

HENRIQUE FARIA | BUENOS AIRES

Mauro Guzmán: Comerme los ojos de los otros

April 5 - May 10, 2017



Mauro Guzmán. *Untitled*, 2016. Color photograph on mirror. 80 x 53,3 x 2,5 cm. Edition of 4 + AP

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From exorcism to exoticism

In her essay “De la filosofía como modo superior de dar por el culo: Deleuze y la «homosexualidad molecular»” [On Philosophy as a Higher Form of Offering Your Ass: Deleuze and ‘Molecular Homosexuality’],¹ Beatriz Preciado quotes from “The Literary Machine,” an essay that forms the second part of Gilles Deleuze’s *Proust and Signs*: “‘Initial hermaphroditism,’ as in a plant or a snail, which cannot fecundate themselves.”² Thus, the metaphor of the pollinator insect, which conveys between different individuals the sterilely separate two sexes in each vegetal hermaphrodite, serves Preciado as a “founding mythology” for rethinking Deleuze’s approach to the figure of the Baron de Charlus, the character in Marcel Proust’s saga *À la recherche du temps perdu*. “Charlus fecundates without needing to make any sort of incursion into the filiation of father and son. He offers his anus and avoids incest...”³. “The molecular Charlus is made of incessant becomings: becoming-woman, becoming-animal, becoming-flower, he becomes, for an instant, the flux that enters and leaves the anus, yet is to be identified neither with woman, nor insect, nor flower, nor shit. Charlus is molecular, since, when he gives his ass, he fecundates.”⁴



Mauro Guzmán. *Untitled*, 2017. From the series *La Guzmania y el reino de los huevos quiméricos mutantes*. Color photograph. 100 x 178 cm. Edition of 4 + AP

There is a night side to modernisms, which is expressed in the fanciful anti-classicism of baroque styles and romanticisms, and which connects the nightmares of surrealism and expressionism with the medieval deliriums of Hieronymus Bosch. This region includes the tales that E. T. A. Hoffmann, in 1817, entitled *Nachtstücke*, or Night Pieces.

The dark side of the ideal of progress is the scream: the scream of horror Nataniel emits in the most famous of these tales, “The Sandman,” when the artifice is revealed; Edvard Munch’s painting *The Scream*, with its sky

¹ In Preciado, Beatriz: *Manifiesto contrasexual* [Countersexual Manifesto]. Madrid, Opera Prima, 2002,

² Deleuze, Gilles: *Proust et les signes*. Paris, Presses universitaires de France (PUF), 1972, p. 94

