

Related Events:

All Events are free and open to the public.

Exhibition Reception

Sunday, November 21, 3-5 pm

(the artist will not be in attendance)

Hyde Park **ARTCENTER**

Cleve Carney Gallery

November 7, 2010-March 5, 2011

Máximo González: *Material Poems*

About the Artist:

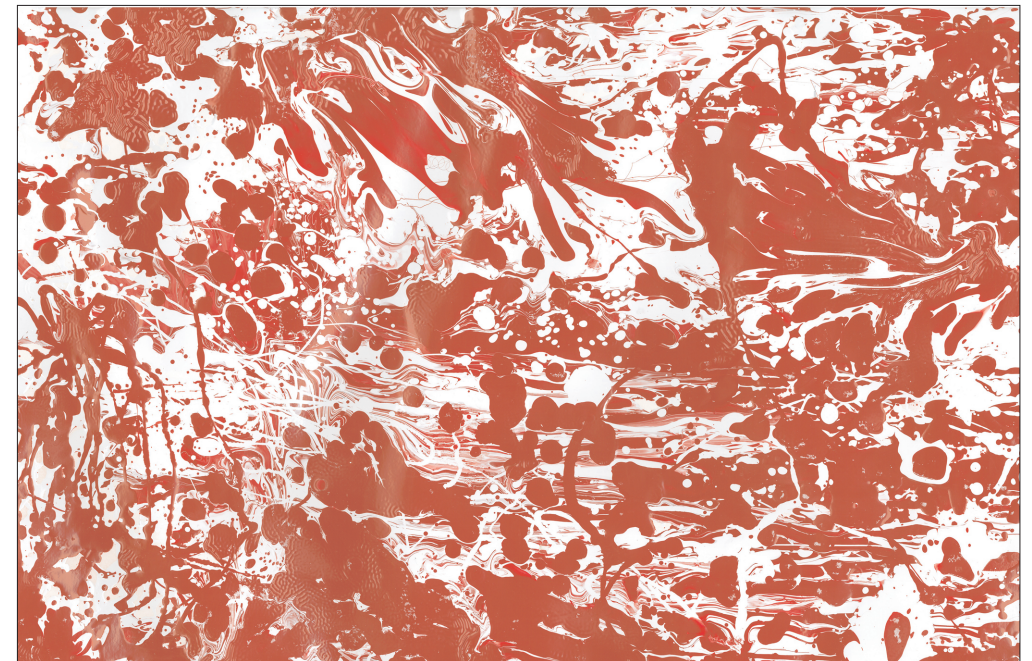
Originally from Argentina, where he studied at the Institute of Art Josefina Conte in Corrientes, González moved to Mexico City in 2003. His work has been featured in over 25 solo exhibitions and he has participated in 58 group exhibitions in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Guatemala, United States, Canada, Spain, England, France, Germany, Poland and Czech Republic. These include the well-received exhibitions *Poetics of the Handmade* curated by Alma Ruiz at MOCA Los Angeles; *The Tree: From the Sublime to the Social* curated by Daina Augaitis at the Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada; and *Fine Line* curated by Patty Ortiz at the Museo de Las Americas, Denver, among many other international institutions. In Chicago, his work has been shown at Monique Meloche Gallery and Skestos Gabriele Gallery.

The artist was in residence at the Hyde Park Art Center from July 12 until September 2, 2010.

Hyde Park **ARTCENTER**

5020 South Cornell Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60615 773.324.5520 www.hydeparkart.org

The Hyde Park Art Center is a not-for-profit organization that presents innovative exhibitions, primarily work by Chicago-area artists, and educational programs in the visual arts for children and adults of diverse backgrounds. The Center is funded in part by 3Arts, Alphawood Foundation; a City Arts III grant from the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and the Illinois Arts Council; Harper Court Arts Council; The Lloyd A. Fry Foundation; The Leo S. Guthman Fund; The Irving Harris Foundation; Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; JPMorgan Chase Foundation; The Mayer & Morris Kaplan Family Foundation; The MacArthur Foundation; The MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince; The Orbit Fund; Polk Bros. Foundation; The Clinton Family Fund; The Wallace Foundation; and the generosity of its members and friends.

