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ILEANA MORENO INAUGURATES TRES ALTARES ÍGNEOS AT PLAGA: A CONTEMPORARY REINTERPRETATION OF THE ALTAR THROUGH THE FEMININE, BETWEEN PAINTING, FIRE, AND LIVING MATERIALITY

BETWEEN RITUAL TRADITION AND CONTEMPORARY VISUAL LANGUAGES, ILEANA MORENO PRESENTS A SERIES OF RECENT PAINTINGS IN WHICH THE ALTAR CEASES TO FUNCTION AS A FIXED DEVOTIONAL STRUCTURE AND BECOMES INSTEAD A SPACE OF DESIRE, CARE, AND TRANSFORMATION. IN TRES ALTARES ÍGNEOS, THE ARTIST ARTICULATES A VISUAL GRAMMAR THAT CONJURES THE GIRLY, THE ANGELIC, AND THE MONSTROUS, PROPOSING INTIMATE IMAGES THAT ACTIVATE A SENSORY AND AFFECTIVE DIMENSION OF BOTH BODY AND MATTER.

PRESS RELEASE

Within the framework of Material Monday, on February 2, Plaga inaugurates its new space with Tres altares igneos (Three Igneous Altars), a solo exhibition by Mexican artist Ileana Moreno, curated by Paulina Ascencio Fuentes. The exhibition brings together a series of recent paintings that engage with the tradition of the retablo and the altar, understood not as fixed devotional structures but as spaces of care, offering, and ritual historically shaped by the feminine.

The title of the exhibition refers to a concrete material condition: the incorporation of copal resin as a fundamental element of the pictorial process. Historically linked to ritual practices and ceremonial fire, this material introduces a living quality into the paintings—it does not fully set, responds to heat, and retains brightness, scent, and a degree of instability—activating a sensory experience that involves not only sight but also the body and memory.

Through a visual grammar that intertwines elements of Japanese manga with Mesoamerican figures, female forms and hybrid presences emerge not to be venerated as icons, but to appear as unstable bodies. Swords, hearts, and flowers compose an affective iconography associated with gestures of defense, care, and protection, where the girly, the angelic, and the monstrous coexist, and where delicacy and violence, the sacred and the pop, the vulnerable and the excessive remain in constant tension.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Ileana Moreno (Ciudad de México, 1989) es artista visual. She holds a BFA in Visual Arts from the Faculty of Art and Design at UNAM (2013–2017) and completed academic training in Art History at FES UNAM (2010–2012).

Her work consists of visual proposals that explore relationships between symbolic and mythological objects and references drawn from pop imaginaries across different decades and cultures. Through allegories constructed via the juxtaposition of formal and plastic values, religious or spiritual motifs, and processes of historical reinterpretation, her practice resignifies visual narratives from a contemporary perspective.

She has participated in artist residencies in Mexico and the United States. Her work has been exhibited in Mexico, the United States, Japan, and Germany, is part of private collections, and has received multiple awards and recognitions throughout her career. She was a recipient of the Jóvenes Creadores grant (2022–2023).



ABOUT THE CURATOR

Paulina Ascencio Fuentes is an independent curator and writer based in Mexico City. Her practice focuses on contemporary art from a critical and material perspective, exploring intersections between image, affect, gender, and visual culture. Through curatorial and research-driven projects, her work engages with artistic practices that question historical narratives and propose alternative ways of understanding the body, ritual, and collective memory.

She has collaborated with independent spaces, galleries, and cultural institutions in Mexico, developing exhibitions and texts that foreground experimental and process-based approaches. Her curatorial work emphasizes dialogue between artistic production and critical thought, situating contemporary practices within broader social and cultural frameworks.



GALERÍA DIVERGENTE

Galería Divergente was founded by gallerist Leo Misael Urbina and is a space dedicated to the commercialization, promotion, and preservation of modern and contemporary Latin American art. Coming from a family of gallerists, Urbina began his career at the age of 18, selling graphic works at La Lagunilla, before consolidating the gallery's project in 2021 at the emblematic Centro de Arte y Antigüedades de Plaza del Ángel in Mexico City.

The gallery holds a strong collection of modern Latin American art, including works by artists such as Diego Rivera, Roberto Montenegro, Leonardo Nierman, Manuel Felguérez, Rafael Coronel, Rufino Tamayo, and Francisco Toledo, among others. Its participation in art fairs such as Zona Maco reflects its ongoing commitment to the national and international art scene.

PLAGA

PLAGA is a curatorial project launched by Galería Divergente in 2024. It functions as a space for aesthetic experimentation and for stimulating speculative thinking from a contemporary perspective. Its name evokes that which expands, unsettles, and disrupts: a symbolic and cultural agent that seeks to infect and challenge traditional structures of art. Based in Mexico City, PLAGA brings together artists, curators, and cultural agents to collectively imagine other possible futures from a critical

