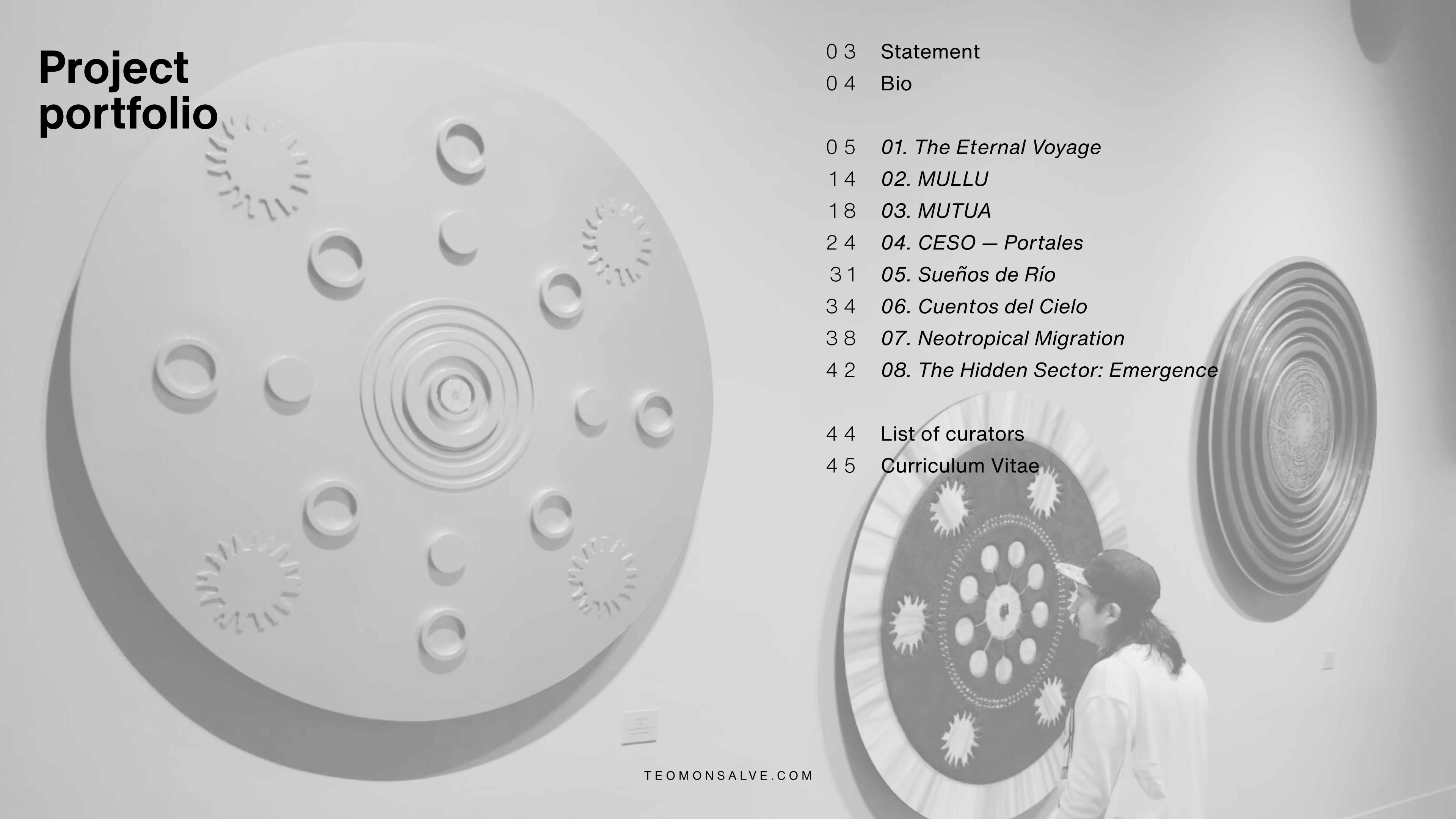


# TEO MONSALVE



# Project portfolio



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# Statement

My practice unfolds in the space of intersection between myth and science. I weave together collaborative systems with humans and non humans to produce my body of work.

