

ART YOUNG ARTISTS 2020

Artist Juan Antonio Olivares Pursues the Ties that Bind Us

WORDS

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Multidisciplinary artist Juan Antonio Olivares creates work that doesn't simply ask to be viewed, but also draws viewers in closer to experience a reflection of themselves. Pulling from a wide range of mediums, from video and sound sculpture to performance and drawing, Olivares's practice seeks to remind us how, as individuals, we are much more connected to one another than we are separated.

Olivares aims to begin every work from a place of vulnerability. "So much of our lives are willingly put on display at this point," says the New York-based artist. "That can mean a turn inwards." This inward turn is demonstrated in *Moléculas*, his 2017 3-D animated film, exhibited at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 2018, wherein a broken teddy bear narrates the story of the artist's move to New York and a painful family loss. Olivares sensitively marries the autobiographical with the fictional, extending this fusion to the surreal in his 2019 exhibition "Naufragios," which contained a 24-piece sound installation composed of seashells emitting overlapping audio of sounds such as Stephen Hawking speaking on the potential of extraterrestrial life and the mesmerizing croons of Nina Simone.

Accompanying the installation is a collection of hyper-realistic graphite drawings of sperm and egg cells, reminiscent of textbook scientific illustrations. "I have been drawing from Scanning Electron Microscopic images because these are the most accurate depictions of objects invisible to the naked eye," says Olivares. "These scans visualize things that are somewhat commonplace in completely unfamiliar detail." This paradox of the seemingly strange producing a sense of familiarity is encompassed in Olivares's precise yet visionary practice. Currently, Olivares is in the process of making two new animations while anticipating two upcoming solo shows, at Galerie Maria Bernheim in Zurich and ChertLüdde in Berlin, both planned for 2021.