

transplant of European culture. The artist revisits it in works like *La colonia* ("The Colony") as a singularly rich source of formal references for exploring the representational ambiguity of the pictorial space. Appearing against a black background is a series of 41 irregular yellow shapes, which the artist calls "houses"; on them, García de la Nuez has drawn perspective lines to indicate depth. The lines suggest corners, stairways, banisters, ramps, and by virtue of them the semi-abstract shapes become windows or openings into domestic interiors. Each shape resembles an expandable painting. Indeed, *Escalera* ("Stairway"), with its whimsical combination of shapes staggered in different directions against a yellow background, could very well be understood as a zoom-out and occupy the place of one of the 41 "houses".

*Cuatro casas en fuego* ("Four Houses on Fire"), in medium format, is a tribute to four artists whose names García de la Nuez explicitly inscribes as referents in the modernist tradition toward abstraction: Turner, Monet, Rothko, and Twombly. Against a scratched blue background, schematic outlines of houses in an intense red hue sprinkled with yellow are placed at the cardinal points of the pictorial space. The text is also red. As in *Mapa*, the contrast between background and figure is translated into the creation of a sense of depth, without wholly representing spatial perspective.

Another notable aspect is the reflexivity of the shapes, expressed at times on the canvas' very surface. In *Dos* ("Two"), the artist wrote: "With one hand we open the circle that the other hand has just closed" and "Because light is thin and shadow is fat." These texts appear above and below, respectively, of a thick horizontal band formed by two rectangles, black and red, at the center of the painting. In turn, four irregular circles

**Gabriel de la Mora.** *MCI / 6-III f*, 2015. Discarded rubber blanket from offset printing press rubber, mounted on wood. 70 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 47 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 2 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (180 x 120 x 6 cm). Courtesy Timothy Taylor.



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LONDON / ENGLAND

**Gabriel de la Mora**  
Timothy Taylor

*Serial* is a repetition in every sense. It is a repetition of superimposed images, a collection of fortuitous findings, and a reutilization of discarded materials. It is a chain of movements, displacements, and actions in the creation of which the artist repeated, accumulated, and archived almost obsessively. Similarly, *Serial* is a reproduction of sounds that communicate via silences and rhythms, a dance of lights and shadows, that are recontextualized and gain new meanings. It is a composition of images and stories that dialog, expand, and complement one another on space and time.

This is Mexican artist Gabriel de la Mora's first solo exhibition in Europe. Presented at the Timothy Taylor gallery in London, it features three new bodies of work, arranged in two spaces. The first section welcomes us with two series of two-dimensional works in a variety of formats. As we enter, we initially think them abstract paintings of geometric shapes in dark colors, almost monochrome. As we approach them for closer inspection, however, they start to seem like collages in another kind of material, made from fragments of advertising images and several different types of disfigured, inserted, and transformed iconographies. Looking at the images again we realize that they contain a much more complex narrative and story, and we discover that they are made with rubber sponges and aluminum plaques of the kind used in offset printing, found, appropriated, and manipulated. We can clearly see a series of blurrings and superpositions of color, generated by the continuous use of the four inks of the offset process: magenta, cyan, yellow, and black.

For the creation of these works De la Mora used materials found in a print shop located under his own studio in the Roma borough of Mexico City. The artist has been using the same space for twelve years, but it was only recently that he noticed the print shop. What appealed to him, in particular, was the sound of machines dating from the 1920s-40s, which have a rhythm resembling that of minimalist music. The sound guided him to find a number of rubber and aluminum pieces that were ready for disposal. He noticed their textures and shades of color, similar to painting. Later he became interested in their history: the patina that results from thousands of reproductions made over time; the machines are cleaned for each new run, but they are never absolutely clean, which causes the blurring effect. Finally, the artist set for himself the task of accumulating the most he could of these materials from different sites, archiving and classifying them with the advice of a restorer who instructed him in the use of chemical cleaners to clean or manipulate the pieces. Hence the title of the exhibition, *Serial*. It has to do with a chain of movements and actions; with obsession, accumulation, and archiving. These works explore the relationship between the image (painting and graphics) with reproduction, time, and accident.

Located in the second section, more sequestered and less central to the exhibition, is a site-specific installation titled *Crystals of Inevidence*.

This work fulfills the function of seriality by means of an effect contrary to the gesture of transforming and giving new meaning to discarded objects. Here, the artist inserted into the gallery wall a series of microscope coverings or glasses in a mathematically rhythmic pattern. The light shining on them produces an effect of motion, reflections, and shadows, which shifts depending on the angle at which each piece is posed. The color of the wall also shifts: it appears clearer, more intense, or darker, and it becomes segmented. In this way, the glasses cease to be coverings or microscope pieces and are transformed into a sculpture of installation, a work of art. The work is contemplative, fragile, and beautiful. We sit on a bench in the gallery and think on that which is not evident, in the glasses' very fragile, almost invisible materiality; they are instruments for our eyes, equally fragile and equally invisible to us (their owners), to see what they can't see by themselves.