Both the material and conceptual research I develop focus on analyzing histories of representation—such as natural history and the history of painting—in order to understand the present and the possible visual codes that shape it.

I take as a starting point ideas related to relational ontology, technodiversity, and the occult, to build the framework through which my work is articulated. Painting, drawing, collage, and installation are the mediums that allow me to evoke magical thinking and propose it as a perceptual lens of reality.

In this way, the objects I produce challenge rationality and appeal to sensibilities as a means of generating meaning.



# Bio

Teo Monsalve (Quito, 1988) holds an MFA from Emily Carr University of Art and Design. His practice develops through the hybridization of traditional media—such as painting, drawing, and printmaking—with new technologies, including artificial intelligence and computer-assisted design programs. His research and production focus on themes related to the natural world and the pre-Columbian past, interpreted through magical thinking, speculative fiction, and emerging epistemologies arising from interdisciplinary dialogues.

By weaving together narratives from various histories of representation—such as natural history and the history of painting—he seeks to create a space of intersection between myth and science. He has participated in group exhibitions in Ecuador, Canada, the United States, France, and Mexico, and has presented five solo exhibitions. In 2020, he received an Honorable Mention in the Premio Brasil, and in 2022 he was awarded the Mariano Aguilera Prize for artistic production. He is currently the Coordinator of the Visual Arts Program at Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ) while continuing his artistic production in Quito.

01

# The Eternal Voyage

*El Viaje Eterno*



*Neotropical Futurism*

*Futurismo Neotropical*

*Curated by*

Santiago Rueda Fajardo 2025

Bienal de Cuenca



# The Eternal Voyage and the Cartography of Cosmic Mestizaje

The Eternal Voyage unfolds in three acts as an aesthetic, spiritual, and political journey across the Pacific Ocean—an ocean rarely considered a cultural and geographic bridge, yet absolutely central to the material and symbolic mestizaje of the Americas. The project does not stem from archaeological nostalgia; it is rooted in the present, from where it reconstructs imaginary and personal routes, weaving together the history of exchanges between the Ecuadorian coast (Manabí, Santa Elena) and the Mesoamerican region, particularly the territory of present-day Mexico.

The backbone of this installation is Neotropical Futurism, an ongoing project in which Monsalve proposes an aesthetic that takes a speculative turn: How can we imagine the future from a profound, ecological, and sensitive relationship with the tropical landscape? How can we activate a science fiction of the earth—a cosmology uncolonized by progress? The first room presents a copper engraving mounted on a structure resembling a totem or ritual column. It depicts El Chawarquero, a mythological figure inspired by the Aztec goddess of the agave, Mayáhuel, reinterpreted within the Andean-Ecuadorian context. This figure embodies the ritual and transformative power of the agave—a plant that, according to Monsalve, has traveled between Mesoamerica and the Andes, leaving biological and cultural traces that still ferment within the fabric of the territory. The Serpens constellation, once used by Pacific navigators, appears intertwined with this icon, establishing a crossing between ancestral navigation, sacred botany, and scientific visuality. The use of copper is not incidental: it has a long history in pre-Hispanic metallurgy and today is essential to global telecommunications and technologies. The work brings indigenous temporality into tension with contemporary acceleration, revealing how ancient materials and symbols continue to emit meaning in the digital age.

The second room presents a large-scale mural painted on paper made from agave-derived fiber. The fiber is not a mere support but a symbolic body. Monsalve turns it into a metaphor for the mestizo body—an identity that does not dissolve into a homogeneous synthesis but rather juxtaposes and strains against itself. The marbling technique—immersing paper into floating pigments over water—creates undulating, unpredictable surfaces, reminiscent of ocean waves or the inner maps of the unconscious. Monsalve reminds us that the flows between Ecuador and Mexico were not only of cacao, spondylus, and copper, but also of images, symbols, affections, and knowledges that still vibrate beneath the crust of the present.

