



***BROKEN  
ROOTS***

Aimee Perez







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Kendall Art Center



## Broken Roots: The Labyrinth and the Thread

The thread has been lost; the labyrinth has been lost also. Now, we no longer even know whether these corridors that encircle us are those of a labyrinth, a secret cosmos, or a chaos of pure chance. Our beautiful duty is to imagine that there exists a labyrinth and a thread. We might never come across the thread; or we might stumble upon it unexpectedly and then lose it again in an act of faith, in the rhythm of a line, in a dream, in the sort of words that are called philosophy or in a moment of mere and simple happiness.

Jorge Luis Borges. *The Thread of the Fable*. Cnossos, 1984

Legend has it that the Moirai –also known as Fates- govern the thread of life of every mortal from birth to death. Daughters of the night, they patiently and always in the dark weave our destiny. Controlling our fate –our past, present and future- they are invisible. Something similar happens with Arachne. Turned into spider, her wonderful webs are condemned to be transparent.

This condition of invisibility associated with women and manual work seems to reaffirm the patriarchal notions that still today confine female work to anonymity.

Fascinated by the artisanal work of women in traditional communities that the artist encountered in her multiple travels to Peru, Aimee Perez (La Habana, 1955) undertakes a journey of revision and reformulation of her own work that echoes pivotal questions about life, ecology, gender and art.

For this purpose, Aimee focuses on two of the earliest traditional practices associated with women: weaving and pottery.

*Intus*, 2018, as its name indicates, is the core of this exhibition. The towering installation that evokes a stunning Andean landscape is the result of a lengthily, quasi-mythical process that uses the knot as the primary technique.

Present in several of the pieces, the knot -as a pristine weaving technique devoid of any other tool than the mere hands- puts the accent in the process and, consequently, in time. Embodying the natural cycles that dictate the harvest and existence itself, time is directly associated with the cultural preservation of traditional preliterate cultures that rely on oral lore for the transmission and preservation of their culture and ultimate survival.

The artist is directly inspired by the *Quipu* what in Quechua means knot. This recording device used in Andean civilizations combines knots and colors in a binary system that generates a semasiographic language. While the binary system is directly associated with accounting, the bright red, white, green and yellow colors as well as the type of fiber (vicuña, alpaca, llama, guanaco, deer and vizcacha fibers) used in the quipus seem to enclose a hidden narrative language still today to be decipher.



Closely linked to *Intus*, *Las hilanderas (The Spinners)*, *La tejedora (The Weaver)*, *Nudos de familia (Family Knots)*, and *Yo, Tierra (I, Earth)* (all of them dated 2018) refer to the essential role of women as a sacred figure in the preservation and transmission of the culture and specifically the figure of the *Mamakuna*.

The *Mamakuna* or “virgins of the Sun” were female priest worshipping the *Inti* (Incan sun god) cult. Trained in religion, spinning and weaving, as well as the preparation of food and the brewing of *chicha* (sacred maize beer), they lived in segregated communities.

Made of clay and fiber, *Yo, Tierra* is a tribute to women as fundamental core holding culture alive. The female figure, devoid of hands and in the act of birth, recalls ancient votive figures where women embodied fertility and life.

Inspired by the *urpus* (aryballo or storage jar in Quechua) -one of the most distinctive Inca ceramic forms used for the production, storage, and transportation of *chicha*, *La Tejedora* is the portrait of a graceful *Mamakuna*. The eyes captivated in the distance while the hands deliver the unrelenting daily work.

The vessel as a container for food and ritual –body and soul- is an essential cornerstone in this show. The direct imprint of the hands over the nude clay that might use different natural colors (chocolate, white and peach) (see *Nudos de familia*) becomes communion with Earth: religare.

In this sense, highlights *El Crisol (Melting Pot, 2018)* where the inverted vessel represents the giving mother Earth.

*Broken Roots* is a state of alert about the pressing environmental problems facing our planet, making us aware of our role as an integral and active part of that cosmos in crisis. That is the main idea behind pieces like *Still Waters (2017)*, *Diary of Fall*, *Invierno (Winter)* and (both 2018) where the artist puts to hand millenarian legends that become at once omen and sentence.

The exhibition is also a reflection on the alienation and fetishism of modern art. The pieces presented in *Broken Roots* seem to echo Adorno’s and Horkheimer statement related to: “Myth is already enlightenment, and enlightenment reverts to mythology.”

The careful selection of the titles brings up undeferrable associations that act as underlying threads unifying this exhibition. On one hand, the references to Pre-Colombian and Greek myths highlight the points of contact and immanence between cultures while the citations to iconic masterpieces of the Art History aim to restore the broken harmony between Fine arts and Traditional arts, autonomous and pre-autonomous art.

*Broken Roots* is that, a labyrinth and a thread in our perennial quest for the restitution of faith or, as Borges claims, a moment of mere and simple happiness.



