Gabriel Orozco

MoMA

Gabriel Orozco

Ann Temkin

WITH ESSAYS BY
Ann Temkin
Briony Fer
Benjamin H. D. Buchloh
Paulina Pobocha
Anne Byrd

The Museum of Modern Art
New York

10 12 02

SO LONG AS THE OLD POND REMAINS A CONTAINER OF A CERTAIN VOLUME OF WATER QUIETLY REFLECTING THE THING AROUND IT, THERE IS NO LIFE IN IT. TO ASSERT ITSELF AS REALITY, A SOUND MUST COME OUT OF IT. A FROG JUMPS INTO IT, THE OLD POND THEN PROVES TO BE DYNAMIC, TO BE FULL OF VITALITY, TO BE OF SIGNIFICANCE TO US SENTIENT BEINGS. IT BECOMES AN OBJECT OF INTEREST, OF VALUE.

BUT THERE IS ONE IMPORTANT OBSERVATION WE HAVE TO MAKE, WHICH IS THAT THE VALUE OF THE OLD POND TO BASHO, THE POET AND SEER (OR MYSTIC), DID NOT COME FROM ANY PARTICULAR SOURCE OUTSIDE THE POND BUT FROM THE POND ITSELF. IT MAY BE BETTER TO SAY, THE POND IS THE VALUE. THE POND DID NOT BECOME SIGNIFICANT TO BASHO BECAUSE OF HIS FINDING THE VALUE ~~of~~ IN THE POND'S RELATIONSHIP TO ANYTHING OUTSIDE THE POND AS A POND.

OH! ANCIENT POND!
A FROG LEAPS IN,
THE WATER'S SOUND

BASHO

D.T. SUZUKI
THE AWAKENING OF ZEN
P. 71 - 72

2003: Everyday Altered

In 2003 visitors to the Italian Pavilion of the Venice Biennale encountered a large gallery containing a clean-lined architectural structure made out of a light, crisp birch. Three elliptical pillars supported a roof whose elegantly contoured form barely acknowledged gravity. Resting on small balls placed atop each column, the roof seemed to float above the visitors passing through.

This work by Orozco is a kind of shadow—or, as he has put it to Briony Fer, it is an equally impossible "Platonic pavilion."[1] *Shades between Rings of Air* is a replica, to scale, of the sculpture court that the Venetian architect Carlo Scarpa built for the Italian Pavilion in 1952. Orozco's version was installed adjacent to this courtyard and it was possible to spot Scarpa's original while standing inside Orozco's installation. Scarpa had built in concrete, and five decades later it had become something of an overgrown ruin. As Orozco has pointed out, the structure was itself so sculptural that it proved difficult to display sculpture there, and as a result it had been abandoned soon after completion.[2] What Orozco did, then, was recast Scarpa's pavilion as a sculpture. "What interested me," he has said, "was the experience of walking between the two, between the ruin of the dusty, open-air pavilion and the wooden replica inside—one to one, almost like a model, which stood in a white room that was very pristine and clean. It was about the time between the Platonic pavilion and the pavilion eroded by weather. It was a shiny new idea that was immediately eroded and 'accidented' by reality."[3]

OPPOSITE:
Notebook 13, p. 46.
Pen on ink-jet print on notebook page, 10 3/4 × 8 1/16" (27.3 × 20.5 cm)

TOP:
Shade Between Rings of Air. 2003. Wood and metal, 9' 2 1/4" × 26' 2 15/16" × 45' 11 3/16" (280 × 800 × 1,400 cm). Installation view of *The 50th International Art Exhibition: Dreams and Conflicts—The Dictatorship of the Viewer;* Venice Biennale, 2003

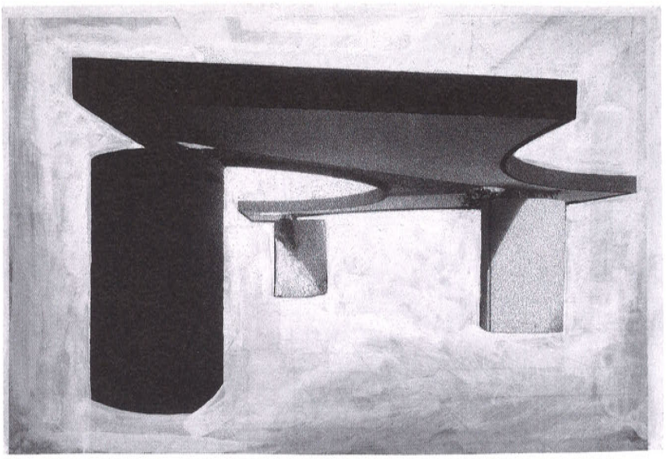
ABOVE:
Partial view of Carlo Scarpa's Pensilina, made for the 26th Venice Biennale (1952), 2003

