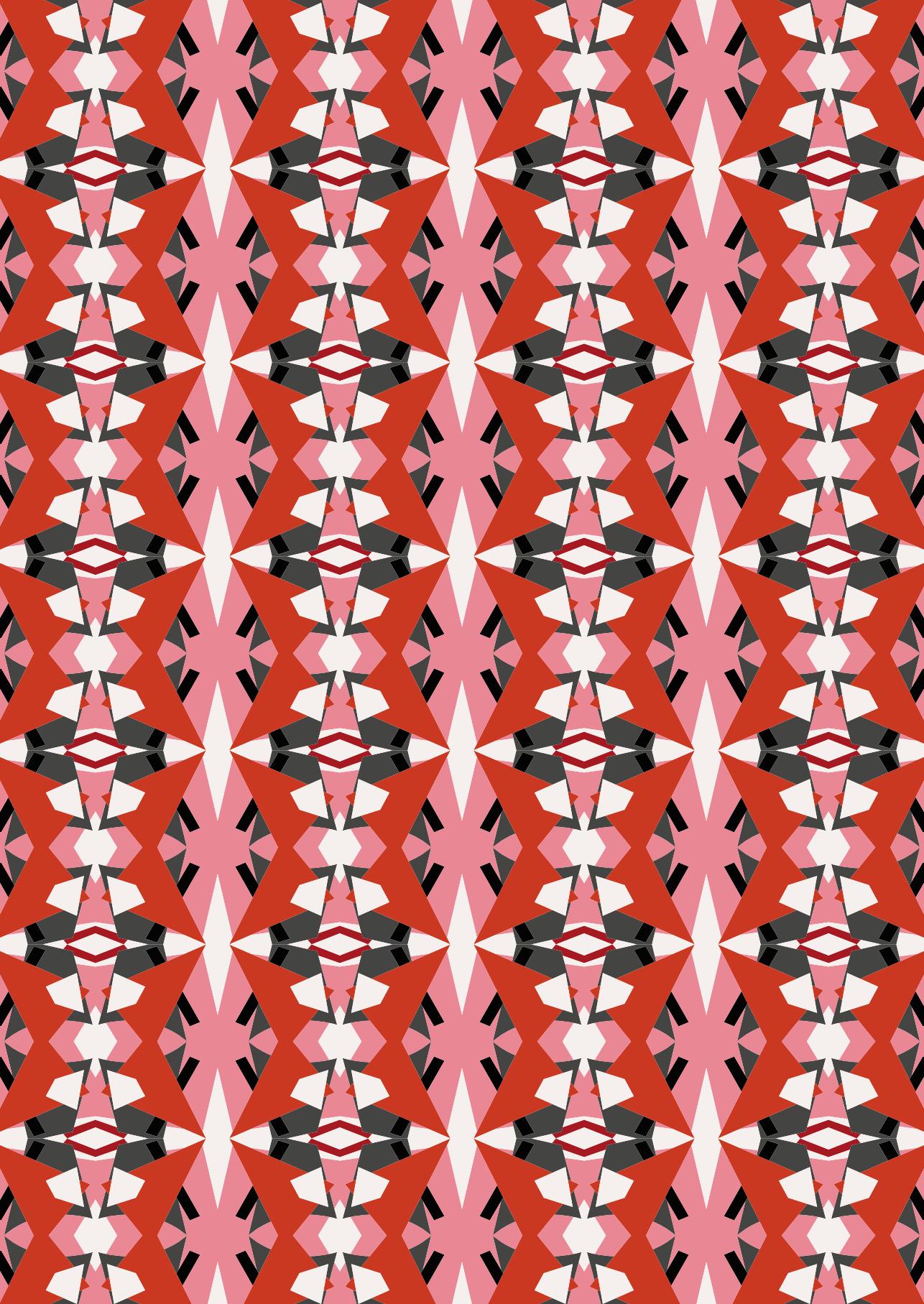


# Quisqueya

EL CENTRO PUEDE ESTAR  
EN TODAS PARTES

# Henríquez



The irreverent work of Quisqueya Henríquez (b. Havana, 1966; d. Santo Domingo, 2024) ranks among the most significant oeuvres to have emerged from the Caribbean over the past four decades. Combining clear-eyed critique with a mischievous sense of humor, her production questions power structures and hegemonic discourses from the perspective of someone both deeply immersed in international artistic currents and firmly rooted in the realities of quotidian life in the Dominican Republic. For Henríquez, this multi-layered perspective served as a potent lever with which to upend the hierarchies of value that elevate certain cultural expressions above others along the lines of nationality, socioeconomic status, and gender.

