



# Urban Sculpture

pepo toledo





## **Pepo Toledo**

**(José Toledo Ordóñez)**

Born in Guatemala City in 1951. His passion for motor cars led him to take part in competitions (1969-1976) and to start his career in that area. Ina

1974 he graduated in automotive technology in the National Schools, Los Angeles, California, USAA, and in 1993 he was awarded a degree in economics from the Mariano Galvez University in Guatemala. He is a recognized promoter and disseminator of culture; he has promoted and coordinated different types of activities and lectured on art in various educational institutions and cultural centers. He is an unfaltering defender of the environment; has given numerous lectures, written popular books and articles on science, technology, and innovation. One of his greatest achievements in this field was

getting Guatemala to become the first country in the world to eliminate lead from gasoline all at once. He always fought against privileges. As regulator, he had a very influencing part in the opening of the Telecommunications and Electricity markets in Guatemala. As a result of that arrangement, today, Guatemala occupies first place in cell phone coverage and competition between phone and internet companies (World Economic Forum – WEF, 2014)

He was a *Prensa Libre* columnist (1991-1999), Director of the Association of Managers of Guatemala (1991-1993), President of the advisory board of the Guatemalan Association of Natural History (1994-2008) -institution in charge of administrating and reconstructing La Aurora National Zoo-, and vice-president of the

Board of the National Electrification Institute (1996-1999). He was also Superintendent of Telecommunications in Guatemala (1999-2000), President of the Latin American Forum of Telecommunication Regulators (1999), President of the National Energy Commission (2004-2007), Vice-president of the Iberoamerican Association of Energy Regulators (2005-2007), Presidential Commissioner for the Penitentiary System Modernization (2007), and President of the Mario Monteforte Toledo Foundation (2000-2008).

Under the Foundation's seal, he edited 10 books and produced 11 documentaries with the objective of documenting Guatemala's greatest cultural exponents. His continuous contact with the art world, led him in the year 2010 to bring out the art within him. That's how his successful career as a sculptor began. He has had 51 solo exhibitions, and 37 public sculptures in Germany, Geneva, Paris, The Hague, Amsterdam, Washington D.C, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Guatemala among others. His flagship expo, Dangerous Sculptures, carries a calling to a new state of consciousness - Creationism - where he condemns the excesses of contemporary art and proposes art should turn back to aesthetics, combined with truth and moral values. Today, he shares his artistic activities with his business life.

[www.pepotoledo.com](http://www.pepotoledo.com)

# *A New State of Consciousness*

*Art cannot be modern. Art is primordially eternal.*  
*Egon Schiele*

The excesses committed in contemporary art have led it to a state of anarchy and confusion. Different authors write, some apocalyptically, about post-art, anti-art and, in the worst case, the death of art. Arthur Danto argues that the end of art does not mean it is no longer produced, but that it is created without any kind of narrative that can be considered as being the next stage. There is no identifiable style. There is no stylistic period. Donald

Kuspit ironically refers to Damien Hirst's exhibition in New York's Mayfair Gallery: half empty coffee cups and beer bottles, ashtrays with cigarette butts, and other things. The next day the janitor threw it all out. The work valued at hundreds of thousands of dollars disappeared.

Most authors distinguish three great art periods: 1. pre-modern art or that of the great masters who produced representational painting and used art as a window to the world; 2. Modern art in which mimetic representation is secondary until it becomes abstract and the painting stands on its own. This is the era of art manifestos. The manifesto defines a movement, a style, and proclaims it as the only kind of art that matters; 3. Contemporary art, which many situate at the end of the sixties; anything goes and any object can be considered as a work of art. The last straw was the appearance of cans with Piero Manzoni's excrement.

Jerry Saltz says 85 per cent of recent contemporary art is bad. Don Thompson goes further: most people respond positively to one in a hundred works and really dislike almost everything else. In our medium works of art are inevitably reduced to the condition

of merchandise. Sellers of art call themselves gallery owners because the word "seller" implies that they work for money. This is pure hypocrisy. If the work is not sold, the artist and the seller do not eat and the work does not circulate.

Contemporary art buyers come to auctions because of snobbery and buy because they need to position themselves. They divide



the works into two categories: those they can hang in their homes and those they cannot. At auctions the market value is contaminated by motives such as status, competition, publicity and, above all, by ego. The price paid for the works is rising while their value is falling. Most artists who sold at record prices ten years ago are gone. This does not prevent many from contending that buying art is a good investment.

The public is reached by imitating the so-called contemporary art museums. The small number of people visiting them means they need to be subsidized, unfortunately with taxpayer money. Contemporary artists can be divided into two groups: visual and conceptual. In conceptual art the idea prevails over the material production of the work to the point that it is considered as being superfluous. Beauty is thought to be outdated. Aesthetic art must be destroyed so that it can be replaced. The first conceptual artists were academics and their suggestions were good; for example, Alighiero Boetti's embroidered maps. They were also bad, such as Vito Acconci's performance when he masturbated beneath a wooden platform on top of which the audience walked. Today mediocrity, incompetence and negativity predominate in conceptual art. It is the refuge of pseudo artists who do not know how to paint, draw or sculpt. It creates a sense of community around a kind of religion or existentialist channel for atheists whose only aspiration is to achieve a degree of transcendence. Art is first of all expression and not a forced representation. Expression and not technique is the meaning of the work. We can recognize a style in the sense of a characteristic technique, but we understand artists by the nature of their ideas or the strength of their feelings. Hence the importance of the concept, although not to the extent of denying what the work really represents and hoping that beauty is surpassed. Today the

essence of art is sought anywhere except where it has always been: in beauty.

José Javier Esparza speaks of the eight deadly sins of contemporary art. To begin with, they should be called anti-art or post-art sins as Allan Kaprov called them.

Esparza denounces an art that obsessively seeks novelty as an end in itself and ends by giving in to simple experimentation; if the art is not understood, so much the better; if it is understood, then the artist believes he has failed. Art made on any type of support becomes unsupportable; ephemeral art that cannot be taken home. Art that appears to be subversive when subsidized by politicians who feel they are very modern by supporting it with the people's money without their consent. Art produced by artists who only value their own ego and don't even understand themselves. Art that banishes beauty because it is considered to be a retrograde and perverse concept. Finally, I come to the worst of all sins; embracing nihilism in an effort to destroy any solid and stable reference. The denial of every principle and authority, of political, religious, social, and family institutions. I ask myself whether that is the world we want for our children.

To the sins mentioned by Esparza I want to add another: by denying aesthetic art and accepting only what is conceptual, the pseudo artists are surrendering art to a very superficial philosophy. What right do they have to do it? They cannot speak on behalf of the real artists. Art belongs to whoever produces the work. Photography and film became firmly established as arts in the last century. The pseudo artists intend to establish as art experiments in philosophy, theatre, film and photography, among others, as if every art could be divided into categories.