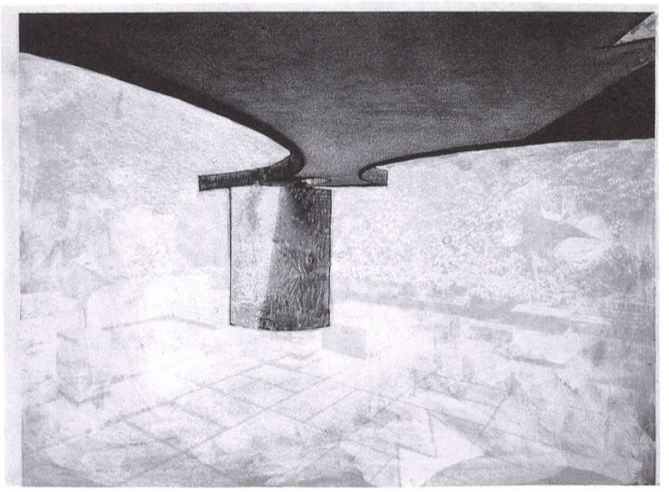
92

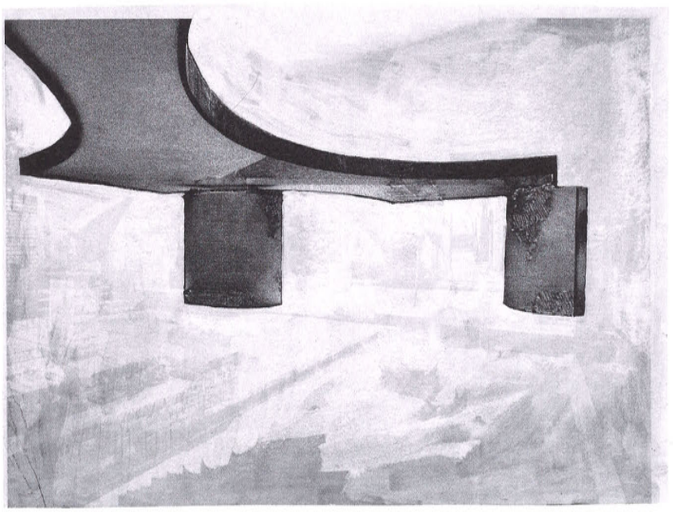
12 04 03

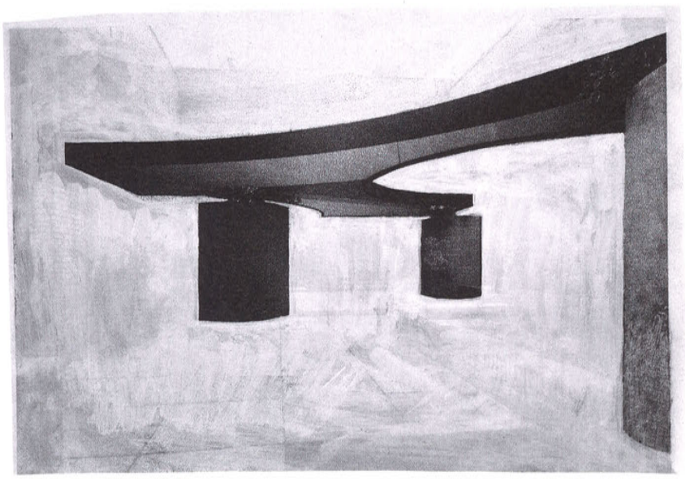
Il Quotidiano Alterato

Vita vita vita







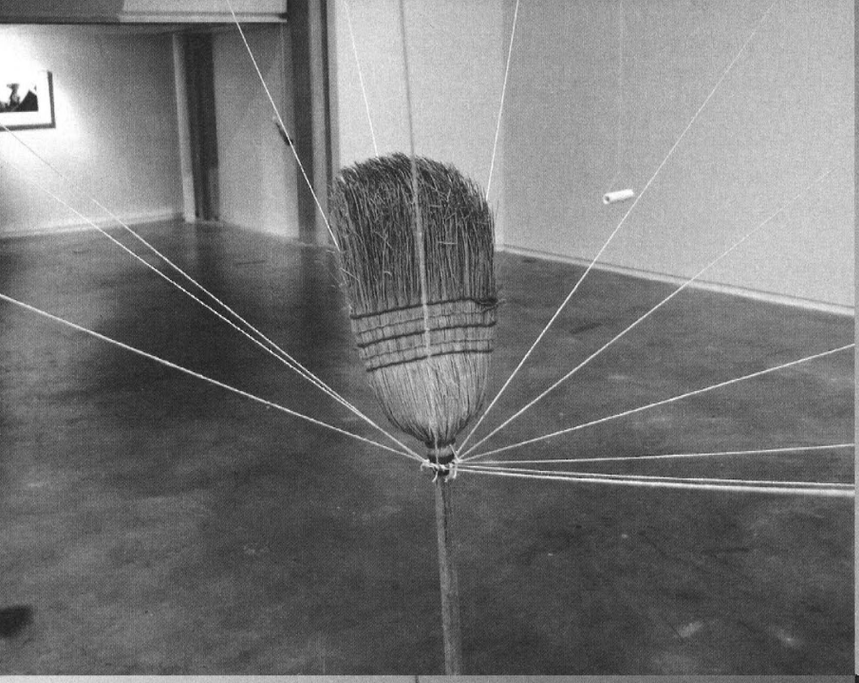


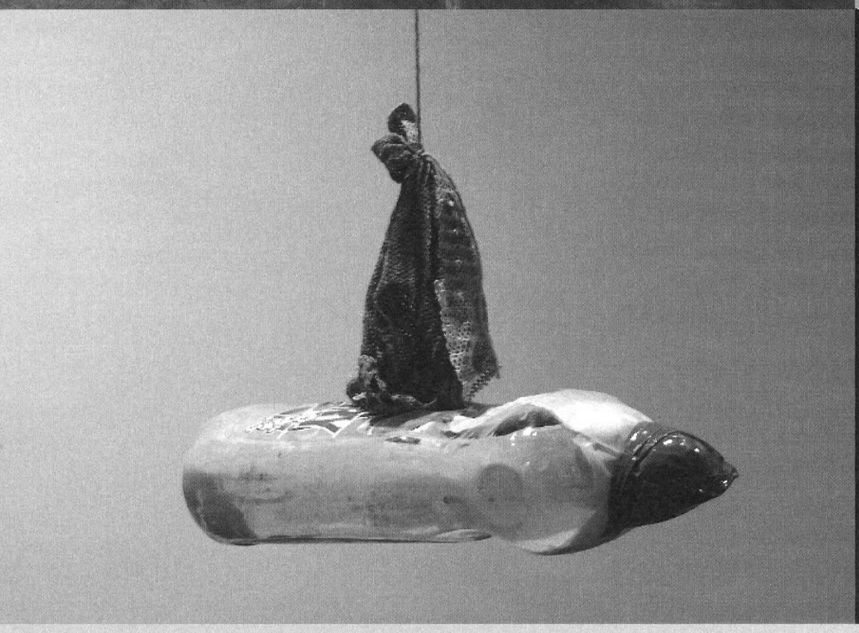
Orozco's sculptural contribution to the Biennale altered and displaced the overlooked in order to bring it to the viewer's attention. His curatorial contribution to the Aperto exhibition continued in this mode. Titled *The Everyday Altered*, it included the works of six artists: Abraham Cruzvillegas, Jimmie Durham, Daniel Guzmán, Jean Luc Moulène, Damián Ortega, and Fernando Ortega. Orozco's statement for the exhibition did not explain his concept so much as literalize it. He submitted a printed page nearly covered with repetitions of the word *vita*—Italian for "life." Orozco disrupted the solid grid of *vita vita vita*, though, irregularly peppering it with variations: *paura* (fear); *bomba bomba bomba* (bomb); crash (in English); and at the end of the last line, *morte* (death). The shock