Gabriel Orozco

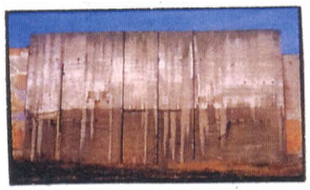
MoMA

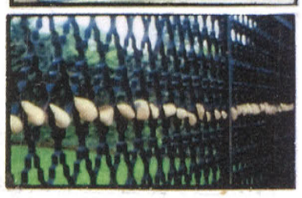
Gabriel Orozco

Ann Temkin

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

The Museum of Modern Art
New York





Open Studio

Ann Temkin

In 1971 French artist Daniel Buren described the studio as one of the "ossifying customs of art."[1] In a remarkable text published in English in 1979, he clearly and simply pointed out that whereas many artists of the late 1960s had rejected or redefined the exhibition spaces of the commercial gallery or museum, it was equally imperative to abandon the studio. Without that refusal, there would be no hope of overturning the artistic traditions Buren and his peers had inherited—traditions that valorized the genius at the expense of the community, and celebrated the object at the expense of the idea. The studio bore as much culpability as the museum for nourishing such a culture, Buren argued. "To question one while leaving the other intact accomplishes nothing."[2]

Almost forty years have passed since that bold declaration, and the artist's studio has been abolished no more than has the commercial gallery or the museum. Yet for Gabriel Orozco, and for many artists of his generation, the convictions reflected in Buren's words were of signal importance to the work they would do. The goals articulated at the end of the 1960s marked a rupture with inherited values that resonated mightily with artists who came of age during the mid-1980s. For members of the final generation that would be making twentieth-century art, the path to the future was one paved by artists who—in the late 1960s and at various points before—were challenging the problematic legacy of a modernism whose ideals no longer seemed wholly compelling.

This affinity was by no means a matter of seamless continuity. To the contrary, Orozco's generation entered art school during a moment in which the radical aspirations of the 1960s and the Conceptual art of the 1970s were nearly invisible. As if the dematerialization of the object witnessed in the late 1960s were an ignorable aberration, the booming economy of the 1980s brought with it a resurgence of large, handcrafted, expensive paintings. They were sold in the white box of the commercial gallery, and sanctioned in large museum exhibitions. And they were painted in spacious, well-appointed studios, places widely celebrated in magazines and documentaries.

In reaction, as the 1980s turned into the 1990s, Orozco and others rejected the lure of the studio. Whether as a matter of principle or circumstantial happenstance, many artists whose work would come to define the '90s would do without the fully outfitted base that for so long had signified setting up shop, the passage to adulthood of which art students dreamed. In most cases these artists chose not to make paintings, immediately obviating the automatic need for space and equipment. It was no coincidence that the art market had crashed and the prospects for selling conventional works of art were slim. A way of life that could be called post-studio—a term coined by Lawrence Alloway in writing about Robert

OPPOSITE:
Gabriel Orozco. Notebook 2 (1992–93), p. 65. Graphite and cut-and-taped printed paper on notebook page, 10¾ × 8 1/16" (27.3 × 20.5 cm)
Collection of the artist

RIGHT:
Photograph of bicycle, New York, c. 1992

RIGHT:
Robert Rauschenberg. *Seven Untitled Hanging Assemblages, Rome*. 1953. Gelatin silver print, 13 × 15" (33 × 38.1 cm). Arranged and photographed by the artist, Pincio Gardens, Villa Borghese, Rome, 1953

Constantin Brancusi. View of studio with *Blond Negress I*. c. 1923. Gelatin silver glass plate negative, 9 7/16 × 7 1/16" (24 × 18 cm)
Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

BELOW:
Gabriel Orozco. *Chair with Cane*. 1990. Silver dye bleach print, 20 × 16" (50.8 × 40.6 cm). Edition of 5

Smithson—was concomitant with the production of a kind of art that was generally created in situ, was often ephemeral, and might involve no objects at all.[3] This way of life presupposed a decentered activity. Like Orozco, many of this generation were emigrants from one nation to another, and rather than settling in one place (as so many earlier twentieth-century artists had done in cities like Paris or New York) they reinforced this status by remaining firmly unattached to one specific locale.