Finally, the third room features a wooden conch shell gilded with gold leaf, created in collaboration with master artisans from the Hermanos Fuentes workshop in San Antonio de Ibarra. The piece enacts a temporal and formal collision: the sculptural technique of the Quito School—an icon of Baroque colonial art—is here used to carve a pagan, cosmic symbol. The conch refers to the number zero in Mayan numeration, and to the notion of fullness, closure, and the beginning of a new cycle.

The choice of the conch is deliberate: it holds the sound of the sea, acting as an antenna that receives and emits signals from that expanded Pacific—where history is not a straight line but a loop, an echo, a vortex of memory and transformation.

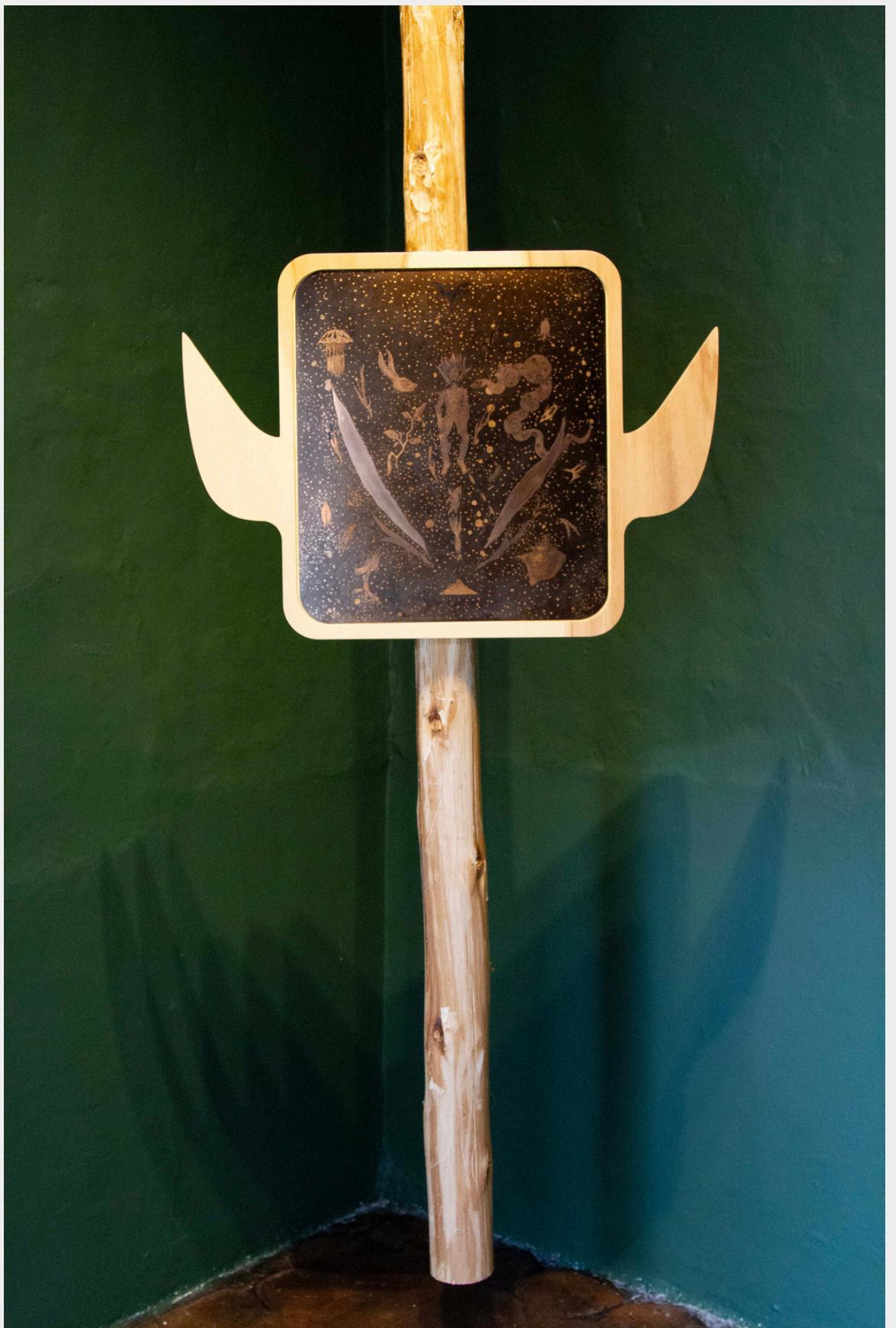
*Santiago Rueda Fajardo*



THE ETERNAL VOYAGE