of the everyday altered was most literal in an untitled work by Fernando Ortega, an electric bug zapper that would interrupt the power supply in the exhibition hall every time a fly was electrocuted, causing a brief blackout in the space. None of the other works involved such explicit interruption, but each shared an impulse to jostle the familiar in order to cause a moment in which recognition mingles with misrecognition.

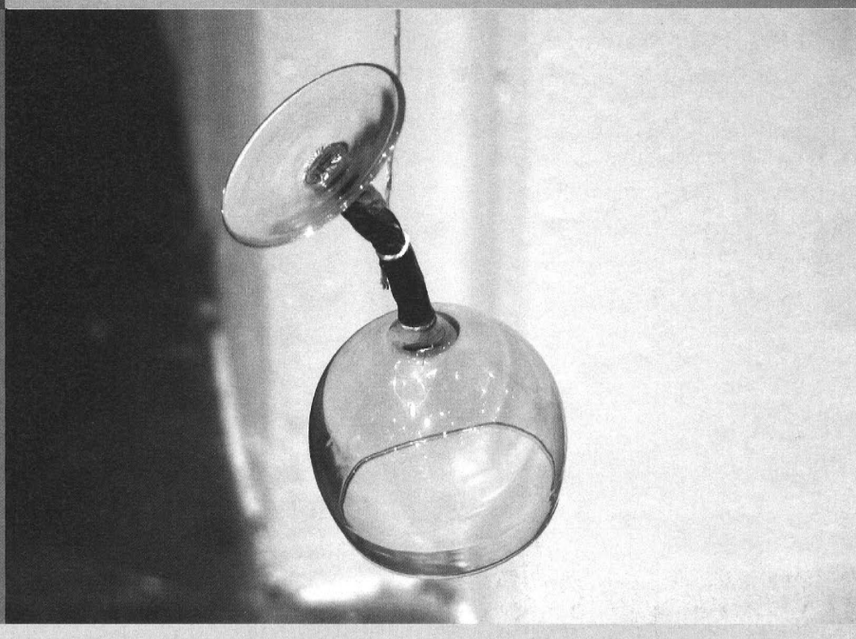
Trinity College in Dublin had also invited Orozco to exhibit that summer. As he had done on a number of occasions, Orozco worked only with objects he found within the gallery. The first of these was a broom, which he used "to clean up a bit." In picking up he also collected bits and pieces of trash that had been left scattered around the room. He inserted a metal ring into the neck of the broomstick, and stretched cotton string from that hole up to the ceiling, over a metal lighting

OPPOSITE:
Notebook 13, p. 92. Ballpoint pen and printed paper on notebook page, 10 3/4 × 8 1/16" (27.3 × 20.5 cm)

