this entanglement of circumstance and movement. His methods are much more informal—inclining always to the partial and incomplete—than that of an atlas that aims systematically to document a whole world of images. It's maybe more like a travel notebook of a life (his own), but one that records the circumstantial conditions of life along with the everyday living of it as he moves between different locations. The relationship of his work to place remains porous, exposing a distinctive formal procedure to multiple global image-circuits and economies, pictorial and otherwise."

His work is characterized by a strong interest in the urban landscape and the human body. Incidents of everyday life and familiar, whose poetry is that of chance and paradox, feed his practice. The boundaries between the art object and the everyday environment are deliberately blurred, art and reality deliberately mixed. The movement, expansion, circularity, the relationship between geometric and organic, are constants that have animated his artistic research for over twenty years.

In 2019, Gabriel Orozco was chosen to orchestrate the transformation of Chapultepec Park in Mexico City into a nerve center at the crossroads of art, culture, and nature.

Gabriel Orozco is a recipient of the Cultural Achievement Award (2014); The Americas Society (2014) and has also been elevated to the rank of Commander of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by French Ministry of Culture in 2025.

He has had major solo exhibitions at The Noguchi Museum, Long Island City (2019); XIII Bienal de la Habana, La Habana; Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de La Habana (2019); Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, Tokyo (2015); Aspen Art Museum, Aspen (2015); Domaine de Chaumont-sur-Loire, France (2015); Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2014); Kunsthaus Bregenz, Bregenz (2013); Tate Modern, London (2011); Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (2010); Kunstmuseum, Basel (2010); Museum of Modern Art, New York (2009); Museo Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City (2006); Museum Ludwig, Köln (2006); Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington (2005); Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2000); Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia (1999); Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris (1998), among others.

Gabriel Orozco was also featured in several international group shows: MAMAC, Nice, France (2022); MCA Chicago, Chicago (2020); MAXXI, Rome (2018); Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai (2018); Seattle Art Museum, Seattle (2017); Centre Pompidou-Metz, Metz (2017); Giardini Arsenal, Venice Biennale, Venice (2017); Yokohama Museum of Art, Yokohama (2016); Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia (2015); 10th Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju (2014); Guggenheim Museum, New York (2014); The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2011); The Power Plant, Toronto (2009); Bass Museum of Art, Miami, (2009); Fundación PROA, Buenos Aires (2009); Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall, Stockholm (2008); Istanbul Museum of Modern Art, Istanbul (2009); FRAC Ile-de-France — Le Plateau, Paris (2008); Kunsthalle wien, Vienna (2007); The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2006); Italian Pavilion, Venice Biennial, Venice (2005); Museum Ludwig, Köln (2005); Tate Modern, London (2006); Documenta 11, Kassel (2002).

His works have joined the collections of the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas; FRAC Normandie, Sotteville-lès-Rouen; Carré d'art, Nîmes; Musée d'art moderne de Paris; Kunstmuseum Basel, Bâle; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Museum Of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; San Francisco Museum Of Modern Art, San Francisco; Whitney Museum, New York; Colección Jumex, Mexico City; Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris; Fundación Botín, Cantabria; Long Museum West Bund, Shanghai; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

*The texts by Briony Fer here quoted are taken from the press release written on the occasion of Gabriel Orozco's sixth solo exhibition at Galerie Chantal Crousel in 2017.