



Press release

Fantasmas

an exhibition by the artist
Wyatt Kahn
at the Anahuacalli Museum.

- The Anahuacalli Museum is proud to present *Fantasmas* (“Ghosts”), a solo exhibition by the artist Wyatt Kahn.
- The opening will take place during Mexico City Art Week, the most important art fair in Latin America.
- *Fantasmas* will open to the public from Tuesday the 6th of February to Sunday the 19th of May.

More than twenty sculptural paintings make up the exhibition that Wyatt Kahn is bringing to the Anahuacalli Museum. Kahn's work moves between painting and sculpture, between the abstract and the figurative, and between the flat and the three-dimensional. In this way, his work finds a home in the museum's space, which oscillates between temple and cave.

The vision of Diego Rivera and Juan O-Gorman, the creators of this site, also resonates with that of Kahn. Rivera was a painter who turned to sculpture and eventually architecture. O-Gorman, a great friend of the muralist, was an architect who increasingly turned to painting. O-Gorman and Rivera met halfway: Anahuacalli is the result of this encounter. It is for this reason that the museum welcomes Wyatt Kahn's work as its own, the creation of an artist whose work is also situated at this crossroads.

“Kahn’s work is something that finds itself in the in-between, in the waiting room between one state and another; something that is difficult to pigeonhole or even name”- says Karla Niño de Rivera, the curator of the Anahuacalli Museum. “They are pieces that are situated at the margins, which bring materials, objects and spaces together. Diego drew upon the filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein’s theory of montage, of working through layers upon layers to create a compelling work. In Kahn’s work elements are also superimposed on top of each other in a playful way – hence we are faced with a work that we have to progressively discover and dissect.”

Kahn's works raise the question not only of whether they are sculpture or painting, but also whether they are subjects or objects, things or bodies. Although his works may appear abstract, they are in fact the result of the artist's observation of everyday life. Kahn draws on recognizable, everyday forms, often referring to the human body. At the same time, certain ordinary elements – an umbrella, a tube of paint, a shoe – are given a new interpretation. His art plays with complementary opposites: suggesting depth while delineating the flat, alluding to dynamism through stillness.

Fantasmas includes in total over thirty works spanning more than thirteen years. It includes some of the first unprimed multi-panel works Kahn created in 2011. The courtyard will feature three of Kahn's Cor-ten steel sculptures that were featured in *Life in Abstract*, Public Art Fund's presentation at City Hall Park, and later at LongHouse Sculpture Park. In addition, this exhibition includes a handful of never-before-exhibited paintings he has made throughout his career, including several works completed in the past year. These works consist of a new series of "color block" works in which a single block of color obscures much of the composition below. Many of the most recent works, including the first of the "color blocks," were conceived while Kahn was living in Mexico City in 2019 and 2020. This is the largest exhibition of Kahn's work to date, and includes the widest range of works from the widest range of years that he has ever exhibited. It also includes works in bronze, lead, canvas, and stuffed animals.

On view through May 19, 2024, *Fantasmas* will occupy both the esplanade and the interior of the museum. Kahn's contemporary work will be in dialogue with objects from Anahuacalli's permanent collection – pieces of Mesoamerican art bequeathed to Mexico by Rivera.

About the artist

Wyatt Kahn was born in 1983 in New York, NY, US, and lives and works in New York, NY, US. Recent institutional solo exhibitions include his outdoor sculptures exhibition *Wyatt Kahn: Life in the Abstract* at City Hall Park in New York, NY, US (2022 – 2023); *Variations on an Object* at Museo di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto (Mart), Trento, IT (2016); and *Object Paintings* at the Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis, MO, US (2015). Recent group exhibitions include *More* at Galería Mascota, Mexico City, MX (2023); *Room by Room: Concepts, Themes, and Artists in The Rachofsky Collection* at The Warehouse, Dallas, TX, US (2023); and *Jay DeFeo: The Ripple Effect* at Le Consortium, Dijon, FR, which traveled to the Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, CO, US (both in 2018). His work is included in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, US; the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, US; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, US; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, FR; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX, US; Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, AZ, US; CCS Bard, Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, US; and Buffalo AKG Art Museum (formerly Albright-Knox Art Gallery), Buffalo, NY, US.

About the Anahuacalli Museum

The Anahuacalli Museum is one of the most interesting spaces for contemporary arts today, offering them a point of encounter with the Mesoamerican past. Its unique architecture has formed a stage for hundreds of national artists as well as a wide variety of international creators, including Patti Smith, Sarah Lucas, Prune Nourry, Alma Allen, and now Wyatt Kahn.

The Anahuacalli was designed by the muralist Diego Rivera to be a city for the arts, and a site in which to house his collection of pre-Hispanic artifacts. 'Anahuacalli is a Nahuatl word that means "house surrounded by water". Its construction took over two decades – from 1942 to the 18th of September 1964, when it opened as a museum.

Rivera was assisted by two architects: his friend Juan O'Gorman, and his daughter Ruth Rivera. In the construction of the Anahuacalli, Rivera and O'Gorman were able to apply principles of integration with the natural environment and respect for the surrounding ecology.

The great esplanade recreates a Mesoamerican ballgame court, framing the volcanic construction as if it were emerging directly from the earth. To enter the Anahuacalli is to gain access to three universes: first, the underworld. Each corner of the first level is dedicated to a pre-Hispanic deity and to an element: earth, water, air and fire. The ceilings are laid with mosaics of natural stone.

Rivera's pre-Hispanic art collection is exhibited in an order that favors the beauty of the pieces. 2,000 of the more than 50,000 pre-Colombian objects that Rivera collected over the course of his life are exhibited across the 23 rooms.

The second level opens out onto a wide, bright space: the studio, where huge sketches of Rivera's most famous murals are on display – in addition to sketches for murals which are now lost. This level represents the earthly realm.

The final level symbolizes the celestial world – a terrace open to the sky, from which the city can be observed in almost 360 degrees. The Anahuacalli is surrounded by a nature reserve: the Ecological Area, which harbors the endemic flora and fauna of the Pedregal, a volcanic outcrop formed by the eruption of the Xitle volcano approximately 1700 years ago.

In 2021, the architect Mauricio Rocha carried out the extension of the museum. He was awarded the Miles Crown Hall Americas Prize for his work. Currently, the Anahuacalli receives close to 10 thousand visitors a month, and offers workshops and a broad educational program. It provides a location for concerts, internationally renowned festivals such as MUTEK, product launches, fashion shows, art presentations and book readings.

The Anahuacalli provides a counterpoint in which contemporary art and architecture are set in dialogue with pre-Colombian architecture and ceramics. It is a unique space in which the aesthetics of the past and the present find themselves united.

General information:

Exhibition dates: February 6th – May 19th, 2024
Visiting hours: Tuesday to Sunday from 11:00 to 17:30 h.
Address: Museo 150, San Pablo Tepetlapa,
Coyoacán, Mexico City.

Press information:

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