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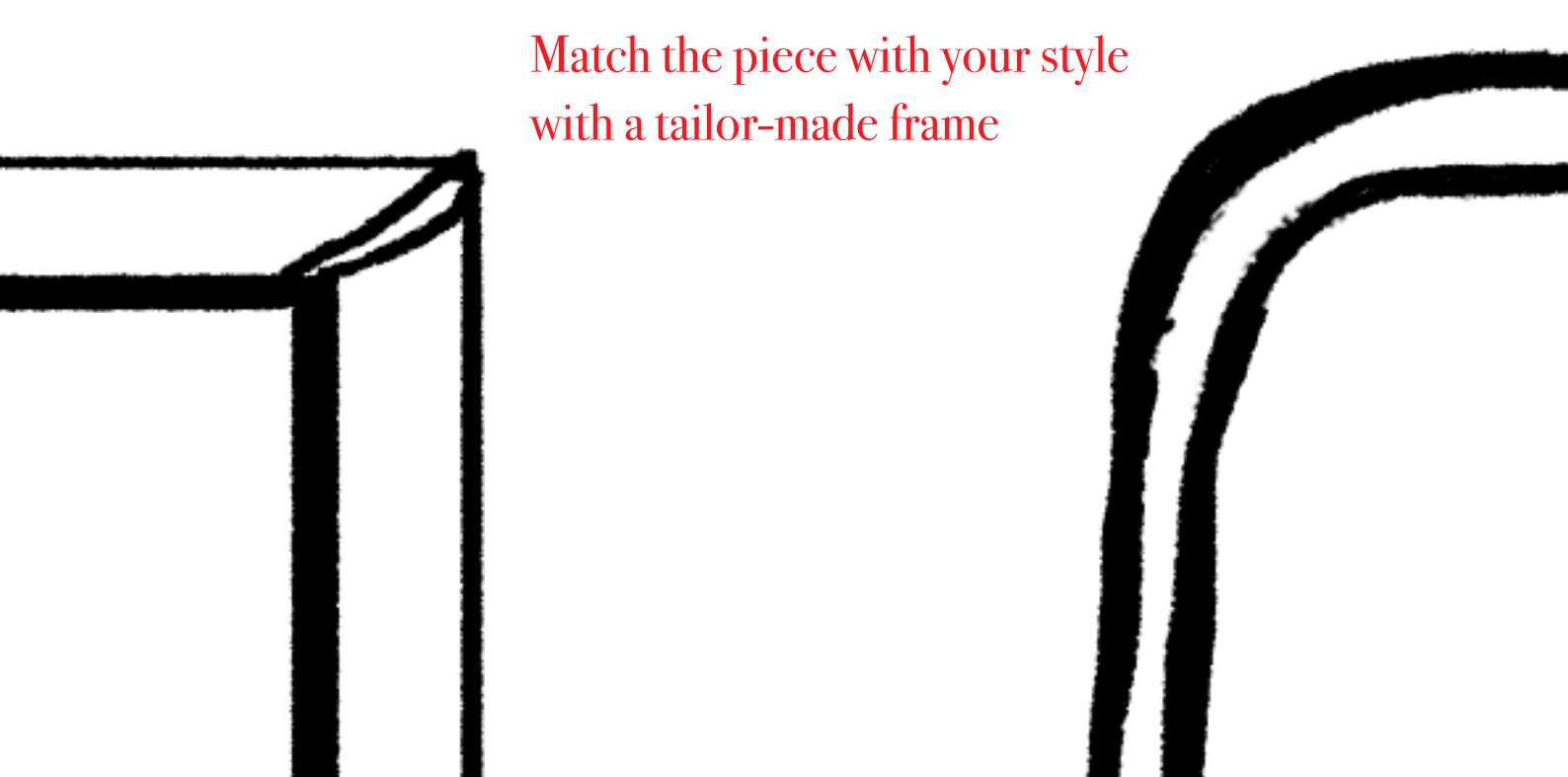
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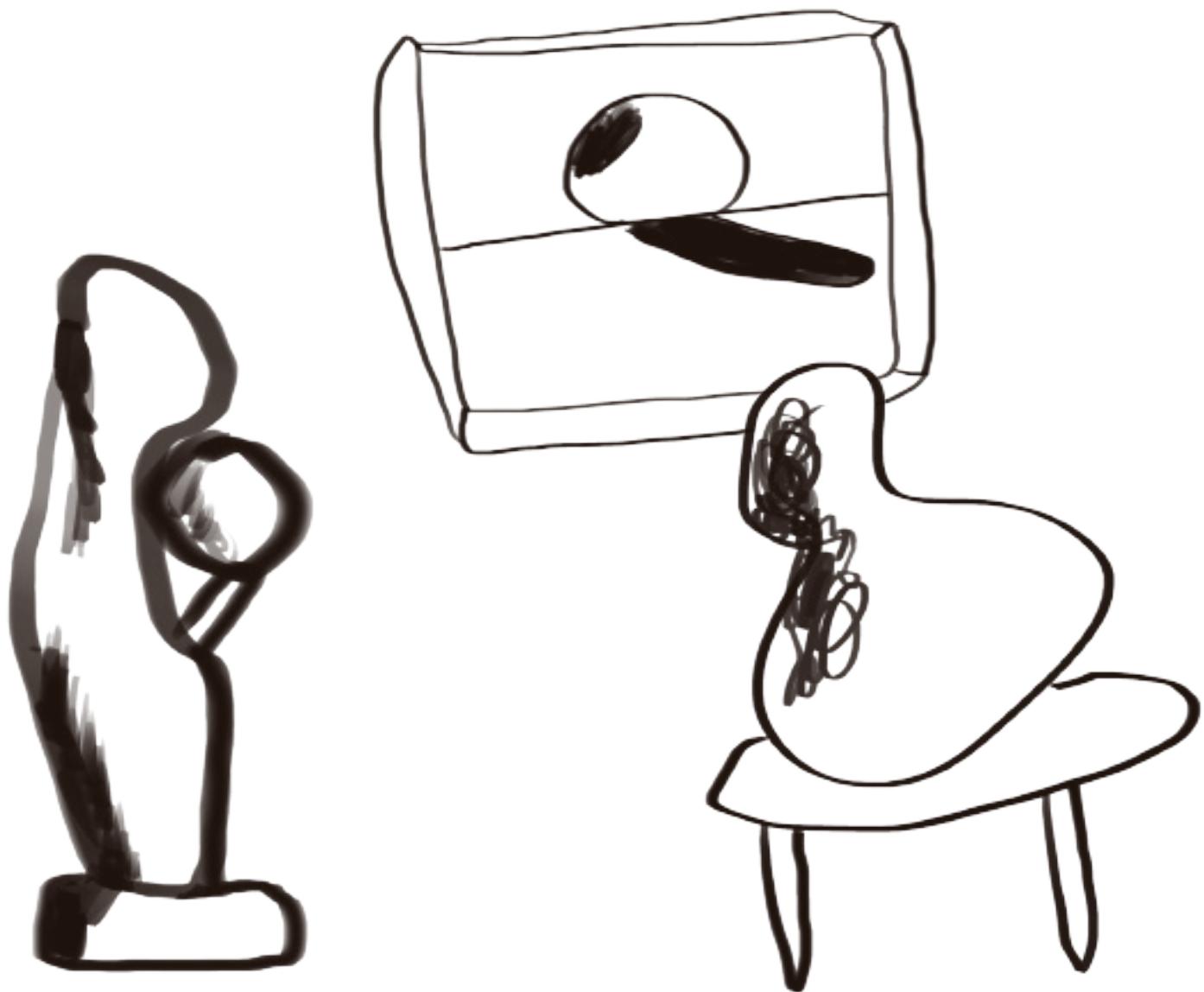
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## Editor's Note