Orozco's first art-making removed from a studio occurred when he was studying in Madrid in 1986–87. For the previous five years he had, with four friends, rented a building in Tlalpan, a southern section of Mexico City. There he had made paintings and drawings in a rich variety of abstract manners. But in Madrid a different practice emerged. Orozco rented a small studio, but he did not use it, in part because the room was unheated and intolerably cold. As Orozco has described it, he made his work walking to and from classes at the Círculo de Bellas Artes with whatever he found along the way, including scraps from a conveniently nearby lumberyard. The sculptures he made were temporary, as ephemeral as the countless unremarkable human tableaux constantly forming and unforming on the streets and sidewalks.

Nothing could be further in ambition or assumption from the typical nineteenth- or twentieth-century sculptor's studio. Such a studio was confirmed by long tradition as a sanctuary in which the artist constructed a personal universe all his (rarely her) own. Its four walls kept the outside world at bay, and its doorway offered the privilege of entry only to those so invited. It was a fictional world in which an artist could immerse himself in his own fantasies. Pygmalion could turn an ivory statue into a beautiful lover. Short of that god-given gift, a sculptor could turn living women into creatures never before seen on this planet: for example, in the case of Constantin Brancusi, elegantly curved forms with gleaming surfaces, or, later, in Alberto Giacometti's studio, attenuated figures of jagged linearity.

A century-long tradition of photographs of the sculptor's studio verifies the status of this space as the artist's all-encompassing universe. For example, Brancusi's hundreds of photographs of his studio insist upon the definitive unity of the artist's vision. The sculptures are cast as alluring vedettes, adored by a camera in

poses that highlight such attributes as the works' reflectivity or textural contrasts. It is precisely in this tradition that we must seek the context for Orozco's photographs, which he began to make in Mexico in the mid-1980s. The first such works were made simply to record his ephemeral outdoor sculptures. As with Brancusi's photographs, these are a sculptor's records of his creations, but here the studio has become the street or the landscape. Orozco's photographs depict two types of situations. On the one hand, they capture the readymade sculptures the artist noted as a passerby, such as *River of Trash* (1990). Alternatively, they record the quiet interventions Orozco would make by means of a few deft moves, as in *Chair with Cane* (1990), a photograph made with the cooperation of a roadside vendor who repaired caned chairs. Orozco brought a chair, inserted the vendor's tall bundle of caning through its broken seat, and then documented the statuesque form against a shadowed wall.

These images implicitly deny the separate realm of a studio, so essential to the vision of earlier artists. Instead, Orozco positions his work in a place where art and life intermingle haphazardly. Robert Rauschenberg is perhaps the most important precursor of this viewpoint, and indeed it is in his early photographs that one finds a striking antecedent to Orozco's own. In 1953, for example, Rauschenberg photographed his *Personal Fetishes* arranged in the Pincio Gardens in Rome. These assemblages had been made during Rauschenberg's and Cy Twombly's travels in North Africa the year before, a time during which Rauschenberg had neither a studio nor any way to carry much with him. Although the photographs portray independent sculptures, and their ritualistic spirit sets them apart from Orozco's, they share the warm wit that eyes the everyday world as a ready platform for art.

Orozco's peripatetic way of life began full force in 1991, when he set off for a trip to Brazil and sublet the house where he lived and worked in Tlalpan, guessing that it would be an extended bout of travel. In fact he would not have a studio in Mexico for the rest of the decade. His new base would become New York City, where in 1992 he and his future wife, Maria Gutierrez, rented a small apartment on East Twelfth Street. There was no means of separating art and life in this compressed space (which in the lingo of New York real estate curiously enough is called a studio apartment). The table in the apartment served as Orozco's workplace, and it is here that he "cut oranges, played with plasticine, and worked on the notebooks."[4] The arrangement was in part an economic decision: Orozco could not understand why artists would give up their freedom, taking day jobs as waiters or assistants, in order to pay the rent on large loft studios they would then have little time to occupy. Instead, he developed a practice accepting of limitations. For instance, Orozco pinned a clear plastic Dannon yogurt cap to the apartment wall; after looking at it for many months he decided that since it had not bored him he might as well try it out on the public (*Yogurt Caps*, 1994). He made a plasticine ball and rolled it around on his building's tar roof to test its capacity for

ABOVE AND RIGHT:
Tabletop, artist's house, Tlalpan, Mexico City, c. 1991–92

BELOW:
Gabriel Orozco. *Dog Urine in Snow*. 1993. Silver dye bleach print, 16 × 20" (40.6 × 50.8 cm). Edition of 5