ABOVE:
Project for Shade Between Rings of Air. 2003. Gouache on four sheets of photographic paper, clockwise from top left: 5 1/8 × 8 1/4" (13 × 21 cm); 6 1/8 × 8 1/4" (15.6 × 21 cm); 5 5/8 × 8 1/4" (14.3 × 21 cm); 6 1/4 × 8 1/4" (15.9 × 21 cm)





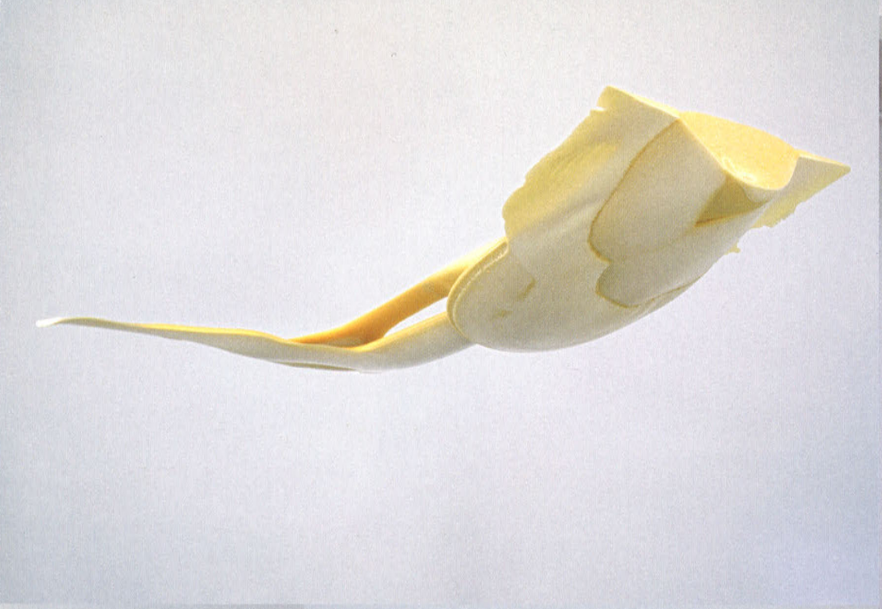


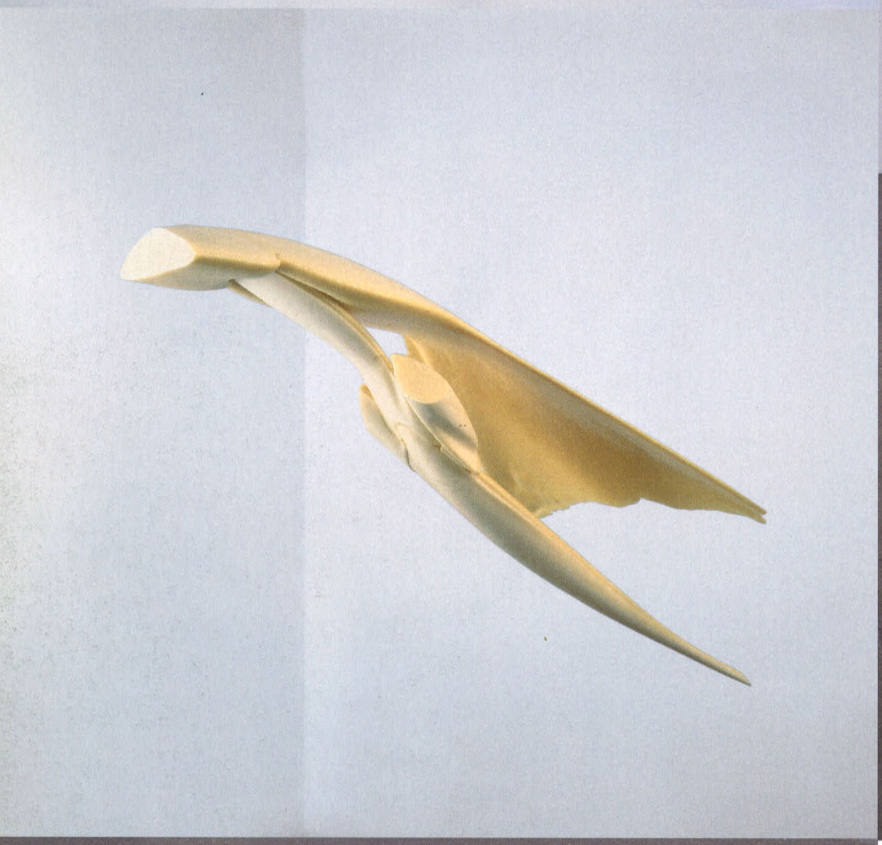
track and back down, tying it to one of the bits of detritus he had collected. He repeated this process again and again—linking the broom to a light-bulb box, a coffee cup, a sponge from a used paint roller, and so on—until the weight of the garbage was enough to suspend the broom in mid-air. Orozco has likened the effect of the different weights and balances acting on each other to that of bodies orbiting in a solar system—each keeping the other in check. He titled the work *The Weight of the Sun*: "The idea is that the broom is the representation of the sun. The broom is to clean up, to take away the dust. Taking away the dust brings the light in. Without dust you see the light."

