

The Fragility of Ancestral Time

Cecilia Fiona | Clara de Tezanos | Francisca Sosa López | Olamide Ogunade

April 11

Casa Velazquez, Zona Colonial
Santo Domingo

“The past carries with it a temporal index by which it is referred to redemption. There is a secret agreement between past generations and the present one. Our coming was expected on earth. Like every generation that preceded us, we have been endowed with a weak Messianic power, a power to which the past has a claim. That claim cannot be settled cheaply.”

- Walter Benjamin

HELICONIA PROJECTS presents *The Fragility of Ancestral Time*, a group exhibition of four international artists: **Cecilia Fiona, Clara de Tezanos, Francisca Sosa López, y Olamide Ogunade**. Spanning sculpture, photography, painting, and textiles, the exhibition touches on how time is a fragile construct - our connection with the past, present, and future is fleeting. The individual's connection, albeit unnoticeable, with its ancestors is a notion Walter Benjamin explores in his writings, specifically in “On the Concept of History”. Benjamin explains our connection with the past fittingly - referencing a ‘secret agreement’ with past generations or {ancestors}. Benjamin alludes to a weak messianic power represented by the revolving movement of time: our strong relationship with our predecessors and how this can bind us to certain realities. The ultimate answer Benjamin arrives at is that the future and present are built over contemporary legacies.

HELICONIA

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Self-taught Danish artist **Cecilia Fiona** examines the idea of our roots {our ancestry} in nature. Fiona looks to transformation, connectedness, and movement as central powers in her practice; coming to the realization that we each have an ecosystem within us, a portal for other species in our microbiome. She ingeniously constructs dreamlike scenarios through mystical figures - both sculptural and in painting, as well as costumes. Her oeuvre is filled with stories where time is just a construct: life and death occur simultaneously, in a symbiotic way. Fiona's intricate visual vocabulary lends to a masterful practice, rich in unique materials such as rabbit skin glue. The Danish artist blends the glue (normally used as primer) with natural and handmade pigments to create a luminous finish across the canvas. Fiona holds a bachelor's degree in art history from the University of Copenhagen, she was also shortlisted for the Hopper Prize in 2023. Recent solo shows include a solo show in Vitrine Gallery, London in 2024 and a solo booth for Vitrine Gallery at Independent Art Fair, NY in 2023. In 2022 Fiona also had a solo show at El Castilleto Residency in Madrid, "Floreo Floreo", and a solo show at Anderson's Contemporary, "Follow the Flowers" in 2022.

Reflecting on her roots in Venezuela, **Francisca Sosa López** intervenes readymade materials such as disposables, spare threads, buttons, and used textiles from her family's home in her native South American country. Her work is deeply influenced by Venezuela's colossal migration crisis. The concept of creating a beautiful piece out of what would otherwise be taken as trash is an important part of Sosa López' oeuvre. Her multidisciplinary practice symbolizes her complicated relationship with her country of origin - emotions (affection, anger, disappointment) are stalwartly palpable in her intricate weavings. Sosa López evokes her motherland from the point of view of reconstruction - to build something better through her practice. Combining rich colours with faint hues, the Venezuelan artist dexterously uses materiality as a form of expression. She has her BA in Fine Arts and Art History from the University of Colorado as well as her MFA in painting from the Slade School of Fine Arts. She has exhibited work at The British Museum, Pippy Houldsworth gallery, PEER gallery, Grove London and others. She is the recipient of the Provost Purchase Prize for UCL East, 2020, and the Adrien Carruther's ACME Award 2020/2021.

Guatemalan artist **Clara de Tezanos'** practice crosses the frontiers of photography, installation, and sculpture. De Tezanos' works are also tied to her native Guatemala, starting with her experimentation from an early age with photography - light and colour were the primary drivers of her work. Challenging classical compositions, her multi-disciplinary practice hints at the theme of infinite time and the divinity one can find in this concept. Using objects such as wood, leather, glass, and semi-precious stones, the Guatemalan artist intricately gestures towards a fullness of each objects' spiritual power. The astronomical-esque layout of her art presents a unique power of filtering natural light - alluding to the sun as a sacred healer. Featuring gemstones that radiate rainbow light infractions, De Tezanos' work speaks on the boundless nature of the cosmos and how our ancestry relates to that. Her work is a pilgrimage to her, a necessary investigation into what she refers to as the 'divine light' - a quest for the truth about time and ancestry. De Tezanos studied photography in Paris, she is also the co-founder of the Center for Contemporary Photography, Fototeca in Guatemala. She has an upcoming solo show at Galeria La La Lande in Paris in 2024. De Tezanos had a solo booth this year at Galeria Rebelde in Zona Maco, Mexico City and has participated in numerous art fairs: Art Lima 2020 in Perú, Art Paris 2021-22-23 in Paris, Together Arts 2021 in Miami, Hangar Paris in 2023, and in Mexico Salón ACME 2023. She had a solo show "La Fuente es el Sol" at La Galería Rebelde in Guatemala City in 2022.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The Nigerian artist **Olamide Ogunade's** delicate portraiture reflects on moments in time. Ogunade's oeuvre meditates on the presumption that time is abstract albeit finite, while moments are everlasting. He argues that time may seem like a fast moving construct, yet the moments we create are time-bending in their permanence. The artist depicts women from the past, so as to show that this too shall pass. Any hardships those women have gone through, they have survived in a resilient way and are now in the present moment - which is the only moment that is everlasting. The Nigerian artist equally comments on the female gaze through his depiction of empowered women, using a mix of bold colors and masterfully painted prints, Ogunade tears down stereotypes of the West African woman as a dependent and further parleys on the theme of individualism. The unique contrast of his use of charcoal for his subjects paired with the saturated background creates a luminosity and elegance in the human form.

Olamide Ogunade studied Fine Art at Yaba College of Technology in Lagos, Nigeria. He has had numerous exhibitions in Europe and Africa. Recent exhibitions include: "Only Until this Cigarette is Ended", Pictorum Gallery (2023); Maya Arts Space, Lebanon (2023); Africa Supernova, Schussing Art Collection, Museum Kunsthall KAdE, Netherlands; "Breath of Hope" by Adebimpe Adebambo (Virtual Exhibition) (2022), Temporary Generation, Suburbia Contemporary, Barcelona (2022); "Voices for Love", PRIOR Art Space, Barcelona (2022); 40 under 40, WHATIFTHEWORLD, Cape Town (2021); Polychromatic, Daniel Raphael, London (2021); Frieze London, The Breeder, London (2021); "Stop, listen!", CFHILL Gallery, Sweden (2021); "Afrika First", Valerius Gallery, Luxembourg (2018). "This is Kuta Exhibition", Nest by Kuta, Abeokuta, Ogun, Nigeria (2018), Art Varsity Awakening, Funaab Art Beat, Ogun, Nigeria (2017), PGM live art exhibition, Lagos, Nigeria (2017), Bella a beau art exhibition, Lagos, Nigeria (2016). Ogunade Olisco's work is in private collections in Burkina Faso, Austria, USA, Germany, France and Sweden.

ABOUT THE SPACE

Casa Velázquez is an emblematic jewel of the Zona Colonial of Santo Domingo. As you walk through its archways, traces of intervention over time are noticed through its mix of Caribbean coral stone used by the spaniards and bricks laid by the French. The space takes from the past, preserving and respecting the present, as do the artists in the show. Acknowledging the present as the only moment in time. The Fragility of Ancestral Time merges with its surroundings to transport the viewer to a timeless time.