³ Preciado, Beatriz: Op. Cit., p.152

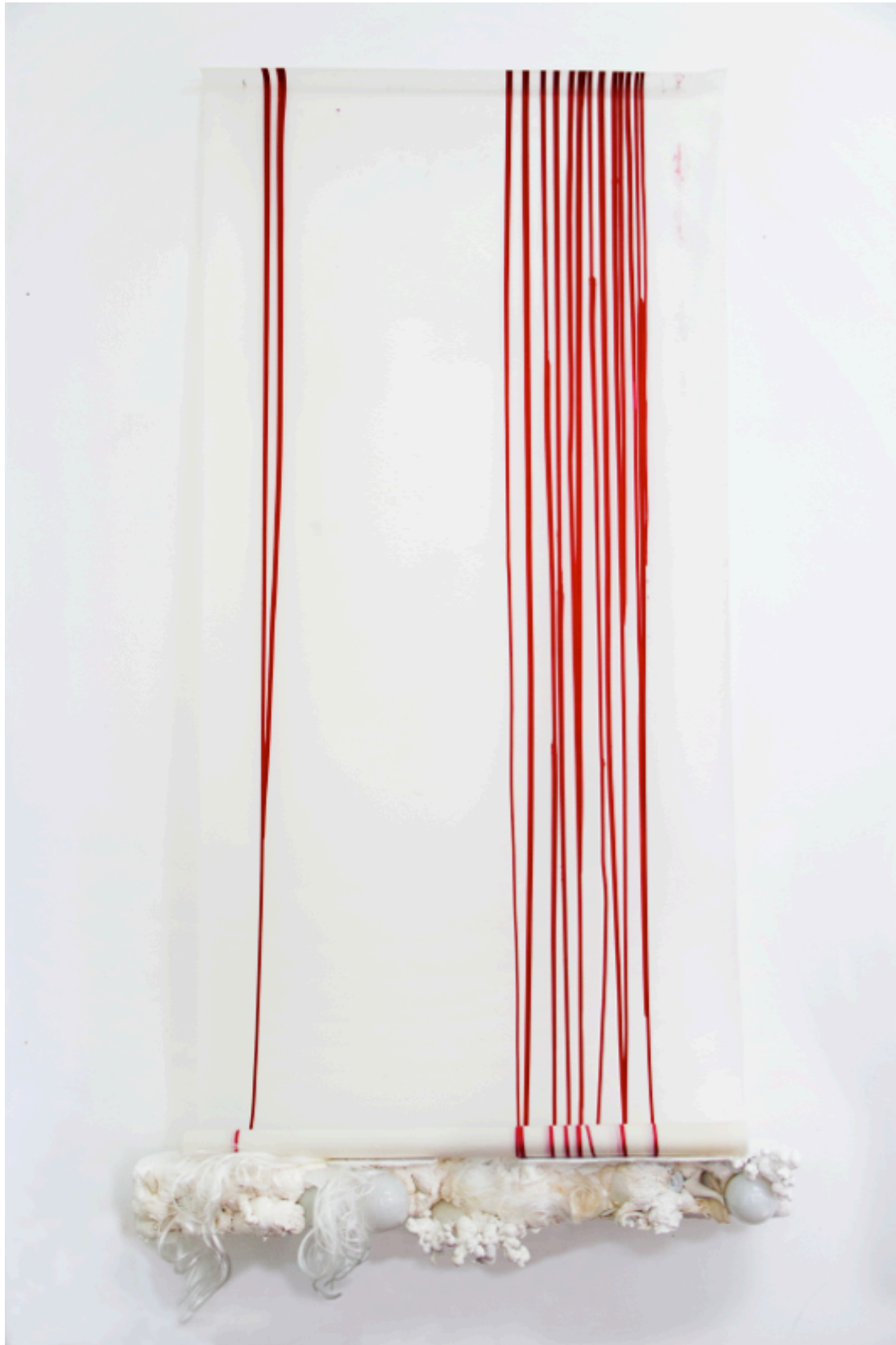
⁴ Idem, pp. 153-154

reddened by the volcano Krakatoa - if not merely by angst. Or the scream of *Linda Bler*, *artista poseída* [Linda Bler [sic: for Blair -- trans.] in the exorcism scene that started off the saga of the nine Linda Bler videos, whose new avatar is La Guzmania.

Two finds connect the background of this show of Mauro Guzmán's: the "discovery," in 2014, of a hermaphroditic American plant that is almost a namesake of his, in a Chinese supermarket in Castelló (a Spanish town on the Mediterranean), and the vision, in October 2016, of the bronze "mermen" of the reconstructed fin de siècle fountain on Albertplatz in Dresden (in Saxony, Germany). Somewhere between the pornographic and the surrealistic, Mauro "translated" these chimerical male bodies, half man and half sea creature (pure rusted bronze covered in verdigris, under artificial rain), into the idea of a subtropical coastal marsh, traversed by the exotic spectre of Isabel Sarli and by the spectre of an iconic bronze by Rosario's famous modernist Lucio Fontana: *Muchacho del Paraná* [Paraná River Boy].



Mauro Guzmán. *Untitled*, 2017. Branch, egg shells, ocular prosthesis, MDF, wig, expanded polyurethane, pearl necklace, shirt, video. 80 x 165 x 184 cm



Mauro Guzmán. *Telones sangrientos*, 2006-2017. Enamel, polyester, expanded polyurethane, wigs, broken tableware, lamps. 280 x 126 x 20 cm