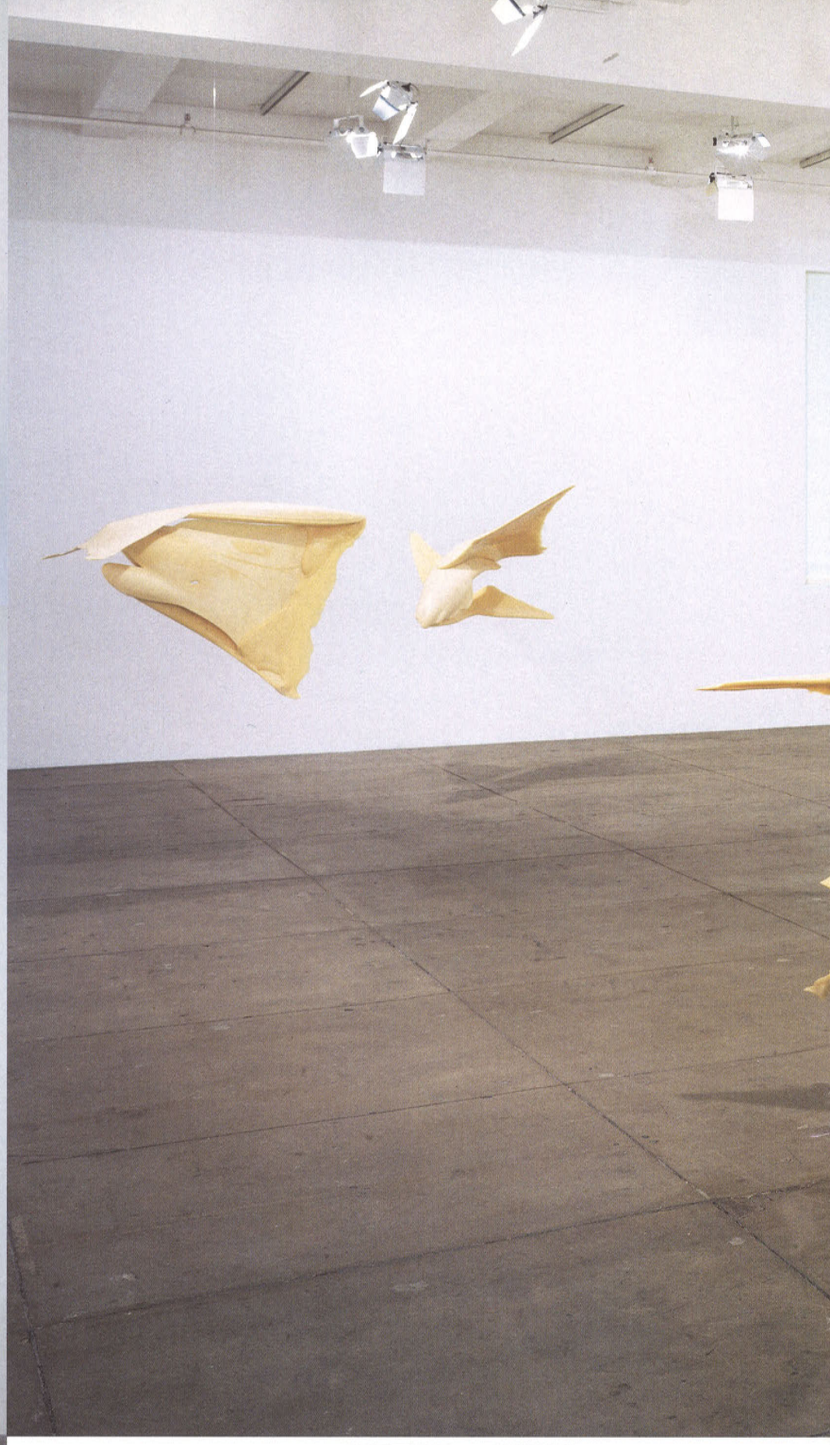
In the fall Orozco showed a set of sculptures, *Spumes*, at Marian Goodman Gallery in New York. He had begun the series a year before, working with Philippe Picoli in a rented space in Brooklyn. The exhibition included about fifty works made from expanding polyurethane foam. The material is often used in construction work: injected in liquid form into the spaces between the walls, it expands into the cracks, usually to act as insulation. In about forty seconds it goes from a dense, heavy liquid to a frothy, bubbly one, doubling or tripling its size and then solidifying. The process is a chemical reaction, and generates a lot of heat. The liquid substance is also quite toxic—it cannot touch bare skin. And while polyurethane foam is a thoroughly industrial material, it was its organic quality that first drew Orozco's attention: "It's a material that works and behaves like an

OPPOSITE:
The Weight of the Sun. 2003. Mixed mediums, dimensions variable. Installation view at *Gabriel Orozco: The Weight of the Sun*, The Douglas Hyde Gallery, Trinity College, Dublin, 2003

ABOVE:
The Weight of the Sun (details). 2003







LEFT, TOP TO BOTTOM:

Spume Stream. 2003.
Polyurethane foam,
10 × 68 × 41"
(25.4 × 172.7 × 104.1 cm)

