



***Jou Morales:
Mortero***

08.06.2024 - 30.07.2024

Paseo del Faro 33, 20008, Donostia-San Sebastian, Guipúzcoa, Basque Country, Spain



Jou Morales: Mortero

June 8 - July 30, 2024

Press release

Villa Magdalena is thrilled to announce *Jou Morales: Mortero*, the Oaxaca-based Mexican artist's first exhibition with the gallery and his first solo presentation in Spain. Artist in residence for the last two months, on view will be Morales's latest paintings produced in San Sebastian.

Jou Morales (b. Oaxaca, 1990) has mined a pictorial mode of expression that reveals a realm of mythological proportions. Deeply tied to his Oaxacan roots, the pictures he unearths reflect on sources ranging from Mesoamerican archeology, ancient history, landscape painting and fantasy. Additionally one can observe an art historical gaze in Morales's practice which pays homage to a Oaxacan lineage of renowned painters such as Rufino Tamayo and Francisco Toledo.

The title of this presentation, *Mortero* (Mortar), evokes the rough cement-like surface as much as the stone subjects of the new paintings that comprise the exhibit. As a result an uncanny marriage of form and content takes place. Throughout the works on view, we bear witness to a prehistoric time lost somewhere between the stone and bronze age. Seeing the imagery for the first time, a tension occurs between nameable and unidentifiable entities, never letting one become accustomed to what seems to be materializing in the real time of the viewer. Monoliths, totems, characters from ancient alphabets, ruins, stone creatures, maps of now extinct cities and temples. Everything that dwells in this shapeless reality constantly collapses and rebuilds itself as if a spirit has resuscitated the remnants of forgotten cultures buried beneath the earth's crust.

In a significant manner Morales's new body of work has undergone a transformative process as a result of the artist's two month residency in San Sebastian. This site-specific exposure to the Basque region – with its unique history and landscape – has led to the manifestation of various new elements in Morales's pictorial sensibility. In contrast to the saturated colors which previously characterized his oeuvre, the artist's new canvases have a propensity towards a more muted palette which reflects the foggy light and temperamental climate of the region in general. Morales has also employed a new technique mixing oil with sand to create textures that resemble sandstone; a material used to construct the majority of the city center of San Sebastian that contains the same ochre earth tones one can see in the artist's new suite of paintings. Interested in the materiality of Tapies's celebrated matter paintings, these works disrupt illusionistic representation and turn the picture plane into a mutating object: weathered surfaces that act as a witness of the passing of time.

Jou Morales (1990, Oaxaca) studied Fine Art at the Universidad Autónoma "Benito Juárez" de Oaxaca (2015) and completed the Clínicas para la Especialización en Arte Contemporáneo para Oaxaca (CEACO) at the Curtiduría Espacio Contemporáneo (2016).

Recent solo exhibitions include: *Atlas de la Loma* (Galería Kurimanzutto, CDMX, Mexico, 2021), *Carroñero* (Instituto de Artes Gráficas de Oaxaca (IAGO) Oaxaca, Mexico, 2018). Recent group exhibitions include: *El fin de lo maravilloso* (Cyberpop en México, Museo Universitario del Chopo, CDMX, 2023), *Mobile Suit* (Campeche Gallery, CDMX, Mexico, 2023), *Taller de Grabado Fernando Sandoval* (El chico, Madrid, Spain, 2022).

He is co-founder and member of YOPE projects space, a space dedicated to the diffusion of local, national and international contemporary art in Oaxaca.



Jou Morales: Mortero
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Jou Morales
Corazones pétreos y pieles de metal
2024
Oil on linen
240 x 190 cm
(95 x 75 inches)



Jou Morales
Hendaia - Altza - Donostia
2024
Oil on linen
126 x 100 cm
(50 x 39 inches)



Jou Morales
Rebobinado - Mecanismos automátats
2024
Oil on linen
126 x 100 cm
(50 x 39 inches)



Jou Morales
Catacumba
 2024
 Oil on linen
 100 x 73 cm
 (39 x 29 inches)



Jou Morales
U
 2024
 Oil on linen
 50 x 50 cm
 (20 x 20 inches)



Jou Morales
Mascarón
 2024
 Oil on linen
 50 x 50 cm
 (20 x 20 inches)



Jou Morales
Visualidades renderizadas
 2024
 Oil on linen
 50 x 50 cm
 (20 x 20 inches)



Jou Morales
*Hay muertos que no hacen ruido y
 son más grandes sus penas*
 2024
 Oil on linen
 50 x 50 cm
 (20 x 20 inches)



Jou Morales
Mortero
 2024
 Oil on linen
 50 x 50 cm
 (20 x 20 inches)



Jou Morales
Mortero II
 2024
 Oil on linen
 50 x 50 cm
 (20 x 20 inches)



Jou Morales
Euskera
 2024
 Oil on linen
 50 x 50 cm
 (20 x 20 inches)



Jou Morales
Hispanoparlante
 2024
 Oil on linen
 50 x 50 cm
 (20 x 20 inches)



Jou Morales
Catacumba II
 2024
 Oil on linen
 50 x 50 cm
 (20 x 20 inches)



Jou Morales
Mira, el horizonte se derritió
 2024
 Oil on linen
 50 x 50 cm
 (20 x 20 inches)



Installation view: *Jou Morales: Mortero*, Villa Magdalena, Donostia-San Sebastián. Photography by Idoia Unzurrunzaga



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Installation view: *Jou Morales: Mortero*, Villa Magdalena, Donostia-San Sebastián. Photography by Idoia Unzurrunzaga



Installation view: *Jou Morales: Mortero*, Villa Magdalena, Donostia-San Sebastián.
Photography by Idoia Unzurrunzaga



Installation view: *Jou Morales: Mortero*, Villa Magdalena, Donostia-San Sebastián. Photography by Idoia Unzurrunzaga



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