I agree with Kuspit when he tells us it is not correct to speak of the decline, much less the end, of painting. Kuspit's theory is that new old-style teachers will prevail, the people who, while dominating their trade also have a conceptual dimension that combines the ideas and techniques of both old and modern masters. Criticism must understand, evaluate, compare, inform. Artists should not be pigeonholed in styles as a pretext to classify the history of art as if style is what matters most. Every movement has included major artists who could not be classified.

Art is also the person. I express what I am with my life's three great passions: motorcars, animals and art. I convey the love and respect I feel for creation: fauna, flora and man, represented in the *Bestiary*, *Urban Forest* and *Utopian Cities* series. God gave us the world to master. This means to manage it, respect it, and preserve its resources. My message goes against the destruction of nature, the degradation of human relationships and the destruction of art itself that is associated with truth and human values. Using the platform of the Mario Monteforte Toledo Foundation we promote art and literature by following these principles.

It is no coincidence that we made this call for the first time in the José Luis Cuevas Museum, a master who, with his drawings rich in brutal gestures lays bare people's souls and aesthetically portrays the anguish of man and the degradation of the human race in a despotic and prostituted world.

Today all this is summarized in a single proposal: creationism. This is not a manifesto because manifestos have always been disqualifiers. This is a call to a new state of conscience, evolutionary, inclusive, respecting God's creation, the restoration

of human relationships, and the return of art to aesthetics. A simple but powerful solution.

Artists declare ourselves to be free. Free from pseudo artists who want to deliver art to philosophy. Free from the critics who want to lock us into styles. Free from the agents who contaminate the art market.

We propose an art that is born in the artists and not in the critics, curators or gallery owners; an inclusive art that takes what is positive from historic aesthetic manifestations, far from the restraints imposed by movements; that accepts the ugly and grotesque but aesthetically represented; that accepts the object encountered as part of the composition, but not as a work of art in itself by simply declaring it to be so; that accepts the multiplicity of techniques and means of expression as part of the creative process; that constantly evolves, without going through stages; that upholds the concept without denying how it is represented; that recognizes beauty as art's unique essence, together with truth and human values.

Today, we are no longer spectators and we raise our voice. Hence the name of this expo: *Dangerous Sculptures* because truth hurts and the search of freedom threatens those who hold privileges.

Today, with all of your help, that pendulum which is the way of art stops and starts its way back to aesthetic art, truth and moral values.

Pepo Toledo

# Art, space, and energy

With my sculpture I pretend to support the battle of forms in constant change, fragile stability, and continuous transition towards new forms: the universe seen through time's passing.

All of this with a different style, breaking paradigms, formats, expression in its highest level. The material employed in my sculptures is metal sheets and sometimes car parts, not as scrap or art povera but giving them their value; as if they were made especially for the art work. I search for kinetic pieces that suggest rhythm and movement.

More than one person has told me that my series *Urban Forest* reminds them of the work by Chillida, especially the Comb of the Wind. This motivated me to travel to Donostia to see this monumental piece.

It came to mind the dialogue between Picasso and Velázquez, when he presented his own version of *The Meninas*. In 1951 he painted *Massacre in Corea*, inspired by the *Moncloa Shootings* by Goya and the *Execution of Emperor Maximilian* by Manet. I also recall conversations throughout history between multiple artists about pieces like *Three Graces* since ancient Greece or *The Scream* nowadays.

I found common ground in the taste we both have for expressing through rusty metal. Rust is a live color. Every time you look at the artwork it is different. It represents the passing of time in the universe.

Moreover, I make a profound analysis that I can resume in two big themes: Line and Plane Aesthetics and Imprisoned and Released Energy. I synthesize my reflections in three words: art, space, and energy.

## Imprisoned and Released Energy

Captive and released energy are antagonistic and at the same fundamental so the universe functions as a sustainable system through time. Duality that feeds on opposition.

Master Chillida talked about an interior space enclosed in the exterior space we can see and touch. Prohibited space, unknown, that locks in every artwork so that it can only be perceived by the senses. Captive energy, radiating focus. This makes – according to Octavio Paz- that Chillida's sculptures to have “a monumentality that doesn't have to do with their sizes”, which he called “gravitational force”.



*Comb of the Wind*, Eduardo Chillida, captive energy



Chillida was attracted to empty space inside or between the sculpture rather than the space that surrounded it. To stand in front of one of the pieces of *The comb of the Wind* is unnerving and disturbing, it provokes a trapping sensation. Maybe that's why Octavio Paz called them "traps to capture what cannot be captured; wind, rumour, music, silence, space.

Paz goes on about Chillida's work explaining that we can sense his rejection towards human figure and geometric abstraction. His pieces evoke a sort of "qualitative physic" reminding us of pre-Socratic philosophers. A world above history and mythology. I can relate to Chillida in this aspect.

In my series *Urban Forest* every figure implies released energy flowing through multiple vanishing points, projecting every form to infinity. The pieces *Tree Whose Ideas Blew Up* and *Tree in Expansion* take momentum to its maximum expression, escaping from absence, liberating the shadow of the wind.



*Urban Forest*, Pepo Toledo, Washington D.C., released energy

When someone talks about black holes it suggests a deep void. According to Michael Finkel they rotate on their own axis like a swirl in space; there's a limit beyond that not even sunlight can escape the gravity field. They feed on collapsed stars making themselves bigger and bigger in mass. Friction and rotation combined make the ones that do manage to escape, to bounce almost at the speed of light. Expelled gases get cold and form new stars. This is how the galaxy regenerates continuously, passing from released energy to captive energy and vice versa.

I finish with the following quote: "I do monumental pieces not for their large scale, but for the energy they release and the spirituality they radiate."

## Line and Plane Aesthetics

For Octavio Paz, space is a bodily experience. We feel it. We are space wherever we are. It's a where. It surrounds and sustains us while we surround and sustain it. "... more faithful than our own shadow, which abandons us at night".

In an encounter with Eduardo Chillida (artist), philosopher Martin Heidegger discovers his opinions about space and time. That's how his book *Art and Space* was born. In it he talks about three spaces in plastics, specifically sculpture; the space where it stands, the space around the sculpture, and the space within the sculpture (if there is one). The sculptor decides consciously or unconsciously, where to put the boundaries of his work regarding the spatial domain.

Michelangelo said "Every block of stone has a statue inside it and it is the task of the sculptor to discover it". The creator's energy defines the limit of what surrounds the sculpture and at the same time the space surrounded by the work of art. On that

same note, José Antonio Ory defines Chillida as the space maker because he considers the space within the sculpture to be more important than the one around. Unlike Michelangelo he expresses himself inside his sculptures, producing absence of form that is later replaced with contained energy. His own mannerism. Both concepts originated from Aristotle's theory of space and place.

Art is also man. Chillida's style is forging. *Comb of the Wind* is a group of three sculptures of forged steel encrusted in rock. Each one weighs ten tons.