To document as defined by the Cambridge dictionary is the act “to record the details of an event or a process”. How is this connected to arts?

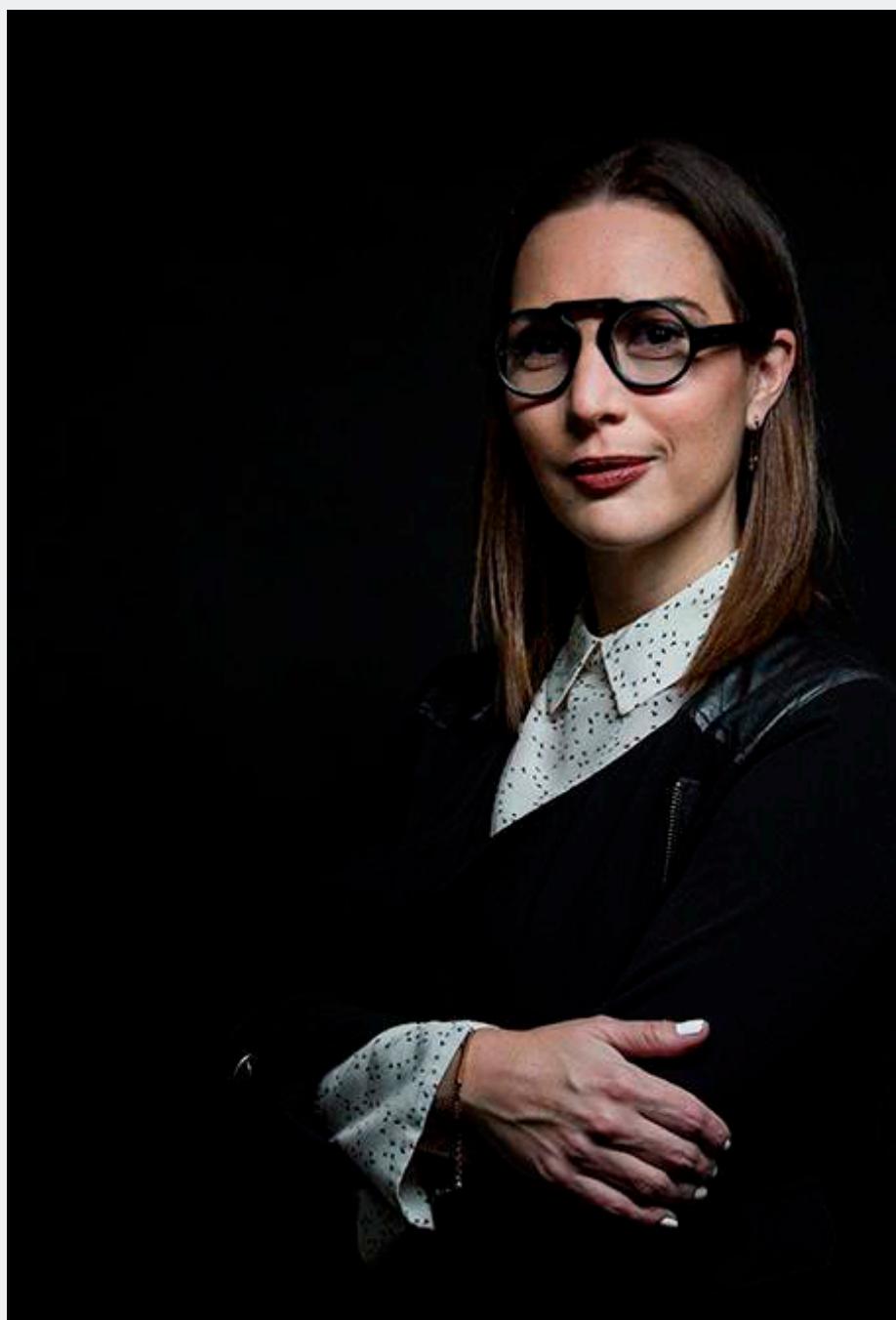
At first sight, the question may sound evident. The natural answer would be, writing the records of an artwork, which to me sound like making catalogues. Yet, after Walter Benjamin’s work *The work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* published in 1936, the question follows other directions.