THE ETERNAL VOYAGE



THE ETERNAL VOYAGE



THE ETERNAL VOYAGE



THE ETERNAL VOYAGE



THE ETERNAL VOYAGE

02

# MULLU

Solo show  
Proyecto NASAL  
CDMX, México

Curated by  
Karla Niño de Rivera

2025

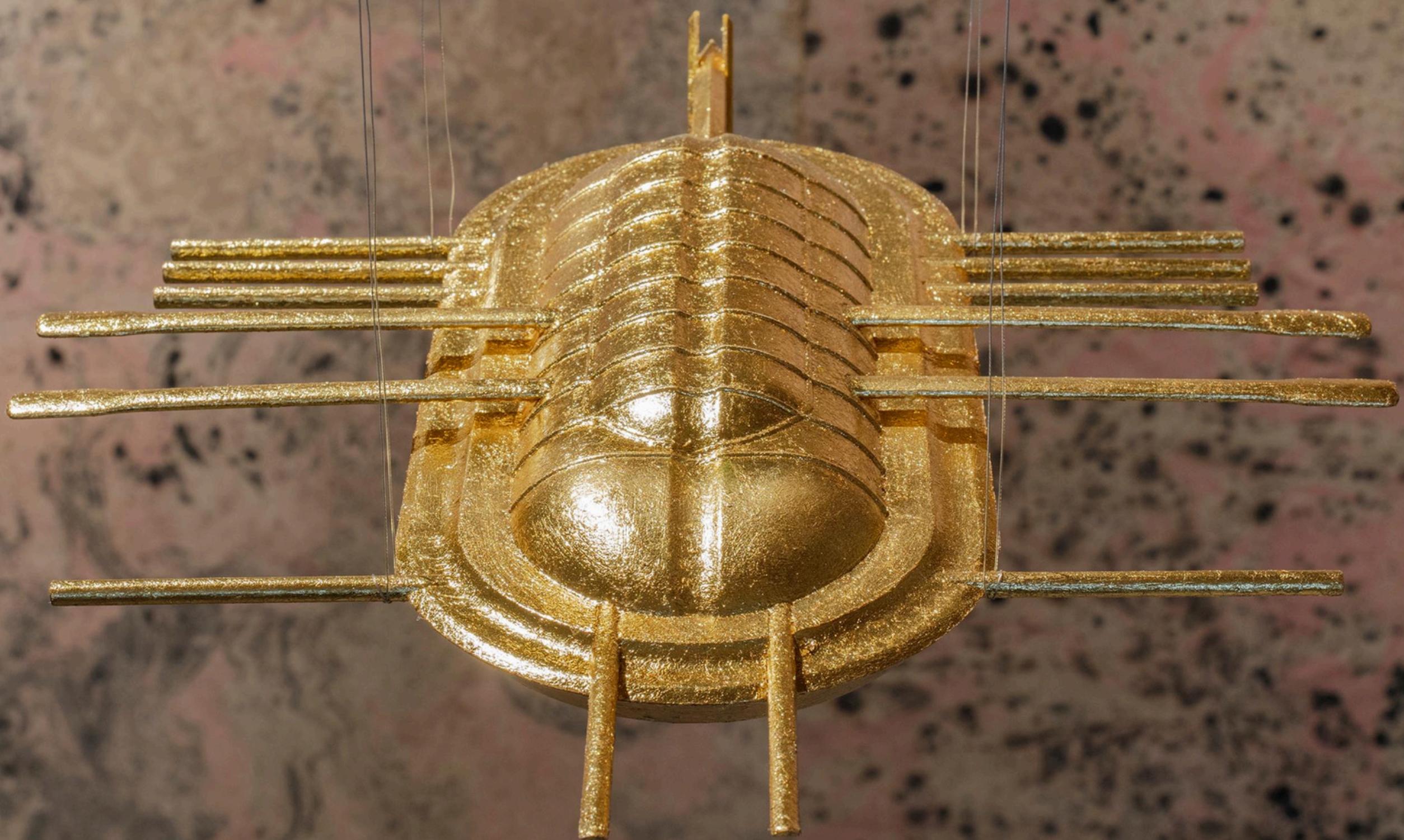
This project begins with a fascination for the remote past and the pre-Columbian world. In particular, I focus on the dialogues and exchanges that took place across the Pacific Ocean between cultures established in the territories now known as Ecuador and Mexico. Archaeological discoveries in the Jama River basin in Manabí and in Manzanillo Bay on the northern Pacific coast of Mexico provide scientific evidence of this exchange. Products such as spondylus, cacao, coca leaves, and chili peppers, among many others, have left material traces that map this route, revealed centuries later.