*Comb of the Wind*, detail, Eduardo Chillida, sculpture's third space

I decided to express myself through steel sheet, maybe because my origins as a mechanic. In the majority of my sculptures, I go beyond the third space – the void between volumes. I renounce mass esthetics and replace it for lines and planes, privileging air in its eternal competition with mass. The result is aerial sculpture. I take absence of form to its maximum expression and mass to its minimum. Am I on the third space

limit, or have I crossed to a fourth one? Why not? Spaces are enclosed inside each other like concentric circles. Let's think about the Matrioshkas, the traditional Russian doll. Hollow, and in the inside, it contains another doll and this doll another one, and so on up to twenty dolls. If we see them all, from biggest to smallest, we are maximizing the level of abstraction. And if we see them from small to big, we are minimizing the abstraction level. In this same way we can analyze everything using it as a reference inside the universe.



*Urban Forest*, detail, by Pepo Toledo. Lines and planes, the fourth space of sculpture.

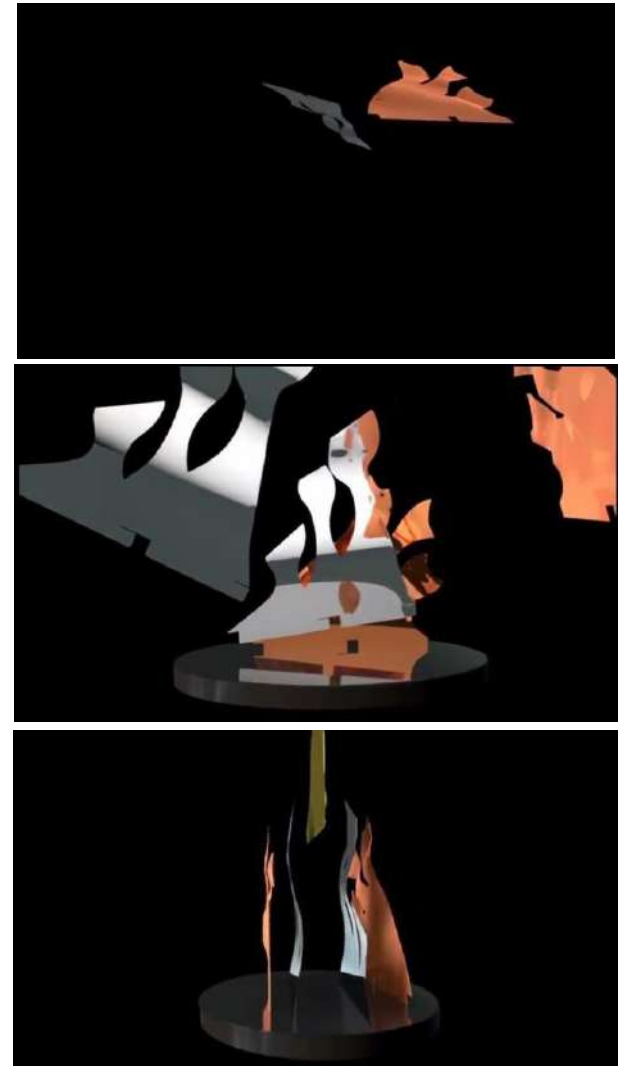
## Fifth space

According to philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995), it is the artist's job to build perceptions and sensations that last hidden in the reality of an object. I was motivated to continue to incur in the relation between art, space, and energy to go beyond the fourth space.

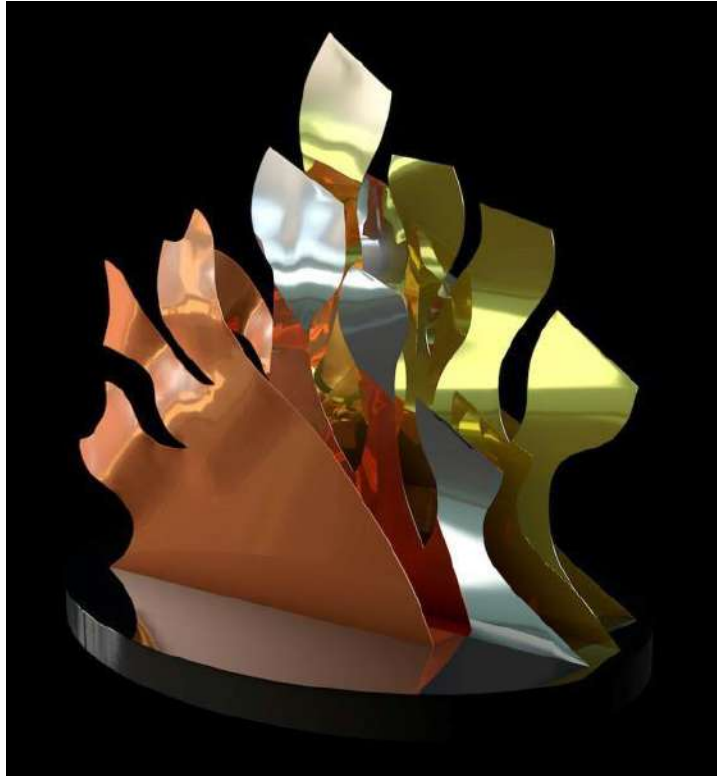
Light is luminous energy that allows us to see what surrounds us. In physical terms, it is electromagnetic radiation that propagates through waves in space. The duality wave-particle explains the characteristics of its physical behavior. Particles of light are called photons and they become a poem, parting from the fact that they are composed of invariant mass zero. This inspired me make a hologram sculpture. The challenge: to break schemes until disappearing mass completely.

I chose the sculpture *Efrain Recinos' Particular Angel* from my series *Angels*. After two years of research everything was ready to present the first giant holographic sculpture known at the time. It took place on December 9th of 2015 in G&T Continental Foundation downtown Guatemala City.

It was an ephemeral act. The Military Martial Band arrived to play the symphonic poem *So Spoke Zarathustra*, op.30, composed by Richard Strauss in 1896. During the 107 seconds that it was played, the angel wings merged in space in a dialogue of reflections to form the angel that revolved on its axis, showing all of its angles.







Left: *Efrain Recinos' Particular Angel* took shape without ceasing to be an angel. And that was how I broke into the fifth space of plastic figure. The last space. Beyond black holes, negative space. Pepo Toledo

Right: Military Martial Band playing *So Spoke Zarathustra*.

Note: the ephemeral act can be appreciated in the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ASrDk38kA4>

# URBAN SCULPTURE

I do monumental pieces not for their large scale, but for the energy they release and the spirituality they radiate. Art is, first of all, expression and not necessarily representation. Expression and not technique gives the artwork meaning. We can recognize style from a characteristic technique, but the artist we recognize by the character of his thoughts or the strength of his feelings. All of my sculptures are models anxious to grow, aspiring to monumental dimensions to “dialogue with daylight, interact with urban spaces and improve quality of life by taking art to the streets”, as artist Maurizio Colombo well said.

With my sculpture I pretend to break paradigms, formats, and express myself big time with a different style.

