

Adriana Lara

TEXT **SOFÍA HERNÁNDEZ CHONG CUY** ○ PORTRAIT **DIEGO PÉREZ**

380° is, perhaps, Lara's first self-portrait, making metaphoric the network of relations she has created over the past five years.



380°, 2007
INSTALLATION VIEW, GALERÍA
COMERCIAL, SAN JUAN,
PUERTO RICO, 2007
COURTESY THE ARTIST AND GALERÍA
COMERCIAL, SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO

Lara's work is preoccupied with systems; it exemplifies a wider tendency away from object making toward research; and her method reinforces the still-underacknowledged fact that artistic production is always collaborative. Unsurprisingly, she refuses to confine herself within artmaking's traditional bounds. In 2003 Lara cofounded the curatorial team Perros Negros with Fernando Mesta and Agustina Ferreyra; their projects include a series of exhibitions mounted in 2007 under the auspices of Galería Sentimental, a parasite-like gallery temporarily formed within the space of Galería Comercial, in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Lara also edits Perros Negros' art 'zine *Pazmaker* (in both title and format a citation of the Parisian *Pacemaker*, published by the similarly minded curatorial office Toasting Agency). Her band, Lasser Moderna, combine Latin *cumbia* and electronic music; their first release featured a cover designed by artist Carlos Amorales.

In *Ideas* Lara traces invisible vectors of thought and social relations; in *Nuevo Archivo de Arte Público* (New Archive for Public Art) (2005), she creates an atlas of fake public art. This Web-based project consists of a fictitious cultural institution responsible for documenting and interpreting postwar public art in Mexico. Most of the NAAP's records use marginal sites as source material—a minimal brick park table, a ball-court mural, a broken yet legible billboard—and with them the artist makes catalogue entries assigning false names, dates, and descriptions to pointed effect: nominated as art, these neglected spaces regain at least hypothetical value and the promise of a new community that might take shape around them.

Lara's installation *380°* (2007), presented as a recent solo exhibition at Galería Comercial, builds on her interest in mapping while also moving in directions at once personal and cosmic. The piece comprises a number of spherical sculptures, some resting on pedestals or tripods and others suspended from the ceiling, that resemble a 3-D diagram of a planetary system—but a diagram that has been exploded. No orbital patterns organize these globes into a coherent universe; *380°* is, perhaps, the artist's first self-portrait, making metaphoric the network of relations that she has created over the past five years.

Art and cosmos, gallery space and universe, commerce and the big bang: the allusions in *380°* are all-encompassing ones that can simultaneously mean everything and nothing. It is in this territory that Lara's work exists, amid contradiction and ramifying complication in the precariously balanced realm of ideas.

In 2003 the Mexico City-based artist Adriana Lara appeared in a show about mapping, titled "GNS (Global Navigation System)," at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris. For her contribution, she decided to ask other artists, writers, and curators, including "GNS" participants, about times when an idea they thought was theirs turned out to be not so original—when they encountered an existing work that embodied their brilliant concept. From the responses, she drew a world map tracing the routes of an idea's (imaginary) travel, with no distinction between origins and endpoints. A line joining Paris and Mexico City, for example, indicates the location of an artist and the place where she found an idea's double, but without showing which is which. The project, which Lara titled simply *Ideas*, ignited a number of international conversations about artistic production and originality.

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Sofia Hernandez Chong Cuy, *Modern Painters*, déc. 2007 - Janv. 2008, pp.72-73
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