Taking as a starting point the study of historical archives and approaching them through a personal interpretation of the images they convey, this research invites reflection through artistic practice. It draws upon speculative fiction and radical imagination to reframe history.

In this way, the body of work takes shape by interweaving diverse techniques and temporalities, including oil painting, artificial intelligence engines, 3D printing, wood carving, and etching, among others.



MULLU



MULLU



MULLU



04

# CESO - Portales

Mariano Aguilera Award  
2022-23

*Premio Mariano  
Aguilera 2022-23*

*Curated by*

Lupe Álvarez

Centro de Arte  
Contemporáneo  
de Quito (CAC),  
Ecuador





**Centro de Exploraciones en el Sector Oculto**

The universe is composed of a visible sector and an invisible one. Through research in the field of particle physics, we now know that, on the one hand, there is matter that can be quantified through technological instruments; and on the other hand, there is what is called dark matter. Dark matter is a hypothetical form of matter that does not interact with light or other forms of electromagnetic radiation, making it undetectable by our instruments. However, indirect evidence of its existence comes from its gravitational effects observed throughout the universe. The field of research that speculates on these hypothetical dark matter particles is known as the hidden sector.

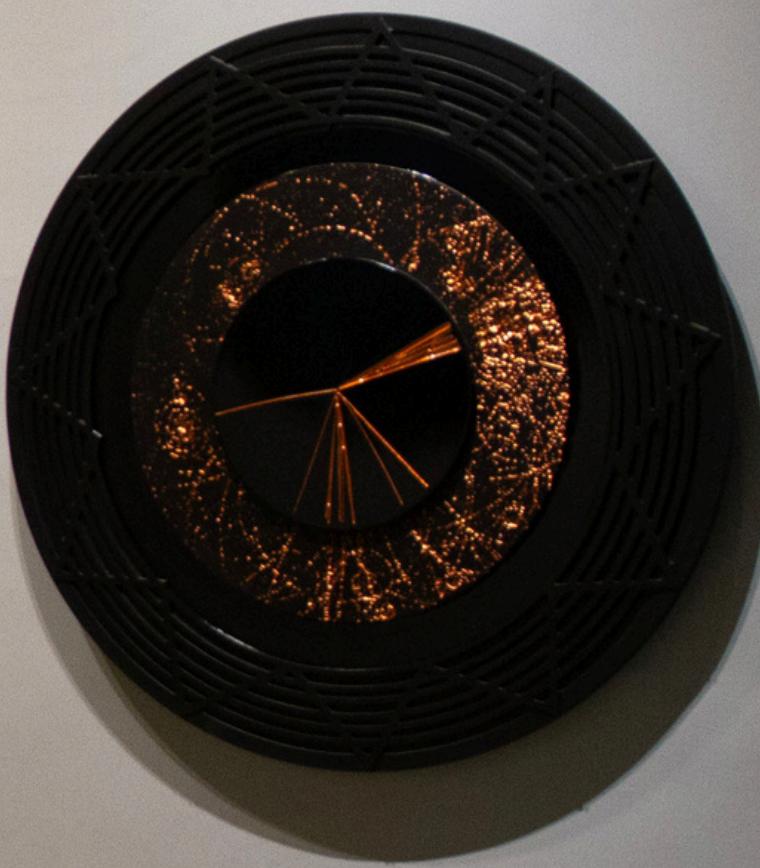
Our investigations take the Hidden Sector as both idea and metaphor to develop a sci-fi narrative that allows us to speculate on the unknown, the invisible, and the concealed. By intertwining ancestral knowledge and classical artistic crafts with contemporary technologies, we have developed methods of production that are elastic and flexible, where the act of making becomes a form of thinking.

