

Guadalupe Maravilla

Seven Ancestral Stomachs

February 26 – March 27, 2021



P·P·O·W is pleased to present Guadalupe Maravilla’s *Seven Ancestral Stomachs*, the artist’s first solo presentation with the gallery. Combining sculpture, painting, performative acts, and installation, Maravilla grounds his transdisciplinary practice in activism and healing. For Maravilla, his own life story is his primary material.

Maravilla was part of the first wave of unaccompanied, undocumented children to arrive at the United States border in the 1980s as a result of the Salvadoran Civil War. While Maravilla emigrated at the age of eight, he became a U.S. citizen at the age of 26. Yet it was not until his recovery from colon cancer in 2013 that he felt the urgency to speak out about the struggles so many undocumented immigrants and their families face. By tracing his migration history and healing journey, Maravilla explores how the trauma undocumented immigrants experience physically manifests in the body. Reflecting upon his own battle with cancer, which began in his gut, as well as that of members of his family, Maravilla examines how genetic trauma manifests in the body over generations. Throughout the many teachings Maravilla experienced in his healing process, one notion kept returning – if one cleanses properly, they will heal seven generations back and seven generations forward.

Discovering sound therapy during his cancer radiation treatment, Maravilla has since developed a series of vertical, large-scale, free-standing sculptures, titled *Disease Throwers*. Functioning as headdresses, instruments, and shrines, the towering sculptures serve as symbols of renewal, generating vibrational sound from gongs. Described by Maravilla as “healing machines”, the structures incorporate materials collected from sites across Central America, such as anatomical models, toys, sacred objects, and sonic instruments including conch shells and flutes.

In addition to *Disease Throwers*, Maravilla will unveil a new series of wall sculptures. The exhibition’s eponymous seven twisting gourds with extending talons embody the seven stomachs of the artist’s ancestors. Surrounding the walls of the *Seven Ancestral Stomachs* is Maravilla’s reinterpretation of the popular Salvadorian children’s game, *Tripa Chuca* or “Dirty Guts,” in which two players take turns drawing lines that never intersect. Over the course of Maravilla’s more than two-month journey to the U.S., *Tripa Chuca* became a survival tool. For *Seven Ancestral Stomachs*, Maravilla has invited an undocumented person to collaborate with him on the *Tripa Chuca* mural in order to create a mapping between two displaced people on the walls of the gallery.

Furthering this investigation of various curative approaches, Maravilla will also present a series of retablos chronicling his healing journey. Originating in Medieval Spain, retablos are small devotional paintings, traditionally used in Mexican and Central American cultures to honor and celebrate the miracles of everyday life. Sending detailed digital sketches to a four-generation retablo painter he met in Mexico while retracing his migration route, Maravilla’s personalization of these votive offerings exemplifies his dedication to supporting a micro-economy through his artistic

practice. Rather than making these paintings himself, Maravilla's choice to collaborate expands the cross-cultural exchange of his practice and helps preserve the tradition of retablo painting in Mexico.

Guadalupe Maravilla (b. 1976) currently lives in Brooklyn, New York. He received his BFA from the School of Visual Arts, and his MFA from Hunter College in New York. His work is in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami. Additionally, he has performed and presented his work at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, Florida; Queens Museum, New York; The Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York; El Museo del Barrio, New York; Museum of Art of El Salvador, San Salvador; X Central American Biennial, Costa Rica; Performa 11, New York; Performa 13, New York; Shelly & Donald Rubin Foundation, New York; the Drawing Center, New York; SITE Santa Fe, New Mexico; the Moody Center for the Arts at Rice University, Houston, Texas; and the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, Missouri, among others.

Maravilla has received numerous awards and fellowships including a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, 2019; Soros Fellowship: Art Migration and Public Space, 2019; MAP Fund Grant, 2019; Franklin Furnace Fund, 2018; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Fellowship, 2018; Art Matters Fellowship, 2017; Creative Capital Grant, 2016; Joan Mitchell Emerging Artist Grant, 2016; The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation Award 2003, among others. He has also completed residencies with the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, New York; SOMA, Mexico City; Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture, Maine; and the Drawing Center, New York.