As a brief reminder, with the rise of photography, Benjamin anticipated fundamental questions to think around an Artwork in the modern world regarding their properties, historicity and uniqueness, which are still in debate today. Those issues came across me recently, when I had to present an exhibition through the photography’s of pieces we had installed before in other walls.

What are the properties of an artwork, (if any...)? How does a piece changes from wall to wall? What happens when an artwork is seen through its records?

This issue is dedicated to think around those questions and its purpose is to share what we have discovered recently about it. It also includes our Art Reveal of this year 2019, Miora Rajaonary, a photographer, whose work is deeply engaged with documentary photography in Africa. Art.doc: The art of documenting; the document of an artwork; and an artist that documents, to close a year, that for the record, was great!

Attentively,  
Regina de Con Cossio  
Editor



# THE WORK OF ART AND ITS RECORD

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# The work of art and its record

by Abel Cervantes

IN 1962 AN ART COLLECTOR BOUGHT YVES KLEIN a work that only he and the artist knew: when he finished reading the paper that contained the work, the collector broke it and set it on fire. Klein, meanwhile, threw half of the gold coins he had received in return to the Seine River. The work of art materialized for a few moments, vanished in seconds. And of it only one record remained.

From that moment, various museums exhibited this work in different ways. One of them placed blank boxes. Another, put in place a written explanation that detailed the work. In 2017 the MUAC of Mexico City showed a photographic series that documented the moment and, its curator, Cuauhtémoc Medina, mentioned that with that gesture Klein inaugurated art that is no longer based on an object but on an idea.