Gabriel Orozco. Detail from Notebook 6 (1994), p. 62. Photograph, showing artist's East Twelfth Street apartment, c. 1994, 4 × 6" (10.2 × 15.2 cm)
Collection of the artist

RIGHT:
View of *Yielding Stone* (1992; prototype), New York, 1992

OPPOSITE:
Gabriel Orozco. Notebook 5 (1994), p. 133. Ballpoint pen and photographs, showing artist's East Twelfth Street apartment, c. 1993, on notebook page, 10 3/4 × 8 1/16" (27.3 × 20.5 cm)
Collection of the artist

imprints (*Yielding Stone*, 1992). He packed all his little experiments in shoe boxes and then decided that it was worth displaying an empty one (*Empty Shoe Box*, 1993). Orozco's habits in New York also echoed those of his year in Madrid. There he spent many hours walking and bicycling around the city, composing and photographing, whether it be his own arrangement of debris to mimic the skyline with the Twin Towers in the distance (*Island Within an Island*, 1993) or the found stain of a dog's urine on newly fallen snow (*Dog Urine in Snow*, 1993).

As much as Orozco's tactics were a matter of financial necessity, they were also a matter of principle. In a dialogue with Benjamin Buchloh in 1998, Orozco asserts that even the modifications applied to the concept of the studio in the 1960s and '70s, variously adopting metaphors such as the laboratory, the office, and the factory, were thin disguises for an idealizing vision he could not accept. When Buchloh asks him to name his social model as an artist, he says that he would like it to be "my apartment." And when the conversation drifts elsewhere, he directs it back to this point:

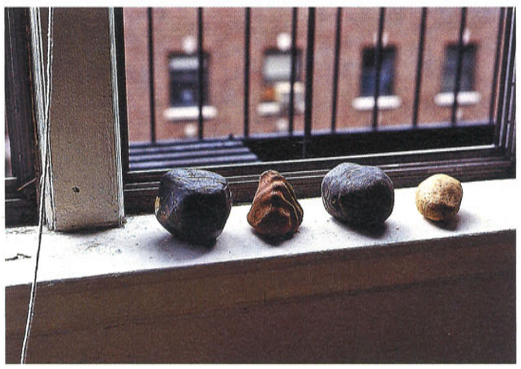
> Just to finish something: the idea of the apartment is important; the idea of avoiding to have a studio or a factory, and just doing anything we can from here, from a common place; then going outside, having situations that produce this or that. The idea of making something more is an (*sic*) utopia in the end: the utopia of the office, the utopia of the factory, the utopia of the explorer, the utopia of the studio like a laboratory, for a genius. . . .[5]

Time in and around the New York apartment, however, was matched or exceeded by time away from it, time that allowed productive "situations." In either case, Orozco wished to be empty-handed. The essence of the light traveler is he who carries just a toothbrush, and Orozco was able to make art as such: several drawings from 1993 are made with toothpaste that has been swished around in the artist's mouth and spat upon the waiting graph paper, then completed with ink and pencil. As many critics have noted, other works from the 1990s alert the viewer to an artist in perpetual motion. Drawings made on train tickets and the now extinct carbon-paper pages of airline tickets imply work made in transit, and trace the artist's travels to and from Mexico City, New York, Paris, Calcutta, and so on. For his contribution, in 1995, to the exhibition series Migrateurs at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (the series' title an apt descriptor of this generation), Orozco could well have relied on the proverbial change of socks in one's backpack. He showed the papier-mâché sculpture *Two Socks*, the molds for which are indicated by the work's title. And the recurrence of vehicles—bicycles, cars, motorcycles—in his sculptures of the mid-1990s all invoke an artist on the move. The archetypal photograph of the sculptor in his studio needed to be replaced,

JUNIO 1993

BELOW:
Artist's apartment on East Twelfth Street, New York, c. 1992

RIGHT:
Artist's apartment on Washington Place, New York, c. 2001



for Orozco and many of his peers, by one of the artist buckled into his or her economy-class seat on an airplane.