In museums we encounter signs spelling “Don’t touch” and guards constantly calling our attention when in a rampage of curiosity, we get to close to an artwork.

Because of that, my desire to do art for the streets is born. Art for the people, art everyone can touch and interact with. Art should come out the museums and manifest on the streets and plazas.

I quote again artist Maurizio Colombo: “A mistake that politics have made is to think culture is somewhere else, as if it were the opposition. It would be helpful to our society those governmental institutions had people dedicated to cultural projects. That way politics would be filled with culture. The task to take aesthetics to citizens is important, to support and expand”.

Pepo Toledo



*Angel of Peace Mexico City.*



*Bushes making themselves interesting.  
San José, Costa Rica.*



*Neurological Knot at the End of the  
Rainbow México City.*

# ANGELS

## *Angel of Sea Waves*



*Angel of Sea Waves* – *Angel's series*. Bank of Guatemala – Guatemala City, Guatemala, 2018



# *Angel of Culture*

The term “culture” was first used referring to taking care of the mind and soul. Today there are many definitions. To make it short we can say culture is what we are or do, everything made by man that includes knowledge. Fine Arts are known as high culture.

The three elements in the Angel of Culture that we here deliver today, represent what we are, what we learn, and what we practice.

Cultural studies, in general, consider culture as the sum of interactions of all social practices. They explore creation and diffusion of meaning and their relations to power. In creation we have language, beliefs, music, marches, works of art, flags, shields, and symbols in general. On the diffusion side, it's essential massive communication media. Whomever controls production of meaning and its propagation, controls culture.

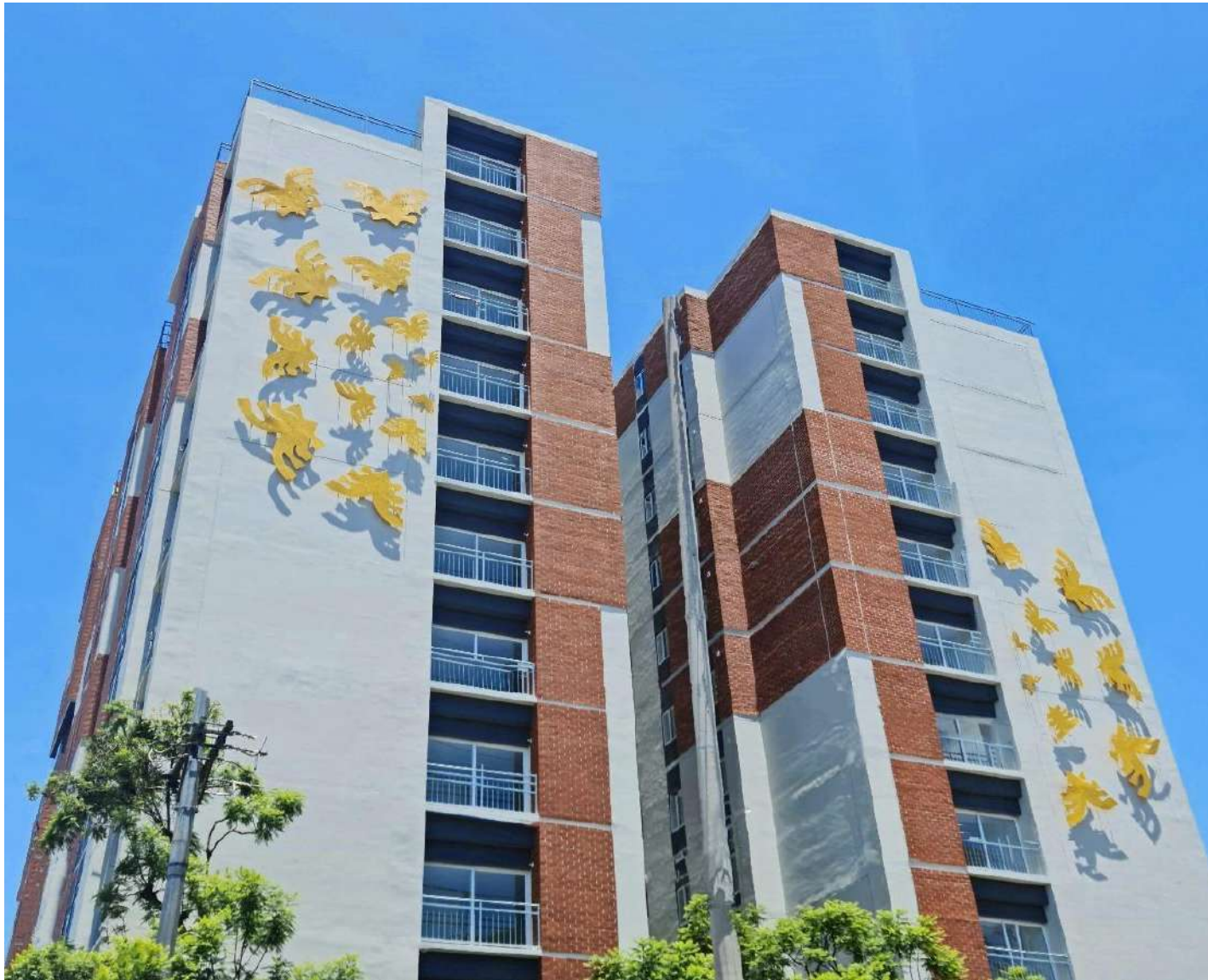
The Angel of Culture belongs to the series Angels which I exhibited on October 2012 as tribute to the great artist Efrain Recinos, on the first anniversary of his death. His extraordinary plastics was bearer of a moral message at all times; beginning with his childish drawings reflecting big battles through time and place with an almost obsessive concern of triumphant good over evil. In his utopia we all live as artists coexisting beautifully in a world without jails.

The students at National School of Plastic Arts are creators of meaning translating into powerful instruments to carry on perception and reality of society. This monumental piece exhorts them to take action responsibly, like Efrain Recinos did.



*Angel of Culture* - *Angel's* series.  
Escuela Nacional de Artes Plásticas Rafael Rodríguez Padilla.  
Guatemala City, Guatemala, 2017





*Sculpture mural Angels I and II - Angel's series.*  
Museo San Mateo building, Guatemala City, Guatemala 2021.



# *Angel of Vision*

Vision is having the capacity to see things from the top, from above all, and beyond time. It all starts with a dream. God gave us the capacity to create and dream.

The Bible says in Ephesians 3:20 “Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.” (New Living Translation).

Sam Walton was a visionary who lived this Bible verse. I didn't have the honor to meet him as many here did, but I knew it from three phrases he left us as inheritance:

First: “High expectations are the key to everything.” God gives us, as stated in Ephesians, “...infinitely more than we might ask or think...” Dream big. God is infinite.

