

# DONNA HUANCA

(Chicago, United States. 1980)

In recent years, Huanca's work has stood out for its understanding of the body, and of the skin in particular, as a territory where surface and matter converse with architecture, space, and the world. Through paintings, sculptures, and performances, the artist creates disturbing futuristic-prehistoric scenarios where identity shatters into a sort of schizodynamic production of knowledge.

Her performances produce slow-paced choreographies that conjure private rituals and meditations in the gallery space, confronting the viewer with a scenario equal parts uncomfortable and suggestive. The titles of the paintings, through which matter emerges as something between the natural and the artificial, and in which blue predominates over skin tones and earthy colors, allude to different types of rocks, minerals, and natural processes. The totemic sculptures, on the other hand, combine a variety of materials that relate to the body and which stand out for their tactile qualities, such as clothes, skin, silicone body imprints, natural and synthetic textiles, or re-contextualized cultural artifacts. Collaborators' bodies are painted from head to toe, resembling figures halfway between a shaman and a futuristic raver. As they move through the space in a trance, following an icy choreography, they switch positions, climb up and down stairs and props that are scattered throughout the gallery, and engage with paintings and sculptures in a wordless dialogue.

Huanca's practice questions systems of knowledge such as biology, ecology, geology, or anthropology. Surrounded by the silent matter of the paintings and sculptures, one can almost feel the constant danger of life in relation to nonlife. The indigenous imaginary and the uncanny but vital collaborators' movements actualize the animist insistence on the fact that all forms of existence have within them a vital affecting force. All the elements—both bodies and objects—are impregnated with cosmetic pigments, unifying and stabilizing the animate with the inanimate, the human with the mineral, the organic with the synthetic. The bodies' coloration—like a virus—confuses and levels the difference between life and nonlife, and operates as an instrument of transformation, setting up a model for the fragmentation of cultural, gender, and national identities and the dissolution of the false dichotomy of nature and culture.

Recent exhibitions include *Obsidian Ladder*, curated by Olivia Marciano, Marciano Art Foundation, Los Angeles, United States; *Lengua Llorona*, Copenhagen Contemporary, Denmark; *Piedra Quemada*, Belvedere Museum, Vienna, Austria; *Cell Echo*, Yuz Museum, Shanghai, China; *Lengua de Bartolina Sisa*, Travesía Cuatro Madrid, Spain; *Jaguar and electric Eels*, Julia Stoschek Collection, Berlin, Germany; *Scar Cymbals*, Zabludowicz Collection, London, United Kingdom; *Surrogate Painteen*, Peres Project, Berlin, Germany; *Ice Chrysocolla*, Cabaret der Künstler – Zunfthaus Voltaire, Manifesta 11, Zurich, Switzerland; *Poly Styrene's Braces*, curated by Anne Barlow, Art in General, New York, United States; *In collaboration with kim?*, Contemporary Art Centre, Riga, Latvia and *Sade Room* (formerly *reclusive*), Moma PS1, New York, United States. She is included in numerous international collections: Collections Solomon R. Guggenheim Collection, New York, United States; Zabludowicz Collection, London, United Kingdom; B.L.A Foundation, Vienna, Austria; Espacio 1414/Berezdivin Collection, Santurce, Puerto Rico; Marciano Art Foundation, Los Angeles, United States; Rubell Family Collection, Miami, United States; Sifang Art Museum, Nanjing, China; Yuz Museum, Shanghai, China, among others.