# Portales

CESO –  
Center for Explorations  
in the Hidden Sector

The Hidden Sector: Portals is the fourth phase of an artistic research project that has been in development since 2018. This project takes as its starting point abstract visual languages—such as pre-Columbian graphics and particle accelerator diagrams—in order to establish a dialogue between diverse ways of creating and sharing knowledge. By proposing a hybrid and intercultural research methodology, the project takes shape as large-scale paintings that function as portals to other dimensions. These works are created through a transmedia method in which industrial and digital tools are interwoven with pictorial techniques, giving form and spirit to these portals into the Hidden Sector.





# Portales

## Simposio: Localidad & Tecnodiversidad

NEST –  
Networking Ecologically  
Smart Territories

*Curated by*  
Lupe Álvarez

Universidad de las  
Artes, Guayaquil,  
Ecuador

2023





PORTALES: LOCALIDAD & TECNODIVERSIDAD

05

# Sueños de Río

Project as part of  
the Exhibition  
Un Jardín Nuestro

*Proyecto parte de  
la Exhibición  
Un Jardín Nuestro*



Teo Monsalve

Parallel exhibition to the  
2022 Cuenca Biennial

*Muestra paralela a la  
Bienal de Cuenca 2022*

Museo de los Metales,  
Cuenca, Ecuador

2022



# Pensamiento Vivo & Sueños de Río

Sylvan thinking and River dreams are bodies of work that have emerged after two years of living in the northern region of the Ecuadorian Amazon. These projects acknowledge a plurality of ways of knowing and are co-created with the very materials the pieces embody. The research is focused on relational ontology, Amazonian cosmologies, and walks through the rainforest in dialogue with object-oriented ontology.

By interweaving these diverse worlds, a visual language emerges that operates as a conceptual map in which materiality speaks with its own voice. The supports and materialities of the works are hybrid, oscillating between the organic and the industrial: handmade papers produced from cabuya and llanchama bark enter into dialogue with canvas, oil paint, or resin. These elements act as non-human collaborators and as emissaries of the natural world. The organic agents fulfill the role of intermediary beings between the natural environment and the cultural spaces in which they are displayed.

