

Quetzalli: Two Materialities

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(next to the side) A sculpture with agave fibers, and detail. Davis Birks. (above) *The Room*, 2012-2022. Museum of Arts, University of Guadalajara, Mexico. (Photo: Josef Kandoll). Photos taken from the artists' websites.

The Quetzalli exhibition space in the city of Oaxaca, Mexico, exhibits two suggestive material proposals as they are visual techniques and languages of contemporary art, which always surprise us; They anchor the reflection on the cultural value of contemplating the planet, its cultural genuineness and excellent giving nature that provides us with food, but also intellect to cultivate reason and critical-creative thinking, with which today we are trying to transform the world.

The exhibition of two materialities means engaging in the conjunction of different sensibilities brought together by the active contemplation of the environment: In which pivots the creative work of the textile artist Trine Ellitsgaard (Denmark, 1954), resident in Oaxaca, and the multiple media installer Davis Birks (Seattle, United States, 1957) resident in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

These are artists who cry out to communicate with their research the earthy textures of the soil where food is produced, but also fibers such as agave to weave textiles that address profound current discourses. But, in addition, abstract customs and traditions to forge with these artistic objects the identity of the Mesoamerican peoples, as well as represent the territory that



gives us the material substrate for the bricks and mortar with which we can build the house in the likeness of the Universe.

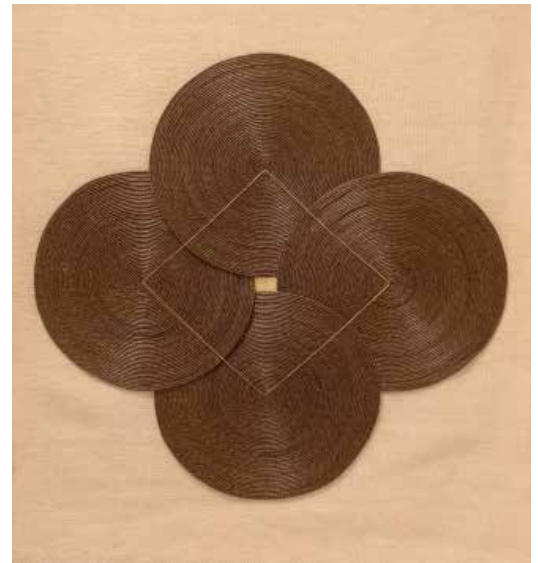
Trine Ellitsgaard

She trained as a weaver in her country of origin, and in the last two decades she moved her residence to Oaxaca where she discovered and synthesized the rich symbolic imagination of the local, populated with forms that possess the notion of great Chaos, which in its various manifestations exercises power over humans or other creatures in the environment. On his website he says about his work:

“As you leave the serenity of your studio, you are confronted with a vivid dynamic of everyday life in Latin America - the intermingled smells of flowers and smoke, the songs of birds and the noise of construction, the saturated color of the sky, colonial buildings and graffiti - woven into a rich and anarchic texture that threatens at every moment the overstimulation of the senses. There is no other option but to allow yourself to be enveloped by the chaos, or fight against it, or both.”

(<https://www.latinamericanmasters.com/es/artistas/trine-ellitsgaard>)

Loaded with a disturbing aesthetic of the natural, her sculptures or installations with cabuya fibers (agave or maguey), create a kind of “totem” that translates Mayan architecture with creativity and originality from the current language, a manifestation of a studious artist who She delves into the strengths of her subject and the environment of origin, at the same time that she tells us about herself, about her own inner environments that accompany her wherever she goes.



Textiles by Trine Ellitsgaard exhibited in various exhibitions.

Davis Birks

Engage in a dialogue with nature, constantly reflecting on the "Re-construction of memory", by observing with a critical attitude the effects that nature suffers derived from human action, leaving marks on trees, stones, land, hills, wetlands, lakes. , coasts, but also in the urban area, it refers us to the essence of those places, not only exterior, but also those carried by the inhabitants themselves, forming the features or signs of their multiculturalism.

It details on its website: "much of the work in this exhibition works with the idea of loss or the point of no return; As an example, in the installations "In memoria" and "La sala", there is a visual play of an interior-exterior landscape, a fusion of nature with the urban; Furthermore, "in the process and final result of the works in the series "Reconstructed Landscapes" a simple analogy is shown with our relationship with the natural environment", with this aesthetic and ideological program the action of his works of art is proposed in the society, while conjuring up what has already been done: -"We cannot go back in time to undo the damage already done; We can only move forward and put the pieces back together to rebuild them as best as possible."

They are two visions of the world or unique and profound readings of what the artists see, breathe, and notice. Both approaches seek to contemplate the immanence of the eternal that was given to us by the maker of the Universe to take advantage of its gifts, however, we have perverted it and instead of exploiting it with tolerance we wanted to spend the treasure in one go, and today we are afraid We appreciate a ruined, cracked horizon, rough as the soil due to the lack of water and an atmosphere that oxygenates the spirit - as these artists do and as our ancestors did -, to once again unite a healthy vision of the indivisible binomial of Nature and Culture.

Luis F. Quirós, January 2024



Material investigations by Davis Birks with a wide source of techniques.



The collaboration of the artist Ricardo Ávila is appreciated.