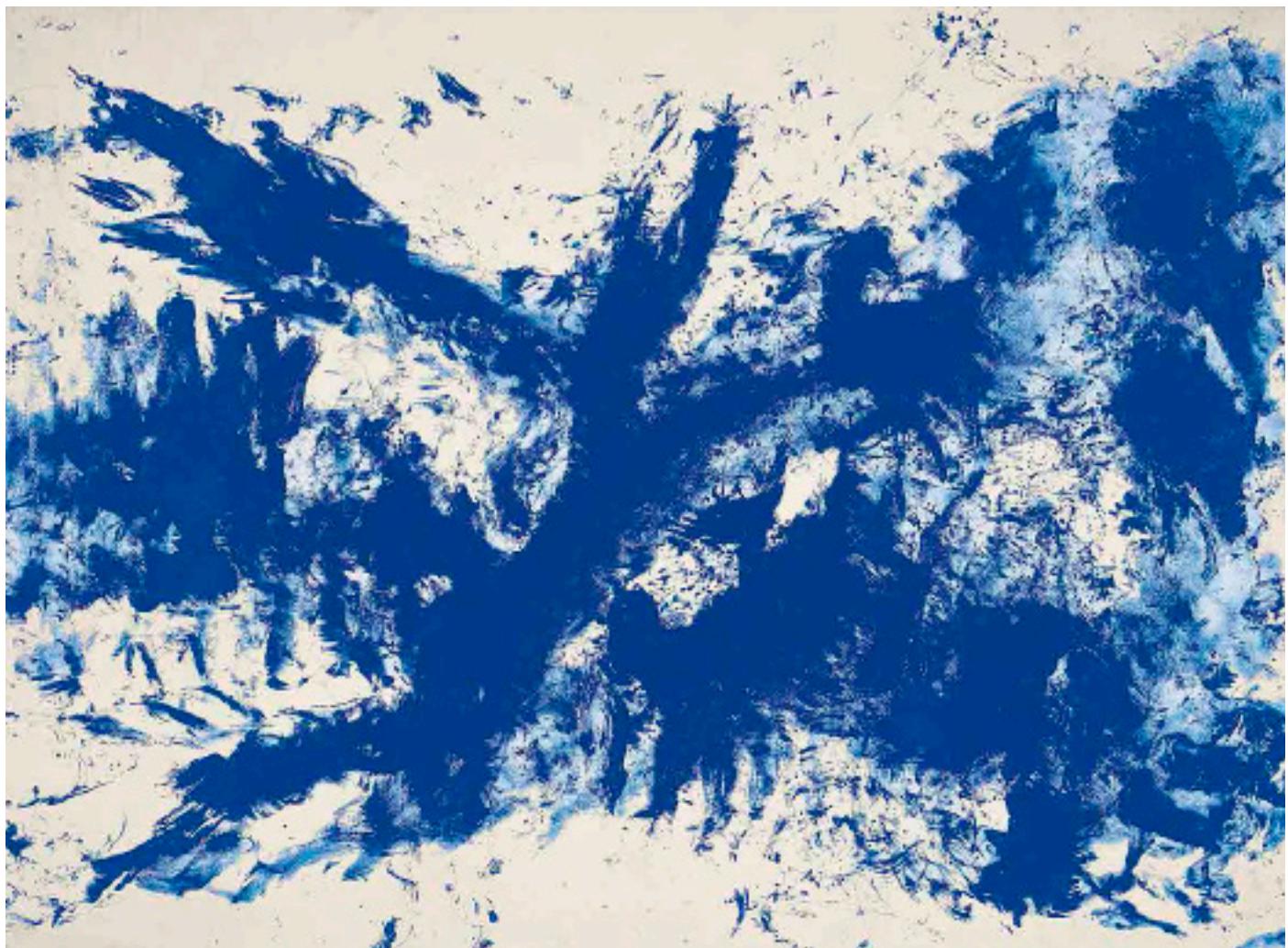
When we visit a museum or a gallery of contemporary art, many of the times we face photographs, videos or other documents that, apparently, only record a work of art. But in recent years contemporary art has taught us that the piece is not exclusively what is in the museum, but also the research behind it, its work process and, of course, its documentation.

Recording a work of art does not refer exclusively to documenting an event. By printing an event on an image or finding its resonance in a voice, the work of art takes on new forms. The content is transformed in proportion with the form does. On the other hand, the viewer is involved in a two-movement process. At first, he observes a series of records that transport him to an artistic practice. And be seduced by it. Upon returning, those same records acquire a different value.

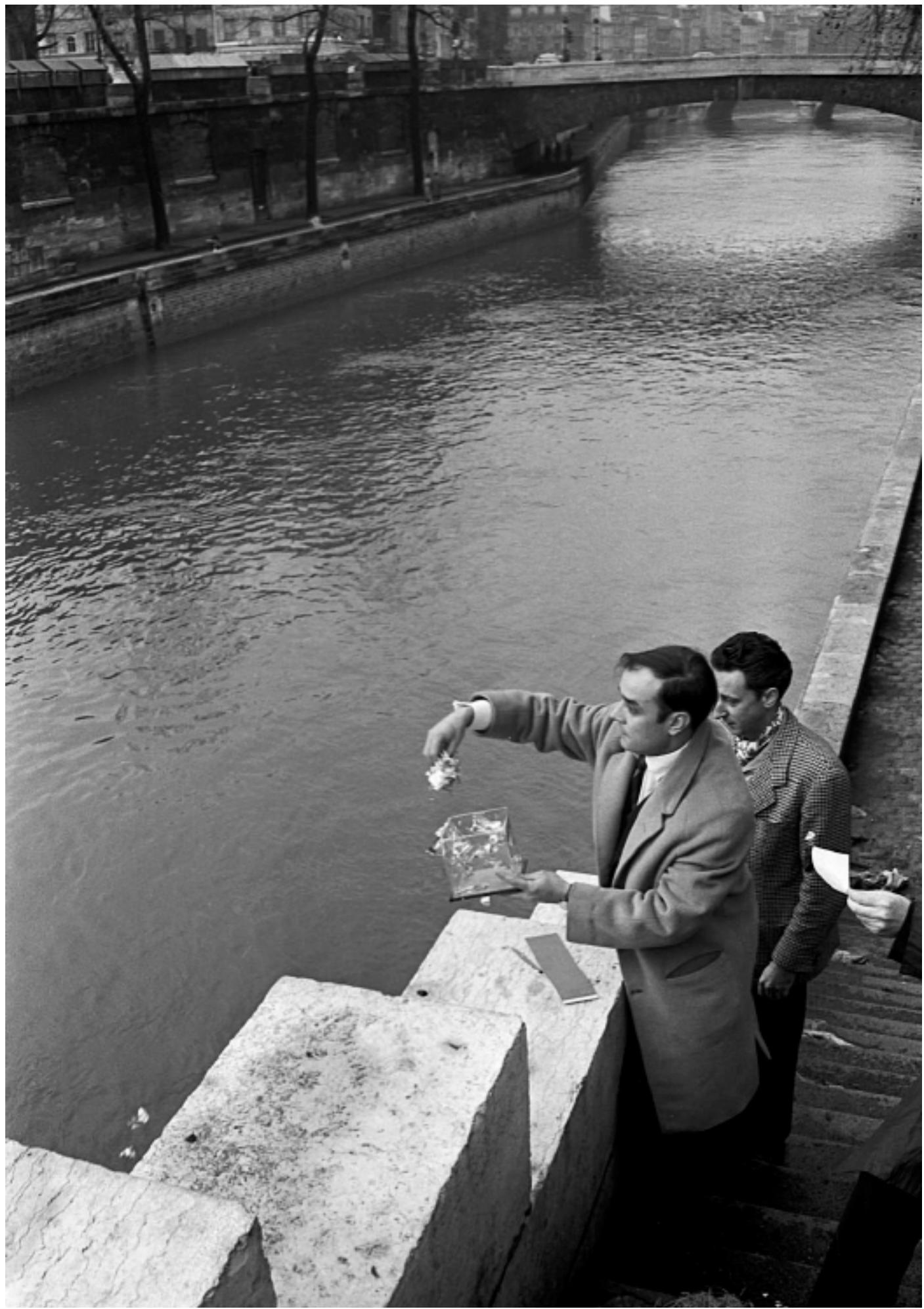
However, the artwork has not ended there. The record is integrated into the memory of the viewer, in the sense of Kierkegaard: memory is repetition, some of the past is presented again in the present. Without repetition we could not recognize anything. Memory surrounds the present as a ghost of the past, a double what it was, happening again in a present expanded. Thus, the viewer will not know what new form the artwork will acquire in his future, because it has already become part of his unconscious.



