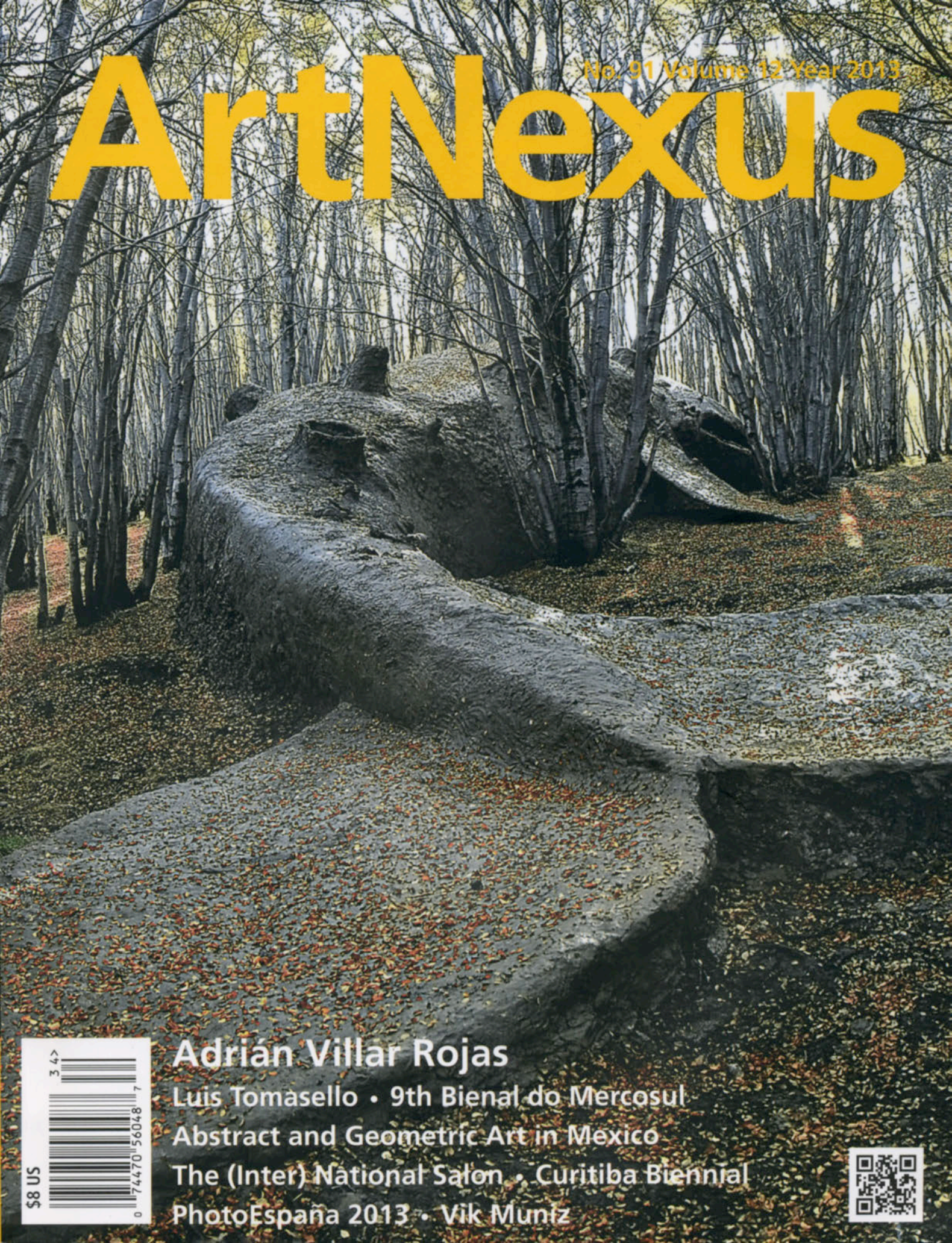


No. 91 Volume 12 Year 2013

# ArtNexus



**Adrián Villar Rojas**

Luis Tomasello • 9th Bienal do Mercosul

Abstract and Geometric Art in Mexico

The (Inter) National Salon • Curitiba Biennial

PhotoEspaña 2013 • Vik Muniz



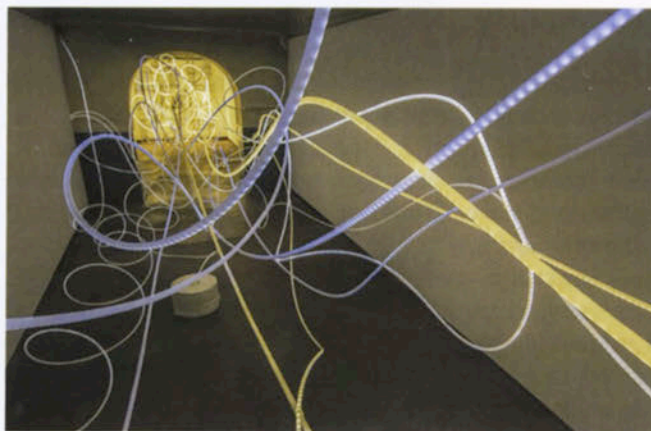
## Grimanesa Amorós

### Tabacalera de Madrid

The interventions by Peruvian artist Grimanesa Amorós are always spectacular exercises in “readjusting” and “coupling” the surroundings. And they are so because of two substantial and verifiable reasons: the first one, Amorós’s ability to project her pieces in a context, as she takes full advantage of all the possibilities offered by such context; the second, the conceptual audacity with which she maximizes the very narrative offered by the context for the benefit of a coherent articulation of her formulations. The installation *Fortuna* (Fortune) that occupies the space at La Fragua Hall at the Tabacalera, in Madrid, is a clear example of her ability to intervene spaces and to develop narratives. The piece is a propositional essay in which semiotics and linguistics communicate in the same stage to turn the “aesthetic action” into an archeological-analytical operative to exhume the memory of the place.

*Fortune* is the title of the first exhibition in Spain that addresses the multidisciplinary and multi-referential nature of Amorós’s artistic proposals. There are many elements and structures of language put into play in each of her works. On this occasion, we stand before a large luminous sculpture that reclaims certain morphological-functional precepts from the kinetic movement and the ductility of materials to generate a sensorial experience that directly influences the subjective scope of the observer. Her works always reveal a fascination with light and the endless possibilities that it offers, not solely aesthetically but also narratively. Thus, in part, her interests not solely center on the hermetic field of the artistic language, but also delve into the scientific world, critical theory and the—extremely spaced in time—realms of social history.

This process resulted in a spectacular, visually stimulating, piece with a labyrinthine structure that through its complexity confirms the socio-semiotic complicity of its formulation. Inspired by the history of the building and its former use as a tobacco factory, *Fortune* revives an extremely compelling and urgent debate about the relevance and reliability of the production systems, but within a context that—like the Spanish one—is going through a terrible crisis in which there seems to be no solution in sight, at least in the short run. On the other hand, the word “fortune” contains a semiotic duality that expresses multiple meanings. In one instance, it makes a direct reference to the name of a cigarette



**Grimanesa Amorós.** *Fortuna*, 2013. Light installation. LEDs, mirror, snuff filters and lighting hardware. 822 ½ x 180 x 167 ¾ in. (28,95 x 4,57 x 4,26 m.).

brand, to its shipping crates and the filter paper that still preserves. It also references the normalization of tobacco production as an exponentially amplified experience of socialization of social and labor relations able to generate fortune according to the type of mediating mechanisms set in place between individuals and their cultural practices. In this manner and, according to Amorós herself, “the title of the piece plays precisely with the idea that everybody has the same opportunities to win and to achieve fortune.”