*El centro puede estar en todas partes* is the most comprehensive survey to date of Quisqueya's prolific career. The exhibition reflects the rigorous, coherent, and radically multi-disciplinary nature of her art, evincing her lifelong dedication to photoconceptualism, video art, and found objects; her profound engagement with the medium of collage; energetic forays into the realms of digital art and abstract painting; and interactive projects in which the public completes the artwork.

The exhibition traces the artist's shift from a more discursive mode that drips with irony, to one characterized by restless formal experimentation and a heightened interest in vernacular material culture. At the same time, the exhibition highlights several aspects that remained constant throughout Henríquez's career, chief among them the conviction that modernity is not a universal condition, but rather a splintered and localized operation shaped by daily acts of cultural hybridization. For Henríquez, these acts possess intrinsic value as forms of creativity, and should be key to how the Caribbean is imagined, both from without and from within.

As much as she drew from the richness and complexity of her island, Quisqueya's legacy stands out for the enduring ways she contributed to and nurtured those same surroundings.

As a collaborator, mentor, catalyst, and community builder—through countless acts of generosity and support for fellow artists, artisans, and art workers—Quisqueya embodied the core convictions of her artistic practice, creating new centers everywhere.

Curated by René Morales, with Isabella Lenzi and Alfonsina Martínez

# THE MYTHS OF

Upon her return to the Dominican Republic in 1997, after graduating from the Havana University of Arts (ISA) and years abroad in Mexico City and Miami, Henríquez resolved to address the persistent stereotypes that have long distorted understandings of the Caribbean and its people. In several works from this period, the artist satirizes the pervasive myth of the Caribbean as a remote paradise suspended in a timeless state of isolation—a concept that has served to marginalize the region more effectively than any ocean.

Henríquez counters these utopian and often prejudiced projections with works that reveal an alternative view of the region's nature as a highly interconnected place, one that has felt the full historical impact of global political forces along with the vicissitudes of an uneven modernity. In the process, the artist challenges the dichotomy between center and periphery, along with the imbalances of power and patterns of exclusion implicit in this stubborn construct.

## INSULARITY

**El sabor de los estereotipos**

From the *Burlas* series

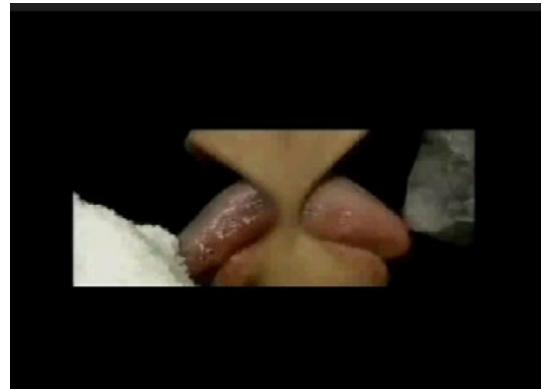
2001

Color video without soundtrack

14 min., 13 sec.

Quisqueya Henríquez Estate

In an early series titled *Burlas*, Henríquez draws on bodily sensations—sound, taste, and vision, along with the perception of temperature—to poke fun at clichés associated with life in the Caribbean. *El sabor de los estereotipos* invites viewers to imagine licking sugar and salt at the same time. In prompting us to conjure this dissonant taste experience from visual imagery, the video suggests how impressions of the other are often grounded in projection rather than direct experience.



