

minerva cuevas

in gods we trust

march 3— april 15, 2023

opening

march 3, 6— 8 pm

press visit:

march 3, 11 am – 12 pm

kurimanzutto
gob. rafael rebollar 94
col. san miguel chapultepec
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Following its inaugural exhibition, kurimanzutto presents Minerva Cuevas's most recent solo exhibition in the gallery in New York.

For more than three decades, Cuevas's practice has been rooted in research-based projects concerned with economic and environmental issues and their socio-political impact.

On this occasion, Cuevas will exhibit large-scale wall reliefs especially conceived for the New York context. The reliefs at kurimanzutto are informed by the Mexico City-based artist's meticulous preparatory research into pre-Hispanic symbology and the history of relationships between oil and wealth management companies. The resulting pieces combine representations of pre-Hispanic gods and goddesses along with corporate logos. Previous monumental relief artwork has been on display at Museum Ludwig in Cologne where the artist introduced us to a broad concept of economics entitled *The Enterprise* (2019).

A series of playful sculptures, which were recently exhibited in Cuevas's exhibition at Museo Jumex in Mexico City, are also on view. They incorporate facsimiles of the heads of animals from Mexico's famed Museo Nacional de Antropología with vintage motor oil drums collected by the artist.

The exhibition at kurimanzutto is anchored by *The Trust* (2023), a major new mural comprising 126 monochrome panels measuring 41 x 11 feet (12.5 x 3.5 meters). The tableau image includes representations of Chalchiuhtlicue, the Aztec goddess of water and fertility, as well as Tlazoltéotl, the mythological goddess of lust and excess. Cuevas also integrates depictions of flora and fauna found in clay and stone objects from various pre-Hispanic museum collections. Through imagery of and surrounding natural resources that span centuries, she draws a connection to colonization in Mesoamerica that started transatlantic trade and our current ecological moment. Each of these archeological elements went through digital and manual modeling processes before being painted in white acrylic and refined through exacting handwork. The artist brings these historical elements in dialogue with the logos of corporations such as Chevron, British Petroleum, and First Republic Bank, all of which use natural and even mythical motifs such as Pegasus,

flowers, and an eagle to communicate values of fortitude, care, strength, and power. A turtle is also present in the relief, which is based on a figure found in the mural Diego Rivera painted at Rockefeller Center that was destroyed for its perceived communist sentiment.

In another key work in the exhibition, Cuevas, for the first time, draws directly from the tradition of post-revolutionary Mexican mural painting. She isolated specific elements from *Epopéya del pueblo Mexicano* (Epic of the Mexican people) (1935), a mural painted by Rivera inside Palacio Nacional in downtown Mexico City, and reproduced only certain highlighted details from the painted scene of pre-Hispanic cultural life, such as stone sculptures and only the loincloths or ceremonial costumes imagined in Rivera's mural. Cuevas reinterprets the image as a fragmented, monochromatic relief that suggests the splintered nature of historical narratives—a way in which to view all of the works in the exhibition.

Alongside the reliefs and sculptures is a selection of historical advertisements of oil products dating from the 1950s to the 1970s that take on a new reading in the context of today's ecological crisis.

In addition to Museo Jumex, and Museum Ludwig, Cuevas (b. Mexico City, 1975) has had solo exhibitions at institutions that include, Whitechapel Gallery, London; Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland; Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands; daadgalerie, Berlin; Centre d'art contemporain, Saint-Nazaire, France; Museo Tamayo, Mexico City. Cuevas has exhibited in group shows at Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY; Centre Pompidou, Paris; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA; South London Gallery; Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit; MAXXI Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo, Rome; Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. She has also participated in the following biennials: 6th Berlin Biennial; 9th Biennale de Lyon, France; 6th Liverpool Biennial, United Kingdom; 27th Bienal de São Paulo, Brazil; Sharjah Biennial 7, United Arab Emirates; 8th İstanbul Bienali; 6th Bienal do Mercosul, Porto Alegre, Brazil; Prospect 4, New Orleans, LI.

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