The newfound strength with which the biennial exhibition culture took hold of the international art world in the early 1990s had much to do with this new state of affairs. The efflorescence of places for showing art paralleled the decentralization of a place for working. Cities throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and South and North America hosted events that bypassed the standard venue of the art museum and instead borrowed from the model of the music or theater festival. For the most part, these occasions replaced the white walls of the museum or the commercial gallery with spaces that felt more provisional, in exact parallel to the non-studio aspects of the artists' workplaces. Organizers adopted locations like abandoned buildings and outdoor parks and pavilions as well as art museums. While many artists shipped a selection of preexisting works to the exhibitions, often the work was made for the occasion and, in Orozco's case, even created on the spot. His work for the 1st Kwangju Bienniale in South Korea, in 1995, exemplifies this approach: he arrived only with notebooks filled with drawings of circular motifs. In a city where light-box advertisements are ubiquitous, he found a fabricator to translate his drawings into ten light boxes. Produced in an ordinary sign shop rather than a studio, the boxes married a cheap form of mass marketing with the most intimate and noncommercial aspect of an artist's work.

Similarly improvisational positions could be taken even when the setting was a conventional museum. Following Buren's equation, the rejection of the studio implied that of the museum gallery, too. Thus in Orozco's first solo museum show, a Projects exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art in the fall of 1993, he bypassed the isolated white space of the customary Projects gallery and instead chose to display his works in public areas usually devoid of art: the long space between the up and down escalators (*Dial Tone*, 1992), the freestanding structural columns (photographs), and the passages near the escalators and elevators (*Recaptured Nature*, 1990, and *Yielding Stone*, 1992). The two works newly made for the show occupied space outside the building: *Hammock Hanging Between Two Skyscrapers* was placed in the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden, and *Home Run* featured the display of single oranges in the windows of the offices and residential apartments across Fifty-fourth Street. Adopting the baseball lingo of the American setting, the title recognized that the work of art "ball" had indeed been hit right out of the museum "park."

Much as *Home Run* relied on the participation of the Museum's neighbors, Orozco's approach generally has required collaboration with workmen and workshops that are not art-related. The diversity of the mediums of the sculpture reflected a diversity of fabrication sites. A French automobile garage, a South Korean sign shop, and a British billiard table factory certainly have nothing in common other than their role as sites for making work by Gabriel Orozco. This is

very different from the fabrication done for artists such as Donald Judd or Richard Serra. Even when these older artists engaged workers who were not, strictly speaking, art workers, they trained them in the making of their works, annexing the factory as an extension of their studios. The works all come from one or a set of fabricators who make them to the specifications of the artist, and together they build up to a coherent set of materials and forms. In a sense the studio is relocated but not dispersed, as it would be with Orozco.

For him, the decentralization of the manufacturing practice mirrors a rich heterogeneity of object and material. There is no way to identify a work by Orozco in terms of physical product. Instead, it must be discerned through leitmotifs and strategies that constantly recur, but in always mutating forms and configurations. Whereas for the previous generation post-studio work still involved a signature material or format—the branding effect of a Buren stripe is not so far removed from the classic Newman "zip" or Pollock "drip"—in the 1990s it seemed necessary to avoid repeating oneself, to always be unexpected. Rirkrit Tiravanija, a friend of Orozco's, could have gone on cooking Thai food on the occasions of his exhibitions, but instead he deliberately moved beyond the work that had made his reputation. The work of Maurizio Cattelan depends precisely on a sense of unpredictability, sustaining a pattern begun when all visitors to an early exhibition were greeted by a "Torno Subito" (I'll be right back) sign on the closed gallery door.[6] For the artists associated with the term "relational aesthetics," work could take the form of guerilla actions, more spontaneous than studied in nature.[7] Every occasion was an opportunity for surprise.