**Helado de agua de mar Caribe**

From the *Burlas* series

2001-2002

Photo print on cotton rag paper

Alberto Cruz Collection

In *Helado de agua de mar caribe*—as in *Sangre fría* and *Ropa congelada*—Henríquez playfully alludes to the stereotype of Caribbean people as being innately hot-blooded in temperament. The ice cream's unexpected salty flavor underscores the superficiality of touristic portrayals of the Caribbean as a site of indulgence and sensuality.



**Ropa congelada**

From the *Burlas* series  
2001

Photo print on cotton paper  
Quisqueya Henríquez Estate





**Sangre fría**

From the *Burlas* series  
2001

Photo print on cotton paper  
Quisqueya Henríquez Estate

**El centro puede estar en todas partes**

2001

Participatory installation  
Quisqueya Henríquez Estate

This installation invites the public to sit and move freely around the exhibition space on wheeled stools, each topped by a photograph of the artist's navel (her 'center'). By means of this simple gesture, the work offers a bodily journey that can be read as a reflection on the notions of center and periphery, in both a physical and in a symbolic, geopolitical sense. The reference to the body opens up multiple interpretations: it can be understood as a metaphor for mobile and changing cultural centers, activated by the movement and presence of those passing through them; it can also serve to transpose debates around modernity, the center, and the periphery, bringing them into the realm of direct experience. Through close contact and kinetic action, the piece invites the viewer to rethink power structures and sociocultural hierarchies not as something fixed or concentrated, but as an unstable construction, subject to constant displacements and negotiation, proposing a rubric that opens the possibility of imagining other maps and other centralities.



**The World Outside**

2006

Color video with soundtrack

46 min., 30 sec.

Liza and Dr. Arturo F. Mosquera Collection

Henríquez filmed *The World Outside* over three years from the same perspective on the terrace of her apartment in Santo Domingo's Gazcue neighborhood, using a video camera on a tripod. The work was inspired by the filmmaker Yasujirō Ozu, known for long, static shots of mundane scenes. As the poetic vignettes that Henríquez captured unfold, a sense arises of the fullness of everyday life in this environment. Turning the relationship between center and periphery on its head, the film presents a dynamic, self-sufficient universe, indifferent to what transpires beyond the horizon.



**Pesas caseras**

2006

Cement, pigment and iron

Collegium/Adrastus Collection

*Pesas caseras* relates to a passage in the film *The World Outside*, in which the camera gazes upon a neighbor exercising with a barbell made from a metal rod cemented into flowerpots at either end. The sculpture pays homage to the creativity that emerges under conditions of material scarcity—a recurring theme in Henríquez's work.

**Brand New Shit**

2002

Offset print on wrapping paper

Quisqueya Henríquez Estate

*Brand New Shit* consists of gift-wrapping papers printed with images of heaps of trash that Henríquez photographed on beaches around Santo Domingo. The ironic implication is that the newly purchased gifts that the paper is meant to conceal will soon enough become garbage themselves. Dismantling the myth of Caribbean insularity, the images reveal a region that is both integrated into the global economy and vulnerable to the environmental consequences of consumer capitalism. With a nod to the paper stack works of the artist Félix González-Torres, the public is invited to take a sheet of each print home with them.



**Orines**

2002

Photo print on cotton rag paper  
Quisqueya Henríquez Estate

The *Orines* series documents a performance in which Henríquez urinated in different public spaces. The images capture fleeting traces on urban and architectural surfaces, discrete imprints that betray deliberate wrongdoing. By shifting an intimate bodily function to the public sphere, the artist challenges the norms that govern the use of space and acceptable behavior, crisscrossed by class and, in particular, gender hierarchies. Here, urinating serves as both an ambiguous way of marking territory and an act of disobedience. Traditionally associated with male behavior and a certain social impunity, the act takes on another meaning when carried out by a woman, underlining the uneven distribution of freedoms, bodies, and territories. Henríquez turns this vulnerability into minimal but forceful resistance, claiming the right to occupy and intervene in the communal sphere.





