

December 14, 2018

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## YARAT Contemporary Art Space



[1] Vajiko Chachkiani, *Glass bones* (still), 2018. Video, 9 min. Commissioned by YARAT. Courtesy by artist, Daniel Marzona (Berlin) and SCAI The Bathhouse (Tokyo). [2] Pedro Gómez-Egaña, *Sleipnir*, 2018. Installation, wood, metal, steel bearings, electromagnets, sound. 216.5 x 616 x 616 cm. Commissioned by YARAT. Courtesy of artist.

**Vajiko Chachkiani**

***Flies Bite, It's Going To Rain***

December 14, 2018–April 14, 2019

**Pedro Gómez-Egaña**

***Sleipnir***

November 9, 2018–February 24, 2019

**YARAT Contemporary Art Space**

YARAT

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Azerbaijan

**Hours:** Tuesday–Sunday 11am–7pm

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**YARAT Contemporary Art Space (Baku, Azerbaijan)**  
presents solo shows by Georgian artist Vajiko Chachkhiani  
and by Colombian-born, Norway-based artist Pedro  
Gómez-Egaña. Curated by Suad Garayeva-Maleki.

Featuring a newly commissioned body of work, *Flies Bite, It's Going To Rain* show combines various media to create an immersive environment which radically tackles ideas of myth, tradition and heritage.

Lending the exhibition its title, a monumental forest installation of dead trees encircles sculptures borrowed from both antiquity and history. Perched on wooden pedestals, the worn and cracked sculptures are either effaced, incomplete or studded with wedges which either hold them together or threaten to tear them apart. They refer to the fragmented nature of storytelling, which in Georgia is entrenched between ancient mythology and its more recent, often traumatic past.

Outside this impenetrable forest stand three wooden barns, brought together as traditional Georgian country constructions. Two of the larger barns, with intricate glass windows, are reminiscent of Georgian verandas, similar in form to the construction Chachkhiani used for his Venice Biennale pavilion in 2017. Nostalgic places of leisure and time spent with family, the constructions also point towards an underlying problematic relationship with memories, heritage and internal emptiness.

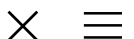
One of the smaller barns shows a newly commissioned video, *Glass Bones*. A dark and daring contemporary interpretation of a popular Georgian fairy-tale, in which a son sacrifices his mother's heart for an impossible love, the video is a Lacanian exploration of the fragile relationship between desire, life and death, carried through generations by help of myths and folklore. Inquisitive and bold in manner, the artist probes tales that often pass unexamined yet have a tremendous effect on our understanding of identity; family, national belonging and self. In the artist's own words, "this show is about history and mythology and the way they define contemporary psychology."

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For his solo exhibition *Sleipnir*, Pedro Gómez-Egaña,  
created a multi sensory immersive experience building a

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opening of the exhibition coincided with YARAT's M.A.P.  
Festival—a multidisciplinary theatre and performance  
festival taking place across Baku in November.

Interested in ritualising audiences' experience of space, the

pavilion-like structure removes the viewer from their familiar surroundings. Built as a space within a space, mechanical components inside the observatory form independent pod-like segments where viewers experience a haunted, ever changing environment. Uniting characteristic elements of the artist's wider practice—such as choreography and the manipulation of light—Pedro Gomez-Egaña modulates the viewers experience of time and narrative, whilst controlling navigation through his purpose-built spaces.

The work takes inspiration from the Norwegian adventurer Thor Heyerdahl's widely contested hypothesis *The Search for Odin*. Through Heyerdahl's numerous visits to Azerbaijan, he observed that the artistic style of rock carvings there resembled those previously found in Norway. He concluded that Azerbaijan was a site of advanced civilisation, with Azeri people migrating north to Scandinavia; he therefore hypothesized that Vikings had their origins in the ancient Caspian region. Titled *Sleipnir*, the exhibition directly references the eight-legged horse ridden by Odin, a god in Norse mythology featured in Heyerdal's theories, who travelled from Azerbaijan to Scandinavia.

For his installation, Pedro Gómez-Egaña also incorporates a musical sound element, performed by singers who create a ghostly presence within the space. Combining traditional Norwegian music with Azeri folk music, the installation reflects upon Heyerdahl's debunked theory. Interested in the historical, and geopolitical characteristics of Azerbaijan, Pedro Gómez-Egaña says his works "take a critical look at current and historical technologies and explore how they define our experience and understanding of time."

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