

XIMENA GARRIDO-LECCA

*Protomorphisms*

June 8 - July 16, 2022

"In a masterly study, B. Easely traced the erection of this universe from the witch hunts to the constitution of the Victorian woman. He describes how, during the seventeenth century, natural philosophers began to banish life conceptually from the cosmos, and how they minimized the role of women in conception. Step by step, they succeeded to declare matter pure, inert nature -agitated by the vis viva. They succeeded to reduce matter to pure mater, the amorphous mother of things, a pure womb in formless readiness for the conception of paternal powers; a mere framework within which virile force could give rise to all things. Materia/mater in this process became logically unknowable, because amorphous and physically unobservable, nothing but a shape- less presupposition. The study of this necessary and complementary principle of all existence was thus by definition excluded from science. Science became the knowledge of virile forces and the shapes they take. In the 1840s, their complement reappeared as the matrix and the law that exalts the conservation of virile energy as the first law of the cosmos and the foundation of modern science."

Ivan Illich, *The Social Construction of Energy*.

### ***Protomorphisms***

*Protomorphisms* presents a series of works that explore the origins of different data storage devices and the development of early computing systems, technologies which, in early stages, utilized artisanal and manual technics in their fabrication. Weaving practices had a major influence on the origins of computer information storage, and women were essential in the development of these technologies, especially in the process of weaving core rope memory.

As Ivan Illich states in *The Social Construction of Energy*, early modern science divorced itself from the concept of energy as a living force or "vis viva," opening the path to the commodification of energy. Ancient notions of energy as part of mother nature's vital force—or womb—were gradually stripped, not only neglecting our relation and connection to its power but also creating a perpetual economic dependency on it. Throughout my practice, I have always been interested in ideas surrounding our relation to nature and how pre-Hispanic cultures, especially Andean culture, focus strongly on the concept of reciprocity, which is part of their social structure and worldview. Among the many manifestations of this reciprocity lies the idea that if we take something from nature, we must retribute it through rituals and offerings as a way of demonstrating gratitude to the "mother provider."

Additionally, many anthropologists<sup>1</sup> have observed that the conception of numerical and mathematical values in pre-Hispanic cultures are intrinsically linked to the cultures' social relations and worldviews. These relations are mainly expressed through weaving, in which colours, patterns and knots have symbolic meaning and become a three-dimensional data storage system dependent on touch and sight. In the Andes, weaving is viewed as equivalent to creating a living being (vis viva) from head to toes. Each part of the loom has a special significance and is part of this creation.

The works intend to subvert notions of the patriarchal origins of knowledge as well as the universal bias toward the supremacy of Western knowledge, which rejects other forms of understanding and relating to the world and considers them inferior or primitive. The exhibition celebrates these "protoforms" or original forms, exposing their influence on the development of science and many Western cultural movements—including in the arts, which have been constantly overshadowed.

- Ximena Garrido-Lecca

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Gary Urton in *The Social Life of Numbers: A Quechua Ontology of Numbers and Philosophy of Arithmetic* and Denis Y. Arnold in her book *Hilos sueltos: Los Andes desde el textil*.

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Galerie Gisela Capitain is pleased to announce *Protomorphisms*, Ximena Garrido-Lecca's second solo exhibition at the gallery.

Through her practice Peruvian artist Ximena Garrido-Lecca explores the impact of natural resource exploitation on different social groups and cultures, with a particular interest in how industrialization and urbanization have historically affected culture, collective memory and the relationship between nature and culture. The division between nature and culture has created a rupture in our previous notions of the natural world, putting nature in the service of human beings and placing it as a mere object to be exploited. These ideas conflict with indigenous Andean cosmology in which nature is intrinsically linked to culture and still venerated through ceremonies and rituals.

The complex Peruvian imaginary, characterized by the clashing between the age-old Andean culture and the contradictions introduced by the process of colonization, are often the basis for Garrido-Lecca's work. While the references are frequently highly local, Garrido-Lecca's work speaks to contemporary global concerns of struggles over natural resources, and private access for those living on its borders.

Equally important to her practice is the memory of artisanal tradition and the abandonment of rural spaces as an aftereffect of the processes of modernization. A recurring theme is the impact of copper exploitation through opencast mining in the countryside of Peru. In Pre-Colombian cultures copper carried a strong religious and ritual connotation. Ximena Garrido-Lecca uses copper as a symbol to reflect on extractivism and the impact this material has on the Peruvian economy and its culture.

Ximena Garrido-Lecca (b. 1980 in Lima, Peru) lives and works in Mexico City.

Recent institutional solo exhibitions include Portikus, Frankfurt, upcoming November 2022, the 34th São Paulo Biennial, 2020, MAC- Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Lima (together with Ishmael Randall Weeks), 2019, OCMA- Orange County Museum of Art, 2019, Proyecto AMIL, Lima 2019; SAPS- Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, Mexico City 2017, MALBA- Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires, 2017, MATE- Mario Testino Museum, Lima 2014.

Institutional group exhibitions include Boros Collection, Berlin, DE (2022), Museo MADRE, Naples, IT, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, DE and Fundacion Jumex, Mexico City, Mexico City, MX (all 2021).