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PRESS RELEASE

DONNA HUANCA
LENGUA LLORONA
22.03. – 01.09.2019

Copenhagen Contemporary (CC) proudly presents *LENGUA LLORONA*; the first solo exhibition in Scandinavia of the international Bolivian–American artist Donna Huanca. *LENGUA LLORONA* is the first performance–based commission at CC, centring on human body culture, relationship with nature, origin, and time. In a scenographic and sensory multimedia installation, Huanca has created a femininely charged universe with ritual undertones.

During the exhibition period, the installation will be activated by a series of live performances in which painted models will inhabit the space and become living paintings.

In *LENGUA LLORONA*, Huanca has developed a new and site–specific multimedia installation for CC comprising painting, sculpture, scent, sound, and live performance.

Huanca has created sixteen monumental oil and sand paintings and a series of painted anthropomorphic sculptures arranged as an archipelago of small islands on top of bone–white sand. The installation is enveloped in an ambient soundtrack consisting of fragmented voices, and the lingering scent of deconstructed Palo Santo originating from a holy South American tree used for ritual cleansing adds another sensory dimension to the space.

During the exhibition period, a series of eight performances will activate the exhibition. The models, as Huanca calls her performers, are decorated with paint, pigment, and textiles. Like living paintings, they inhabit the installation leaving physical traces on the walls and floor, thus creating a lasting transformation of the space. Through the models' controlled movements and interaction with the space and the audience, a moment of intense presence emerges.

Huanca views skin as a foundation on which to create painterly surfaces and as the communicator of cultural identity. To Huanca, skin represents the definitive layer both uniting and separating us from our surroundings across time and space.

Huanca considers the performances to be central points of tension in her work where the installation is fully brought to life as a microcosmic circuit of organic relations between bodies and surroundings.

Huanca's practice is based on an aesthetic and philosophical examination of the body's biochemical heritage and cultural history; its organic processes, connections, and metamorphoses constitute the artist's key interests.



In all aspects of Huanca's work, she uses materials directly related to nature, such as raw colour pigments, oils, turmeric, sand, leather, hair, and clay. With great aesthetic accuracy, Huanca mixes all these colours, materials, textures, scents, and sounds into a visually appealing figurative language.

This enables Huanca to address all our senses at once and, from this position, to explore the underlying conventions linked to bodily behaviour. By using the body and skin as both canvas and performative tool, Huanca examines how dominating gender and body policies form our perception of identity and connectedness. With *LENGUA LLORONA*, she introduces a different gaze on the body, departing from direct objectification, instead directing our focus on ideas about origin, memory, biology, and time.

The title of the exhibition, *LENGUA LLORONA*, translates from Spanish into 'crying tongue' and is a strongly femininely charged term. 'Crying tongue' may equally be reminiscent of natural waterfalls, lamentation, or a sexual act. Thus, Huanca plays with the juxtaposition of etymological meaning in linguistic terms and aesthetic metaphors, which is also reflected in the titles of the individual works.

The exhibition has been realised in collaboration with curator Aukje Lepoutre Ravn.

In recent years, Donna Huanca has achieved great international recognition for her expressive and sensory installations, activated via meditative performances using painted models. Donna Huanca says about her performances:

"I perceive the space as a cohesive elusiveness that can be activated at several levels. By virtue of their powerful presence, my models facilitate a transitory process which captures and develops the space. So, the models function as a kind of respiratory system of temporality and deconstruction. They sense and feel the space, leaving it changed."

Live performance dates:

- 1) Thursday 21 March from 17.30–21: Preview
- 2) Friday 22 March from 11–13 + 15–18
- 3) Friday 26 April from 11–13 + 15–18
- 4) Saturday 27 April from 11–13 + 15–18
- 5) Thursday 23 May from 18–21
- 6) Friday 24 May from 11–13
- 7) Saturday 22 June from 14–18
- 8) Saturday 31 August from 14–18



ABOUT DONNA HUANCA

Donna Huanca (b.1980) lives and works in Berlin. She grew up in Chicago, the daughter of Bolivian parents whose native country and cultural traditions are a recurring inspiration to her practice. Huanca is best known for her painterly installations mixing painting, sculpture, sound, and scent with live performance. Huanca obtained a bachelor in painting from University of Houston, Texas, USA (2004) and studied at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine, USA (2006) as well as the Städelschule, Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Frankfurt, GE (2010). Huanca's work has been shown in many contexts across the world, most recently in the monumental exhibition *PIEDRA QUEMADA* at the Belvedere Museum, Vienna, AT (2018). Other recent solo exhibitions include: *CELL ECHO*, Yuz Museum, Shanghai, CN (2018), *LEUNGUA DE BARTOLINA SISA*, Travesía Cuatro, Madrid, ES (2017), *SCAR CYMBALS*, Zabłudowicz Collection, London, UK (2016), *SURROGATE PAINTEEN*, Peres Projects, Berlin, DE (2016), *ICE CHRYSOCOLLA*, Cabaret der Künstler – Zunfthaus Voltaire, Manifesta 11, Zurich, CH, *POLYSTYRENE'S BRACES*, curated by Art in General, New York, hosted by Kim? Contemporary Art Center, Riga, Latvia and elsewhere.

The official opening of *LENGUA LLORONA* takes place on Thursday 21 March from 17– 22.

The exhibition is open for the press on Thursday 21 March from 14.00–15.30. Introduction to the exhibition by curator Aukje Lepoutre Ravn. Moreover, CC's director and the exhibition curators will be present at the press preview. Following the press preview, refreshments will be served in the foyer.

NB | On the opening day Donna Huanca is with her models and therefore she will not be available for questions at the press preview. However it is possible to request an interview with the artist.

To attend the press preview or for interview, please contact (no later than Friday 15 March):

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For further information about Donna Huanca's exhibition please contact:

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Press kit and images are available for download from the CC website:

<http://cphco.org/en/presse/>

Read more about the event here:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/416157158959810/>

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