

# MACG PRESENTA: EMBALSAMADA CON PICANTE

NICOLE CHAPUT

10 FEB 24  
21 APR 24



MACG ACTUAL



## **THIS ROOM IS A RELIC, A WAREHOUSE WHERE THE SKINS AND THE BODIES OF**

women who were forced to mutate to overcome adversity hang.

Enter this room with the mission of rescuing clues to decipher a mythology belonging to an unknown civilization, frozen in a parallel temporality; civilization composed of female figures whose flesh was transformed by fire to survive the rites imposed by masculinity and the pedagogies of cruelty. Through the intermittent anatomy of these chimeras, it is possible to build a path that frees our own bodies.

Nicole Chaput is an artist who still calls herself a “painter.” Insisting on painting has, for her, a particular reason: to reclaim an artistic medium that has historically been the preferred mechanism of patriarchal power apparatuses to dictate the “must be” of physical appearance; assuming the responsibility to challenge and transform it from within. Painting, furthermore, has “embalmed” the bodies of those it represents from a male perspective: keeping them in a single form, eternally, depriving them of the right to evolve. Here, the pictorial medium unfolds, and the canvas becomes a human-scale rotating display that allows three fragmented female bodies to be combined.

Chaput’s practice intertwines references to literature, the fashion universe, and art history. These works deploy quotes from painters such as Ingres, Schiele and Siqueiros, among many others, making corporeal fragments ranging from Cher Horowitz’s virtual wardrobe from *Clueless* (1995), the animality in collections such as *Voss* (2001) by Alexander McQueen, the lyrical carnage of Sylvia Plath, or the “mujeres ardientes” (ardent women) of Mariana Enriquez. The mannequin-like women who inhabit this room protest against beauty canons imposed on female bodies through these cultural spheres.

*Embalmed with spice* is an exquisite corpse of women who, seeing themselves represented by eyes that were not theirs, began to mutate. A space that honors them, that gives them back their right to transformation and to be grotesque; that shows what irritates and burns us; that suggests a path to rebirth after the fire, from the embers.

Isabel Sonderéguer

## WORKS

### NICOLE CHAPUT

*Embalsamada con picante* [Embalmed with Spice], 2024

Nine oil on bleached denim paintings stretched on custom-made wooden canvases mounted on a rotating wooden and stainless-steel structure of three thiers, based composed of nine pigmented concrete cylinders.

220 x 120 cm

Courtesy of the artist

This piece functions as a living entity, or rather, as nine living entities that intermingle in a chimeric operation, constantly transforming. Displayed in this showcase are women who inherit body parts from the history of Western art, contemporary fashion, and Yoruba religion. In this way, a mannequin with direct references to artists such as Klimt or Ingres, to Alexander McQueen's corset, to the caryatids (Greek columns with a feminine form) or to the orisha lemanjá, a mermaid who is the divinity of the sea and fertility, is constructed.

Thus, these fragmented or dismembered figures exhume the flesh that had been embalmed by painting, by the male gaze, by the patriarchal system. Through an almost playful mechanism, embodied paintings, and iconographic amputations, *Embalsamada con picante* [Embalmed with Spice], gives back to women the right to mutate, to exist beyond beauty.

### NICOLE CHAPUT

*Pergamino de un cuerpo desperdigado como un collar roto*

[Parchment of a scattered body like a broken necklace], 2023

Oil on digitized polypropylene paper

34 cm x 5.85 m

Courtesy of the artist

This work aims to replicate the sensation we experience when encountering a document from an ancient and unknown civilization; much like the early archaeologists studying Mesoamerican codices or hieroglyphs in Egyptian tombs. Meaning that, although we do not fully understand, we can rescue certain clues that offer a general idea.

Accordingly, the parchment throws hints that allow us to interpret the code, reconstructing the mythological story accompanying the chimeras found in the room. Fragments of various scenes are entwined: a Louis Vuitton runway, the arched body of a hysteric that might resemble an exorcism, the sketch for Niki de Saint Phalle's "Hon," the first Egyptian frieze with animal print, among others. The relationship between art, fashion, history, and patriarchy is reiterated.

The eyes that observe us come from different sources, from Ancient Egypt to Vogue covers, making evident the multiplicity of gazes from which the idea of the feminine and of beauty, of the duty of womanhood, has been constructed. The flames accompanying the drawings suggest that fire was the liberation mechanism found by these chameleon-like figures: burning the body to free themselves from the canon and to be reborn from the embers.



## Nicole Chaput

With a flesh stroke and dagger brush, Nicole Chaput (Mexico City, 1995) reinvents the visual repertoire of the feminine through embodied paintings. Her practice mutates the anatomical configurations of the femme figures that populate the work. These sumptuous bodily irregularities correspond to how she morphs the painting's support itself, creating a double deformation. By presenting painting as a pictorial body that resists being slashed by a picture frame, Chaput challenges the omnipotence historically attributed to this artistic medium for representing and narrating-through the male gaze- feminine bodies and their stories. Not passive aesthetic experiences, these disobedient portraits of women reflect accelerated organic modifications consequent to a body's exposure to regular hostility. As with pearls, whose unexpected forms of nacreous layers are created by mollusks as defense mechanisms, Nicole Chaput's femme paintings generate their own forms, guided by their desire to exist in the shell of anomaly.

Nicole Chaput is a painter who lives and works in Mexico City. She holds a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (2018) and participated in the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (ME, 2019). Chaput has received grants and fellowships from the former institutions; as well as a grant by the Foundation for Contemporary Arts (NY, 2020) for experimental artists and the Young Creator's Grant awarded by the National Fund for Culture and the Arts (Mexico, 2018-2019). Her work has been shown in the United States, United Kingdom, Brazil, Australia, Puerto Rico and Mexico. Recent solo exhibitions include *Embalsamada con picante* (Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, Mexico City, 2024); *Convent Carpaccio* (Galería Agustina Ferreyra, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 2023); *Mi madre es un ventilador con cara de vaca* (Biquini Wax, Mexico City, 2022); and *Venus Atómica* (Galería Karen Huber, Mexico City, 2021). She has been included in numerous group exhibitions at Mendes Wood DM (São Paulo, BR); Deli Gallery (Mexico City, MX); Museo Cabañas (Jalisco, MX); Sullivan Galleries (Chicago, IL); Antiguo Colegio San Ildefonso (Mexico City, MX); Disneyland Paris (Melbourne, AUS); Chalton Gallery (London, UK); among many others. Her work has been reviewed in various publications such as Artforum, Frieze and Terremoto.

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Curatorship  
Isabel Sonderéguer

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## FLOOR 3

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Cover image:

Nicole Chaput, *Embalmed with spice*, 2024

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