Yves Klein, *El hombre en el espacio*, 1960



Yves Klein. ANT 105, 1960 | Yves Klein. ANT 125, 1960



Transfer of an *Intangible Pictorial Sensitivity Zone* to Claude Pascal.

# AN INTERVIEW WITH GABRIELA SALAZAR

by Abel Cervantes  
Photos by Rogelio Reynoso,  
Sybaris Collection Archive

GABRIELA SALAZAR was born in New York in 1981. Her work examines the relationship “between human-made spaces and structures and the unpredictable or invisible forces (the shifting of land, the pressures of gravity, the passing and layering of time) that act upon them”. She has been an artist-in-residence in numerous programs including AIR, Abrons Art Center (2018), Open Sessions, The Drawing Center (2017), MacDowell (2009), and Yale-Norfolk School of Art (2002). In 2019 she collaborated with Sybaris Collection in an exhibition at Casa Nakasone, the new architectural piece by Escobedo- Soliz in Mexico City.

In her work, Salazar examines the modes and measures of knowledge that are transmitted, visibly and invisibly, via structure and stuff.

She approaches the built environment, her personal history, and material, as frameworks for site-responsive installations, drawings, and sculpture that engage the relational and associative possibilities inherent in medium, architecture, the body, selfhood, and place. Throughout her practice runs a fascination with the phenomenology of site; the ways architecture is (mis)repurposed towards contemporary needs and uses; rule-making (and bending) as a strategy for uncovering idealizations and uncertainty in experience and expectations; and the large-and-small consequences of intentionality, ambition, limit, and failure.



**The question is trying to discuss if its possible for a piece to get a new meaning everytime they are displayed in a different place.**