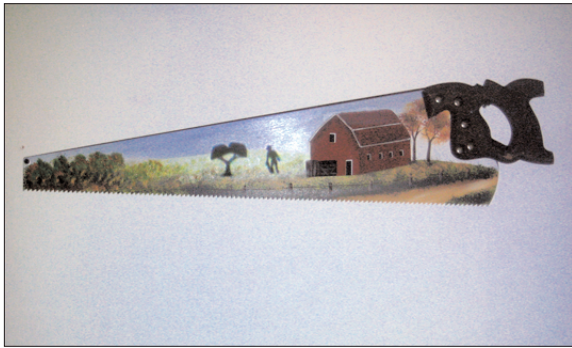


Decorative (detail), 2010, cup, paper, vinyl paint, frames, 8 1/2 x 6 x 2 1/2 feet

Reclaiming value for something that lost it is a concept that has been at the heart of contemporary artist Máximo González's work for many years. Most recognized for his previous paper collages made from devalued currency, González's recent project at the Hyde Park Art Center follows a similar trajectory ascribing new meaning and significance to seemingly worthless objects. The Argentinean artist produced the artworks during a residency at the Hyde Park Art Center from July 12 until September 3, 2010. Having been to Chicago many times before, González was interested in thoroughly exploring its flea markets, swap meets, and yard sales to find second-hand object that would help him achieve his most introspective body of work yet in *Material Poems*.

The *Material Poems* series demonstrates a new process of working for the artist, while continuing to question worth on multiple levels. González based the work on poems that he first wrote in preparation for the Art Center residency. The poems survey the artist's childhood memories of political events, the economy, movies, and other historic episodes, and were never intended to be read. Instead, they

serve as loose conceptual sketches for the nearly 20 mixed media sculptures, drawings, paintings, video and installations realized at the Art Center to construct the entire *Material Poems* series.



We Recycle, 2010, painted saw and animated video (30 sec. loop), 6 x 31 inches.

their original purpose and past life as an object. For example, *Aluminum 1886*, consists of an assemblage of 105 pieces of stunning metal serving wear compiled into a massive rectangle. The items precariously hang from the wall mimicking the unstable price per pound of aluminum as a commodity. The installation suggests a sentimental collection as much as a dormant financial investment. Being able to identify the object helps us understand the piece better by grounding the artwork in something we might have our own memories of encountering or living with like a camping mug or a formal serving tray.

A certain quality of madness exists in all of the works too. González's inanimate objects come to life, both literally and in the mind of the artist/viewer. In *We Recycle*, a projection plays a repeating scene of what the artist imagines would take place in the found picture painted on a handsaw. The title is both playful and conceptually dizzying in that the handsaw is recycled by being retired as a tool and transformed into a canvas, which is then recycled again in perpetuity by González's looping video animation.

What may appear to be a strange white cylinder with metal parts jutting out titled *Insomnia Victims' Favorite Wallpaper* is a reel used to print wallpaper. Between the

metal, intricate graphite drawings of squashes, inventive machines, forks, boats, and other nonsensical elements meander around the tube. The surreal mindscape in González's piece is both threatening and silly, and is reminiscent of the 19th century story "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, where a woman goes crazy after being confined to a room with horrible wallpaper that she peels off in order to free the women she imagines stuck inside the wallpaper.

The mug in the installation *Decorative* is able to speak indecipherably by pouring out words and flowers. The four large enamel paintings adjacent to the mug amplify the familiar abstract pattern found on such camping utensils, pushing the design to the point of bold hallucination.

Insanity is made most apparent in the video work, *Straight Jacket*, which provides the empty home as a backdrop for all of the decorative objects in the exhibition. A man (the artist) wrapped in white nervously sways back and forth with his hands behind his back as if he is in a restraining garment typically used for mental patients. Quickly, the "jacket" is revealed to be white button-down collar shirts buttoned together to create one large swatch of fabric. The man is frantic to peel off the layers of work clothes. His heavy breathing accentuates the struggle to be set free. As fast as it began, the performance is over as the man steps out of the shell of shirts on the ground and walks past the camera frame. Perhaps ditching the weight of the shirts, like donating the clutter of decorative objects from a home, liberate the individual to enter a clearer mental space.

From Antiques Road Show to Hoarders, the psychosis of collecting anything and everything is a popular spectacle these days. Public fascination with the stories of obtaining and living with the objects equals the intimate connection the person/collector has to the object. The emotional value is indisputable but how is the monetary worth of these collected items established?

The relationship between contemporary or fine art and decorative art is symbiotic for González as one art form gives birth to the other. The art work presented in *Material Poems* by Máximo González adds a new dimension and value to the common American decorative object inviting us to see the refreshing potential in everyday things.



Aluminum 1886, 2010, aluminum trays and utensils, 7 x 14 feet