**Documentation of *Paradise of Greenness*,**  
realized at Art Basel Miami Beach (2001), ifa-Galerie Bonn (2002),  
and Villa Medici, Roma (2002)

Photo print on paper  
Quisqueya Hernández Estate

For *Paradise of Greenness*, Hernández arranged for a fleet of cars with green-tinted windows to offer free rides to attendees of the 2001 edition of Art Basel Miami Beach. (The work was later presented again in Bonn and Rome.) En route to their destinations, participants listened to an audio track recorded by the artist while driving through Santo Domingo, featuring the blaring sounds of street traffic, construction sites, an electric power plant, and other sources of urban noise pollution.

Here again, Hernández deploys sensory experience to collapse the psychological distances between the Caribbean and elsewhere, while evoking a stressful urban environment that belies the cliché of tropical serenity.



**Bornnaked**

2003-2004

Participatory installation and sound component

19 min., 52 sec.

Quisqueya Henríquez Estate

*Bornnaked* takes its name from one of the surnames adopted by persecuted Jews who had to change their identities for the sake of survival. The work consists of a two-seater sofa with its upholstery removed, displayed as a 'naked' body that exposes its inner layers while triggering reflection on intimacy, vulnerability, and confession. The sofa emits a soundtrack of recordings taken amid markets, streets, and other public spaces in Santo Domingo—including the voices of street vendors—intertwined with fragments of personal accounts.

# QUIMERAS

Throughout every stage of her career, Henríquez created collages almost obsessively, amassing hundreds of examples. Each of these finely crafted compositions engenders striking effects ranging from the whimsical to the grotesque. Henríquez uses collage as a powerful tool with which to parody gender codes. At the same time, her intense engagement with the medium resonates with notions of syncretism and creolization, the processes by which aspects of disparate cultures merge and recombine to yield new hybrids, often as a result of colonization and mass migration.

Many of these collages incorporate newspaper clippings of the body parts of baseball players. A former athlete herself, Henríquez noted that baseball represents one of the few areas in which the Dominican Republic—renowned for producing star players—appears regularly in international mass media. The unsettling effects generated in these images echo the distortions arising from the hegemonic gaze. At times, the artist used bats and balls suggestively, accentuating body parts linked to strength, dexterity, and sexuality as a way of mocking the performative masculinity that is so often on display in professional sports. The work also alludes to a sport that is presented as a means for social advancement within a highly unequal society.



**Body Reconstructions**

2015

Collage with newspaper clippings on book pages  
Quisqueya Henríquez Estate

In numerous collage series, Henríquez combines fragments of athletic bodies with imagery drawn from books about some of her artistic heroes, including Constantin Brancusi and Robert Rauschenberg. In doing so, she evokes the dilemmas and pressures faced by artists from the Global South as they contend with an artistic canon and art world still structured around wealthier nations.

*Body Reconstructions* enlists pages from a book dedicated to the pioneering post-minimalist sculptor Lynda Benglis, recombining them with cutouts of bare-chested male bodybuilders. The series reflects on the mandates that regulate body image and, in particular, the social pressures many women in the Dominican Republic feel to conform to imposed ideals of beauty. It also addresses the tensions between gender stereotypes and the way in which desire, representation, and matter converge. The clash between swollen, tanned muscles and the globular and vaguely corporeal forms of Benglis's sculptures lead to an unexpected fusion between a caricature of hypermasculinity and a feminist icon.



**Intertextualidad**

2005

Color video without soundtrack

02 min., 59 sec.

Quisqueya Henríquez Estate



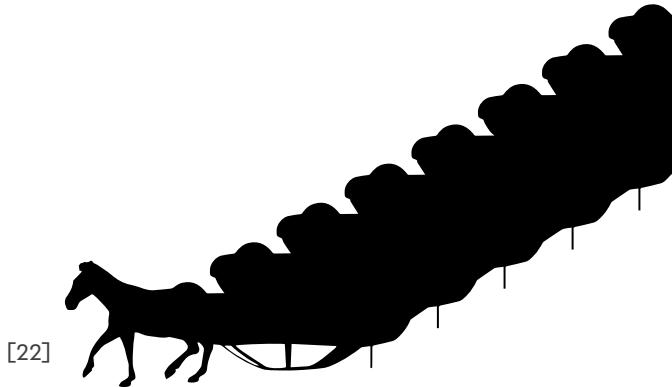
In *Intertextualidad*, Henríquez presents variations on the theme of a surreal entanglement between a donkey and an automobile. In the video of the same name, a rooster boldly navigates cars and other obstacles. These wry scenes point to the overlap of the rural and the urban on the streets of Santo Domingo and, more broadly, the effects of uneven modernization across the Global South.

