

roberto gil de montes

rainy season

oct. 22 – dec. 15 2022

opening:

oct. 22, 12 – 2 pm

press preview:

oct 20, 11 am

kurimanzutto
gob. rafael rebollar 94
col. san miguel chapultepec
11850 ciudad de méxico

tue - thur, 11am – 6 pm
fri - sat, 11am – 4 pm

press
julia villaseñor
julia@kurimanzutto.com
+52 55 52 56 24 08

www.kurimanzutto.com

@kurimanzutto



The sea has grown and the water changes from blue to grey to brown. The beach is strewn with pieces of tile, sticks, hats, rubber tyres, branches, mangled corn sacks and clumps of foliage, washed up like messages. The ocean shapes them all, brushes off their edges, moulds and crashes into them, brings them into land and sends them back out to sea again, moving matter everywhere. An old sofa has been dragged out toward the shoreline, children's toys beside it in the sand. Behind this, graffitied walls hold up unpredictable washing lines, and rain puddles or whole rivers of road reflect the sunlight cracking through cuts in the bruised clouds.

kurimanzutto presents Roberto Gil de Montes' first solo exhibition in Mexico, *Rainy Season (Temporada de Lluvias)*. Evoking high summer in Nayarit, this series of oil paintings explores the hidden images and forgotten or imagined stories of life in the tropics in rainy season, when almost every afternoon an *aguacero* drenches the landscape and places a sheen between the observer and what they see.

Born in Guadalajara in 1950, Gil de Montes moved to the United States at the age of twelve and spent his teens and early career in Los Angeles, where he became involved in the Chicano art movement. He moved to Mexico City in the 1980s, before returning to California and eventually being drawn back to Mexico. He is now settled in the rural fishing town of La Peñita de Jaltemba on the Pacific coast of Nayarit.

Gil de Montes' artistic practice is guided by disciplined attention and playful experiment. Whilst being marked by the eclectic influences of artists including, among many others, Marsden Hartley and the figurative painters of the Bay Area in the 1950s, there are also frequent references to pre-Hispanic artistic traditions. His paintings are often populated with lush, varied forms from dreams and daily experience alongside the iconography of Huichol art: the canvas, for him, is a space to redefine the relationship between the real and the imaginary.

While bearing witness to border crossings and transgressions – geographical and cultural – these new paintings also evoke a powerful sense of the local peculiarities of the place in which they were created. *Rainy season* is an invitation to stay inside, the artist's gaze turning inwards. The images, inflected with Gil de Montes' acute sense of the absurd and his characteristic lightness and generosity of spirit, are the embodiments of an inconclusive search for meanings behind ideas, incidents, the mundane and the deadly serious.

Boys lie in pools of water, ambiguously testing the distance between languid repose and deathly calm. Hybrid and non-binary figures are partially submerged and at the same time affirmatively exposed. Searching faces look out from

behind veiled coverings, verdant foliage, TV screens, masks, headdresses, returning our gaze, waiting for answers. Five deer dancers have been caught in a heavy downpour or are bobbing far out to sea. Bodies reach out for other bodies. Two men think about a swim among the broken tombstones, unearthed and rearranged by a hurricane. And a boy in a *guayabera* stands before the scorched red of his imagination with an owl and together they scrutinise us.

When the clouds lift and separate and the sun breaks through, Gil de Montes reminds us that the seething damp heat brings everything everything to new life in crawling, glistening assemblages. And the search begins again.

-Lucy Foster

about the artist

Roberto Gil de Montes was born in 1950 in Guadalajara, Mexico. As a teenager his family relocated to the United States where he later went on to receive a BFA and MFA from Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles. As a young artist he became involved in the Chicano art movement in and around Los Angeles, developing relationships with artists such as Carlos Almaraz. In the 1980s, he returned to Mexico City where he worked at the Museo de Arte Moderno and on *Artes Visuales*, the prestigious arts journal that explored visual culture in Latin America. Roberto returned to Los Angeles to concentrate on his painting practice and began to exhibit widely. He also became involved in the creation of LACE (Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions) and began to show with Jan Baum Gallery, the only gallery at that time to show Black, Latinx and Asian artists on the West Coast. In 2000, he and his partner, Eddie, packed up their home in Echo Park and moved, via San Francisco, to La Peñita, a fishing town on the Pacific coast of Nayarit, Mexico, where they had spent many holidays. Roberto continues to live in La Peñita and paints in a studio directly overlooking the town plaza, a block from the coast.

kurimanzutto
gob. rafael rebollar 94
col. san miguel chapultepec
11850 ciudad de méxico

tue - thur, 11am - 6pm
fri - sat, 11am - 4pm

press
julia villaseñor
julia@kurimanzutto.com
+52 55 52 56 24 08

www.kurimanzutto.com

@kurimanzutto