Spume 2. 2003.
Polyurethane foam,
11" × 6' 1" × 38"
(27.9 × 183.4 × 96.5 cm)

Organ Shell. 2003.
Polyurethane foam,
8 1/2 × 39 × 22 1/2"
(21.6 × 99 × 57.2 cm)

ABOVE:

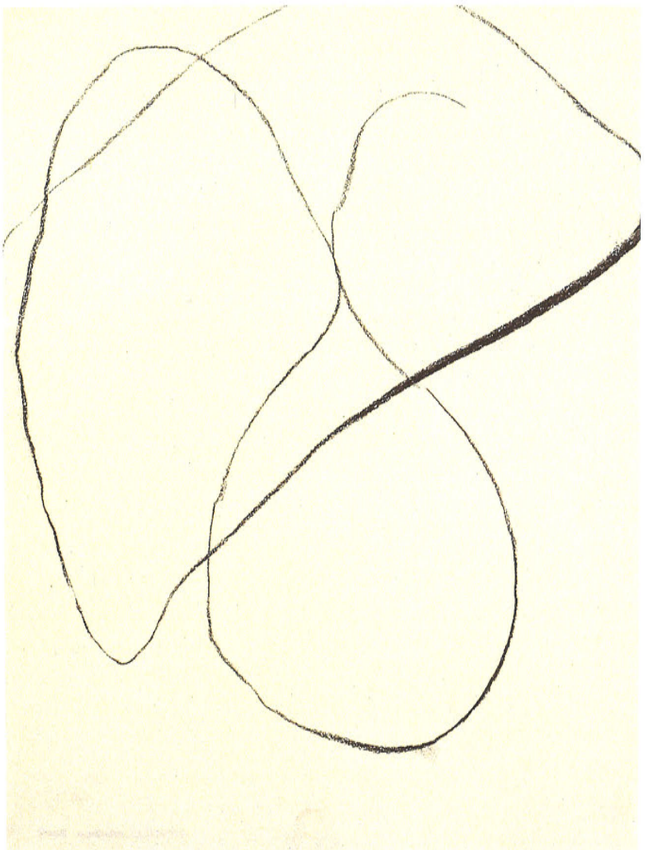
Installation view of
Marian Goodman Gallery,
New York, 2003

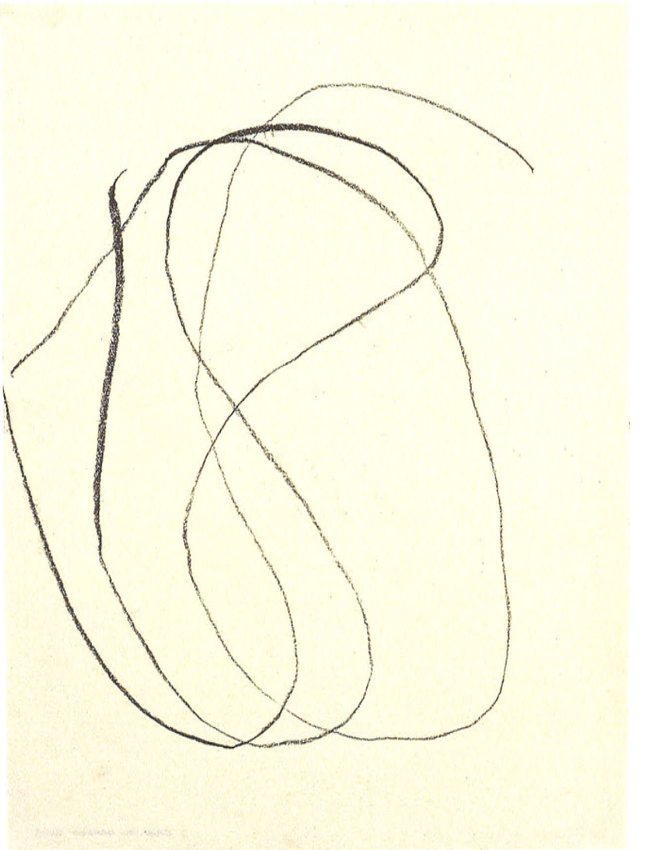
RIGHT:

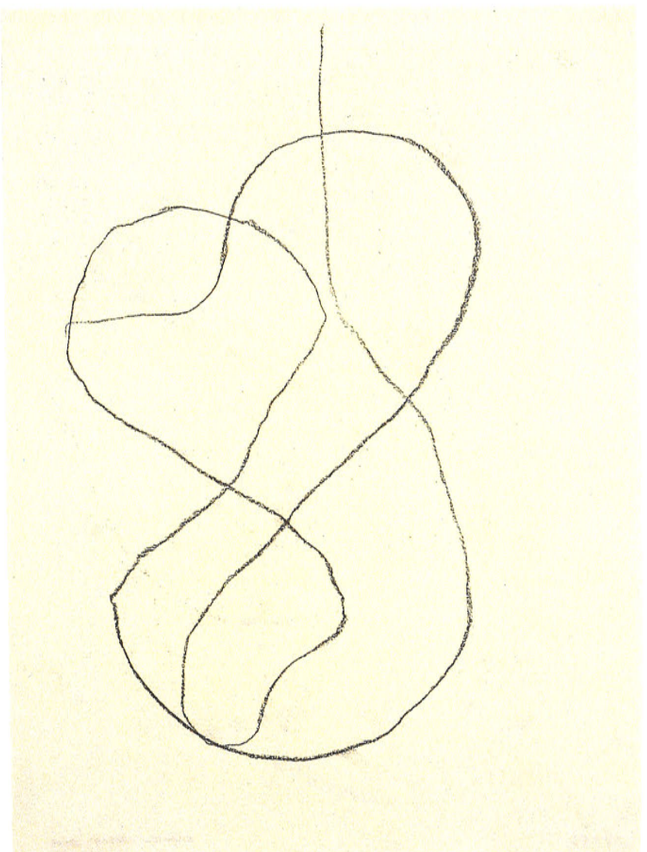
Multiple Dropping on Copper Field. 2003.
Polyurethane foam on
copper screen,
12 × 21 × 20 1/2"
(30.5 × 53.3 × 52.1 cm)

organism, like lava or perhaps like the universe as it expands." Orozco devised various means of directing the foam's growth. He made flexible latex hammocks which he referred to as "recipients" and held their edges to guide the foam as it spilled and puffed its way down the mold. He also made structures out of cotton and wire mesh and used these to guide the foam's flow, sometimes interrupting it with balls or other objects. No technique allowed Orozco total control over the material, but its pour was somewhat predictable and could be influenced—by using gravity, for example, or by stretching or slackening the latex hammock in order to increase or decrease the tension, thus stretching or slightly condensing the foam. He was very interested in the time it took for the material to expand, and also in the topography of the final outcome: each sculpture's emergence seemed to chart a particular landscape.

Orozco made *Spumes* in black, gray, and yellow foam. At Marian Goodman, the south gallery was a kind of sci-fi landscape of strange hybrids. Fingerlike droppings of foam on Styrofoam balls or copper screens rested on tables and mobiles







"In his Breathing Drawings *(2002), for example, which he has made since 1998, he sets himself an exercise—he closes his eyes and breathes. As he does so, he blindly draws a line on the page. The pressure exerted on the line of chalk varies with his breathing, and at the end of a breath he terminates the line. . . . This is about as hand-made* and *as mechanical, as concentrated* and *as distracted, as drawing can get. To make a work in the time frame of a few breaths is to make it in an instant. Yet to repeat the exercise will make a drawing that is completely different."*

Briony Fer, "Spirograph: The Circular Ruins of Drawing," in *Gabriel Orozco* (2004), pp. 15–16

OPPOSITE:
Spume After Trace 2. 2003. Transfer print on polyurethane foam, 51 × 38 × 1" (129.5 × 96.5 × 2.5 cm)

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
Untitled. 2003. Charcoal on paper, 11 × 8 ¼" (27.9 × 20.9 cm)

Untitled. 2003. Charcoal on paper, 11 × 8 ¼" (27.9 × 20.9 cm)

Untitled. 2003. Charcoal on paper, 11 × 8 ¼" (27.9 × 20.9 cm)

of polyurethane grafted onto wire mesh were suspended from the ceiling. *Fleuve* occupied a small viewing room. A wall-mounted arc of black cotton-backed foam, it projected into the space with an industrial-strength solidity. On the floor nearby rested five dark-gray balls, each simple in form but rich in surface effects that developed as the foam popped and grew. In the north gallery, nine large-scale works all in yellow foam floated through the room. Reviewing the exhibition for *Artforum*, Frances Richard wrote: "Suspended from the ceiling were nine mobiles in cut and poured 'natural'-hued foam, each a variation on the morphology of its fellows but each unique. The sculptures are the color of bone, or cake batter, or pissed-on ice, or corroded Styrofoam; their sweeping, torquing, fluted shapes suggest missiles and jawbones, wings and surfboards, seedpods, tail fins, flukes, nose cones, and cartilage. They look like Brancusis; like balsa-wood airplanes in a kid's bedroom; like spun sugar. Turning slowly in ambient air currents, as installed the big, airy solids seemed to be gliding through an unknown element; it was pleasurable just to share their space."[4]

LEFT:
Fleuve. 2003. Polyurethane foam, polystyrene foam balls, cotton, plaster, and wire, 7'5" × 17" × 32" (226.1 × 43.2 × 81.3 cm)

OPPOSITE:
Isadora's Necklace. 2003. Chromogenic color print, 16 × 20" (40.6 × 50.8 cm). Edition of 5

Rolling Life's Hand Line. 2003. Chromogenic color print, 16 × 20" (40.6 × 50.8 cm). Edition of 5

Published in conjunction with the exhibition *Gabriel Orozco*, organized by Ann Temkin, The Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis Chief Curator of Painting and Sculpture, with Paulina Pobocha, Curatorial Assistant, Painting and Sculpture, at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, December 13, 2009–March 1, 2010. The exhibition travels to Kunstmuseum Basel, April 18–August 10, 2010; Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, September 15, 2010–January 3, 2011; and Tate Modern, London, January 19–May 2, 2011.