ACRYLIC, CABUYA  
HANDMADE PAPER, RESIN,  
COLLAGE, AND ACHIOTE ON  
LLANCHAMA BARK.  
80 x 50 cm  
2021





SUEÑOS DE RÍO



Teo Monsalve

06

## Cuentos del Cielo

Project as part of the  
exhibition *This Is Not an  
Atlas*

*Proyecto parte de la  
exhibición *This Is Not  
an Atlas**

*Curated by*  
Noor Alé

Visual Art Center of  
Clarington, Canadá

2022

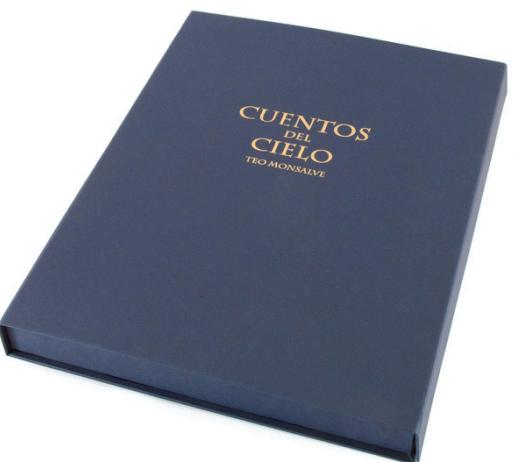


# Cuentos del Cielo

The pluriverse is a concept inspired by the Zapatista idea of a world of many worlds. It has been further developed in the social sciences over the last few decades with a particular focus on decolonial thought. Latin American thinkers such as Marisol de la Cadena, Mario Blaser, Walter Mignolo, Enrique Dussel, Arturo Escobar, and Alberto Acosta, to name only a few, have contributed to the elaboration of this concept. I take this notion as a point of departure for the development of this project.

Cuentos del Cielo is a mixed-media project produced on inkjet reproductions of the constellation atlas *Uranometria* (“measurement of the heavens”), created by the German astronomer and lawyer Johann Bayer in 1603. *Uranometria* was the first atlas to include all the constellations of the northern and southern hemispheres known at that time. I appropriate this cartographic project in order to transform it through a variety of media such as collage, painting, and drawing. This gesture allows me to reconfigure the constellations so that they may emerge as something different.

To carry out this reconfiguration, I draw on divergent image sources to assemble the compositions that arise through the process of making. Disciplines such as biology, anthropology, astronomy, and art history enable me to juxtapose a plurality of voices that compose the works. In doing so, I articulate my proposal to visualize the pluriverse through an act of radical imagination embodied in the artistic practice.



BOX WITH 48 WORKS IN  
MIXED MEDIA.  
EXHIBITED AT NO LUGAR  
(QUITO) AS PART OF THE  
SOLO EXHIBITION FÁBULAS  
NEOTROPICALES, AND AT  
VAC, ONTARIO, CANADA.  
2022





CUENTOS DEL CIELO



07

## Neotropical Migration

### *Fábulas Neotropicales*

Curaduría  
Curated by

Ana María Garzón

[Link to the text by Ana  
María Garzón ESP](#)→

No Lugar, Quito,  
Ecuador

2020

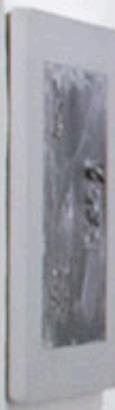


# Neotropical Migration

Is a project where I draw parallels and differences between human and bird migrations. Analyzing the natural phenomenon of bird migrations has allowed me to visualize my ideas about my personal migratory experience and use the natural world as a referent in how to deal with empathy to the contemporary migratory crisis. The project takes form of collages that explore an interdisciplinary dialogue of aesthetic transformations, where I aim to generate elastic and hybrid narratives that lend themselves for fluid ways of sharing knowledge. Through my material practice, I weave and juxtapose diverse visual universes together so that they might emerge as new ecosystems expanding beyond their established meanings whether in biology, astronomy, anthropology, etc.

My aim is to open a dialogue with histories of representation like painting history and natural history, to challenge their aesthetic structures and re-imagine them in a contemporary art context. The collages are assembled on natural history prints from divergent historical moments and the sources that inhabit them come from science magazines, text books and other hegemonic objects. I use the method in this case as a psico-magic act. Cutting through these prints is a performative action that liberates the subjects represented in them so that they might become something new.