**Intertextualidad**

2005

Vinyl installation

Quisqueya Henríquez Estate



# VERNACULAR

In the course of researching new materials for her studio practice, Henríquez became increasingly fascinated with the aesthetics of Santo Domingo's informal economy. Amid open-air markets and wholesale outlets bursting with cheap imported merchandise, she encountered a realm of vivid sensorial experience. Her work took a maximalist turn, incorporating kaleidoscopic colors, labyrinthine geometric designs, and a wide array of textures and materials—all in the service of interrogating patterns of consumption while subverting the divide between so-called high art and popular expression.

# MAXIMALISM

**Enlace de tres**

From the *Formal/Informal* series  
2017-2018

Mixed media  
Colección Alberto Cruz

*Formal/Informal* brings together Quisqueya's appreciation for local, vernacular creative practices and her interest in twentieth-century modernist design. To create the series, the artist began by collecting replicas of iconic pieces of furniture by figures such as Marcel Breuer, Achille Castiglioni, Le Corbusier, and Charlotte Perriand. Working closely with Federico (Fico) Gómez Polonio and other skilled artisans, Henríquez stripped the objects down to their metal armatures and had them encased in colored, rubberized plastic strips to form graphic patterns. The resulting surfaces mimic a type of ornamentation commonly found on the streets of Santo Domingo, used to decorate elements such as fenceposts, bicycle frames, and bus steering wheels. In this way, the series questions the hierarchies between art and design, "high" and "low" forms of creativity, and imported and locally rooted aesthetic paradigms.

**Patrón de consumo (espejuelos)**

2015

Spectacles, cardboard, Jequitiba wood and foam  
Quisqueya Henríquez Estate

In numerous works, Henríquez tests the limits of what abstract painting can be, exploring the effects of color, texture, line, and composition on two-dimensional surfaces while dispensing with paint altogether. In *Patrón de consumo*, she uses cheap sunglasses as pigment, creating a composition that is infinitely reconfigurable. Each pair of shades is generic to the point of being interchangeable and disposable. In this sense, they recall the ceaseless flow of expendable goods that defines contemporary material culture, pausing in our lives only briefly en route to the landfill. The many reflections on the lenses highlight the viewer's own active role in systems of consumption and waste.