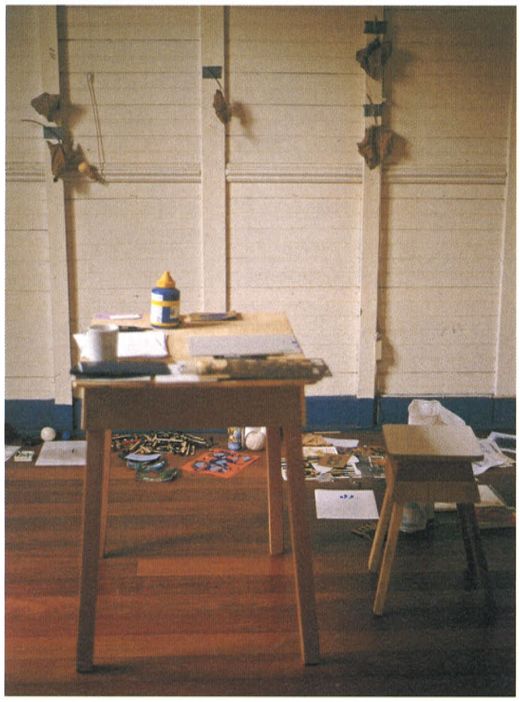
Particular to Orozco's work is an ongoing engagement with the city, first initiated while he was studying in Madrid. His methodology involves close listening to the urban landscape, which requires spending more time outdoors than in. Even when made available to him, studios have incited claustrophobia. In Berlin, for example, a DAAD grant in 1995 brought with it a spacious studio, but after a few weeks of discomfort Orozco converted it to a bedroom and devoted the majority of his time to riding around the city on a yellow Schwalbe scooter. He looked for matching scooters he would then photograph next to his own, ultimately producing a set of forty images collectively presented as *Until You Find Another Yellow Schwalbe.* Just as Orozco could reject a studio, he could effectively do away with a gallery space. Also in 1995 he converted Galerie Micheline Szwajcer in Antwerp into a literal *Parking Lot*, which he realized would be of far more appeal to a neighborhood overcrowded with traffic than would be a few new works of art for sale.

Back in New York in 1996, Orozco rented a new, larger apartment off of Washington Square. But its character was still far more that of a home office than a studio, its artistic function mostly limited to the making of the artist's notebooks and drawings. Exceptionally, the apartment was the site of creation for

Penske Work Project (1998) in progress, New York, 1998

Black Kites, the "skullpture" he sent to Documenta 10 in Kassel, Germany, in June 1997. But the apartment's unusual role as sculpture studio had explicit cause: a collapsed lung that kept Orozco indoors for several months. Following this, the outdoors once again became his foremost workplace, as demonstrated in his *Penske Work Project* in 1998. Trolling for inspiration on the streets of Manhattan, aloft in the driver's seat of a Penske rental truck, Orozco would pull over to make sculptures in situ, usually at construction-site Dumpsters that were treasure troves of materials. The street was the studio and the truck a mobile storage unit, ultimately unloaded at 24 West Fifty-seventh Street for final setup in Marian Goodman Gallery.

If Orozco's body of work is explicit about the way in which it evades the studio, it also presents directly the studio practice that does exist for him. This occurs in the *Working Tables*, of which three sets are now in museum collections.[8] These works feature large assemblies of the small found and handmade objects that Orozco accumulates in the course of testing various ideas and materials. Initially he kept such objects stored in shoe boxes in a closet; working with Bernhard Bürgi for his show at the Kunsthalle Zürich in 1996, Orozco decided that they could have a public life. He specifically chose a table, rather than a vitrine or case, for its implicit role as an active social space, a literal platform for all sorts of work, or, perhaps even better, for the playing of games.



Artist's apartment in San José, Costa Rica, c. 2001

Transferred directly into the museum or the gallery, the *Working Tables* offer the insights that one would normally gain only by visiting the artist's workplace. Although these fragments are made at home or on the road rather than in a conventional studio, they carry the perfume of the studio into the public realm. They present the artist's hand and brain in action, the sculptural equivalent to the notebooks that also are compiled and kept at home. The intimacy they allow is one generally kept at safe remove from the finished work of art. Orozco likens the experience of them to his pleasure at walking into an auto mechanic's garage and seeing all the small car parts and tools and equipment laid out on big tables.

Despite Orozco's mention of the garage, the *Working Tables* are important indications that his work operates along a pole more feminine than masculine in spirit. Indeed, masculinity is one of the codes for the modernism against which this work positions itself. In the history of modern art it has generally been the male artist who was entitled to the studio, as the businessman his office. Jackson Pollock took over the barn next to the farmhouse he shared with Lee Krasner, while she painted in an upstairs bedroom. Such a history often resulted in an aversion to the tradition of the studio and all that it implied, even upon the arrival of the era when women could claim its privileges for themselves. Eva Hesse rented a loft studio on the Bowery in New York, but she preferred to work in her living space below: "I work only downstairs. In my corner. . . . Feels less lost and lonely that way. Upstairs is unknown unfamiliar to me."[9] Orozco's *Working Tables* are, as Briony Fer has described them, "the art of kitchen tables."[10] They have their parallels in compilations of small-scale objects by artists such as Hesse, Louise Bourgeois, and Kiki Smith. While the approach is not limited to women artists—Joseph Beuys collected and displayed similar bits and pieces in his vitrines—they advertise their unmonumental, unheroic nature as modest works that are neither clearly finished nor unfinished. Provisional in tone, this is work of the sort that could be interrupted by the cooking of meals or fetching of children. Equally, it could be continued while getting on a plane or moving to another city for several weeks or months.