Aimee Perez, Invierno  
ceramic vessel  
24 x 13 x 13"





Aimee Perez, Still Waters 2  
mixed media on belgian linen framed  
72 x 52"

Aimee Perez, Still Waters  
mixed media sculpture  
62 x 13 x 12"





Aimee Perez, La que Habita  
ceramic sculpture  
18 x 6 x 6"

Aimee Perez, Nudos de Familia  
mixed media sculpture  
32 x 10 x 10"





Aimee Perez, Diario de una Caída  
ceramic sculpture  
12 x 12 x 12"

Aimee Perez, Yo Tierra  
mixed media sculpture  
46 x 10 x 10"





Aimee Perez, La Hacedora de Nubes  
ceramic and metal  
25 x 10 x 10"





Aimee Perez, *Aguila Bicefala*  
mixed media sculpture  
24 x 14 x 12"



Aimee Perez, Las Hilanderas  
ceramic and fiber sculpture  
25 x 18 x 10"



Aimee Perez, Arachne  
mixed media sculpture  
74 x 22 x 16"

Aimee Perez, El Crisol  
ceramic sculpture  
36 x 16 x 16 in





Aimee Perez, Deidad  
ceramic sculpture  
19 x 22 x 8"

Aimee Perez, Deidad 2  
mixed media on belgian linen framed  
52 x 72"





Aimee Perez 2018

Aimee Perez, Mitos 1  
mono print  
20 x 24"

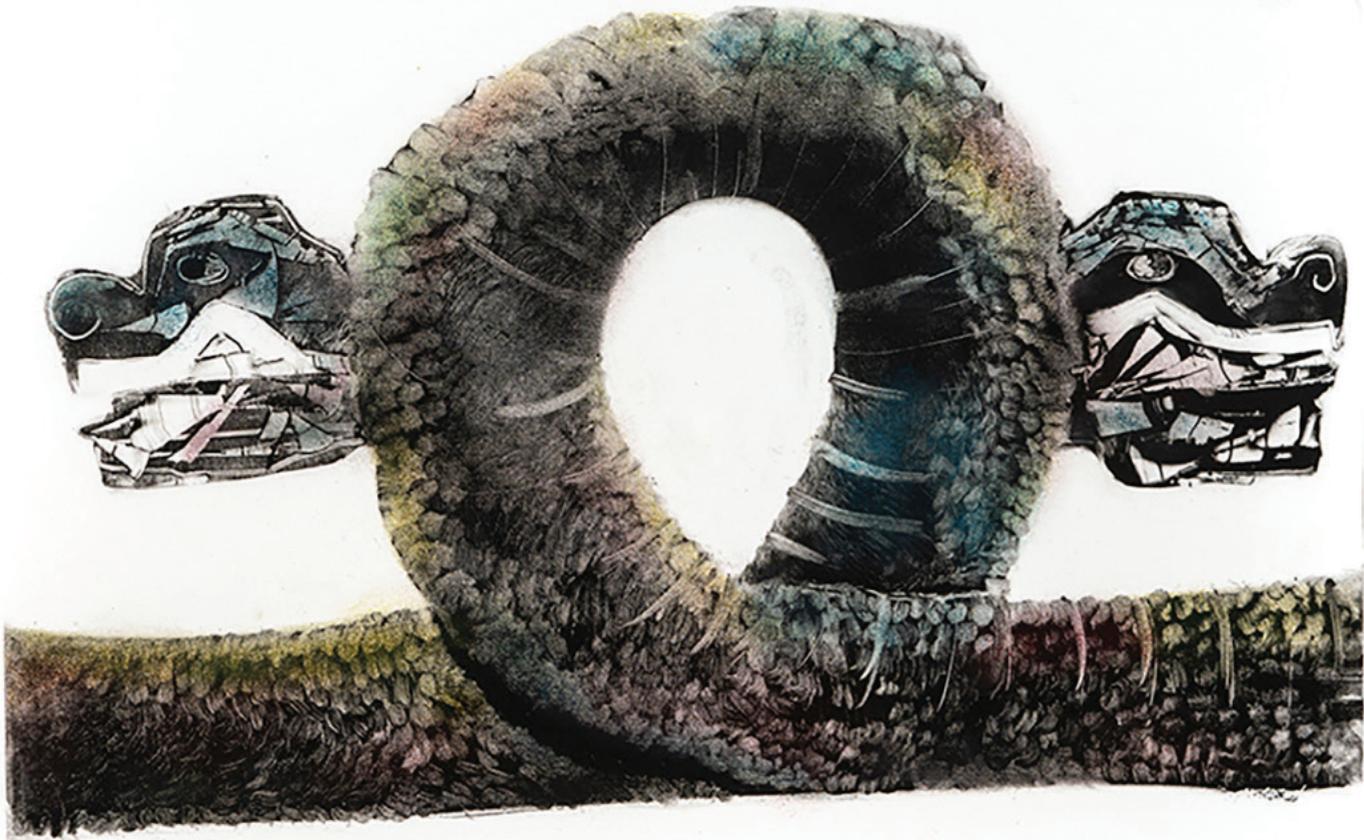


*Mitos 2 2014 Aimee Perez*

Aimee Perez, Mitos 2  
mono print  
20 x 24"



Aimee Perez, Ondulaciones  
mono print  
20 x 24"



*Serpente de dos Cabezas Aimee Perez 2018*

Aimee Perez, Two Headed Serpent  
mono print  
20 x 24"



