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Cristóbal Gracia, *Caronte*, 2019, coconuts, plastic jaws, epoxy platiline, painting, and airbrushing on beach towels, dimensions variable.

### GUADALAJARA

## The Green Goddess Reloaded

MUSEO DE ARTE DE ZAPOPAN  
Andador 20 de Noviembre 166  
May 18–August 15, 2021

A follow-up to a 2019 exhibition in the French city of Lille that reflected, from a contemporary perspective, on the mythical lost city of “El Dorado” and the narrative of conquest it enshrines, “The Green Goddess Reloaded”

focuses in particular on Mexico: how the country has long been exploited by imperialism and capitalism, serving as both a site of extraction and as a projection screen for colonial fantasies.

Although some of the works in this new edition may leave a didactic aftertaste, the fruitful dialogue between the twenty-two international and Mexican artists makes it evident that these themes have not lost their relevance. Wendy Cabrera Rubio, Andrea Robles, and Cristóbal Gracia critically tackle the tension between exoticism, tourism, and neocolonialism in their works. In a diorama-like installation, Cabrera Rubio and Robles satirize the commercialization of local material culture, and Gracia deconstructs the image of his hometown of Acapulco modeled in the Hollywood movie *Tarzan and the Mermaids*, which was shot in the region in 1948.

While these Latin American artists astutely expose and deconstruct narratives that purport to represent a place or a culture as being fabricated for purposes of accumulation and domination, some of the work by artists from Europe and the United States unfortunately reproduces the very stereotypes the exhibition endeavors to critique. Lucile Littot and Naomi Fisher, for example, unreflectively display their fascination with Edward James's surrealist sculpture garden *Las Pozas*, constructed near the village of Xilitla, San Luis Potosí, between 1949 and 1984. In fact, this group of fantastical concrete structures is itself a product of European escapist fantasies, instrumentalizing its context of creation as a backdrop for an eclectic architectural folly appropriated from disparate material cultures. Curator Dorothee Dupuis's provocative curatorial juxtaposition of these very different approaches triggers a productive self-reflection in the European and US-American viewer about their own fascination with “Mexican culture,” and it becomes apparent that the El Dorado phenomenon reveals more about the exoticizing subject than its object.

— Anna Goetz

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