

Two Decades Of Stunning Works By Teresita Fernández Rewrite History, Expose Gruesome Dialogue Hidden In Natural Splendor

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Teresita Fernández: Elemental Installation View at Pérez Art Museum Miami
ORIOL TARRIDAS PHOTOGRAPHY

A ghostly shape resembling Mexico hovers below Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, those states casting shadows onto the haunting white space below the border. A map clearly and boldly defines each U.S. state installed in gleaming charcoal.

Mexico has an area of 761,600 square miles, surpassing Alaska at 665,384 square miles, Texas at 268,596 square miles, and California at 163,694 square miles. Yet, according to the Mercator Map, the most widely used map in the United States often found in businesses, libraries, and classrooms where geography is taught, Alaska appears to be three times larger than Mexico.

The problematic Mercator cylindrical map projection, constructed in 1569 by Flemish geographer and cartographer Gerardus for use by navigators, presents a distorted view of the world that's shaped inaccurate opinions.

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In a site-specific installation of *Fire (United States of the Americas) 3* (2017–2019) at Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM), Teresita Fernández retells history that's been erased by colonialism, land ownership, and power.



Teresita-Fernandez "Fire (United States of the Americas) 2" (2017/2019) Charcoal Dimensions ... [+]
Courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Hong Kong and Seoul

Teresita Fernández: Elemental, the first mid-career retrospective of Fernández, who was born in Miami and now lives in New York, debunks many sociopolitical myths, relying on materials such as gold, graphite, charcoal, and other minerals, creating a dazzling display that invites a thorny dialogue.

On view through February 9, 2020, the exhibition co-organized with Phoenix Art Museum, featured more than 50 large-scale sculptures, installations, drawings, and wall works.

"We are thrilled to be collaborating with Phoenix Art Museum on this monumental retrospective," said PAMM Director Franklin Sirmans. "Teresita's work and influence has been vital to the evolution of Miami's art scene and has played a significant role in the development of our museum. We are also very grateful to have received a generous grant from the Andy Warhol Foundation to directly support the exhibition and enable us to present an in-depth series of programming around this exhibition."



"Fire" (2005) Silk yarn, steel armature, and epoxy 96 x 144 inches x 144 inches Collection SFMOMA; ... [+]
ORIOLE TARRIDAS PHOTOGRAPHY

The vibrant *Fire* (2005), a silk yarn, steel armature, and epoxy rounded structure sits in the center of the gallery room featuring *Fire (United States of the Americas) 3*, along with monumental glazed ceramic works from the *Fire (America)* created in 2017, and sewn together by *Charred Landscape (America)*, (2017), comprised of charcoal installed as a horizontal belt on each wall.



"Fire (America) 5" (2017) Glazed ceramic 96 x 192 inches x 1 ¼ inches
Collection Pérez Art Museum Miami, museum purchase with funds provided by Jorge M. Pérez

The shimmering 2017 *Fire (America)* mosaics reference slash-and-burn agriculture, also known as fire-fallow cultivation, which involves the cutting and burning plants to create a swidden, or an area of land cleared for cultivation.

Fernández subverts traditional genres of landscape painting and Land art to provoke dire narratives. The exhibition of a series of experiential installations from a wide-array of works created over the last two decades, along with the new outdoor public sculpture *Solarium Sanctuary* (2019), elevates Fernández's work by combining it for the first time.

The most recent series, *Fire (United States of the Americas)* (2017–2019) and *Viñales* (2015–2019), challenge political and social complexities of landscape, while older works reference the subterranean, natural phenomena, and the discernible visual appeal of nature.



"Drawn Waters (Borrowdale)" (2009) Natural and machined graphite on steel armature 121 inches x 43 ... [+]
Courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Hong Kong and Seoul

A highlight is *Drawn Waters (Borrowdale)* (2009), natural and machined graphite on steel armature, that gleams as it pours onto the floor.



"Ghost (Vines)" (2013) Laser-cut stainless steel with green silkscreen ink on reverse 92 ½ inches ... [+]
ORIOL TARRIDAS PHOTOGRAPHY

Reflective works such as *Ghost (Vines)*, (2013), a laser-cut stainless steel with green silkscreen ink on reverse, make it impossible to ignore the dialogue by drawing in the viewer.

The diversity of materials, textures, and colors undulate as you wander through the galleries and explore the natural wonder and are forced to face the excruciating impact of human behavior.