



An Interview with Camila Gb

GLOBAL ALLSTARS



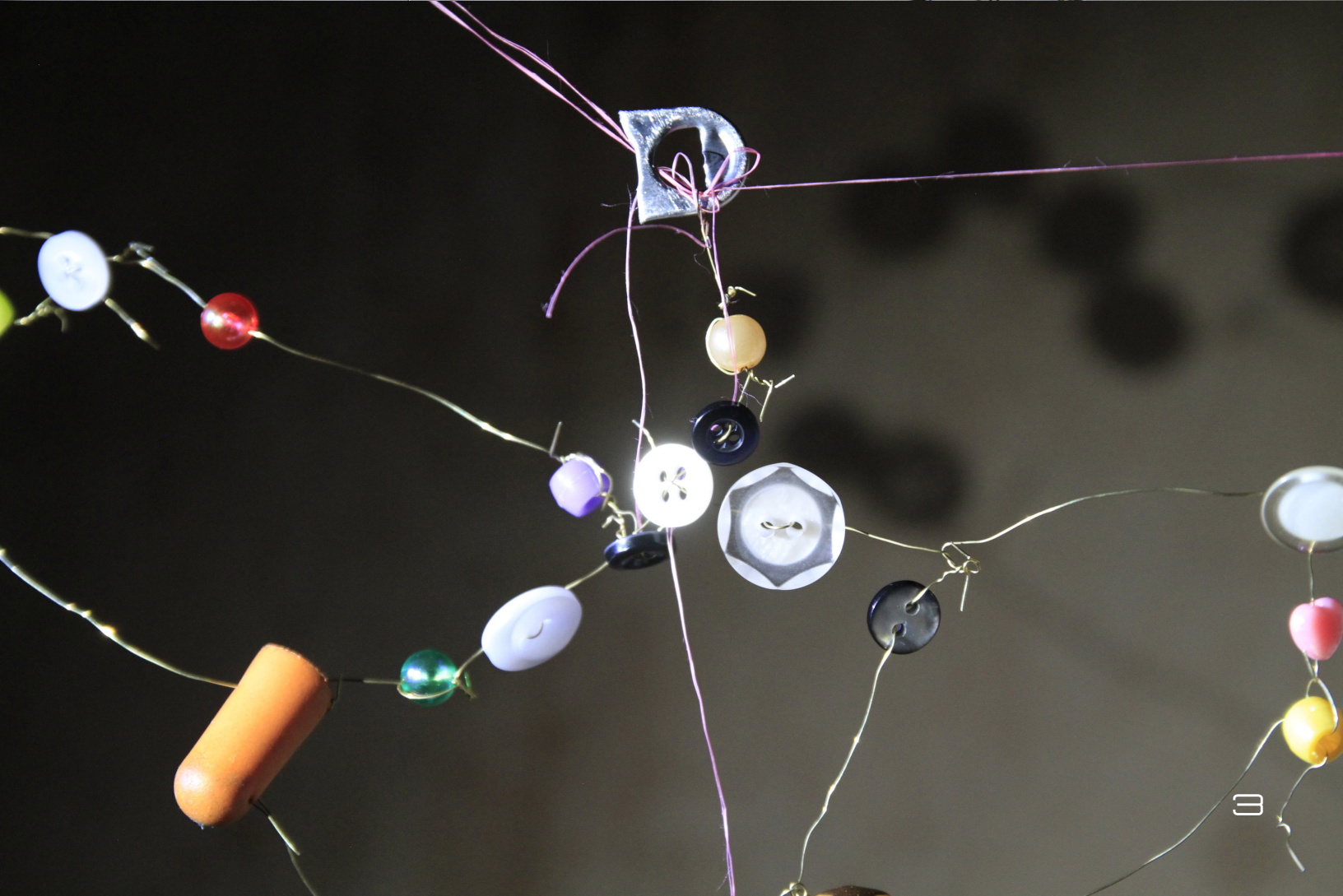
Viceroy, 2024, created as part of the Virreina residency program in the Colombian countryside.

Camila Gb is an interdisciplinary artist. She works within her intimate imagination to explore the contrast between *the soft* and *the threatening*. This creative space evokes the tensions commonly found when contemplating the power of desire and vulnerability...