Over the past five years, Orozco has begun to make paintings—scores of them—a development that initially shocked his admirers and still causes considerable misunderstanding. After a few initial experiments, Orozco made a painting, *The Samurai's Tree* (2004), that he decided to use as a template for a large series. Manipulating its design by computer, he applied a set of rules that yielded 672 different permutations in gold, white, red, and blue, collectively titled *Samurai Tree Invariants*.[11] In 2005 Orozco strayed from the predetermined design schemes and began creating paintings that are composed individually, a practice that continues today alongside the making of the *Invariants*. His return to this traditional

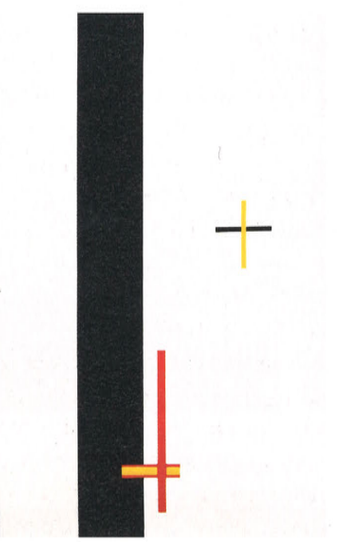
LEFT:
Le Corbusier's Maisons Lipchitz-Miestschaninoff (1924), Boulogne-Billancourt, France, 2009

medium appeared to repudiate much that his work was thought to have stood for. Orozco's renunciation of the culture of the studio is paramount among the basic principles called into question by this new activity. Surely one cannot make paintings without a studio.

Indeed one cannot, yet the subject of the studio turns out to be a valuable key to understanding the place of the paintings in Orozco's thinking. When Orozco left Mexico at the beginning of the 1990s, his disinterest in a studio perfectly expressed the new way by which he wanted to define being an artist. But in 2004, after a fifteen-year-long hiatus from creating paintings, a desire to make them resurfaced, and Orozco decided to accommodate it. An opportune site for this project was the studio occupied by Philippe Picoli, with whom he had first collaborated in 1993 on the making of *La DS*—the sculptural transformation of a Citroën DS automobile—and with whom he since then had shared a few other projects as well. Picoli lived and worked in the studio that Le Corbusier had built for Jacques Lipchitz in 1924, located near the Bois de Boulogne on the outskirts of Paris.[12] Rich in history and handsome in design, the studio lent itself to an experimental venture into the territory of early-twentieth-century abstraction.

For a year, from late summer 2004 through early fall 2005, Orozco worked "shoulder to shoulder" with Picoli, who had not been trained as a painter.[13] But once Picoli's skills were finely honed, and the project of turning the *Invariant* diagrams into paintings had been firmly established, Orozco departed. The work of painting is now one that he delegates to Picoli in Paris and Christian Macia in Mexico City. Macia had first assisted Orozco with *Mobile Matrix* (2006), drawing in graphite on the skeleton of a whale. He now works in a nineteenth-century house lent to him by Manuel Sevrano, an eminent restorer who first showed Orozco how to paint in tempera on wood panel, in the manner of medieval icons. Sevrano also has a large shop that serves as a site of production—it is here that the canvas and wood supports are prepared before being sent to Macia for painting. (An atelier in Bonn provides the supports for the French paintings.) Picoli and Macia work with a few assistants, all trained artists or art students, who are paid per project.