**Is it possible to think that pieces change their intrinsic value, when they are moved to a different context?**

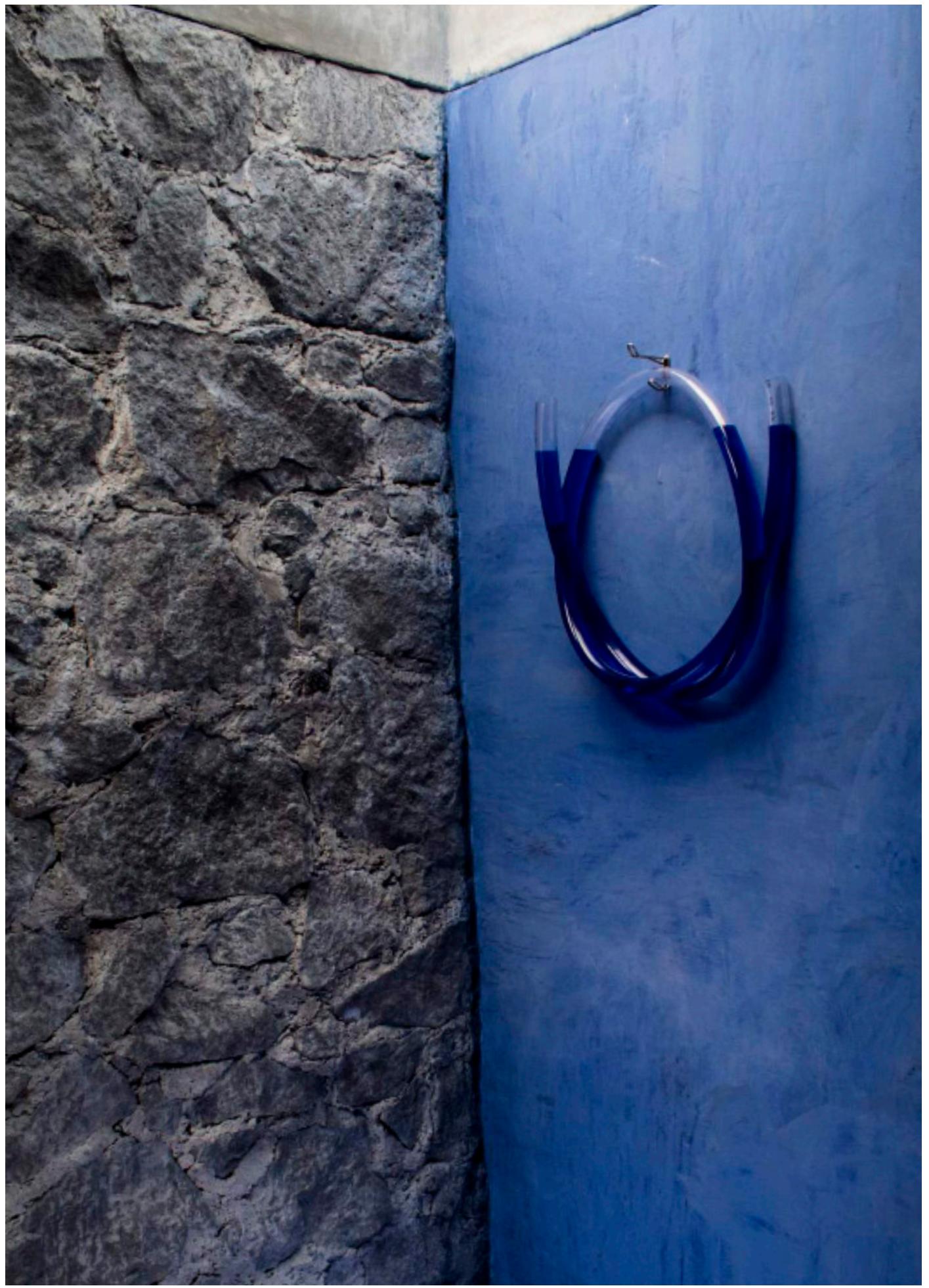
My work is often relational to its support or environment, and welcomes the intrusion of contextual associations and site-specific meanings. It's very intentional in my practice; I am often looking to use forms and materials that have resonance with lived experience, with sensory or haptic memory. Like in the *Hook Crook* series, I am expecting the viewer to "feel" the handrailing-ness of the pieces, and it's from the upending of that original feeling and expectation of support and touchability from that form that the piece gets its tension.