Aimee Perez, Intus  
tapiz fiber art  
132 x 40"





Aimee Perez, *Serpiente Bicefala*  
ceramic sculpture  
27 x 19 x 10"



# Aimee Perez

**Aimee Perez** (b in Havana Cuba, 1955). She left for the United States when she was twelve with her family through the Freedom Flights and grew up in Miami in Cuban immigrant community. As a young adult she won the Gold Key Award in painting and several honorable mentions as she continued her pursuit of the arts during her college years. In 1989 she moved to Mexico City and continued painting and exhibiting with Cuban and Mexican artists. In 1997 she was invited to participate as a guest artist in the studio of Mexican sculptor Jose Sacal and it is here she begins to work for the first time in 3D with clay. She returned to Miami in 2006 and continued her work winning several awards for her figurative ceramics in the state of Florida. Perez has been praised for her command of gestures making her sculptures expressionistic and powerful which combined with the juxtaposition to found objects creates an organic symbiosis. She says her work is her voice, a dialogue with the observer and simultaneously a self-exploration. Her work can be found in many private collections in the United States and Mexico and in permanent collections including Florida International University Honors College Collection and The Bennett Women's Art Collection in Texas, Kendall Art Center/ The Rodriguez Collection and the Huntsville Museum of Art, Huntsville, Alabama.

## EDUCATION

2003 – BS Business Administration, Endicott College, Beverly, Massachusetts.

## SELECT EXHIBITIONS

2018 - Broken Roots, Kendall Art Center/ The Rodriguez Collection, Henry Ballate, curator, Miami, Florida

2016 - Mapping the Heart, CGAF Gallery, Lilia Garcia, curator, Coconut Grove, Miami, Florida

2018 - 46th International Exhibition, Brownsville Museum of Art, Alejandro Macias, curator, Brownsville, Texas.

2018 - No Constraints to Beauty, Pompano Beach Cultural Center, Byron Schwartz, curator, Pompano Beach, Florida

2018 - Three Women, Three Elements, The Wirtz Gallery, Mercedes Cruz, curator, Miami, Florida

2018 - Capu, Efe Serrano Gallery, Francisca Serrano, curator, Murcia, Spain

2018 - Looking At The Collection, Huntsville Museum of Art, Peter Baldai, curator, Huntsville, Alabama

2018 - Esta es una Gran Historia, Coca Cola Company, Universidad de Anahuac, Mexico City, Mexico

2018 - BRADICA, Carlos Saladrigas Gallery, Ignacio Font, curator, Miami, Florida  
2017 - Close Up/Nine Contemporary Cuban Artist, Lores Degenstein Gallery, Alberto Carol, curator, Selsgrove, Pennsylvania  
2017 - High Frequency, Milander Art Center, Jose Luis Rodriguez, curator, Hialeah, Florida  
2017 - Red Clay Survey, Huntsville Museum of Art, Peter Baldai, curator, Huntsville, Alabama  
2017 - Naturae, Galeria Efe Serrano, Francisca Serrano, curator, Murcia, Spain  
2017 - Pentavisions/Five Contemporary Cuban Artists, Arango Gallery, Ismael Gomez-Peralta, curator, Miami, Florida  
2017 - Young Art Collectors Council, Viridian Gallery, Susan Thompson, curator, New York City, New York  
2016 - Time Travel, Aqua Art Miami Fair, Carol Damian, curator, Miami Beach, Florida  
2016 - NestGen - Ecological Biennale Project, FIU Engineering College, Miami, FL  
2016 - Latinos 500, Barry University/Miami Shores Arts Commission, Carol Damian, curator, Miami, Florida  
2016 - Bombay Sapphire Artisan Series, Wynwood Lab Gallery. Miami. Florida  
2016 - 26th Annual All Florida Juried Arts Show, Stuart, Florida  
2016 - CloseUp/Eight Contemporary Cuban Artists, Webber College Gallery, Victor Gomez, curator, Ocala, Florida  
2015 - Red Dot Art Fair, Latin American Art Pavilion, Dennys Matos, curator Miami, Florida  
2015 - CAFE XVII 'Culture and Community Development, University of West Indies, Leandro Soto, curator, Barbados, West Indies

#### HONORS/AWARDS

2013 - Best in Show – CLM show University of Miami, Miami, FL (Debra Fritts curator)  
2014 - Best in Show – CLM show University of Miami, Miami, FL (Arthur Rodriguez, curator)  
2014 – Best in Show – Artsight Gallery, Coral Gables, FL (Maria Lino curator)  
2017- Red Clay Survey – Merit Award

#### COLLECTIONS

Florida International University, Honors College Art Collection, Miami, FL.  
The Bennett Women's Art Collection, San Antonio, Tx.  
Huntsville Museum of Art, Huntsville, Alabama.  
The Rodriguez Collection, Miami, FL.

Owner and Collector  
Leonardo Rodríguez

Finance and Operations Director  
Leonardo Rodríguez, Jr.

Art Director and Curator  
Henry Ballate, M.F.A.

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Copyediting  
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Photo courtesy of  
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Janet Batet

