

OVERVIEW

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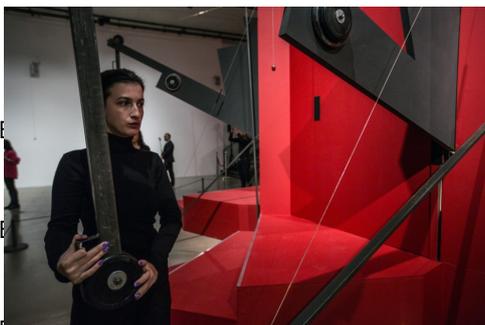
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YARAT CENTRE: PEDRO GÓMEZ-EGAÑA SLEIPNIR SOLO SHOW

09 Nov - 24 Feb 19

YARAT Contemporary Art Space announces a solo exhibition from Color born, Norway-based artist Pedro Gómez-Egaña. Showcasing a major artwork as part of his ongoing "Observatory" series, Gómez-Egaña creates a multi-sensory, immersive experience, building a large-scale pavilion structure within YARAT's gallery walls. Taking inspiration from the Caspian region, the exhibition coincides with YARAT's M.A.P. festival – a multidisciplinary art and performance festival taking place across Baku.

Interested in ritualising audiences' experience of space, the pavilion-like structure repositions the viewer from their familiar surroundings. Built as a space within a space, mechanical components inside the observatory form independent pod-like segments where visitors experience a haunted, ever-changing environment. Uniting characteristic elements of the artist's wider practice – such as choreography and the manipulation of light – Gómez-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 'The Search for Odin'. Through Heyerdahl's hypothesis, he observed that the artistic style of rock carvings there resembled previously found in Norway. He concluded that Azerbaijan was a site of an ancient civilisation, with Azeri people migrating north to Scandinavia; he therefore hypothesised 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. Heyerdahl's theories, who travelled from Azerbaijan to Scandinavia.

For his installation, 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 deconstruction of the theory. Interested in the historical, and geopolitical characteristics of Azerbaijan, Gómez-Egaña says his works 'take a critical look at current and historical technologies and how they define our experience and understanding of time'.

Gómez-Egaña's installation will be presented as part of YARAT's M.A.P. festival which takes place from 6 – 11 November 2018

This exhibition is curated by Suad Garayeva Maleki

About the Artist

Pedro Gómez-Egaña was born in Colombia and lives and works between Copenhagen, Denmark and Bergen, Norway. Gómez-Egaña studied music composition, performance and visual arts at Goldsmiths College, the Bergen National Academy of Arts, and completed his doctoral project in visual arts at the Norwegian Research Fellowship Programme in 2012. Gómez-Egaña's work has exhibited around the world including: the Venice Biennale; Brussels Biennial; ICA, London; Kunstnerens Hus, Oslo; La Kunsthalle, MuHKA, Brussels and Colomboscope, Colombo amongst others.

Pedro Gómez-Egaña is currently a professor and researcher at the Faculty of Design, Bergen University, Norway.

About YARAT

YARAT is an artist-founded, not-for-profit art organisation based in Baku, Azerbaijan, established by Aida Mahmudova in 2011. YARAT (which means 'create' in Azerbaijani) is dedicated to contemporary art with a long-term commitment to creating a hub for practice, research, thinking and education in the Caucasus, Central Asia and surrounding region.

YARAT comprises YARAT Art Centre, ARTIM Project Space, YARAT Studios, YAY Gallery and an extended educational and public programme. YARAT Art Centre, a 2000m² converted Soviet-era naval building, opened in March 2015 and is the organisation's main exhibition space.

January 2019  
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space. The exhibition programme features new commissions by artists responding region. It supports and provides access to artists from the region, while engaging established, international artists.

In October 2015, YARAT opened ARTIM, a central, accessible and dynamic space in Old City. ARTIM (meaning 'progress' in Azerbaijani) shows experimental practices a work by emerging Azeri art professionals (selected through open call) and the international artists from the residency programme. It features multiple small-scale projects and hosts ARTIM LAB, a programme enabling young artists to engage in workshop daily studio practice to generate new ideas and works.

In 2016 YARAT launched a renewed residency programme. Aimed at developing Azerbaijani voices and emerging international artists, the focus is on new, innovative practices and artists with an interest in the region. The residency programme features international and 4 local artists a year at YARAT Studios' spaces.

Education has been at the heart of YARAT's activities since its creation. With a diverse public programme that includes courses, workshops, lectures, screenings, film, literature and theatre clubs and family weekends, YARAT aims to give access to audiences of all ages. The public programme invests proactively in building community and nurturing a wider understanding of, and participation in, contemporary art.

## M.A.P. FESTIVAL

**November 6 – 11, 2018**

YARAT hosts M.A.P., a multidisciplinary performance festival featuring drama, opera, and street and puppet performances. Founded in 2017, M.A.P. takes place in major theatre venues across Baku during one week. The second edition is curated by Kamran Shahmardan, a theatre director and the founder of 'Black and White Festival' in Imatra, Finland. Entitled "Theatre without Borders", this year's programme includes diverse performances from theatre companies across Switzerland, Denmark, Great Britain, Germany, Estonia, Russia, Iran and Japan. Bringing a vibrant atmosphere to the city, the festival opens with "Aria", a production featuring singing, costume and dance by the Italian collective No Gravity. Other events include a poem performed with acrobats by acclaimed Swiss director and choreographer Finzi Pasca, and a modern version of Austrian composer Joseph Haydn's opera "The Island" by the Mariinsky Theatre, Russia.

### Notes to editors:

**Exhibition:** Pedro Gómez-Egaña – Sleipnir

**Location:** YARAT Contemporary Art Centre, (National Flag Square), Bayil, AZ1003

**Dates:** November 9, 2018 – February 24, 2019

**Exhibition opens:** Tuesday through Sunday, from 12:00 – 20:00

Admission is free

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YARAT CONTEMPORARY ART SPACE © 2018

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