

Huesos/Piedras/Flores
(Bones/Stones/Flowers)

María García-Ibáñez An archaeological find: on a table we see bones, stones, and flowers recreating some sort of ritual. The placing of these elements brings to mind a burial, the transit between life and death, a journey from this world and into the unknown. Indistinctly, for different civilizations of the ancient world, the cult of bones was perhaps one of the most common ways of purifying the body and transforming it into a vehicle bound for eternity. Bones are relics that symbolize the eternal cycle of life and death, as well as the regeneration of nature. The finger phalanxes of two hands, as well as several spines refer, together with the rest of the objects on the table, to that mystical character. But the bones that we are seeing now are not real. The Spanish artist María García-Ibáñez has modeled them in ceramic with great precision, decorating and enameling them in a very refined way. The project called Huesos/Piedras/Flores (Bones/Stones/Flowers) is all about the concepts of origins, memory, and time. García-Ibáñez resorts to objects and situations that we associate mentally with distant eras, and she contrasts them formally with the aesthetics of the new. In the majority of her projects she utilizes different media and materials, and although there are some pieces that could work as independent elements, they integrate beautifully to the whole. In this installation we can see some kind of nest made with ribs, and also a hipbone, a jaw, et cetera, and on the side, some flowers also done in ceramic. The piece is complemented by several drawings with disconcerting shapes. They are classical prints from the history of anatomy that, once she has intervened them, become unusual landscapes. Tissues and veins evoke mountains and rivers; vertebrae suddenly transmute into flowers; viscera, into caves; placentas, into beehives; bones, into earth crusts; muscular dissections, into fruits or planets. These hybrids are a type of mandala that fuses magically the entrails of the human body with the natural environment. The artist erases, duplicates, or isolates parts looking for a decontextualization of the human body that displaces the image into a more or less recognizable landscape. This is the

start of an exercise on dissection on these new “organic” shapes through a direct intervention with watercolor, pencil, or gouache. For García-Ibáñez the different drawings and ceramic pieces construct a certain kind of dictionary, a catalogue of the imaginary that recounts the mystical union of human beings with their environment. Her work prompts connections between the sculptures and the drawings, between science and fabulation. Correspondingly, flowers in García-Ibáñez’s work (vanitas on the fleetingness of existence) should be understood as a celebration of life and a reminder of death. These flowers have turned literally into stone, thanks to baking the clay. This suggests a new way of looking at things, an awakening that allows us to perceive reality in a different way and to discover the magic hidden in the quotidian.

Text by Gonzalo Ortega, from the Catalogue Ruta Mística (Mystical Path)

Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey (MARCO)