At the end of our visit, we breathe and get up. We think that both the production and the contemplation of art are philosophical exercises. For De la Mora, the encounter with the work begins with the gaze, and is later made stable via the emotions and the other senses. When one observes and contemplates, questions and ideas emerge. "Thinking and doing go hand in hand, as do seeing and thinking, or walking, thinking, and seeing," the artist says. The conclusion, then, is that *Serial* is a reflection about time, about the re-signification, re-encounter, and re-production of images and stories, including concepts of possibility, control, and accident.

PAULA LÓPEZ ZAMBRABO

MADRID / SPAIN

## Ulises Carrión

### Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía

To understand Ulises Carrión in a museum context, it is helpful to think about the writer first and then move on to thinking about the artist, without ever setting the former too far aside or entirely forgetting about him. Let's think about the artist who wanted to stop being a writer, who devoted his efforts to publishing, and who predicted the end of the book. Let's think about the Wittgensteinian fly clashing against the glass of language, and also about the poetry of its flight. *Querido lector. No lea* ("Dear Reader. Don't Read"), the work appropriately chosen by curator Guy Schraenen as a title for the show, works not only as a motto and epitome for Carrión's creative drive, but also as the best possible user's manual for visitors.

Ulises Carrión (1941, San Andrés Tuxtla, Mexico – 1989, Amsterdam, The Netherlands) was one of Latin America's earliest conceptual artists. His first retrospective, *Me ocurrió bastante tarde* ("It Occurred to Me Rather Late") was held in 2003 at Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, but only now is he having a European one. His work has not been as visible in Europe as it deserves, with the obvious exception of The Netherlands. Ultimately, this initiative by the Reina Sofía can be seen as part of the institution's gambit for collecting Latin American art of the 1970s and 1980s and giving it greater exposure. In recent years, this inclination has prompted the acquisition of archives and a collaboration with the Red de Conceptualismos del Sur, crystallized in the 2012 exhibition *Perder la forma humana* ("Losing Human Form").

This exhibition offers a complete, well-rounded panoramic not only of Carrión's work, but, even more importantly, of his creative processes. With great conceptual solidity and based on a deep knowledge of the work and the artist, this exhibition features some 350 items, including books, magazines, sound-art works, mail-art works, public projects,

and performances, never losing sight of the fact that many of these fetish objects are nothing more than the remnants of the inexhaustible methodologies and explorations behind Carrión's many initiatives as curator, publisher, distributor, lecturer, archivist, art theoretician, and writer. Some sections of the exhibition are articulated around thematic-conceptual nuclei that remained constant throughout Carrión's career (fundamentally, the ideas of reading and of books), and others touch on specific projects such as *Gossip, Scandal and Good Manners* (1981), a field study of the mechanisms and structures of gossip and rumors, documented in a graphic format and later presented in a conference, like any scientific investigation would be.

Carrión is primarily identified with projects like the legendary bookstore-gallery *Other Books And So* (1975-1979), the first of its kind devoted to artist's publications, which in 1979 became the archive of the same name, or his participation in the mail-art network. This show also presents visitors with lesser-known projects and works, such as Carrión's organization of a film cycle about Lilia Prado at De Appel Arts Centre, in 1984, or videos like *TV-Tonight* (1987), which posited sharp and humorous reflections about language, communication, writing, and visuality. The show ends in a multidisciplinary gallery featuring video, here sound-art works, and a reading area where visitor can (finally!) peruse facsimiles or some of Carrión's books, non-books, and anti-books, and consult a bibliography about the artist. The gallery's simple idea would have delighted Carrión—it could indeed have been one of his own works—who was a precursor or the agitated debate around notions like "original," "copy," and "forgery," and an enemy of fetishism in the arts.

The stimulating power of Carrión's work perhaps resides in the fact that it remains an enigma. His early career in Mexico unfolded in literary circles, and his self-exile in Europe meant also an exile from literature and a move towards the visual arts. He never settled definitively in any of those two fields, and his main contribution to both is, precisely, his positing of a lack of definition as the site of the poetic. His status as an outsider in every aspect of life always meant the challenge of construction/deconstruction as inevitable moments of the processes of life and communication. Revealingly, the work from which the exhibition takes

**Ulises Carrión.** *No lea* (Don't Read), 1975. Printing on paper. 10 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 13 <sup>25</sup>/<sub>32</sub> in. (26.5 x 35 cm) each one. Private collection, Paris.



Don't read.

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