Fundación Televisa CONACULTA México

Major support for the exhibition is provided by the National Council for Culture and the Arts (CONACULTA), and Fundación Televisa, Mexico.

Additional funding is provided by MoMA's Wallis Annenberg Fund for Innovation in Contemporary Art through the Annenberg Foundation and by Jerry I. Speyer and Katherine G. Farley.

Produced by the Department of Publications
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
Edited by Libby Hruska
Designed by Pure+Applied (Paul Carlos and Urshula Barbour) with Gabriel Orozco
Production by Christina Grillo
Printed and bound by CS Graphics, Singapore
This book is typeset in Swift, designed by Gerard Unger
The paper is 135 gsm Gardapat Kiara

© 2009 The Museum of Modern Art, New York
Certain illustrations are covered by claims to copyright cited on page 255 in this volume.

All rights reserved.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2009936174
ISBN: 978-0-87070-762-9

Published by The Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53 Street, New York, NY 10019-5497
www.moma.org

Distributed in the United States and Canada by D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers, 155 Sixth Avenue, 2nd floor, New York, NY 10013, www.artbook.com

Distributed outside the United States and Canada by Tate Publishing, a division of Tate Enterprises Ltd, Millbank, London SW1P 4RG

FRONT COVER: Notebook 6 (July 21, 1994–November 5,1994), p. 184. Cut-and-pasted printed paper (original photographic images by Robb Kendrick and Alberto Garcia) glued into notebook, 9 15/16 × 19" (25.3 × 48.3 cm). Collection of the artist

BACK COVER: *La DS*. 1993. Modified Citroën DS, 55 3/16" × 15' 9 15/16" × 45 5/16" (140.1 × 482.5 × 115.1 cm). Fonds national d'art contemporain (Cnap), Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, Paris, Fnac 94003

FRONT ENDPAPERS: Notebook 2 (July 17, 1992–March 23, 1993), pp. 145–46. Ballpoint pen and cut-and-taped printed paper on notebook pages, 10 3/4 × 8 1/16" (27.3 × 20.5 cm). Collection of the artist

OPPOSITE HALF-TITLE PAGE: Notebook 2 (July 17, 1992–March 23, 1993), p. 56. Ballpoint pen, graphite, and sticker on notebook page, 10 3/4 × 8 1/16" (27.3 × 20.5 cm). Collection of the artist

FRONTISPIECE: Notebook 2 (July 17, 1992–March 23, 1993), p. 95. Ballpoint pen, graphite, and photographs on notebook page, 10 3/4 × 8 1/16" (27.3 × 20.5 cm). Collection of the artist

OPPOSITE P. 256: Notebook 3 (March 1–July 24, 1993), p. 43. Cut-and-taped printed paper and graphite on notebook page, 10 3/4 × 8 1/16" (27.3 × 20.5 cm). Collection of the artist

BACK ENDPAPERS: LEFT Notebook 2 (July 17, 1992–March 23, 1993), p. 30. Cut-and-taped printed paper and leaves on notebook page, 10 3/4 × 8 1/16" (27.3 × 20.5 cm). Collection of the artist; RIGHT p. 29. Ballpoint pen, cut-and-taped printed paper, and board on notebook page, 10 3/4 × 8 1/16" (27.3 × 20.5 cm). Collection of the artist

Printed in Singapore

Gabriel Orozco

Ann Temkin

SINCE THE EARLY 1990S, Gabriel Orozco has forged a career marked by constant surprise and innovation. He roams freely and fluently among drawing, photography, sculpture, installation, and painting, creating a heterogeneous body of objects that resists categorization. In works ranging from subtle interventions in the landscape to meticulously executed sculptures and quick snapshots, art intermingles with reality and idea is inseparable from experience. This volume, designed in collaboration with Orozco, offers a comprehensive examination of the artist's career from the late 1980s to the present. Critical essays by Ann Temkin, Briony Fer, and Benjamin H. D. Buchloh provide new approaches to grounding Orozco's work in the larger landscape of contemporary art. They are complemented by a richly illustrated chronology that combines biographical information with focused discussions of selected objects. Each entry pays particular attention to Orozco's material practice and introduces the artist's own reflections on the work he has made.

Ann Temkin is The Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis Chief Curator of Painting and Sculpture at The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

FRONT COVER: Notebook 6 (July 21–November 5, 1994), p. 184. Cut-and-pasted printed paper (original photographic images by Robb Kendrick and Alberto Garcia) glued into notebook, 9 15/16 × 19" (25.3 × 48.3 cm)
Collection of the artist

BACK COVER: *La DS*. 1993. Modified Citroën DS, 55 3/16" × 15' 9 15/16" × 45 5/16" (140.1 × 482.5 × 115.1 cm)
Fonds national d'art contemporain (Cnap), Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, Paris, Fnac 94003

Published by The Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53 Street, New York, NY 10019–5497
www.moma.org

Distributed in the United States and Canada by D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers, 155 Sixth Avenue, 2nd floor, New York, NY 10013
www.artbook.com

Distributed outside the United States and Canada by Tate Publishing, a division of Tate Enterprises Ltd, Millbank, London, SW1P 4RG

PRINTED IN SINGAPORE

ISBN: 978-0-87070-762-9

9 780870 707629