**5 segundos**

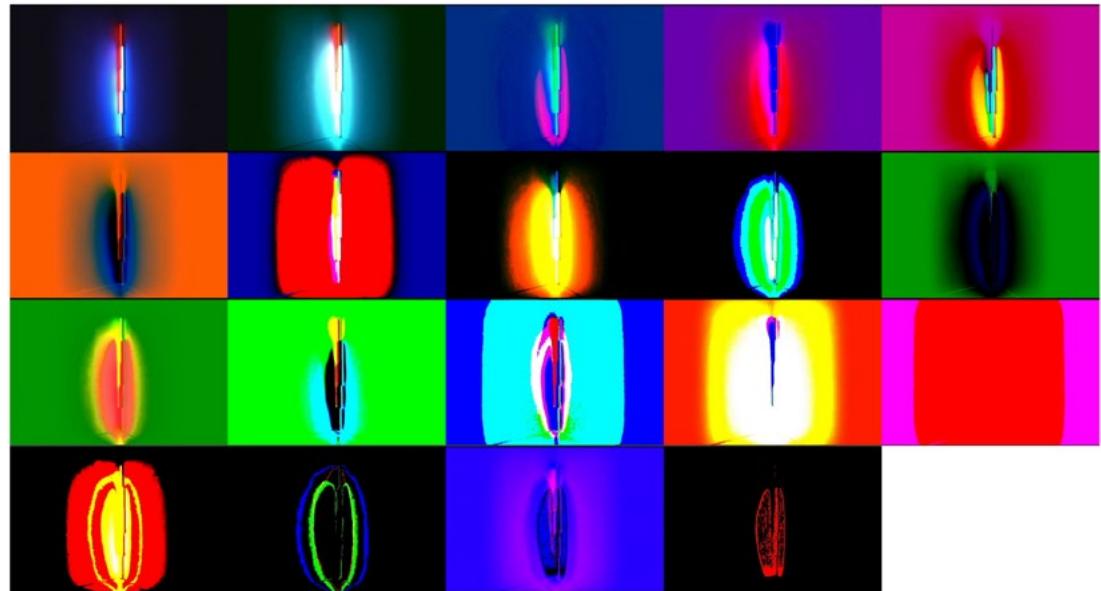
2011

Color video without soundtrack

10 mins., 6 sec.

Quisqueya Henríquez Estate

In this video, a light sculpture by the US minimalist artist Dan Flavin undergoes a series of striking transformations. The work embodies Henríquez's playful and irreverent appropriation of the historical canon, using it as raw material for her own work.





**Violeta**

From the *Miedo a la mirada* series  
2015

Inkjet print on plywood and acrylic paint  
Alberto Cruz Collection

**From the *Miedo a la mirada* series**

2015

Inkjet print on plywood and acrylic paint  
Alberto Cruz Collection

**Analyze Here**

2013

Acrylic paint on magazine pages  
Rizek Acebal Collection

The point of departure for the works in which Henríquez employs stains reminiscent of the Rorschach psychological test is an anecdote about the architect Mies van der Rohe and his emotional attachment to the marble used in the German Pavilion at the Barcelona International Exposition, which he designed in collaboration with Lilly Reich in 1929. Later consecrated as an icon of the modernist movement, over time the building became associated almost exclusively with Mies, marking yet another instance of the erasure of a woman's contribution to the history of art and architecture. In these works, Henríquez links the natural veining of the marble to the Rorschach test—developed in the early twentieth century to explore perception and subjective projection through symmetrical inkblots. By applying painterly stains of color to domestic spaces and objects, book pages, and geometric patterns, the artist explores the tension between control and chance, the rational and the emotional, geometric abstraction and the organic. The gesture oscillates between subjective interpretation and formal structure—between the randomness of the stain and the rigor of the pattern.

In the series *Miedo a la mirada* (Fear of the Gaze), Quisqueya uses patterns inspired by the designs of Russian Constructivist artists such as Varvara Stepánova and Lyubov Popova, whose contributions—like those of Lilly Reich—were long relegated to the background in favor of those of their male counterparts within the historical avant-garde.



**B306**

2005

Photo print on cotton rag paper  
Quisqueya Henríquez Estate

This multilayered work is based on a well-known 1928 photograph of designer Charlotte Perriand reclining in the B-306 adjustable chaise lounge that she created in collaboration with Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret. Using her own body, Quisqueya isolates the shadow that looms in the background of the original image. In this way, she alludes to how Perriand's vital contributions to the field of modernist design were long overshadowed by those of her more famous male colleagues. More broadly, the work reflects Henríquez's critique of hierarchies grounded in gender and nationality.

# EL JARDÍN

In 2020, during the COVID lockdown, Henríquez relocated to Las Terrenas in the north-eastern reaches of the Dominican Republic, where she found fresh inspiration amid lush surroundings. Henríquez made close observation of the intricate patterns and textures of the local trees and plants. The bodies of work that ensued evoke a dense tropical forest. Henríquez incorporated rocks, leaves, and other natural materials and objects, even using the area's distinctive orange soil as pigment. Far away from the bustling city that had for so long served as her muse, Quisqueya cultivated an intimate relationship with nature, reveling in the otherworldly beauty of her island.

