HENRY ART GALLERY TO PRESENT
EKTOR GARCIA: MATÉRIA PRIMA

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ektor garcia: matéria prima
April 2 – September 4, 2022


Across his artistic practice, ektor garcia (b. 1985, Red Bluff, California) challenges the hierarchies of gendered and racialized labor, combining a queer punk sensibility with the handcraft traditions of Mexico, his ancestral homeland.

In textiles, ceramics, and metalwork, frequently in combination with found materials, garcia engages vernacular and craft practices historically cast in diminutive or marginalized roles, ascribing renewed value through intimate, repetitive processes. The resulting objects are hybrid in nature—both malleable and solid, dense and porous, sharp and tender—evoking the body and its labor as a source of pleasure and pain, rupture and healing. Pieces are often reconfigured; textiles are made and unmade. Undoing the knots is as important as reknotted to find new points of connection and possibility.

For his exhibition at the Henry, garcia worked with faculty, staff, and students at the University of Washington’s Ceramic and Metal Arts Building to create a series of linked-chain sculptures made in ceramic, copper, and glass. Comprised of individual, interlocking links, these chains form a series of mutual and contingent relationships across their
constitutive parts. Each link varies slightly and holds the memory of hands touching materials. The title of the exhibition, matéria prima, is a play on words that references garcia’s process: matéria prima (raw material) also includes the Spanish word prima (cousin). This double meaning reflects both the generative potential of garcia’s cumulative process and the relational affinities across materials and maker.

Organized in variable permutations dependent on the space, garcia’s installations are an accumulation of objects, disrupting spatial hierarchies with sculptures sprawled across floors and dispersed throughout the supporting architecture. At the Henry, butterflies made of crocheted copper wire escape the confines of the gallery and inhabit interstitial spaces of the museum, directing visitors’ attention to less assuming locations within the building. A recurring motif across garcia’s work, the butterfly is a potent symbol of transformation and migration, and for garcia, also alludes to the derogatory, Spanish term for gay men used in Mexico mariposa (butterfly). In his hands, garcia reclaims this symbol. In a gesture emblematic of his larger practice, he recoups the socially devalued through acts of ritual care.

A complimentary publication will accompany the exhibition.

About the Artist

ektor garcia at the University of Washington's Ceramic & Metal Arts Building. Photo: Sophia Marciniak.

ektor garcia earned a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and an MFA from Columbia University. He has complete residencies at Progetto, Puglia, Italy; International Studio and Curatorial Program, New York; Cove Park, Argyll and Bute, Scotland; and Ox-Bow, Saugatuck, Michigan. garcia has held solo exhibition at the Sculpture
Center, New York; and Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany, among others. His work has been featured in numerous group exhibitions, including at the Hangzhou Triennial of Fiber Art, China; New Museum, New York; El Museo del Barrio, New York; and Prospect, New Orleans.

**Artist Fellowship Program**

**ektor garcia** is a participating artist in the Henry’s Artist Fellowship Program, which is intended to advance artistic inquiry through the mutual exchange between invited artists and the larger University of Washington community. It is designed as a generative program that promotes dynamic collaboration and facilitates artistic development, aligning the Henry’s commitment to innovation and inquiry with the University’s standing as a leader in research. The 2022 pilot year of the Artist Fellowship Program is made possible by the Jones Endowed Fund for the Arts.

**ektor garcia: matéria prima** is organized by Nina Bozicnik, Curator, and supported in part by a generous gift from Lee Rhodes and Peter Seligmann. New work created by garcia as part of the Henry Artist Fellowship Program was funded through a grant from the Jones Endowed Fund for the Arts.
ABOUT THE HENRY
The Henry Art Gallery is internationally recognized for bold and challenging exhibitions, for being the first to premiere new works by established and emerging artists, and for highlighting contemporary art practice through a roster of multidisciplinary programs. Containing more than 27,000 works of art, the museum’s permanent collection is a significant cultural resource available to scholars, researchers, and the general public. The Henry is located on the University of Washington campus in Seattle, Washington. Visit henryart.org to learn more.

Henry Art Gallery
University of Washington

PHYSICAL ADDRESS
15th Avenue NE + NE 41st Street
Seattle, WA 98195

MAILING ADDRESS
Henry Art Gallery
University of Washington
Box 351410
Seattle, WA 98195

MUSEUM HOURS
Thursday: 10 AM – 7 PM
Friday – Sunday: 10 AM – 5 PM

ADMISSION
General Admission: $0-20 suggested donation
Free for Henry members, UW faculty and staff, children and students
Free on first Thursdays

INFORMATION
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