 *Fábulas  
Neotropicales  
Teo Monsalve*



NEOTROPICAL MIGRATION



# Curriculum Vitae

## Teo Monsalve

### EDUCATION

- 2017-2019 MFA, Emily Carr University of Art and Design, Vancouver, B.C, Canada.
- 2007-2011 BFA, Emily Carr University of Art and Design, Vancouver, B.C, Canada.

### SOLO SHOW

- 2025 Proyecto NASAL, *MULLU*.
- 2020 No Lugar, *Fábulas Neotropicales*, curada por Ana María Garzón, Quito, Ecuador.
- 2018 Khora Art, *Metamorfosis Ambulante*, Quito, Ecuador.
- 2017 La Ideal, *Para'iso Perdido*, La Ideal, Quito, Ecuador.
- 2016 Ileana Viteri Galería de Arte, *SER de los Andes*, Quito, Ecuador.
- 2010 No Lugar. *El Despertar*, Quito, Ecuador.

### TEACHING

- 2023/25 Coordinación Carrera de Artes Visuales , USFQ.
- 2023 Profesor tiempo completo/ coordinación del departamento de gráfica artística , USFQ.
- 2021 Art Workshop with NCTM Art, Milan, Italy.
- 2020 Profesor a tiempo parcial, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Quito.
- 2019 Teaching fellowship, FNDT Drawing, Emily Carr University.
- 2018 Summer institute for teens seminar leader, Emily Carr University
- 2018 TA Painting. Emily Carr University.

### RELEVANT GROUP SHOWS

- 2025 Bienal de Cuenca *The Game*, Cuenca, Ecuador.
- 2025 *MUTUA*, Galería Q, USFQ, Quito, Ecuador.
- 2023 62 Salón de Julio de Guayaquil. Guayaquil, Ecuador.
- 2023 NEST GYE, *Simposio Localidad y Tecnodiversidad*, Universidad de las Artes, Guayaquil.
- 2023 Premio Mariano Aguilera edición 2022/2023, Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Quito.
- 2022 61 Salón de Julio de Guayaquil. Guayaquil, Ecuador.
- 2022 SAMAY, Maire de 8ème Arrondissement. Paris, Francia.
- 2022 *VOLVER*, CityScape Community Artspace. Vancouver, BC, Canada.
- 2022 *This is not an atlas*, Art Center of Clarington, Ontario Canadá.
- 2021 *Pop Up*, El alabado según, Museo Casa del Alabado , Quito, Ecuador.
- 2021 *Incertidumbres*, Museo Nacional del Ecuador, Quito Ecuador.
- 2020 Premio Brasil, Centro de Arte Contemporáneo, Quito, Ecuador.
- 2020 *Leaning out of windows*, Art and Physics Collaborations through Aesthetic Transformations, Emily Carr University, Vancouver, Canada.
- 2019 *Paste Up!*, La Fraternidad, Mexico City, Mexico.
- 2016 *25 murales por los 25 años del Pobre Diablo*, Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Quito. Ecuador.
- 2015 Premium Art Basel Show, Curators Voice Art Projects (Wynwood)Miami, USA.

### AWARDS

- 2024 Creative Grant USFQ
- 2022 Premio Nuevo Mariano Aguilera, Ganador de beca para la creación artística.
- 2020 Premio Brasil, Mención de honor.

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Técnico operador de Taller de Gráfica Monsalve.
- TEDX Emily Carr University of Art and Design . 2017

### PUBLICATIONS

- 2023 *Leaning Out Of Windows Book*, Emily Carr University of Art and Design.
- 2021 Teodoro Monsalve. *Neotropical Fabulation*, Ecocene, Capadocia Journal of Environmental Humanities.
- 2020 *Teo Monsalve Busca nuevas formas en su última muestra*. Primicias. Digital
- 2020 Teodoro Monsalve. *El Sector Oculto*. Index Arte Contemporáneo. Quito, Ecuador, Digital.
- 2020 Ana María Garzón, *Constelaciones y confabulaciones de una naturaleza migrante*. Terremoto. Mexico. Digital.

### INFO

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W W W . T E O M O N S A L V E . C O M