

The very title of Ugalde's latest exhibition, *Anecdotario del teorema* (Annals of the Theorem), comes across as a riddle. It does not tell us what theorem this is, whether Pythagoras', Fermat's, Bayes', Passolini's, or his own; it does not provide any more information than the sole statement of what a theorem means, and even that only on the basis of events, circumstances, and accidents connected to it. Both the geometric lyricism of the large-format paintings made with vinyl ink on plasticized canvas and the formal dismantling of emblematic artworks and artists such as David, Vermeer, and Raphael, made by means of ink injection on paper, speak eloquently—in the media used as well as in their execution—of Ugalde transgressive vocation, in the mold of the artists cited, and even—still in his sight—of more recent conventions—in terms of figure and representation—that he equals in time—if you will, and above all, in iconographic terms—to David's *Napoleon* and Koons' *Balloon Dog*. Ugalde's work inhabits the narrow haven where Gant Wood's *American Gothic* and Walter Lantz's *Woody Woodpecker* coexist interchangeably. All figures end up in abstraction.

Equalization is always violent, especially in political terms (even if in economic terms, everything always is, or can be, a commodity.) Ugalde's subversive vocation with regards to the formal starts from the circumstance—agreed upon in his trajectory as an artist—that signs, their referents and allusions, can be said by unsaying—ah, the paradoxical conventions of meaning—on the basis of the disassembly of their parts by means of geometric formulations. The tension that results, for example—both in composition and conceptual terms—from cutting up and arranging the layers of various segments of David's *Napoleon* in a mirror-like set up, confirms his formal intuitions; it brings them to the fore for an audience that may or may not see on the canvas something more than Napoleon Bonaparte and his white horse, which comes to

provide a stencil for the breakup of the reds, blues, and ochres that define and articulate—evidently—the very figure of Napoleon, transformed into a grid of chromatic counterpoints that tend—dynamic—to form squares, triangles, and circles that emulate, in the terms in which Fabián Ugalde's work is—above all—a formal reflection put together on the basis of the essential abstraction—if we may describe the forms and their dynamics in that way—of signs and cultural gestures, and runs in parallel—full of connecting vessels—to his more explicitly geometric aspect—again, according to ultimately political conventions—in the interplay of patterns through which he constitutes narratives very similar to those he proposes on the basis of this appropriation of the work of Great Masters (these being as well—highly likely—the appropriation of the work of more recent masters, or better yet, climates) in terms of patterns, in which he plays—always a provocateur—with the double meaning of the act of reflecting—insisting on symmetry and its ghosts—as something done in front of a mirror, or otherwise.

RICARDO POHLENZ

MIAMI / FL

Felipe Mujica

Pérez Art Museum Miami - PAMM

The exhibition *The Swaying Motion of the Bank of the River Falls* (2021) by Chilean-born Brooklyn-based Felipe Mujica presents a project produced in collaboration with Florida's Miccosukee tribe. Known for his large-size fabric panels or "curtains" that operate as sculptural

Fabián Ugalde. *Moroni Signal Failures*, 2021. Inks printed on glossy laminated paper. 43 ³/₁₀ x 34 ³/₅ in. (110 x 88 cm)



Felipe Mujica. *Steps*, 2021. Cotton fabric and thread. 88 ³/₁₆ x 56 in. (224 x 142.2 cm). Photo: Luis Corzo. Courtesy of the artist and PAMM



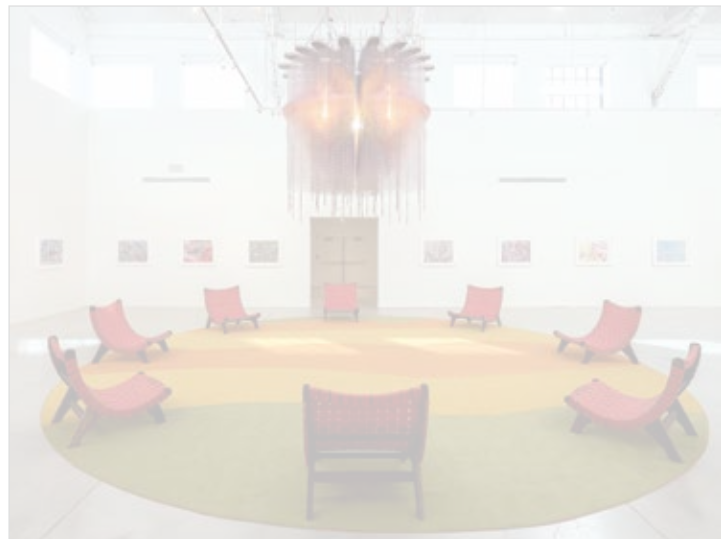
objects and functional architectural interventions, Mujica developed this site-specific installation to be presented indoors and outside PAMM's building on Biscayne Bay.