**Does the piece have in other words, a semantic or meaning that can be different depending where is it exhibited?**

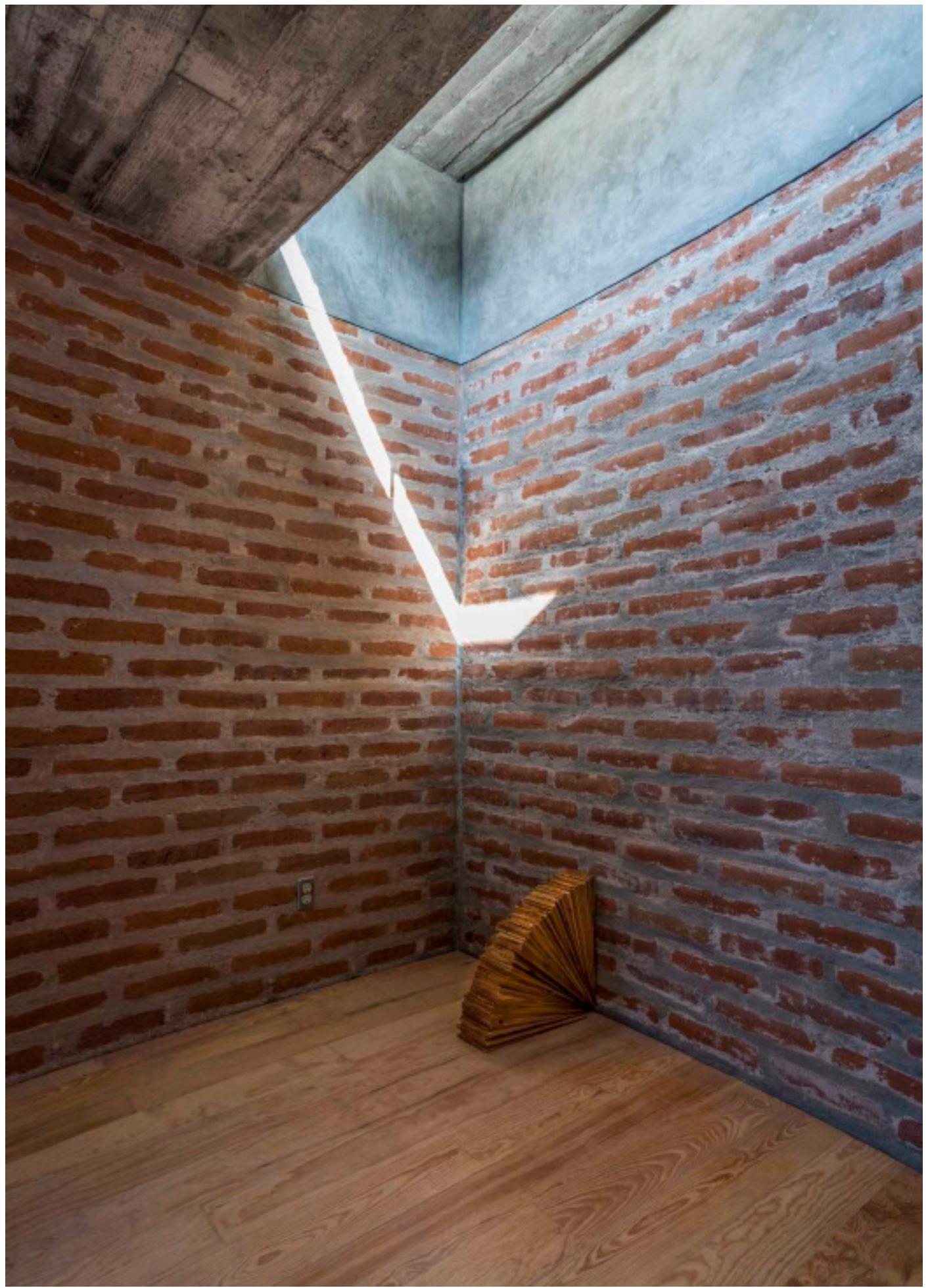
Personally, I *do* think art (and especially sculpture) that is not made with site-specificity in mind still cannot be seen apart from context, to some degree or another. But there is a difference when work is actively open to engaging in a conversation with its location(s).



Gabriela Salazar, *Hook Crook, Fair Foul*, 2017 - 2018, madera, papel, plastilina, gancho (metal y caucho)



Gabriela Salazar, *Knot Level*, 2012 - 2019, tubo de vinil, gancho de metal, agua coloreada  $55 \times 48 \times 21$  cm



Gabriela Salazar, *Wall Wedge*, 2012, barras de cedro, pared y piso,  $45 \times 45 \times 45$  cm



### **Can it get new meaning?**

I like to believe that some of my works in fact mediate between their support (or location), and the viewer's understanding of that space or support. I orchestrated the installation at Casa Nakasone from afar, through images of the site, and so in this way, too, the pieces mediate my own understanding and ability to experience that house, another country. When the works move to a gallery or other site, they carry their previous locations through the memories of those that saw them there, an audience that is extended through documentation.



**What do you think that the relation between Nakasone and the pieces could be?**

**What new meanings could the piece get in this environment?**

The *Hook Crooks* are a series that is meant to gather and disperse in different configurations and locations. Like a school of fish or a flock of birds, each piece is an individual (titled and numbered), but, when installed, it momentarily holds a place in a larger, moving, body. (The hooks themselves hold this place for the railing forms, which are interchangeable within the hooks.)

In the past, I've described the installation *Hook Crook, Fair Foul* as a library of possible actions. One could think of how a book carries its limited meanings within its covers, somewhat statically, but how in concert with other books and writings, that singular tome becomes a tool; in relation to other works, the single object can create something more, beyond itself. Each *Hook Crook* will always be a part of the larger body, even when separated.



# THE GROWTH OF AFRICAN ARTISTS IN 2019



Isaac Julien, *Playtime & Kapital*, 2013, video instalación. Fotografía: MUAC



IT IS NOT NEWS: THE ARCHITECTS AND CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS OF AFRICA are shaking the market and the spaces dedicated to their respective disciplines. In addition, in recent years, women artists have gained difficult terrain to predict. As mentioned by the ArtTactic report, published in July, on auction sales of Modern and contemporary African art between 2016 and 2019, which found that the average price for female artists was consistently higher than for males. In 2019, women fetch on average \$91,338, compared with \$19,555 for men.

What are the reasons why African women have achieved this goal? On the one hand, Hannah O'Leary, the head of Modern and contemporary African art at Sotheby's, mentions that although women artists are taking a decisive role in the art market, there is still much to do, because only a low percentage of these artists are represented in the market. On the other hand, many collectors still do not find the most interesting artists because they are waiting for the way the market behaves to purchase one of the works that come from Africa.



2019 can be considered as the year of the start of the rise of the art of African women. In a recent article *The Art Newspaper* is highlighting that “the South African photographer Mary Sibande has her first solo show in the UK at Somerset House (until 5 January 2020), while the non-profit space Gasworks is hosting Kudzanai-Violet Hwami’s first ever institutional solo show. She is one of four artists to represent Zimbabwe at the Venice Biennale this year and has just been signed by Goodman Gallery. Further afield, Nigerian-born Otobong Nkanga has her first UK museum show at Tate St Ives.”