Second: “If people believe in themselves, it's amazing what they can accomplish.” Have faith in God and in yourself. Let's go back to Ephesians: “...God, who is able ...” What is He able to do? “...infinitely more than we might ask or think...” How is he going to do it? “...through his mighty power at work within us...” Vision is like faith, “Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see.” (Hebrews 11:1, King James Version). You have to imagine it; you have to see it with your mind, not with your eyes. If you believe in your vision with all your strength, others will too.

Third: “One person seeking glory doesn't accomplish very much.” Be humble like Sam Walton was. “Now all glory to God...” we read in Ephesians. Everything I've done in my life, from the smallest to the biggest things, like this Angel of Vision that we inaugurate today, is because

God allows it and goes before me. Glory and honor to His name for His love and His truth.

Ask God for help to choose your life's desire, within the purpose He has for you in this world. One big dream, an ideal where you can share the gifts, He gave you. Ask him to send you the Angel of Vision to enlighten your mind and empower your project. This way, your dream will be the same as God's dream for your life.

Invention is associated to the new, innovation to the novelty. A visionary must be an innovator. Novel implies change, but associated to words like rupture, radical, disruptive, revolutionary. The common denominator is risk. There is nothing impossible. Those who excuse themselves, and use circumstances as a shield, make them their own prison.

Visionaries know where they want to get and when. They must have the capacity to communicate their vision, pass on their passion and turn it into actions. The process is simple:

climb to the top, see from above everything and land. Take action. Vision without action is nothing but a dream.

If your vision is the size of the rest of your life, you're focused. If in this process they call you crazy, you're on the right path. This will make you part of the select group of visionaries. I end with another Sam Walton's quote: “Capital isn't scarce; vision is.” Be unusual.

Pepo Toledo



*Angel of Vision - Angel's series.*  
Arkansas, United States, 2016

## *Peace is born inside of us*

Peace is something we're not often grateful for until we lose it, like many other things God gives us. Today I am thankful for this afternoon.

Absence of violence is not real peace. For countries that emerged from war, there's no peace without forgiveness. Conflicts must be solved reconstructing not destroying, going forward not backwards, united and not in dissension. An old saying says that forgiveness can't change the past but it can change the future.

Isaac Newton said "Men build too many walls and not enough bridges".

It is inside us that war and peace are born. It is there where we need to build the foundations of peace so we can raise our homes. As a home that lives in harmony is the biggest treasure of all.

Only with a positive attitude we can construct a lifetime structure based on peace, truth, love, equality, justice, freedom, and sympathy.

Societies that do so develop a level of tolerance and union that makes them able to go through natural, economic, and every other kind of disaster. When peace flourishes so do human potential.

Herodotus used to say "No one is so foolish as to prefer war to peace, in which, instead of sons burying their fathers, fathers bury their sons."

*The Peace Angel* is an offer of blessing that I make on behalf of Guatemala. It's intention is to reach the largest number of cities in the world.

Pepo Toledo





*Angel of Peace,*  
*Angel's series.*  
Spazio building,  
Guatemala City  
2022





*Angel of Peace - Angel's series.*  
Guatemala City Town Hall, Guatemala, 2016





*Angel of Peace – Angel's series.*  
United Nations Palace, Geneva, 2016





*Angel of Peace – Angel's series.*  
Tennenlohe, Erlagen, Baviera, Germany, 2015



*Angel of Peace – Angel's series.*

Sculpture Garden at Art Museum of the Americas – OEA. Washington D.C., United States, 2014





Presented at Zócalo Bookfair 2012 - Downtown Mexico City, Mexico D.F.



*Angel of Peace – Angel's series.*  
Permanent place at Circuit of Nations, near Mexico's  
International Airport – México City, 2012





*Angel of Peace - Angel of Peace – Angel's series.*  
Presented in Rozas Botrán Gallery.

Guatemala City, Guatemala, 2012



*Angel of Peace - Angel of Peace – Angel's series.*  
Permanent installation National Police Historic Archives

# PEPO GLYPHS

## *The Family II*



*The Family II*. Tiffany 5 building, Guatemala City, 2021



## *The Family*



*The Family* - Santo Domingo El Cerro  
Antigua Guatemala, Guatemala, 2018



# *Pepo Glyphs*

Umberto Eco defines culture as a communication phenomenon. This is based on significance systems we use to give meaning to the universe that surrounds us.

Semiology or semiotics studies communication processes in society, what a group of words, gesture, or image means.

We are visual beings. “You don’t think without images,” said Aristotle. Signs are specific, and they represent visual form and abstract concepts, words, figures, and also sounds. They can be understood by animals. Symbols are more ample. They become necessary in daily activities such as traffic. The Greek word *glýfō* means engrave and it applies to a sign carved or incised, for example Mayan glyphs. It also applies to written or painted signs. The ones used on ancient Egypt are called hieroglyphs, the ones engraved on rock petroglyphs, and the ones I made for you Pepo glyphs.

Symbols are the vehicle to express concepts, they allow to inform and be informed. They make the ephemeral of the words and gestures perpetrate. They establish a connection with what they are representing, for example, the dove as a peace symbol. We encounter symbols that mean the same in different cultures, like the dragon associated to evil. And in other cases, they mean the opposite, like the Nazi swastika symbol of evil, and in the ancient Sanskrit language means wellbeing. The one who observes an artwork can see a different meaning than the one meant by the artist. What will happen when you see the pepo glyphs?

Symbols are images which meaning goes beyond the obvious. We find them influencing our every move. We are surrounded by symbolism, and sometimes we have to rely on science to comprehend them. Many people take the easy road, going through informative chaos to clumsy simplifications, leaving history secrets hidden. Every individual is forced to become a cryptologist since childhood.

Communication is vital for society to function. It doesn’t get easier when there are barriers between people for social, geographic, cultural, language or even historical context reasons. These determine the point of view of each person, what we want to say, what we say, what the other heard or thinks he heard, etcetera. Additionally, there are judgments, perceptions, distractions, expectations, emotions, labels, negativism, lies, defensiveness, inappropriate moments, bad jokes, and disposition to hear but not to listen; we can conclude that effective communication is a miracle. The necessity to build bridges, interpret, clarify terms and concepts, and illustrate ideas is born. The development of language and technology only enhances barriers or communication bridges. What matters is attitude.

Symbolic systems have different meaning for each culture. Almost 200 years ago, Champollion decoded Egyptian hieroglyphs. I dare you to decode the Pepo glyphs. Focus on the differences, find the order in the mutations. Each person has its own vision of reality, but what is real and what is unreal? Is our own perception of reality disturbed? The only truth is that what each person understands will be a reflection of his heart.

Pepo Toledo



*Pepo Glyphs*, - Sculptural ensemble  
Santo Domingo El Cerro  
Antigua Guatemala, Guatemala, 2018






*Pepo Glyphs*, Sculptural ensemble  
Santo Domingo El Cerro  
Antigua Guatemala, Guatemala, 2018





*Pepo Glyphs*, Sculptural ensemble  
Sala Quiroa, Hotel Casa Santo Domingo  
Antigua Guatemala, Guatemala, 2018

An abstract sculpture composed of several thick, bright yellow lines. The lines are intertwined in a complex, non-representational manner, creating a sense of dynamic movement and spatial tension. Some lines are straight, while others are curved or looped. The sculpture is set against a plain, light-colored background.