The artist accidentally began using fabric as a medium when preparing a show in Santiago de Chile in 2006. As he recalls, "I was experimenting with video at the time, and I needed to obscure the space, but I decided not to use a typical black curtain, which I thought was too serious."¹ He decided that using a colorful fabric would work better, so he commissioned a seamstress to make it. Once he installed it, he had an "aha moment," and as he explains: "All of a sudden I had in front of me a beautiful artifact, permeable architecture, a drawing in space, with color and forms."²

Interested in geometric abstraction, Mujica started to decorate monochromatic banners with sewn designs inspired by European abstract artists, including Alexander Rodchenko and Paul Klee. He later realized his practice was conducive to establishing dialogues with popular and indigenous cultures through collaborative and socially engaged projects. Building connections with groups outside the dominant Eurocentric field became a fundamental aspect of his practice. For the 32nd São Paulo Biennial (2016), he worked with a Brazilian embroidery collective and produced large curtains stitched with triangular patterns. Two years later, for Mexico's XIII Bienal FEMSA (2018), he worked with the Wixárika artisans from Zacatecas, who introduced him to the Huichol beading tradition.

On the occasion of the invitation he received from PAMM to carry out a commission that constitutes his first individual project in a museum in the United States, Mujica was introduced to one of Florida's Native American artistic traditions, the Seminole and Miccosukee *Taweekaache* (tah-wee-GAH-chee), which means "design" in the Mikasuki language.³ This patchwork style, made from skillfully sewing colorful horizontal strips of fabric, dates back to the beginning of the twentieth century when hand-cranked sewing machines were introduced to Seminole and Miccosukee women. Each band of fabric features two-colored geometric patterns following the principles of transformational geometry, a process used to create abstract designs using translation, rotation, and reflection of different geometric forms. Traditional Miccosukee *Taweekaache* patterns are inspired by legends and stories as well as natural elements which give them names such as "Fire," "Rain," and "Storm."⁴

Jorge Pardo. *Mongrel*, 2021. Installation. Variable dimensions. Photo: Oriol Tarridas. Courtesy of MOAD, the MDC Museum of Art and Design



To create the installation presented at PAMM, Mujica partnered with Miccosukee artist Khadijah Cypress to produce 20 banners inspired by the tribe's cosmology. Sewn on earth and blue-toned colored fabrics, the "curtains" represent several motifs commonly used in traditional patchwork such as "Fire," "Big Storm," and "Bird." Mujica takes their meaning a step forward by giving the installation an interactive character. Visitors can experience the tribe's cosmology at a multi-sensorial level while walking through the installation, touching the pieces of fabric, and sinuously swaying the banners which are loosely suspended from the ceiling. The changeable nature of the installation allows visitors to transform the space and play with the fabrics' color combinations. The public is given complete freedom as there are no determined paths. Everyone can explore the installation visually and physically, making it a truly sensorial experience.

By incorporating Miccosukee traditional designs into this new series, Mujica continues to collaborate with local communities and integrate what is considered "craft" or "popular arts" into his work. He also expands his research on the history of geometric abstraction beyond the Eurocentric parameters, creates new dialogues, highlights the work of tribal cultures, and explores new sensitivities regarding the metaphysical exploration of the natural world.

NOTES

1. Kristina Foster, video interview with the artist. Cited in "Curtain call for Chilean artist Felipe Mujica," *Financial Times*, November 26, 2021. <https://www.ft.com/content/b86dedf1-69a8-4012-8859-f4844eff3a29>

2. *Ibid.*

3. <https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/sflarch/collections/seminole-dolls/patchwork/>

4. *Ibid.*

FRANCINE BIRBRAGHER-ROZENCWAIG, PHD

Jorge Pardo

Museum of Art and Design @MDC

Mongrel, Jorge Pardo's latest exhibition, curated by Rina Carvajal for the Museum of Art and Design at Miami Dade College, functions in continuity with his previous work. The show consists of an installation resembling the inside of a domestic space, once again underscoring the artist's interest in architecture and design.

At the center of the room is a round carpet in green, ochre, and orange, with eight modernist chairs, red in color, arranged equidistantly around it. The placement of the chairs sets up the stage for a dialog devoid of pre-established hierarchies, where each participant could occupy an equal spot.

The main component of the installation is a large chandelier, which becomes the focal point of the "room", right above the carpet. The chandelier can be seen as a sculpture comprised of numerous individual elements assembled together, all designed by Pardo on a computer and then laser-cut according to his specifications. Once lit, the chandelier shines in multiple colors.

The walls around these elements contain several two-dimensional, multicolor artworks, hung at equal intervals. The scene is perfectly proportioned; all the elements have been arranged in a spatially well centered, balanced manner, following basic principles of interior design.

The room's modernist style also makes reference to a specific era and region. The chairs are reminiscent of the *boutaques* that were especially popular in Cuban and Latin American living rooms in the 1950s and 60s. The chandelier puts us in mind of the custom, common across the region, of lighting interior spaces in a dramatic fashion.