



UNO (from the series *Conjunto Compacto*), 2016. Brass, branches, porcelain plate, glass fruit, stone, neon. 42 × 130 cm / 16^{9/16} × 51^{3/16} in. Photo: Guillaume Ziccarelli

Gabriel Rico

One Law for The Lion & Ox is Oppression

Opening Sunday November 5, 6-8 pm
November 5 – December 23, 2017

Perrotin is proud to present *One Law for The Lion & Ox is Oppression*, Gabriel Rico's debut exhibition in New York and first solo show with the gallery.

Past exhibitions by Rico include MAZ Zapopan Art Museum, Zapopan, Mexico; Galerie Perrotin, Paris, France; CEART Centro de arte Tomaz y Valiente, Madrid, Spain; 8th Gyeonggi International Ceramic Biennale, Korea Ceramic Foundation, Seoul, Korea and Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice, Italy and most recently his first solo exhibition in the United States at the Arizona State University Art Museum. He has received awards by The National Fund for Culture and the Arts (FONCA) Mexico; The Ministry of Culture of Colombia, Bogota, Colombia; Bursary for Artists at The Ténor Foundation, France and Prince Claus Foundation, Amsterdam, Netherlands. His work is in the collections of Centro de Arte Tomas & Valiente/ Museo Nacional Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain; Artist Village, WARP contemporary art platform, St. Nikklass, Belgium; Korean Ceramic Foundation (KOCEF) Seoul, Korea and ArtNexus Foundation, Bogota, Colombia.

"Art remains at the service of the human even as it tries to undo previous definitions of humanism to arrive at a "becoming" that is in affinity with animals."

Ron Boglio

With a post-Surrealist/Arte Povera approach, artist Gabriel Rico's latest body of work mines a range of materials, from taxidermy animals to neon shapes and found natural objects, that together create environments addressing the relationship between nature, architecture and the future ruins of civilization. Looking at the behaviors and survival techniques of animals, like the Golden pheasant, he creates settings that reveal complexities of the current human condition. The juxtaposition of diverse life forms infuse the objects with a humor and irony, reflective of the common struggle to attain equilibrium amidst the everyday challenges of life.



Naturaleza muerta, 2016. Wood, pheasant skin, plastic fruits, neon, rope
115 x 50 x 50 cm / 45^{1/4} x 19^{11/16} x 19^{11/16} in

The title of the exhibition derives from the final line of William Blake's visionary text, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.¹ "One law for the lion and ox is oppression," can be considered as the confinement of energy by the law of reason that in return would destroy energy, and therefore existence. Blake insists there is no single law, no moral absolute, by which man is governed, which brings into question whether animals reveal something about culture and what it means to be human?

Looking back to a time when man was believed to be the master of nature, Rico investigates historical technologies seen during the peak of the Age of Reason. He distills geometric shapes that correspond to this period when the applied life sciences began to rely on mathematics to quantize nature in order to understand, dominate, and ultimately attempt to conquer it.

Through works such as *Venado*, one can see Rico taking these failed romantic notions about man conquering nature to a playful, tragic, and poetic result. The familiar shape of the Modernist square is here composed of a fine balance of objects that reveal a deeper sense of intention: the projective geometry of neon, fragments of a taxidermy deer hoof, a handmade vintage knife (partially composed of deer bone), a brass angle, and two devalued Mexican coins. Together, they bring to light the question of whether Modernity missed the third world.

Playing with the ideas of balance, connection and uncertainty, Rico's work also reveals a chance meeting of sculptural objects related to *La Danza del Venado* (*The Deer Dance*), a native Yaqui Dance from the northern Mexican state of Sonora, where dancers reenact a dramatic deer hunt to honor the natural world. *The Deer Dance* has no European influence and has remained unchanged for centuries. The inherent ritual, primal, and spiritual qualities recall the cycle of life, in a way similar to how Blake's poem recalls his perception of good and evil. Rico translates the diametrically opposed energies between the hunter and the deer, or the lion and the ox, into new forms that aspire to a harmonious relationship between humans and our natural environment.

Julio Cesar Morales

July 2017, Curator at the Arizona State University Art Museum

More information about the artist >>>

1. Blake, William, edited with an introduction and commentary by Michael Phillips.
The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2011