*Lines and Planes that evoke translocation of the ethics  
of priorities of art today parting from found object*

Artifact is all that made with art, technique, or craft: a utensil, machine, furniture, any object in general. Synonym of artifice, contraption, trick or wit. We can make a distinction between artifacts as such and cultural artifacts.

Utensils, tools, and appliances are consumed, damaged, and lose their utility; they become junk. They might be of interest to an anthropologist or maybe a historian. They make our lives easier and sometimes more joyful. Batman's artifacts, for example, are fantastic, enviable.

Cultural artifact is to use but it does not have shelf life, tangible or intangible. It is a natural object whose existence is understood. For example, language, beliefs, flags, shields, and symbolism in general. Into that category falls art.

Compared Literature Ph.D. Luis Miguel Isava states that in order to reveal the natural character of a cultural artifact it must be taken out of context, for example: earrings. Women in Western civilizations commonly use them on the ears, if used by the opposite sex or on other body parts they acquire countercultural character.

Theorists as Isava seek to locate the cultural artifact somewhere between natural object and utensil.

Campagnolo Brand is fundamental in cycling history. Its creative spirit and global focus led them to artistically create a daily life artifact: Campagnolo corkscrew, design inspired by the

famous bicycles. A clear example of an intermediate between utensil and cultural artifact, in this case a work of art.



Campagnolo corkscrew

Here we encounter the essence of Industrial Design: creating series of objects fabricated based on artistic principles. The fact that they're not unique doesn't take away the designer's merit. Similar case is that of handicrafts, fabricated manually. The first one is a work of art and the rest are similar repetitions.

In the beginnings of the 20th century Marcel Duchamp, knowing the power of artifacts, rebelled against the nature of visual arts creating works of art from found objects for the simple act of choice, no matter who fabricated them. This he called "readymade", term not even him knew how to define. The most iconic one was a urinal titled "Fountain". The concept was to appropriate someone else's design without modifying it or incorporating it in another work of art. To justify plagiarism, he signed other artists' paintings and said he could sign a skyscraper and turn it into a readymade. He started an art stream in which any object could be considered a work of art. Duchamp knew the



craft but his proposal opened doors to pseudo artists that don't know how to draw, paint, or sculpt, to do anti-art, and worst of all, claim they are the real artists.

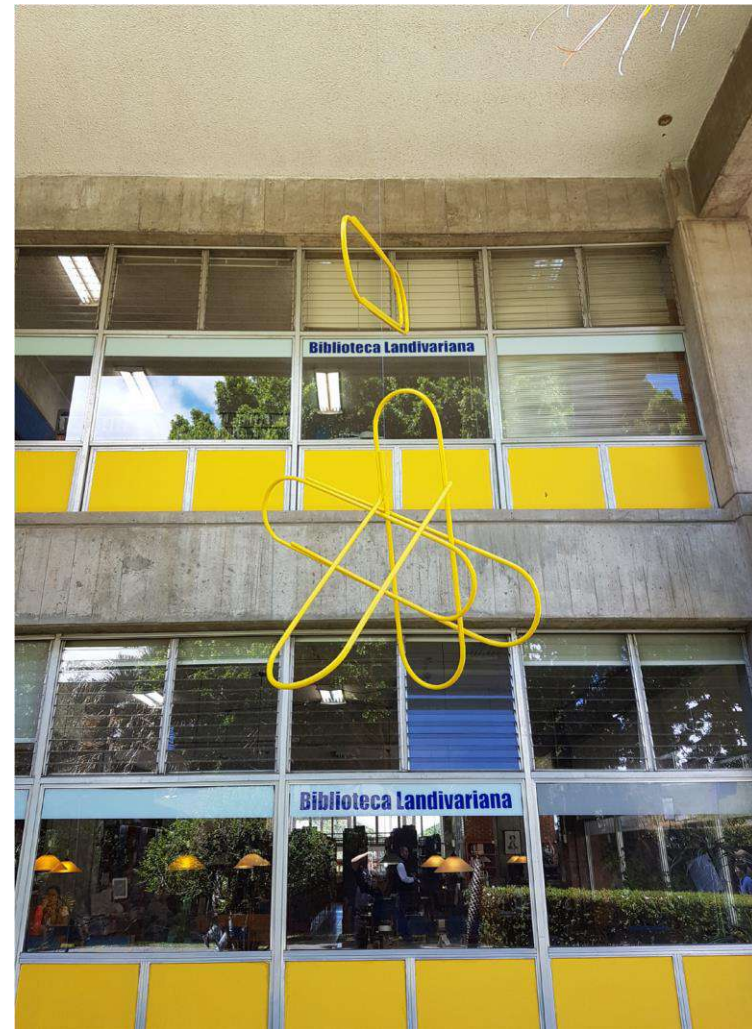
From Arthur Danto's point of view, Duchamp's ready mades and pop art –when Andy Warhol transforms space into a supermarket- planted a dimension of philosophic reflection transforming ordinary objects into works of art.

The main art work of my series Artifacts was inspired by quotidian objects magnified, modified, and installed in a way that they lose their utility and therefore transform into a cultural artifact. The title *Lines and Planes that evoke translocation of the ethics of priorities of art today parting from found object.*



*Fountain* by Marcel Duchamp





The sculpture was unveiled in Landívar Library, Central Campus of Universidad Rafael Landívar, on march 7th 2017

# HIPERARCHIULTRAMEGAMICROMACROCOSMOS

Astronomical observatory SIGGI is a project promoted by German sculptor Dieter Erhard for San Miguel Dueñas, town which his wife Miriam is from. The Mayor Alejandro Fernandez was on board since the beginning. The construction was built with the support of Rotary North Club and several private companies.

The observatory has four levels. On the first one there are educational posters along with a projection system, on the second one microscope reminiscing that life began at the oceans, and on the third-floor telescopes to see Water, Fire, and Acatenango volcanos. Located on the terrace, or fourth floor, is a giant telescope to see the stars. Pepo Toledo referenced Guatemala's geography making its land brave and beautiful at the same time, just as its women.

Pepo helped with the architectural design of the building and the mural that covers it. The design, explains the artist, parts from the three heavens mentioned in the Bible, along with the Creator's hand which from the stars fall from. God's Hand was initially used by Jews to show divine intervention since it was prohibited to represent God or even pronounce his name.

The Image used by Pepo was inspired by the one in San Clemente de Tahull church in Catalonia. Between Christians, God's right hand (Dextera Domini in latin) means power and divine protection.

The concept of the mural is from microcosms to macrocosms. The exterior is filled with different types of fantasy microorganisms. If we minimize the abstraction level, we reach different solar systems that make up galaxies.