All the genius mythology that once went together with the studio—isolation, inspiration, struggle, ecstasy, despair—is absent in the making of Orozco's paintings. The process

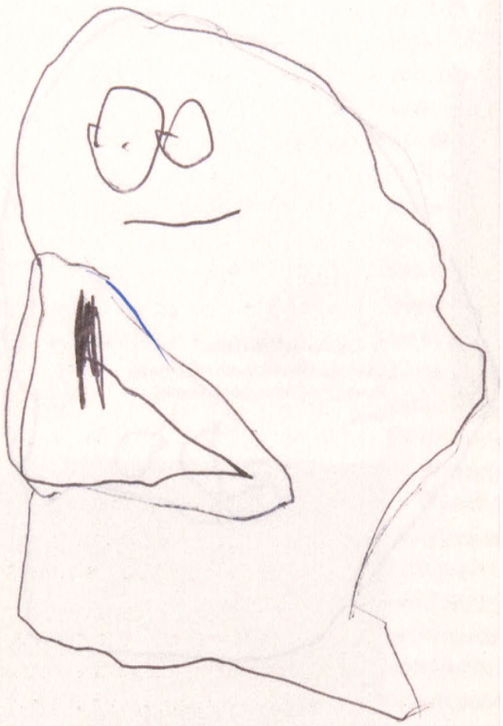


LEFT:
László Moholy-Nagy. *EM2*. 1922. Porcelain enamel on steel, 18 3/4 × 11 7/8" (47.5 × 30.1 cm)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Philip Johnson in memory of Sibyl Moholy-Nagy

ABOVE:
Gabriel Orozco. Detail from Notebook 14 (2003–06), p. 114. Photograph, showing Boulogne–Billancourt studio, 6 × 4 1/2" (15.2 × 11.4 cm)
Collection of the artist

DERRIDA

10



SIMÓN

11

2 MARZO 2008

CAPITALIST ARTIST.
KAPITAL KUNSTLER
KAPITAL KUNST
EMPRESA EN LUGAR DE TALLER
FÁBRICA EN LUGAR DE COMUNIDAD

→ RELACIÓN PERVERTIDA Ø PRODUCCIÓN.

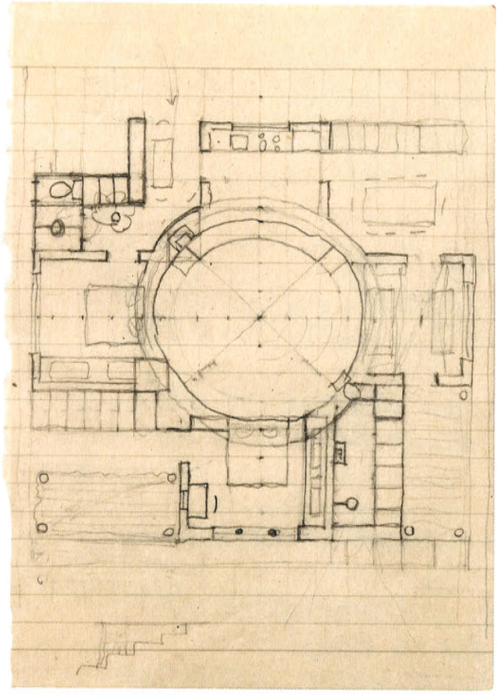
EMPLEADO EN LUGAR Ø DISCÍPULO
SUBORDINADO EN LUGAR Ø COLEGA.

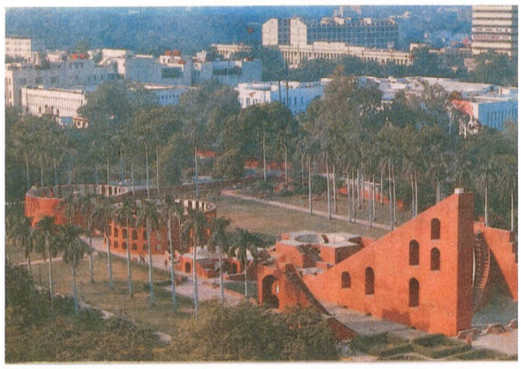
POLÍTICA ECONÓMICA EN LA PRODUCCIÓN Ø LA OBRA.