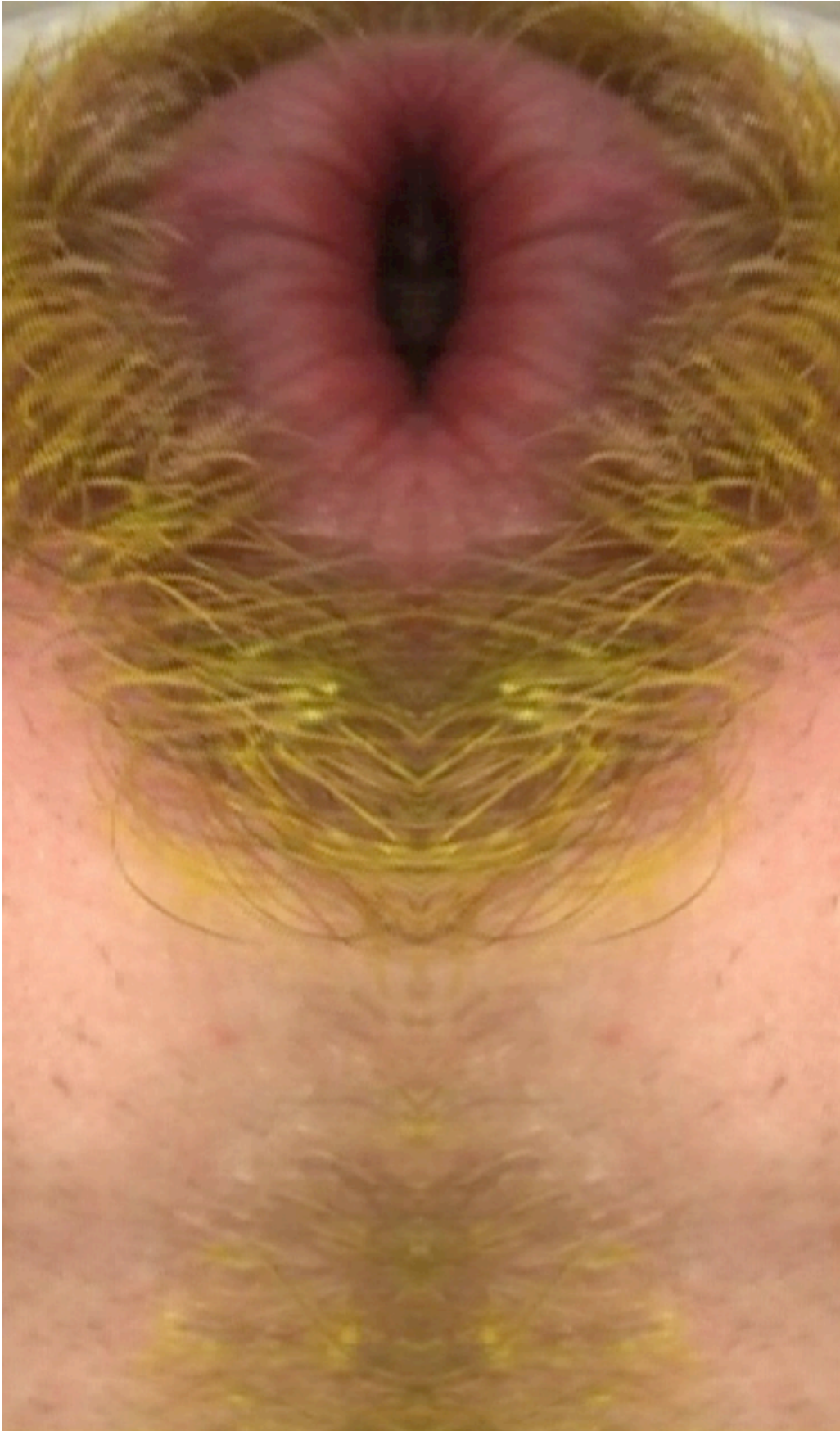
This double exposure, so to speak, between Sarli's opulent flesh and the lean young fisherman, triggered the theatrical and cinematographic fiction

of a deconstructive orgy in the mud. A visual fiction as well, resolved in a video: *La Guzmania y el reino de los huevos quiméricos mutantes* [La Guzmania, and the Realm of the Chimeric Mutant Eggs]. The terrain over what the orgy deconstructs is found in the fallen idols (Nazi?), toppled alongside the stairs on which descends, majestic and paranoiac, the most eccentric *vedette* imaginable: a chimeric creature who's a blend of harpy and egg-bearing female, whose nightmare is drowned in a mud of men in which La Guzmania, the hermaphroditic plant personified, devours (eyes, eggs/balls, sexual organs, insects?) and is devoured. She alone manages to endure the phallic glare amid so old a totem, so demolished a monument. Extravagance and far-fetchedness raise the artifice whereby La Guzmania pretends to be the porno actress faking an eternal orgasm. This fiction of a fiction expresses her truth, as does the retable of fantastic scenes that unfold as in a fairy tale, as in a mythology that's by no means epic: the desert of fried eggs, the oasis of a golden shower, the gilded tree of dream sausages. Like his much admired Jack Smith, Mauro Guzmán threads together a trash narrative to make "the latent" speak in certain local modern icons, or to take apart the erect modernist body against the grain of modernity's daylight canon.