Science continuously discovers new subatomic particles, each time smaller and smaller, and at the same time discovers new celestial bodies, challenging human imagination's vain intent to comprehend infinity.







# URBAN FOREST



*Cannoneer Bush. Urban Forest series*  
Paseo La Sexta, Guatemala, Guatemala, 2017





*Crazy Bush, Urban Forest series*  
Paseo La Sexta, Guatemala City,  
Guatemala, 2012/7





*Urban Forest* - From the series *Urban Forest*  
Boulevard Austriaco, zone 16 –  
Guatemala City, Guatemala, 2016





*Urban Forest* mural  
From the series *Urban Forest*  
La Morera Neighborhood, zone 1  
Guatemala City, Guatemala, 2015



*Fountain of Life*  
 From the series *Urban Forest*  
 Boulevard 17 Oriente  
 Tapachula, Chiapas, México, 2014



## *Fountain of Life*

The sculpture *Fountain of Life* from the series *Urban Forest*, is significantly situated in front of the Secretary for Development of South Border and Bond to the International Chiapas Cooperation. I could talk for hours about our friendship and caring with Mexico; our history, Tacaná volcano, Coatán river, black beans and *tamalitos de chipilin* are just some of the things that we have in common.

Lines and planes taken to the fourth dimension: absence of form taken to its highest expression; mass reduced to its minimum expression. Abstract plants, bold survivors, in a degraded world. Released energy through vanishing points looking to meet somewhere in infinity. Melody, rhythm, dynamics. Revolted momentum in its maximum expression, confronting contamination of the biomass.

It is time to dialogue with the dear and admired poet of Chiapas, Jaime Sabines Gutiérrez. The poem goes like this: "I love God. He settled galaxies and distributed transit in an ant's path. They say sometimes he gets angry and makes earthquakes, storms, fire, unleashed wind, strong currents, punishments, and disasters. But this is a lie. It is the earth changing, agitating and growing, when God wanders".

Another poem of Sabines goes like this: "It is the shadow of water / and the echoes of a sigh, / trace of a look, / memory of absence..." Words that immediately make me remember City of Tapachula of Córdoba and Ordóñez. Spring of water, exuberant vegetation, development axis, diverse cultural focus. In a few words, Fountain of Life.



*From Chaos to Order - Urban Forest series*  
DIGA building plaza  
Universidad de San Carlos  
Guatemala City, Guatemala 2021





*From Chaos to Order - Urban Forest series*  
Auditorium – University of San Carlos, Guatemala City,  
Guatemala 2014

## *From Chaos to Order*

With my sculptures I pretend to contribute to the battle of forms in constant change and fragile stability: the universe seen through time, duality between order and chaos. Is this a sign that the energy of the universe tends to balance leading to mayhem? Or is it that chaos far from being the opposite of order, precedes it? Do revolutions conduct to institutionally? Hence the title *Chaos Transforms into Order*. Painted in yellow. I like to use that color because it's the most contradictory when it comes to what it reflects: joy, enthusiasm, courage, strength, passion. Color of the sun and the light. Violent, intense, irritating, loud, dangerous. Kandinsky used to say that yellow represents violent madness, the unbearable. It was Van Gogh's favorite color especially in his last years of crisis, when he painted cornfields under menacing and tormented skies. For Frida Kahlo it meant madness, sickness, fear, part of the sun and joy. For us, today it represents the university's indomitable, revolutionary spirit. Pepo Toledo.



Sculptural ensemble *Quauhtlemallan - Urban Forest*  
La Aurora International Airport  
Guatemala City, Guatemala, 2013



## *Quauhtlemallan*

The sculpture ensemble presented in Guatemala City's International Airport *La Aurora* is called *Quauhtlemallan*. Coming from a náhuatl vocabulary where it is believed the name Guatemala comes from and means "place of many trees".

The truth is that two thirds of our territory has forestry for conifer forests. In Canada, the largest pulpwood producer in the world, a tree of this kind is ready to be cut in fifteen years, while in Guatemala it only takes five.

On the other hand, 70% of energy consumption of stationary sources, from a ranch to an industry, comes from firewood consumption. Unfortunately, the majority of the trees are cut down.

If we put together potential and needs the result is a possibility to initiate a true agricultural and energetic revolution based on sustainable forests.

Firewood burning releases carbon dioxide that forests capture creating a virtuous circle. Usually, the best solutions to our problems are so simple and close that we tend to oversee them.

Pepo Toledo

## *From love to hate*

The series Urban Forest sentences pollution and T destruction of the biomass. Abstract plants, surviving heroes, charged with dynamism, rhythm, melody, and why not, sensuality. For the first time on the streets in San José, Costa Rica, at Klaus Steinmetz Contemporary art gallery Bushes Making Themselves Interesting represents an aspect of human relations. Seen from the side they suggest dance, courtship, love. In the front side they turn aggressive.

Ironic reality in human relations. We go from love at first sight, which doesn't cease to be simple attraction, to falling in love. Then comes disenchantment provoked by situations like coexistence, past revival, lack of forgiveness, idealization of the partner whose image is distorted by our society's clichés. Aversion follows and finally, with no apparent cause, hostility arises. Hence the proverb "From love to hate there's only one step". Maybe it's a defense mechanism against pain and frustration. Some believe indifference is an even worse antagonist to love than hate. Is it possible to hate someone we have loved? Does unconditional love, ineffable antidote to aversion, belong to the world of "Utopic cities"?

I finish this topic with a quote from F. Heumer: "Love has a powerful brother, hate. Beware not to offend the first one because the other one can kill you".

Pepo Toledo







*Bushes Making Themselves Interesting - Urban Forest*  
Klaus Steimetz Art Gallery  
San Jose, Costa Rica, 2011



*Tree Whose Ideas Blew Up* and *Tree in Expansion*, released energy - *Urban Forest*  
Mission, Embassy of Guatemala - Washington D.C, United States 2013





*Bushes making themselves interesting I and II - Urban Forest*  
Residency, Embassy of Guatemala - Washington D.C, United States 2015



Photography by Eduardo Spiegeler

# UTOPIAN CITIES

Our cities are besieged with traffic, pollution, and crime amongst other evils. *Utopian Cities* is a sentence against chaos and metropolitan degradation. Abandoned cities, still but at the same time defying the laws of gravity, waiting patiently. They're an urgent call to heal deep metropolitan wounds, suggesting an ideal world of invention and discovery.

Maurizio Colombo





*Utopian Cities*  
Maranta Project, Oakland, Guatemala City, Guatemala, November 2020



*Utopian Cities*  
Sculpture Park, 18 avenue zone 14, Guatemala City, Guatemala, November 2019





## *The art of hospitality turned into a sculpture for prosperity*

Formed by four pillars that represent service, comfort, experience and excellence, characteristics that for more than 60 years have made Camino Real a benchmark for international hospitality. Each one points to the sky, symbolizing our inexhaustible desire to be better. Built on a pineapple-shaped reticular base, a universal icon for hospitality and inspiration of our characteristic facade, which welcomes and embraces all visitors who honor us with their preference. A solid foundation of our past and standard of our future.

