

daniel guzmán

*the man who should be
dead: notes on the
dead house, the fire
and the tale*

jan 12 — feb 24, 2024

opening

jan 12, 6 — 8 pm

kurimanzutto
gob. rafael rebollar 94
col. san miguel chapultepec
11850 mexico city

516 w 20th street
new york city, 10011

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

www.kurimanzutto.com
[@kurimanzutto](https://www.instagram.com/kurimanzutto)



*It was necessary, given our colonial poverty, to find a place in
World History, discover our hidden being, reconstruct history
in a different way to "find a space of our own.*

–Enrique Dussel¹

*The word has been given to us as a parable, not to distance us
from things, but to have them close, even closer, like when we
recognize someone familiar in a face, like when a hand brushes
against us.*

–Giorgio Agamben²

kurimanzutto presents the latest chapter from the exhibition series *The Man Who Should Be Dead* in New York by Mexican artist Daniel Guzmán. Following the project's most recent iteration in Mexico City in June 2023, *Notes on the Dead House, the Fire, and the Tale* continues the artist's exploration of drawing forms initiated in 2017. For this presentation, Guzmán expands a selection of his works on paper, transforming them into three-dimensional structures that incorporate additional visual references from his artistic practice.

Music criticism, science fiction, narrative literature, essays, and poetry are just a few of the influences shaping Guzmán's works in this series. Throughout each chapter, "The Man Who Should Be Dead" unfolds a narrative universe filled with places, gods, characters, references, and inspirations. Pictorial references, such as Philip Guston's depictions of Nixon as a vociferous and repulsive scrotum, are reimaged by Guzmán as the form of a partially ruined house with hanging testicles, engaging in various actions across the series. Guzmán also draws inspiration from the dark scenarios of George Grosz and Max Beckmann, incorporating black environments, fragmented landscapes, and contrasting colors that have been constants in his compositions for over a decade.

¹ Dussel, Enrique. *Retratos de una filosofía de la liberación*. Herder, Barcelona, 2022.

² Agamben, Giorgio. *The Fire and the Tale*. Translation by Lorenzo Chiesa. Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA. 2017.

The artist has developed a glossary of references and visual markers challenging the contemporary representation of Mexican identity. From recognizable motifs resembling glyphs and representations of deities in pre-Hispanic codices—like the mutilated goddess Coyolxauhqui and the sacrificial Aztec flint with eyes and teeth interacting across many works—to the omnipresent influence of muralists such as José Clemente Orozco, whose monumental characters embody the sinister father (sometimes merging Hernán Cortéz into Darth Vader).

In each chapter of "The Man Who Should Be Dead," Daniel Guzmán intertwines new visual and literary references. For the upcoming presentation in New York, the figure of the mystical Mexican artist Dr. Atl and his admiration for the volcanic explosions of the Parícutín volcano, along with his creation of the idyllic Mexican landscape in the early 20th century, takes a prominent place in Guzmán's latest visual narrative. Materially, the works may be deceiving—what appears as a painting is, in fact, a work on paper, existing somewhere between a drawing and an acrylic painting, mounted on wood. Emphasizing the significance of drawing, the artist brings it to a three-dimensional plane through subtle gestures, such as raising the paper a few centimeters from the wall with the frame and treating the structures of larger pieces to create a sense of sculptural circulation.

To be born is a mystery; the place of our birth imposes a history and a language on us, an origin. We begin to walk through life trying to assemble the narrative, the story of that origin, the dead house, and the fire of the mystery that brought us to life.

The new drawings are a note, an attempt to recount a personal experience of the world we inhabit among the ruins of creator myths—the dead house and the metaphysical fire; language that sweeps away everything we once knew.

A kind of prequel, in the manner of classic science fiction films like Alien and Star Wars. We are now on the quest of the story of the man who should be dead.

–Daniel Guzmán, Guadalajara, November 2023.

kurimanzutto
gob. rafael rebollar 94
col. san miguel chapultepec
11850 mexico city

516 w 20th street
new york city, 10011

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

www.kurimanzutto.com
@kurimanzutto



Born in 1964 in Mexico City, Guzmán takes inspiration from a diverse range of elements congruous to Mexican popular culture, often borrowing visual imagery from tabloids, pulp fiction, literature, rock music and cinema. A voracious reader and incurable music lover, Daniel Guzmán digests, absorbs and recombines musical and literary references at his own discretion. His work is marked by an almost autobiographical sincerity. Comics and cartoons, song lyrics, Pre-Hispanic iconography and sensational press clippings – residues of the artist's daily life in Mexico City and, more recently, in Guadalajara – combine and reconfigure as part of his vocabulary. Resulting from a constant, disciplined search, his drawings are guided by his hand's intuition, which translates his references and imagination unto paper. Ink, pencil, acrylic or pastel alike serve to create images that seem to be in constant transformation, and which sometimes interlace with texts in a complex weave of connections and connotations. His sculptures, videos and installations reflect a very personal and intimate territory, that emerges from such close examination of the culture and the urban landscape that surrounds him. With a strategic and contagious sense of humor, Guzmán shares the wide range of influences he has cultivated, and through which he reflects upon his experience of the world. Daniel Guzmán's last major exhibition in New York was held at the New Museum in 2008. The artist lives and works in Guadalajara.

kurimanzutto
gob. rafael rebollar 94
col. san miguel chapultepec
11850 mexico city

516 w 20th street
new york city, 10011

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

www.kurimanzutto.com

@kurimanzutto





Daniel Guzmán, *Temblor Cósmico I*. De la serie: "El hombre que debería estar muerto. Apuntes de la casa muerta", 2023. Pencil, Black Creta colored pencil and acrylic on Stonehenge paper on a wooden frame 57 x 76 cm (22.44 x 29.92 in). Courtesy kurimanzutto.

kurimanzutto
gob. rafael rebollar 94
col. san miguel chapultepec
11850 mexico city

516 w 20th street
new york city, 10011

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

www.kurimanzutto.com
@kurimanzutto

