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●● There has been an international boom of 'conceptual art.'●●

VICTOR ZAMUDIO TAYLOR
Curator, "Como Agua Fría."

BY MARIA GALLUCCI
The News

The black-and-white and boldly colorful paintings hanging in the tall, narrow Mexico City gallery might seem more like a hodgepodge of artwork than a carefully coordinated exhibition. That is the point, after all.

Conceptual paintings have just a few formal standards, such as subjecting a specific idea to the artist's own techniques, creative language and style of presentation.

At the Caja Blanca gallery in the upscale Arcos Bosques shopping center, curator Victor Zamudio Taylor has united five Mexico City painters to present a diverse and eclectic exhibit, titled "Como Agua Fría" ("Like Cold Water"). The display will remain up through early December.

"In the last few decades, there has been an international boom of 'conceptual art,' where the painter investigates a concept and reveals the idea through his own artistic language," Zamudio Taylor said before the Oct. 22 inauguration.

"What connects these five artists here is that they are all working on conceptual painting, and not merely expressive art," he said, adding that 'expressive' painting is less concerned with a concept and more focused on the artist's individual emotions.

He said that the exhibit title referred to a "thirst to learn new proposals" and a shift away from more traditional painting techniques.

The Caja Blanca gallery, which opened less than a year ago, is a brightly-lit showroom where paintings hang from enormously tall walls in scattered clusters.

Artists at the exhibit include Will Berry, 'Moris' Israel Moreno, Agustín González, Taka Fernández and Manuel Mather.

At the exhibit, Berry's untitled 2009 piece is covered in triangles, ovals and curving lines in various shades of gray. Another canvas retains its

CONCEPTUAL PAINTERS CONVERGE

Mexico City gallery hosts five exhibitions in one



Agustín González's 2009 acrylic painting "Night Mountain."



An untitled 2009 piece by Taka Fernández.



A 2009 silk screen titled "Sunday, May 10" by 'Moris' Israel Moreno.

EXHIBIT INFO

"Como agua fría"

- The exhibit is up through Dec. 5 in Caja Blanca at Centro Comercial Arcos Bosques, located on Paseo de los Tamarindos in Bosques de las Lomas.
- Gallery hours are Monday to Sunday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- For more details, visit www.cajablanca.com.mx

geometric inclination but with smaller squiggles and a lighter palette.

"My work is about my life here in Mexico," said the Tennessee-born artist before the event.

"It is not a personal narrative, but I am very interested in the light, the surfaces and the touch of many years of human life."

Berry said since moving to Mexico from Manhattan over a decade ago, he has been fascinated by the Federal District's enormous expanse and its collage of architecture from pre-

Hispanic, colonial and modern eras.

Moreno said he achieved his collection of silk screen prints after nearly a year of gathering copies of a sensationalist Mexican tabloid every day. From there, he organized the papers by common themes – namely blood, gore and violence.

"The idea was to show the way in which the obsessions of daily life in Mexico have helped conform our vocabulary and, over time, have formed part of Mexican culture," he said.

In a style Zamudio Taylor equated with the modernist

work of Andy Warhol, Moris took the texts to silk screen and, in a counterintuitive style, censored every word but the most graphic.

A cover from a Feb. 8 paper reads only "drowned" in Spanish, while a Feb. 14 copy reads "homicide."

González's paintings mix abstract and figurative language, and his canvases are filled with ambiguous symbols and allegories open for interpretation.

His 2009 piece "Mordida" ("Bite") shows the lips of a green sphere surrounded by a succession of sharp lines, blue

wisps and a muted pink background. His oil painting "Tornado" presents a cyclone of green, black and yellow emerging from a small red skull and surrounded by jagged strokes bordering the canvas.

Fernández's work derives influence from counterculture movements like punk and graffiti art. Her splatters, stains and spills are a departure from the better-defined shapes of her exhibit counterparts.

An untitled 2008 painting shows a play on textures and shades, with dark forest greens shading the borders, a mint green center and a dark paint splat on top, its rounded lines sharpened by quick brushstrokes and splotches. A 2009 piece demonstrates black paint scattered like an oil spill surrounded by warm beige and olive tones.

Zamudio Taylor defined Mather's technique as provocative and "intentionally bad" for his kitschy interpretations and use of "stereotypes of poor taste." The contradictory formula must be working, though, because Mather last year won the Rufino Tamayo biennial painting award for his work.

His 2009 piece "Años de venganza 2" ("Years of Revenge 2") pictures two maniacal grizzlies riding a red motorcycle across the desert. An untitled 2008 work shows a wolf cub on his hind legs holding a metal antenna during a lightning storm.

The exhibit curator said he hoped the Caja Blanca collection could demonstrate the diversity of conceptual art in Mexico City as the genre continues to grow at national and international levels.

CORRECTION

In the article on Monday, October 26, the name of one of the owners of Frida Kahlo's collection at La Buhardilla Gallery is Leticia, not Elizabeth, Fernández. We regret the error.

RICARDO CASTILLO,
correspondent.