A slightly more daring attempt to interpret this piece and the cultural context of its location, would be that the labyrinth proposed by Amorós could very well describe the corpus of a wonderful allegory of associations and disconnects between the hegemonic cultural contexts and those known as peripheral. Thus underscoring in this manner the disproportional relationship inscribed in the logic of the “unfavorable cultural bias.” The labyrinth in so far as figure, tenses the dialectic relationships between the idea of a hypothetical encounter and of the terrible notion of loss. Space, light and time—which are the resources exploited by the installation into an almost cosmological unity—thus suppose the discovery of a triad of meaning that announces those small islands of writing that loom over America and Europe through stories of domination and servitude; narratives that can either lead to a conclusion or also reach an abyss of ambiguity and persistent delusions. This apotheosis of cables—reminiscent of Ariadne’s thread in Greek mythology—describes through visual force, the map of a cartography of highly complex relationships, in which the cultural discourse determines the strategies to enter or leave that chaos that draws the map of

the contemporary. There, viewers have the chance to write their own stories or to abstain from doing so in an act of indifference that would be highly paradoxical in the face of the strong experiential impact the installation generates on its own. To the extent that, in the threshold of its visual seduction, the piece somehow addresses that state of addiction in which any active reasoning surrenders to a landscape of fictitious pleasure.

The indirect reference to the communication systems and the biological structures—created by nature or managed in laboratories of scientific speculation—represents another element that charges the piece with multiple interpretations. Is it possible that we can solely be defined by our biology? Or, on the contrary, are we capable of verifying the weight imposed by culture and its dictates, and wear it like a mark-tattoo over our individual experiences.

The journey—as a cultural occurrence that outlines itineraries of departures and returns—is also the line of argument of this piece. Our journeys from one place to another and back have drawn our personal maps. In the narrative plot of the conquest, the journey created the map and not the other way around. And this work in part addresses that. It conveys the labyrinthine bustle that occurs in the context of a globalized and ever-changing culture, as result of the Web and because of the use of technological devices. The emphasis is not solely on reviewing the idea of the productive experience of tobacco as a vehicle for cultural and social relationships, but also on addressing how its incidence affects a larger apparatus of conceptual and ideo-aesthetic relationships. Thus, the piece’s narrative coherence and its resulting impact on the sphere of consciousness.

**Andrés Isaac Santana**