REPRODUCCIÓN DE LA CULTURA DE CAPITAL

POP ART CONVERTIDO EN CAP ART

POPULAR - - -	- - - CAPITAL
PRIVATE PUBLIC - - -	- - - PUBLIC INTO PRIVATE
UNDERGROUND - -	- - - STATUS
CHEAP TO PRODUCE.	- - EXPENSIVE TO PRODUCE





OPPOSITE:
Gabriel Orozco. Notebook 16 (2008–09), p. 8. Photograph and ballpoint pen on notebook pages on notebook page, 10 3/4 × 8 1/16" (27.3 × 20.5 cm)
Collection of the artist

ABOVE, TOP TO BOTTOM:
Gabriel Orozco. Detail from Notebook 14 (2003–06), p. 28. Graphite on notebook page, 5 7/8 × 4 1/8" (15 × 10.5 cm)
Collection of the artist

Gabriel Orozco. Detail from Notebook 9 (1996–99), p. 102. Postcard on notebook page, 10 3/4 × 8 1/16" (27.3 × 20.5 cm) (cropped)
Collection of the artist

Roca Bianca, Mexico, 2004

has more in common with that of László Moholy-Nagy's three *Telephone Pictures* (1922), which he proudly described as having been called in to a sign-making factory, ordered as identical compositions in small, medium, and large sizes.[14] Eighty-five years later Orozco's telephone is an iPhone, and he uses his laptop to chat in real time with Grazia Cattaneo, Picoli's wife, using software that allows two users to share a screen and discuss what they see. The technology enables a process more collaborative than that of Moholy-Nagy. As Orozco makes decisions about the paintings' structures and colors, Cattaneo clicks the mouse to make the changes on the screen. When he pronounces satisfaction with a design, she will hand it to Picoli in the Paris studio or e-mail it to Macia in Mexico City. The paintings will be made while Orozco is busy doing something else, perhaps a country or a continent away.

Orozco sees the two studios as temporary sites for a project that has an end, and the assistants who make the paintings understand that their role is a finite one. In Orozco's mind, he has not become a painter; on the contrary, his interest resides in the building of the compositions, not the craft of their execution. The whole operation has nevertheless prompted skepticism from some quarters because it comes unnervingly close to the traditional enterprise of a painter's studio, with its paint boxes and brushes, its vistas and aromas. Yet one should not mistake Orozco for a modern-day Peter Paul Rubens, supervising a workshop of painters who will in large part make the paintings sold under his name.[15] For Orozco, even the role of on-site general or coach overstates the case. Rather, the artist is an occasional visitor to the studios, one who freely admits that he wishes not to interfere in the daily practice of painting.

What is at stake here? Is there a way to bring back the making of paintings and the display of paintings that is not complicit with discredited values, with art's role as a luxury enjoyed only by an elite? Is there a way in which looking at a *Samurai Tree* painting on the wall can function on the same level as looking at the cap of a yogurt container? In the early 1990s the extreme statement of the latter was necessary to explain everything that Orozco's art was not about. With his paintings, begun a decade later, the artist made a wager that his previous activity had carved out a viable place for painting. The wariness that greeted the work proved that he was overly optimistic. Despite, or because of, the eventual commercial popularity of the paintings, this wariness has not entirely evaporated. Misplaced assumptions obscure the fact that the paintings up the ante on Orozco's original dare: with these works on canvas and on wood, he investigates if and how one can meld a practice forged under the sign of Marcel Duchamp and John Cage with one that also incorporates the legacy of Brancusi and Piet Mondrian.

Over the years, Orozco has not felt the need or the desire to build a workplace that fulfills the potential traditionally ascribed to an artist's studio: to create a universe, wholly defined and shaped by the vision of its occupant. He has, however, conceived and designed Observatory House, completed in 2006. Located on a breathtaking promontory over the sea on Mexico's Pacific coast, the house centers on a circular swimming pool open to the sky above. The design was inspired by the Jantar Mantar observatory, an eighteenth-century building in New Delhi, India, which Orozco first discovered on a visit in 1996. Like its source, Orozco considers the structure an instrument, a vehicle for concentration. Largely open to the elements, it is a place through which air, light, and sounds constantly circulate.

The model of the observatory is stunningly apt for this artist. The house underscores that Orozco, while ostensibly relaxing, is exactly who he is while working in countless cities and countries: an observer, with camera and compass and other tools at hand. Perched between sea and sky, the house translates into architecture the formal universe of Orozco's work. And at the same time it recognizes as Orozco's true concern *the* universe, which cannot be entered through a doorway or contained by four walls, nor reserved for one individual or those he invites. For Orozco, it is the role of the artist to work within that cosmos, and to honor and illuminate it through an oeuvre assembling rhymes and accidents with no apparent association but with an inarguably compelling sense of order.

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