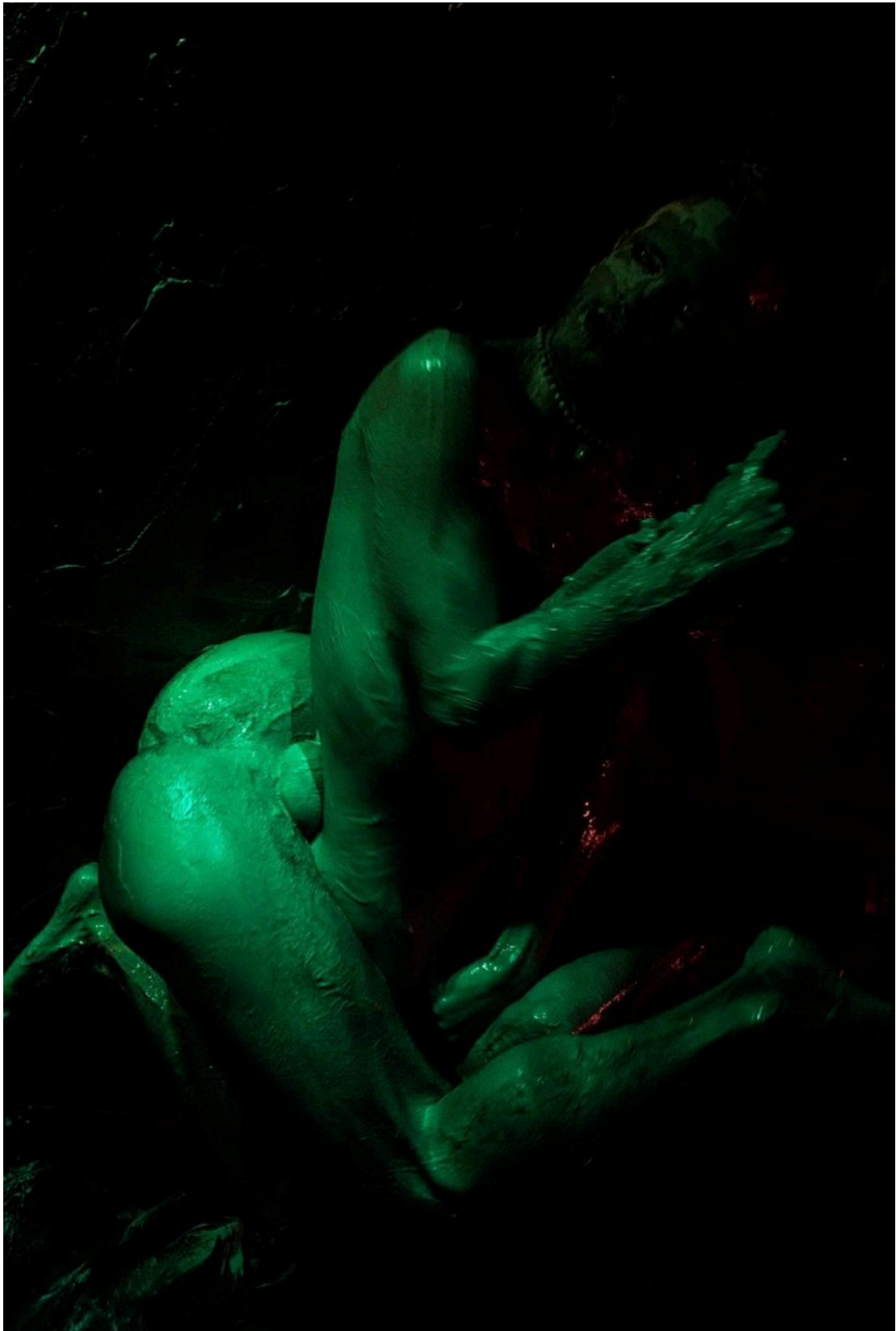
Jack Smith called "Atlantis" the utopian place that temporarily made real his films as a process, through the very occurrence of the shoot. La Guzmania, like Charlus, "is made of incessant becomings": becomes a carnivorous flower, becomes a woman, becomes a mother. All that transpires in a nocturnal dream space, a "realm" of pure pleasure which - like Jack Smith's Atlantis - is not quite of this world. To experience infinite jouissance in a labyrinth of mirrors: that's what a real woman seems to know how to achieve. Only, the real woman doesn't exist: she's a fantasy, an artifice, and that's the apparent knowledge a transvestite, a *cross dresser*, a *drag queen* [English in original - trans.] comes to possess. The muddy La Guzmania dwells in the nightmares of the European, medieval egg-laying mother. Nothing terrifies as much as infinite feminine jouissance, which is why what's latent in a porno flick is a horror flick. Guzmán's La Guzmania is the only woman who seems to know that.

Beatriz Vignoli

Beatriz Vignoli is art critic for the periodical *Rosario/12* (a subsidiary of the newspaper group *Página/12*) and a freelance curator of contemporary art.



Mauro Guzmán. *Dios ano*, 2011. Video, color y sound. 1' 30". Edition of 4 + AP



Mauro Guzmán. *Mantis religiosa*, 2017. From the series *Anoxia nocturna*. Color photograph. 150 x 100 cm. Edition of 4 + AP