# DE QUISQUEYA

**Inviable**

2017

Photo print on aluminum  
Quisqueya Henríquez Estate

*Inviable* documents abandoned home constructions throughout the Dominican countryside. The series speaks to both the elusiveness of utopian aspirations and the fecundity of tropical nature, which persists as economic cycles rise and fall, ready to reclaim land lost to human intrusion.

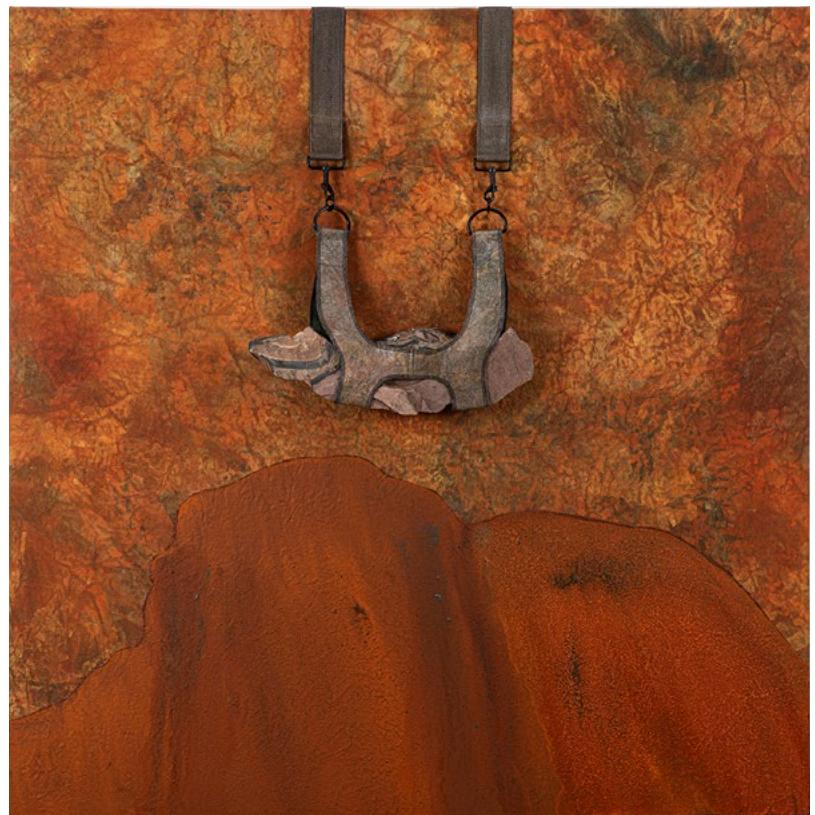


**Piedra loca**

2022

Acrylic paint on canvas, stone, and fabric

Alberto Cruz Collection



# ALIENTO

Quisqueya worked with other artists and cultural agents frequently, and considered her commitment to a communal approach not merely as a production framework, but as a critical tool for achieving greater autonomy and expanding the means to encounter and circulate art. In 2001, together with the artists Jorge Pineda and Fernando Varela, she organized *Curador curado* (Curated Curator) at the Modern Art Museum of Santo Domingo. This exhibition would mark a turning point in the production and exhibition of art in the Dominican Republic. The show proposed a dynamic of peer mentoring and collaboration. In this equation, the artists worked together to question approaches, hierarchies, and the roles of institutions and other agents within the art sector, while asserting the agency and voice of artists.

In 2015, along with Laura Castro and Engel Leonardo, Henríquez founded Sindicato. This hybrid project brought together the curatorial and commercial in a single platform in order to meet the most pressing needs of the Dominican art scene, generating self-managed spaces in which to work with greater independence; seeking exchanges with similar projects throughout the Caribbean, Central and Latin America; and showcasing local ventures globally. In this way, Sindicato fostered experiences that went beyond traditional exhibition formats, emphasizing localized action, networking, and engagement with wider audiences.