CAMILA GB GLOBAL ALLSTARS

CAMILA GB GLOBAL ALLSTARS



A: Hi Camila, I know you are currently based in Mexico City. Is that where you are originally from?

C: Yes, I was born in Mexico City, but I was raised in a small town called Cuernavaca, which is in a nearby state called Morelos. I moved over there when I was like five years old. Then later, I moved back to Mexico City when I was 15 to go to school here.

A: Did you go to art school?

C: For high school I did, but not for my undergraduate degree. In México, there are no prestigious private art schools for bachelor degree level, just public ones from the National Institute of Fine Arts and from the National Autonomous University (UNAM). The National Institute of Fine Arts (INBA) is in charge of culture and art schools across the country and they get cuts to their budget all the time. I went to an INBA high school focused on art and humanities. Unfortunately, a year before I was scheduled to graduate, the government decided to dissolve another institution my school relied on. Because of this, my school was left up in the air. That experience is what pushed me to enroll in the UNAM for a degree in philosophy rather than continue studying art. But UNAM did not shape me. My relationship with the university is

quite insignificant. I approach it more so as a legitimization mechanism and do not expect it to be able to provide me with much beyond a certificate. I am a cross-disciplinary artist, so of course I benefit more from an interdisciplinary training that covers different fields within art and humanities, and that's what I pursued.

A: What would you say you are investigating through your art practice?

C: My biggest take from philosophy is aesthetic research. I would like to reorient aesthetics towards perception and how perception is mediated. I have a deep interest in the sensory research that has been done in psychology and neuropsychology: trying to understand how our perception is ruled not only by how the senses work, but also by external output and narratives that configure us in order to bend towards certain things and avoid others. In that sense, I really like, for example, the work of Forensic Architecture. I have been able to participate in study groups with some of its Mexican members who opened an office here affiliated with UNAM. What they do that blows my mind is addressing the aesthetic/perceptive component in the displaying of political narratives through investigations of media. They

gather evidence that can be used to address human rights violations in court. If they do art museum exhibitions or "art pieces" is just another formal institutional language they can speak.

A: Do you feel like that's sort of what you're doing with your practice?

C: No, no, no. I really like that type of investigation and I think that my interest in political aesthetics has to do with trying to understand aesthetics outside the study of art objects, but I'm also into different types of art, not only research-based practices. A lot of my work grows in different lines, in different directions, and I'm hoping these lines will eventually intersect. It's not going to be that easy because most people tend to situate a lot of the interests that I have into different fields of knowledge and disciplines...

A: You mentioned that you have an interest in perception. I'm curious about your thoughts on subjectivity as an inspiration for art. Subjectivity changes from person to person, which makes collective experience challenging to grasp. Do you feel like when you are making art, that you are guided by your own internal reasoning and your own internal world?





C: Yes, my interest in perception and subjectivity comes from my own conditions. Last year, I was diagnosed with a Sensory Processing Disorder that is usually found in people with Autism Spectrum Disorder. For example, if I am touching a candle, the signal of pain will take longer than usual to be emitted, so my finger will remain there longer. Also, the intensity in which the stimuli is interpreted can vary from being atypically low (as with physical pain sensations) to dangerously high (in my case this happens with auditory stimuli). I do have an issue within my nervous system called dysautonomia in which your body struggles to correctly interpret a lot of the signals it's emitting—it is a common feature of the Hypermobile Ehler Danlos Syndrome, the culprit of my shitty knees. So I do have an abnormally different way of perceiving sensory stimuli and trying to make sense out of it. A lot of people tend to see sensory stuff as a common ground across the board, but when you are aware of the variations and how perception is not only physically conditioned but also narratively and politically formed, it becomes fascinating.

A: You were born in 1997, right?

C: Yes.

A: So that's the first year of Gen Z. I've been following artists who are Gen Z, and I have a lot of friends who are Gen Z and from my perspective, I find that there is much more of an impulse to talk about individual perceptions in life, individual experiences. This raises questions and conversations about mental health as well, which are a lot more accepted now than they were in previous generations, at least in the United States. People are starting to comfortably explore their individual consciousness, and then see what comes from that.

