

Naufus Ramírez-Figueroa
With the South on My Back

January 20 – February 17, 2024

The work of Naufus Ramírez-Figueroa (Guatemala, 1978) explores dreams, stories and specific historical narratives to reinterpret events in Latin America—particularly those related to Mesoamerica, processes of colonization, or the Guatemalan Civil War (1960-1996). By mixing imaginative and historiographic aspects, and the intimate and the public, Ramírez-Figueroa produces works that evoke and re-signify memories of certain events, while at the same time making evident their affective framework, as well as the consequences they have on personal and collective scales.

With the South on My Back—a commission by Galerie Nordenhake for its first collaboration with the artist—comprises a new group of paintings and sculptures, which take as their starting point a research trip the artist made in 2023 to the archaeological site of Cacaxtla, Mexico. The murals found at this site are one of the few records of the artistic exchange between the Maya and Central Mexican cultures. As such, they are an example of cultural mobility and cross-pollination.

For this exhibition, Ramírez-Figueroa developed sculptures and a series of paintings on carved wood that reinterpret the *Cacaxtlan Mural of the Battle* (600 - 750 A.D.), which depicts a sacrifice in honor of the corn god, Xólotl. In the face of these ritual representations, the artist modified some of its forms, such as children's figures with backpacks that replace some shields. In doing so, the artist juxtaposes to the original historical meanings one of the most prevalent forms of cultural exchange today: those produced by the diasporas of the global south, a consequence of the violence and economic crisis in the region. For the artist, moreover, childhood traumas are images that illuminate problems that society aims to forget.

The bronze sculptures, meanwhile, use the forms of two trees with cosmogonic meanings for certain Mesoamerican cultures: the ceiba and the flame coral tree. The former is considered sacred for the Mayan culture; the latter is still used in some spiritualities in Mexico and Guatemala. Beyond doing naturalistic representations of these branches, Ramírez-Figueroa mixes them with imaginative figures, thus opening them to personal and speculative interpretations.

GALERIE NORDENHAKE
mexico city

Monterrey 65
Col. Roma, 06700
Ciudad de México
T. +52 (55) 7414 9776
www.nordenhake.com
@galerie_nordenhake

Naufus Ramírez-Figueroa (Guatemala, 1978) lives and works in Guatemala. He has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions, among them: *Chosen Memories*, The Museum of Modern Art, MoMA, New York (2023); *Cantándole a las plantas*, Museo de Arte Moderno de Medellín (2023); *Cantándole a las plantas, Performances 2001-2023*, Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá (2023); *Naufus Ramírez-Figueroa*, Museum Leuven (2022); *Beyond, the Sea Sings*, Times Art Center (2021); *Avanzar con paso leve*, Thyssen-Bornemisza (2020); *Asymmetries*, The Power Plant, Toronto (2020); *At Small Arms*, Toronto Biennial Of Art (2019); *The House of Kawinal*, New Museum, New York (2018); *Shit Baby and the Crumpled Giraffe*, Kunsthalle Lissabon, Lisbon (2017); *The Green Ray*, daadgalerie, Berlin (2017); *Linnæus in Tenebris*, CAPC Musée d'art contemporain, Burdeos (2017); *VIVA ARTE VIVA*, 57th Venice Biennale, Venice (2017); *Two Flamingos Copulating on a Tin Roof*, Haus Esters, Krefeld Kunstmuseum, Krefeld (2017); *Incerteza Viva*, 32nd São Paulo Biennial, São Paulo (2016); *God's Reptilian Finger*, Gasworks, London (2015); *Rendez-Vous*, 13th Lyon Biennial, Lyon (2015); *Burning Down the House*, 10th Gwangju Biennial, Gwangju (2014); *A Chronicle of Interventions*, Tate Modern, London, (2014); *Illy Present Future*, Castello di Rivoli, Torino (2013); *Beber y Leer El Arcoíris*, Casa América, Madrid (2012); *Home Works IV*, Ashkal Alwan, Beirut (2008); y 53th Internationale Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen, Oberhausen, (2007). He received the Guggenheim Fellowship, the Mies Van Der Rohe Award, a Franklin Furnace Award, Inga Maren Otto Award, Artpace Residency, an Akademie Schloss Solitude Scholarship (selected by Dan Graham) and a DAAD Berlin Artist-in-Residence Scholarship.