

STIRWORLD

“Jose Dávila’s ensemble of works speaks to the architectural marvel of its venue”

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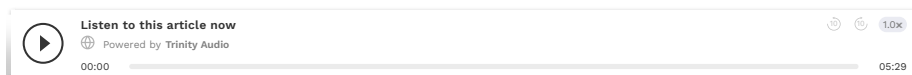
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Jose Dávila's ensemble of works speaks to the architectural marvel of its venue

Memory of a Telluric Movement by Jose Dávila at Museum Haus Konstruktiv is a poetic juxtaposition of natural & industrial materials to visually represent an intertwined world.

by Dilpreet Bhullar | Published on : Aug 17, 2022



Mexican artist Jose Dávila's large body of work, of sculptures, along with drawings and paintings, has deftly played with mathematical laws and physical phenomena of mass and space. To question the given value of gravity and weightlessness, Davila carefully juxtaposes natural elements with industrially manufactured materials, which lends an unmissable poetic touch to the works. His exhibition *Memory of a Telluric Movement* is an experiential walkthrough of an ensemble of works – **installations** and **paintings** – which directly speak to the architectural marvel of its venue Museum Haus Konstruktiv, **Zürich**.



Jose Dávila, Acapulco chair stack, 2021, Metal, epoxy paint, and boulders
 Image: Agustín Arce, Courtesy of Jose Dávila and Sean Kelly Gallery, New York

Sabine Schaschl, Director of Museum Haus Konstruktiv and Curator of the exhibition, in an interview with STIR talks about the curatorial approach to select the works from Davila's body of work, "In my curatorial practice I work in longer processes with personal encounters and studio visits." For Schaschl this is a key to understanding the concept and themes of work and the working process before taking a call to invite an artist for a **solo exhibition**. Keeping this in mind, "I propose the **exhibition spaces** and share my thoughts with the artists", adds Schaschl, "we decide together which works can have the best dialogue with the architecture and how the exhibition can bring to light the most important aspects of an artistic body of works."



Jose Dávila, Will has moved mountains, 2020, One way mirror, wood, metal, concrete, boulder, and ratchet strap
 Image: Agustín Arce, Courtesy of Jose Dávila and König Galerie, Berlin/London/Seoul

With the installation *Singularity has something of the unreal*, the assembly of the natural concrete, boulders, rocks, marble, metal, wood, enamelled bricks, and plaster, each placed on the well-cut wooden boxes, is a fine reflection of the recontextualisation of the material and form in the hands of the artist. The appropriation of earthly and functional material at once 'collapses' the historical meaning they entail. It is this shift in the sense perception of the viewer when they witness the coming together of an unconventional kind which Davila refers to as a telluric movement.



Jose Dávila, *The rope sometimes bursts*, 2022, Metal drums and ratchet strap
Image: Agustín Arce, Courtesy of Jose Dávila and Galería OMR, Ciudad de México

The geophysicists often use the term telluric movement to map subsurface structures, including layered rocks and sedimentary basins. The artist is acutely aware to not conduct a class on geophysics with this exhibition. But he refers to it as, "the symbolic potential for change when things move, how a 'crack' is a 'door' for change, and the inclusion of new ideas. Let's say an earthquake can be a catastrophe but it can also bring the possibility to start from scratch or renew old structures."



The different galleries in the art exhibition have their specific application to the given space. The idea is to underscore the present geometric forms in everyday objects and how it influences our “constructed world”. The presence of the antagonistic materials and capacities within the framework of a conversation creates balance: the use of the primitive and the modern, references to history and a social allegory highlights how everything is intertwined and connected.



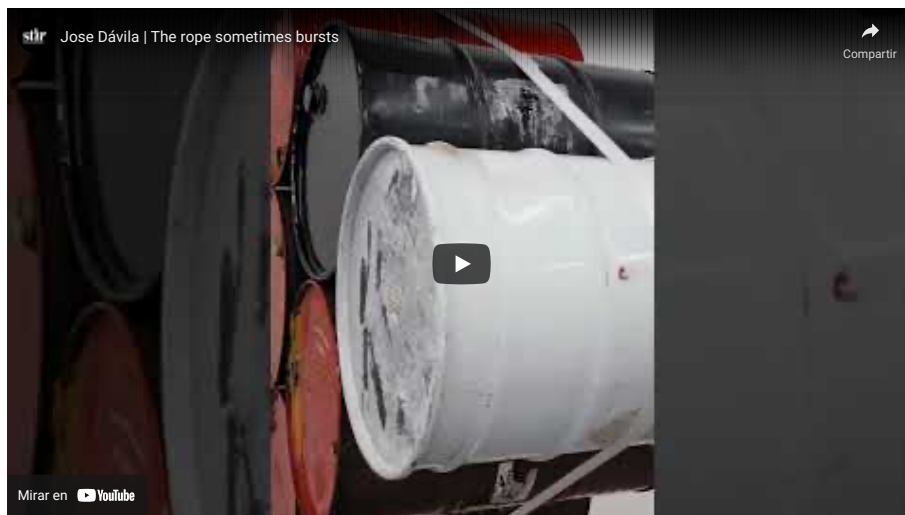
Jose Dávila, The fact of constantly returning to the same point or situation, 2022 Vinyl paint on loomstate linen
Image: Agustín Arce, Courtesy of Jose Dávila and König Galerie, Berlin/London/Seoul



Jose Dávila, Collaborating together despite our differences, 2022 Metall, Holz | Metal, wood
Image: Agustín Arce, Courtesy of Jose Dávila and Galleri Nicolai Wallner, København

Trained as an **architect**, Davila's practice relooks at the works by the artists and architects to gauge their meaning in the contemporary context. For instance, the German-born artist Josef Albers' paintings, synonymous with square, are explored with the vinyl print of a series of squares in the work *Memory of a telluric movement*. The isolated square of the nestled squares of Albers in the work at display is slanted and divided across the two red vinyl prints – a part of horizontally displayed five monochromatic prints. As opposed to the strict geometric alignment of the squares available within the practice of Albers, the figure under the telluric spell has defied the norms of the dimensions. The **large-scale installation** stands as a metaphoric symbol of a dent in the social laws and order.

Another work *The fact of constantly returning to the same point or situation* with a vertical arrangement of the semi-circles at the centre of the rectangular vinyl board is a visual representation of the 'squaring the circle'. Davila mentions, "This expression squaring the circle is used as a metaphor for trying to do the impossible. I am interested in this metaphor and the restless intention of trying to make two different realities co-exist".



The rope sometimes bursts, 2022, Metal drums and ratchet strap
Video: Schwarzpictures.com, Courtesy of Jose Dávila and Galería OMR, Ciudad de México

The **conceptual art** of Davila follows the principle of **Minimalism** and Arte Povera to raise a critical inquiry into the limits of constructed spaces and the human capacity to build an environment of functionality. In a similar vein, Davila explains, "I believe art is a tool to trigger the minds and emotions of people, if the show has done that and made them have a reflection or profound moment, then the purpose was complete." The core tenant of Davila's practice is to realign the context of objects. Towards this end, the reconfiguration of the shape and form leads to a reinterpretation of the meaning. As the static well-balanced structure collapses in the exhibition, it subtly tends to move the viewers' attention to the ongoing **global crisis** be it sociopolitical, ecological or economic.

The exhibition *Memory of a Telluric Movement* is on view at Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zürich, **Switzerland** until September 11, 2022.

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