On the other hand, one of the most interesting artists of recent times, Isaac Julien, focused on unveiling the ills of capitalism, organized an exhibition at Victoria Miro’s space based on the feminist book Bell Hooks, which talks about black people and self-esteem. The exhibition includes African artists such as Akunyili Crosby - who was named by *The Wall Street Journal*



as one of the artists whose work value grew considerably in recent years (her paintings began selling at \$ 3,000 and today reach \$ 100,000) -, South African Zanele Muholi, the Kenyan Wangecihi Mutu and the Gambian-British photographer Khadija Saye

In Sybaris Collection this year we selected as revelation artist the South African photographer Miora Rajaonary as one of the most interesting contemporary looks that fuses documentary and fictional interests, not only as a market trend, but as a way of recognizing the aesthetic and social value that she owns her work.

What does 2020 hold for us? It is not casual to say that Africa will continue to make its way into the international market as one of the most interesting territories for collecting.

Mary Sibande, *In the midst of chaos, there is opportunity*, 2017, fibreglass, vinyl, metal, painted wood, 100% cotton, and polyester fiberfill, 800 × 400 × 20 cm



Kudzanai-Violet Hwami, *Chafamba Chasvava*, 2017, oil stick, acrylic and oil on canvas, 270 × 180 cm

## ART REVEAL 2019: MIORA RAJAONARY

EACH YEAR, SYBARIS COLLECTION RECOGNIZES the work of a prominent artist who, through formal risk and experimentation, has managed to value his work both in museums and galleries and in the art market. In 2019 we chose Miora Rajaonary for having a unique look in which documentary and fictional interests merge. Her photographs are not only aesthetically attractive pieces, but samples of an elaborate work that represents the concerns of our times.



Pule, vocalist for the punk rock band TCIYF, during the Punk Fuck event in Soweto. © Miora Rajaonary / Native Agency



## I.

When Miora Rajaonary was 29, she took a camera for the first time to learn the basic technical concepts. Before wondering about the frame, the shutter, the exposure time or the light, Rajaonary looked at herself and said: who am I?

Thula (left), Tox (centre), his girlfriend, and Pule (right) are skateboarding and drinking in Soweto. With so little economic opportunities offered to the black youth, punk and skateboard have become an escape from a system and a lifestyle they don't want to conform to, and the key to freedom. Johannesburg, South Africa. April 2017.  
© Miora Rajaonary / Native Agency



2.

Miora Rajaonary was born in Madagascar, South Africa, in 1984. She said to *In Sight* magazine "I am a person of color, but I was educated in the French education system. I value my culture and traditions but have a way of reasoning that is Western. I identify myself as a black person, but for some people, my skin is too light, my hair too curly, my partner is white, our child is mixed race, and we are foreigners in the country we live in."

Thula is performing with his punk rock band, TCIYF, during a concert at a bar in Linden, an upmarket suburb in Johannesburg. TCYIF was created five years ago in Soweto but gained a diverse and significant audience beyond the township. April 2017, Johannesburg. © Miora Rajaonary / Native Agency



3.

I look at a photography of her series *Terminous Yeoville*. The images have an evident documentary interest. They are saturated with colors and persons. They seem to be alive. There isn't an obvious point of interest. When I look at them, I remember the words Siri Husvedt used to describe a photograph from another time and another place: her subjectivity and her personality are part of her images. I have a feeling that I could talk to them. And they would answer me. They don't seem like an object to me. They seem real to me. *Terminous Yeoville* records everyday situations that take place in Yeoville, a suburb of Johannesburg, where a strong immigrant culture has been created. Here, a boxing class on the street. There, a classroom. The Shop. The Hair Salon. Young people playing soccer. A wedding. African migrants who hide a history of violence and resentment. The photographs are only the result of a work process that includes journalistic methods, such as the interview.

Tank is part of the youth that got involved in the skate and punk community of Soweto. Skateboarding was spread in the township thanks to the Skate Society Soweto that distributed skateboards to the youngsters of the area. Johannesburg, South Africa. April 2017. © Miora Rajaonary / Native Agency



4.

What do the photographs of the *Million Rand Babies* series hide? There is a gym where boxing is practiced. All the images show an action - two teenagers fight over the ring, a child practices with his feet to coordinate his movements, another has just been shot down, a coach looks towards the camera a moment before starting an exercise ... - except two: one where a child with huge gloves looks to nothing and another where we see medals on the floor. The relationship between the photograph and the observer collides. On the one hand, a beautiful image, technically faultless. On the other, a terrible possibility: this gym dedicated to low-income people fleeing crime, is also a space where the best amateur boxers have the opportunity to dedicate themselves professionally to this sport and improve their personal situation. Would talking about light, shadows and the shape of these photographs be a way to escape the problem they exhibit?

Modiba, drummer for Demogoroth Satanum, South Africa's first all-black metal band, during their performance at the Punk Fuck event in Soweto. Johannesburg, South Africa. April 2017 © Miora Rajaonary / Native Agency

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