C: I do think there is a shift in how different generations address these problems. Trauma, specifically intergenerational trauma, is the key factor of the conversation about how subjectivity is addressed cross-generation-wise. What happened to me is that my parents are Boomers, so I kind of grew up as a Millennial, even if I am in the first year of Gen Z. I have always existed in this liminal zone between the two generations. I do see that Gen Z has been encouraged by Millennials to address their mental health. Because of this, Gen Z's are comfortable saying "I don't want to be the mess that I am anymore, so I am going to try to understand why I work the way I do, and take responsibility in order to prevent hurting myself and people around me".

A: This may be why there are frequent conversations surrounding identity with Gen-Z. That and also the fact that they were using social media starting at such a young age.

C: I have seen a lot of criticism towards Gen-Z about how obsessed they are with labels. Gen X were trying to not be labeled or boxed in at all, so it seems strange that this new generation is eager to jump into the boxes. I think this labeling system comes from the use of the internet from an early age and how content inside it is stratified based on personal preferences. We just grew up in a digital / narrative ecosystem that pushed this type of differentiation through recognition and consumption. I do find this phenomenon very interesting.

A: So, it seems like you are drawn to tiny little details in your work, inviting the viewer to get up close and spend time with the work to see what is going on... Are you referencing a specific broader conversation through working on the micro level? Or is it something that you're maybe doing subconsciously?

C: I started out doing wax modeling and making jewelry using the technique of lost wax metal casting, so playing with wax and molds is something I brought into my art practice. The stuff that I was doing as sculpture in the beginning



CAMILA GB GLOBAL ALLSTARS

were soft sculptures: it was the opposite of working with metal, using mostly interesting stuff I had at hand like underwear, candles, bed sheets, buttons, stuffed animals, and other random objects. They started to pile up and merge as I started to play with molds at a bigger scale. I like immersive stuff, and mold making has allowed me to explore the magic of repetition.

A: Yes, I'm curious about your choice of form. You're using cell phones, bones, dog teeth, underwear, forks, buttons...each of the forms end up being repeated in other projects as well. Conceptually, do you have a reason that you choose these specific forms?

C: Many of these forms are things that are mass produced. I have collected objects that I like making molds out of, and I really like the spatial distribution format of catalogues. With the heart bead, the cell phones, the medical blister packs, etc., I've been trying to channel the spatial design around mass production objects to build a kind of system.

A: A personal system?

C: It is a personal system. I have taxonomic fixations, so I find it fascinating how systems operate. I have found that through the constant use of certain materials, I have started to find unexpected associations. It makes sense to

me in a way that not even I can fully grasp or understand...It's about patterns—I would love to one day be able to express or communicate that inner system clearer so people could make sense out of it.

A: What artists do you look at in particular? Are there contemporary artists or artists from history who inspire you?

C: Recently, I have been dealing with some health issues, so I have had less of a chance to immerse myself in environments where contemporary art is being shown, but I am very impacted by the practices of my friends and the people I have worked with. I find inspiration for my art mostly outside of the "art world". I get excited easily and have a material curiosity that gets lit up through unexpected interactions. For example, when they were doing an MRI on me, I felt like I was inside a photocopy machine, and saw some panels on the ceiling of the room picturing trees—those panels are an attempt to distract the patients from the fact they are inside a huge machine. I loved those...

If I had to mention some influences and artwork I look over to, I would need to break it down to seasons, since it was mostly the timing that made those things important for me. I would say I really appreciate the way in which the work of

Jenny Holzer and Francis Alys hit me when I was a teenager, even if I don't look in that direction often anymore. From there I remember being deeply impacted by the scenic discipline of Butoh, poetry and philosophy of language. The exhibition of Forensic Architecture that I saw in 2017 at the MUAC changed something inside me. I also liked the exhibition that Andrea Fraser had at that same museum a year before that. I used to love Sion Sono, and from him I got a first approach to the Pink Eiga film genre, then when I saw Onna no Kappa from Shinji Imaoka, I lost my head (it's a proletarian musical with interspecies pornography!) and now talking about that I feel that exploration is something I have pending. I Love Greg Araki too. Loved the movie Wikiriders by Miel Ferraez and Clara Winter and I'm proud ASF of having them as friends. I love the work of the Peruvian poet and linguist Mario Montalbetti. Since I'm an erratic and interdisciplinary person, I could also name many things from different fields that are not considered artistic per se, but hope with this you get an idea :)

<https://camilagb.com/>



