

The History of Peru. 13 artists, 12 works

Fernando Bryce, Claudia Coca, Sandra Gamarra, Jean Paul Zelada and Alejandra Delgado, Nicole Franchy, Iosu Aramburu, Verónica Luján, Raúl Silva, Fernando Nureña, Benjamín Cieza, Juan Carlos Catacora and Ashly Gómez.

Curated by Miguel Aguirre

Opening: November 15th from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. From November 15th to January 16th, 2026

Miguel Aguirre (Peru, 1973), artist and curator of the exhibition, presents a review of the history of Peru through the eyes of thirteen of the most prominent Peruvian artists of the moment. They focus on addressing the social and political challenges that have marked and continue to mark their country. The exhibition brings together paintings and drawings by artists from three different generations that act as a visual compendium of the history of Peru. They invite us to reflect on how social differences and injustices in the Andean country are not resolved but sustained over time. The works selected by Aguirre address fundamental themes of their history, such as wars lost since the 19th century up to the internal armed conflict of the 80s, showing the deep scars they have left on the nation. They reference ambitious and avant-garde social projects from the 30s, prematurely thwarted, but demonstrating the unyielding struggle to achieve a fairer country. The thirteen artists draw our attention to the patterns that have historically repeated themselves. A critical vision is entirely present in their works, allowing for an understanding of the struggles of the Peruvian people.

FERNANDO BRYCE (Lima, 1965)

The work 100+ is a superposition of four elements: an iconic 100-dollar bill, the idealized image of an Off-Shore bank taken from the internet, and two columns of text where the same question is posed, and Bryce transcribes the answers from both Chat GPT and Deep Seek: Illegal gold—the Peruvian Institute of Economy estimates this year that over 100 tons will be exported from Peru, valued at US\$12 billion—is sold in global markets, what is the benefit for formal banks in the global North? The challenge of mapping the logic and circulation of capital is resolved with the old resource of emblematic representation and the textual information from the two most relevant artificial intelligence applications today: the Chinese and the American, providing an answer to one of the aspects that relate the global economy to organized crime and corruption.

CLAUDIA COCA (Lima, 1970)

The colonial invention of “the Other” as savage, barbarian, and natural continues to be installed in current societies as a latent concept: an imperial discourse that still manages the world.

Today, the “savages” are those who defend their territories or those who flee due to the advancement of perverse capitalism. The West continues to expel people from their territories and close its borders to the Other. The story of a migrant, today, continues to be a barbarian tale. For the exhibition, she has created a large graphite on canvas titled Migrant.

SANDRA GAMARRA HESHIKI (Lima, 1972)

A series that confronts learned texts about classic 15th and 16th-century paintings written by the Italian historian Corrado Ricci with Peruvian press photographs, featuring various vulnerable populations of Peru in compositions that echo the works Ricci comments on.

JEAN PAUL ZELADA (Trujillo, 1972) AND ALEJANDRA DELGADO (La Paz, 1977)

The work Just for one day shows us a scene in which the Peruvian Colonel Francisco Bolognesi and his officers—heroes of the War of the Pacific, an armed conflict that took place between 1879 and 1884 between Chile and the allies Bolivia and Peru—pose in an austere setting, but something happens that breaks that formality. An eighties Pop music figure—Madonna—appears in the middle of the group of men. This creates a coexistence of two registers distant in time and social context, although both belong to a popular recognition in Peru.

They are significant figures in a history that sometimes compartmentalizes areas of events too much. The importance of a battle or an artistic movement can be known with the same interest. Archival images are susceptible to deterioration, both those in physical support and those in the virtual world, with the glitch being the error that modifies them. There is no way to escape the transformation of history.

NICOLE FRANCHY (Lima, 1977)

Nicole Franchy's work is characterized by reflecting on landscape, territory, and power, which she calls "associative landscapes" or "political geographies." In the case of Huepetuhe—a Peruvian town located in the province of Manu in the department of Madre de Dios—illegal mining has devastated the territory to the point of being unrecognizable, and the scene seems to be from another planet. Beams of light lift, as if pulling from underground, mineral remains and, at the same time, cut the reading of the "landscape" into fragments of what is left of it.

IOSU ARAMBURU (Lima, 1986)

This series of paintings is a farewell. They are made following a group of drawings that five artists and close friends of José Carlos Mariátegui made of his face shortly after he died in April 1930. Mariátegui was a Peruvian socialist thinker, but above all, he was a nucleus around which the most avant-garde thought, activism, and art of the 20s were articulated in that corner of South America, and his sudden death was experienced as a fundamental event. That feeling is in this last look that Julia Codesido, Carmen Saco, Camilo Blas, Artemio Ocaña, and Arístides Vallejo give to his face in the hospital or already at his home during the preparations for the funeral procession.