# COLECTIVO

Between 2015 and 2020, Sindicato rolled out a series of projects that spread artistic practice throughout urban and commercial contexts, testing forms of exhibition and circulation beyond the white cube. Their first project, *High and Local Villa Consuelo*, took place in the streets and sidewalks of a peripheral neighborhood of Santo Domingo, incorporating elements of local popular culture—materials, colors, techniques, and informal architecture—in dialogue with languages linked to abstraction and contemporary art. This approach was also used for *Comparsa*, an action part of the National Carnival Parade, in which the works were activated by means of the bodies of its participants. Other initiatives, such as *Fotosistema* and *Vocabulario Común*, developed by Quisqueya and Laura Castro with guest artists, delved into the relationship between art, public space, and social circulation, exploring modes of production and encounter outside institutional formats. Their last project took place in September 2020.



**High and Local Villa Consuelo**

2015

Engel Leonardo, Laura Castro, and Quisqueya Henríquez

Documentation of an intervention in the Villa Consuelo neighborhood,  
Santo Domingo

Quisqueya Henríquez Estate

**Comparsa**

2016

Engel Leonardo, Laura Castro, and Quisqueya Henríquez

Documentation of an action carried out during the National Carnival  
Parade, in Santo Domingo

Quisqueya Henríquez Estate

**Fotosistema**

2016

Laura Castro and Quisqueya Henríquez, in collaboration with Máximo del  
Castillo and Maurice Sánchez

Documentation of an intervention at the photography shop Fotosistema,  
in Santo Domingo

Quisqueya Henríquez Estate

**Vocabulario común**

2016

Laura Castro and Quisqueya Henríquez, in collaboration with Máximo del  
Castillo

Documentation of a collective project producing beach miscellany  
printed with typographic designs composed of commonly used slang in  
Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. The items were distributed  
on the opening day of the Gran Bienal Tropical, at Kiosko La Comay,  
Loíza, Puerto Rico

Quisqueya Henríquez Estate

**Aliento colectivo**

2015-2016

Participatory installation with balloons

Quisqueya Henríquez Estate

*Aliento colectivo* gives physical form to the spirit of collaboration and community-building that animates Henríquez's work. The piece was shown for the first time in the Maleza exhibition (2015), and then again at Casas del XVI in the colonial city of Santo Domingo, and was originally inflated by fellow artists and friends. At *c arte c*, members of the public are invited to inflate their own balloons and add them to the growing cluster: a simple gesture that turns the piece into a shared organism, built collectively.



### **One Day Left**

2004/2015/2026

Activation with plants, flowers, and vases, realized with the participation of florists María José Giraldo and Camila Lemoine, and the use of ceramic pieces made by students of the Laboratory of Form using a terracotta potter's wheel.

Courtesy of the collections of the Escuela de Cerámica de La Moncloa, Ayuntamiento de Madrid and the Estate of Quisqueya Henríquez

*One Day Left* employs an everyday gesture to reflect on the cycle of life and the responses of individuals in the face of adverse circumstances. The piece was first realized at Clark Space (Montreal) in 2004. The piece consisted of a florist who worked during the exhibition opening to create large-scale arrangements of local flowers with only one day of life remaining. Henríquez reactivated the piece in 2015 as part of the exhibition *Maleza* at the Centro Cultural de España in Santo Domingo. On that occasion, she invited artist Natalia Ortega Gámez to create the arrangements with tropical flowers and plants, displayed in ceramic vessels produced by Gámez herself. In this exhibition, the work is activated once again, this time using European plant species.



## THE CENTER CAN BE EVERYWHERE

Quisqueya Henríquez

January 20 - April 26, 2026

Exhibition organized by the Alberto Cruz Foundation, with the support of the Quisqueya Henríquez Estate and the collaboration of the Universidad Complutense de Madrid

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Laura Castro - Research and organization of the Quisqueya Henríquez Estate archive

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Alfonsina Martínez

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Federico Alberto Henríquez  
Iván Camilo Henríquez  
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### Gallery Assistants

Asociación de Familiares y Amigos de Personas con Discapacidad

### Installation

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Audiovisuales Creamos

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### Graphic Production

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### Artwork Transport

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### Text Translation

Akoté Traducciones

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They also thank all those who contributed to the research that led to this exhibition, as well as the entire team involved in bringing it to fruition.

FUNDACIÓN  
ALBERTO CRUZ



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