

BLUM & POE

Los Angeles, New York, Tokyo

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pia Camil
Nidos y Nudos

July 17–August 14, 2021
Blum & Poe, Los Angeles

July 1, 2021, Los Angeles, CA — Blum & Poe is pleased to present *Nidos y Nudos / Nests & Knots*, Mexico City-based artist Pia Camil's third solo presentation with the gallery.

Pia Camil's work takes a critical approach to modernism's legacy, exploring themes such as US-Mexico relations, the politics of consumerism, and the invisibility of feminized labor, often articulated through imagery from the Mexican urban landscape. Recently with emphasis on the importance of collectivity through public participation, she explores these territories through performance, painting, installation, sculpture, and film. Camil's latest exhibition, *Nidos y Nudos*, was created during a pandemic-prompted uprooting from Mexico City to the rural countryside. Precipitated by the stark contrast between one environment and the next, Camil spent the last year looking to nature for lessons in collective intelligence and the building of symbiotic architectures. What results are two new bodies of work, *Nidos (Nests)* and *Nudos (Knots)*.

The ten works on view from the *Nidos* series are organic totem-like forms of concrete, mortar, and recycled newspaper in bright pigments. Camil's sculptures explore the concept of the nest, focusing in particular on the termite nest as one of the architectural wonders of the living world—this body of work is a meditation on its labyrinthine design and its symbolism. The termite nest is built by the collective action of workers in a colony, a swarm intelligence that creates elaborate structural motifs that allow for efficient ventilation and temperature control, yielding mounds 300 times bigger than the insects themselves. Continuing with Camil's signature leitmotif of transforming mass-market, used, and recycled materials, these structures are coated with a mixture of cement and newspaper. The irregular surfaces contain small “windows” to peek into, to glimpse a moment from everyday news with particular points of views and stories, creating a connection between object and viewer. These works are a post-pandemic rumination on the nest as protector, enclosure, and incubator for the seed of a species.

Presented alongside, the sister series *Nudos* is comprised of works on paper with coiling, overlapping lines of ink and vibrant oil stick over hand-smudged locally sourced clay. Informed by calligraphy, storytelling, and multispecies feminist theorist Donna Haraway's book *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (2016), Camil's drawings channel Haraway's concept of “sympoiesis, or making-with,” rather than “autopoiesis, or self-making.” The drawing patterns suggest pathways or messages made by termites during their daily activities. These forms reference collective creation but also the act of getting tied up, like hands in a cat's cradle—another reference to Haraway's string

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figures—symbolizing a speculative fabulation. In this vein of cultivating a kind of practice that would provide the means for building a more livable future, Camil's *Nudos* are material-semiotic maps to other worlds.

Pia Camil's (b. 1980, Mexico City) work is currently on view in her solo exhibition *Three Works* at MOCA Tucson, AZ (2021). Recent museum exhibitions include *Unflagging*, Ballroom Marfa, TX (2020); *Velo Revelo*, Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, MA (2020); *Here Comes the Sun*, performance at Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY (2019); *Fade into Black*, Queens Museum, Queens, NY (2019); *Bara, Bara, Bara*, Tramway, Glasgow, Scotland (2019); *Telón de Boca*, Museo Universitario del Chopo, Mexico City, Mexico (2018); *Split Wall*, Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham, UK (2018); *Fade into Black*, SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, GA (2018); *Bara, Bara, Bara*, Dallas Contemporary, Dallas, TX (2017); *A Pot for a Latch*, New Museum, New York, NY (2016), traveled to Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art, University of California, Davis, CA; *Skins*, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, OH (2015); and *Cuadrado Negro*, Basque Museum-Centre of Contemporary Art, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain (2013).

About Blum & Poe

Blum & Poe was founded by Timothy Blum and Jeffrey Poe in Santa Monica in September of 1994 as a space to show local and international contemporary art in all media. Blum's extensive experience in the Japanese art world combined with Poe's keen knowledge of emerging artists in Los Angeles, together resulted in an international program of influential artists. Throughout a twenty-six-year history, Blum & Poe has shaped the trajectory of contemporary art by championing artists at all stages of their careers—cultivating the lineages that run between emerging and established practices, and working with artist estates to generate new discourse surrounding historical work.

In 2003 the gallery moved to a larger space in Culver City, and in 2009 Blum & Poe purchased and renovated its current 22,000 square foot complex on La Cienega Boulevard. In this location the gallery has since held museum-caliber surveys, examining the historical work of such movements as the Japanese Mono-ha school (2012); the Korean Dansaekhwa monochrome painters (2014); the European postwar movement CoBrA (2015); Japanese art of 1980s and '90s (2019); a rereading of Brazilian Modernism (2019); and a revisionist take on the 1959 MoMA exhibition, *New Images of Man* (2020). To produce these exhibitions, Blum & Poe has worked with celebrated curators such as Joan Kee, Mika Yoshitake, Sofia Gotti, and Alison M. Gingeras.

In 2014, Blum & Poe opened galleries in New York and Tokyo to focus on intimately scaled projects in tandem with an expansive program of exhibitions, lectures, performance series, screenings, and an annual art book fair at its base in Los Angeles. In 2015, Blum & Poe was certified as an Arts:Earth Partnership (AEP) green art gallery and consequently

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became one of the first green certified galleries in the United States. Blum & Poe's own publishing division focuses on sharing aspects of its program via original scholarship and accessible media ranging from academic monographs, audio series, magazines, and artists' books. In 2020, the gallery launched Blum & Poe Broadcasts, an online platform showcasing artists' projects in conjunction with physical installations or as standalone digital endeavors.

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