VERÓNICA LUJÁN (Trujillo, 1987)

This painting is based on a press photograph taken during a protest in northern Peru in February 2023. The history of politics in the Andean country teaches us that it has been managed, most of the time, by corrupt leaders. Currently, the Peruvian government is being controlled, and has been for a few years, by "organized crime gangs." Criminals—in their role as congressmen—who legislate solely for their own benefit, leaving the vast majority of Peruvians in a state of insecurity and abandonment. This painting contains the ambiguous feeling of hysteria and impotence that Peru has always experienced, and at the same time, the love and hope for a better country.

RAÚL SILVA (Lima, 1991)

This work—which can be described as a pictorial collage—belongs to a series in which Raúl Silva selects elements from different archives of Peruvian history, choosing some that deal with nature and others with civilization. All elements come from plates by Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala (16th century), paintings by Diego Quispe Tito (17th century), comics published during the first government of Alan García (1985-1990), or photographs of the fire at the San Sebastián church in Cusco that occurred in 2016. Each image refers to different ideas: destruction, coloniality, industry. Works like this are often exercises that Silva performs as a prelude to broader video and installation projects. This particular piece is an essay.

BENJAMIN CIEZA HURTADO (Lima, 1991)

Aquellos años maravillosos I (Those Wonderful Years I) is a painting in which the soccer player Julinho, the nineties idol of the Peruvian sports club Sporting Cristal, is observed in a vulnerable and exhausted moment after a match ended. Today, we can observe him with similar transparency in his role as an influencer, where he exchanges the aura of the stadiums for the closeness of his private spaces. Aquellos años maravillosos II (Those Wonderful Years II), on the other hand, is a painting that portrays John Paul II, the leader of the Catholic Church who visited the city of Iquitos (Peru) in 1985. The goal was to bring light to the territory that has been hit by violence and the exploitation of natural resources since the beginning of the 20th century. Currently, the problems affecting the Peruvian jungle are the same or even worse than in the eighties.

FERNANDO NUREÑA (Lima, 1993)

The last photographs that the photographer Willy Retto took in the final minutes of his life, prior to the tragic events of the assassination of eight journalists and their guide in Uchuraccay (Ayacucho, Peru) in 1983, are well known. However, his first published photograph in the newspaper Última Hora was taken at age eleven, in 1968, when he accompanied his father, also a photographer, to cover the Caminos del Inca rally. This work uses that first photograph, of a remarkable creative, funny, and tender quality, as working material. With the pictorial

interpretation of this photo, Fernando Nureña is interested in approaching the figure of Retto beyond his status as a victim and drawing attention to his trajectory as a notable photographer, without downplaying the tragedy of his death.

JUAN CARLOS CATACORA (Lima, 1996)

Fire devours a bus as if it were an everyday and repeated act, a postcard that news reports transmit until it becomes routine. The painting retains that moment of chaos, not to inform but to insist on its emotional and political charge. The smoke and flames dialogue with the texture of the oil paint, creating a visual field where urban violence mixes with media noise, questioning how much of our visual memory is constructed from the spectacle of disaster. In the fragmented framing, the red shoes on the carpet capture the distance between the official narrative and social reality. The painting freezes a media instant that, beneath its apparent banality, evidences the hierarchies of power and its disinterest in a country in crisis. The visual crop acts as a magnifying glass and a scalpel: it eliminates the face but amplifies the gesture, letting the image become a symbol of a structural disconnection.

ASHLY GÓMEZ (Lima, 2002)

In these paintings, Ashly Gómez invents two newspapers to resignify the back page of the sensationalist newspaper Trome—the one with the largest circulation in Peru and the best-selling in Spanish—and to confront the hierarchy of violence that traverses the country. In La Conera, the scene of burning buses coexists with the phrase “ask for your Free Palestine poster,” thus evidencing the hypocrisy of looking at the distant while normalizing local violence. In El peruano ya aprendió (The Peruvian has already learned), the police repression against protesters embodies the phrase of former President Dina Boluarte, showing how protest is punished with death and silence. Both pieces intertwine in the same tension: the vast majority of Peruvian citizens are cornered between the violence of organized crime and the violence carried out by the state itself.