Pepo Toledo



*Utopian Cities* – Camino Real Hotel Guatemala City 2019

H



## *Green, color of Guatemala*

This piece is composed by solid skyscrapers with peaks on its bases that make them float, like the utopic city we desire, solid but escaping, unreachable.

Inspired by Guatemala's topography, mountains and volcanos, beautiful but at the same time dangerous. Green is the color of our jungles, color of life, abundance, fertility, freshness, hope, optimism, youth; the color of Guatemala.

Pepo Toledo.

*Self-Conscious City*

*Utopian Cities*

Plaza de la Luz, OEG Building

Guatemala City, Guatemala, 2013





*Satellite ALG 2604*

*Utopian Cities* - Ana Lucía Gómez Latin-American Art Gallery Guatemala City, Guatemala 2011

Photography by Alan Benchoam



From de series *Utopic Cities*  
Castel of Wittenburg gardens  
Wassenaar, The Hague, The Netherlands, 2015





# BESTIARY

This series denounces the destruction of every animal's habitat. It has its maximum expression in the piece *The Scream*, a polar bear desperately stretching his neck towards the sky because the loss of his ambience. *Taurus* represents domestic animals of which we can serve.

My technique is to incorporate metal sheet with automobile parts, not as junk or Art Povera but giving them an additional value, as if they were made for the art work. I search for kinetic pieces that suggest rhythm and movement. All of this with a different style, breaking paradigms and formats, expressing myself big time. I recognize my work is influenced by cubism and constructivism, sometimes crossing the line to the abstract. In some cases, movement flows through the pieces evoking the 20th century futurists. I try to represent simple geometric relations which, according to Cézanne, all natural forms can be reduced to.

Pepo Toledo



*The Scream – Bestiary. Sixth Avenue. Downtown Guatemala City, Guatemala, 2011*





*Taurus – Bestiary.* Sixth Avenue. Downtown Guatemala City, Guatemala, 2011





Riot in destruction of these works of art on Paseo La Sexta. Thursday, November 10th, 2016, Guatemala, Guatemala.

“I want to thank all those people that have expressed their sadness, anger, and sympathy towards the destruction of my sculptures on 6th avenue, but most of all I am thankful for the love of art that everyone manifested. I’ve only been able to see pictures since I’m heading back to Guatemala after placing the Angel of Peace in UN Geneva. We won’t give up.

Art is transcendental, vandalism is not.





*The Scream – Bestiary*  
Contemporary Art Museum  
Chiapas Cultural Center Jaime Sabines  
Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, México, 2012.

# NEUROLOGICAL ABSTRACTIONS

## *Spontaneous Order*



*Spontaneous Order - Neurological Abstractions series*  
DIGA building plaza – Universidad de San Carlos, Guatemala City, Guatemala





*Spontaneous Order - Neurological Abstractions series. DIGA building plaza – Universidad de San Carlos, Guatemala City, Guatemala*

## URBAN SCULPTURE Pepo Toledo RETROSPECTIVE

## *Rotary's good will action making a difference*

The world is going through chaotic situations, economically, politically and socially. The question is: can order arise from chaos? That duality has been fundamental to explain the origin of the Universe and human being in religion, philosophy, and science. The Bible says: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty..." Order is not random; it originates by fulfilling God's precepts. Each individual must use them as foundation of his home so he can project them onto society. Humanitarian service, ethics, encouraging peace and good will in the world are precepts that Rotary International teaches business leaders. The sculpture we unveil today represents order in chaos. Looks like a scribble but it's structured with solid composition principles that allow it to rotate without losing its balance. Its dynamic configuration hugs the globe. It channels the action of rotary associations from all around the world, united to benefit mankind.







**URBAN SCULPTURE** Pepo Toledo **RETROSPECTIVE**





*Neurological Knot at the End of the Rainbow - Neurological Abstractions*  
Carranza Cultural Center. Venustiano Carranza Delegation, México D.F., 2013



# *Where do we come from?*

## *Where are we going?*

Our planet is seizing. Doesn't matter if we see it from an economic, politic, or social point of view, it's going through a difficult situation.

Human beings continually ask themselves fundamental questions such as: Where do we come from? Where are we heading? Is the universe a sustainable system? Can order arise from chaos?

Chaos and order duality has been fundamental to explain the origins of the universe in all mythologies and religions, in philosophy and science. In Christianity God's order is preceded by chaos which was permitted by Him. The Bible talks about creation starting with these verses: "1In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1: 1-2, King James Bible Online).

A system is a group of things related to each other. The change of one of them can affect the whole group. Its properties cannot be explained or described separately, each one of the elements is linked directly or indirectly.

Systemic thinking studies relations of a whole and in it, the capacity to understand interactions between the elements of a system. In dynamic systems there are elements that allow

repetitive movement, sometimes geometrically established, called attractors. These are in charge of maintaining the possible variables in their established path making the system sustainable.

Chaotic systems are associated to strange attractors. Unlike classic attractors they have a fractal structure (not whole) in every scale and their dynamic is uncontrolled. Edward Lorenz's meteorological metaphor (1996) refers to the butterfly effect which explains the following: the sensitive dependency on initial conditions in which a small change at one place in a deterministic nonlinear system can result in large differences in a later state. Like a butterfly's flutter in one continent causing a tsunami at the other side of the ocean.

For scientists' chaos is an overdose of order and not the absence of it. Their principles are chance, the unpredictable, nonlinearities. They're pretty common and can be found in nature and society itself. In Christianity chance doesn't exist, just God's perfect will, controlling even the most insignificant situation. There aren't casualties, just Godities.

Order disintegrates into chaos, and chaos constitutes order arising from organized systems. Chaos makes order possible. Far from being the opposite it precedes it. Chaos is empty and messy. It is absence of form and at the same time the medium where the creation of form is born. Chaos drives a system to a type of order much more complex. When they reach a point where they lack balance, they have the capacity to renew themselves.

Rudolf Emanuel Clausius states that the human brain tries to comprehend things through order. A painting seems organized if the one who's watching finds in it an organized structure in form and color. Art is about establishing order, harmony, and proportion. Many contemporary artists despise beauty because it has come to represent perfection lacking content. This does not allow them to do the opposite, stating that concept rules over aesthetics, denying it and pretending beauty is surpassed.

The return to harmony and a minimal order is vital to rescue the world from the confusion it's in, according to Clausius. Art plays an important role in favor and against. The misfits go against institutions and political, religious, aesthetic, and moral laws. They propose a new morality based in immorality. Art should take chaos to order because order itself has become chaotic.

My signature series *Dangerous Sculptures* acts according to my manifesto *Creationism*, where I condemn excess in contemporary art and propose a comeback to aesthetic art, leaded by truth and moral values; with art bring order to chaos.

In my creations composition prevails. We understand by it intuitive vision, sensibility to organize form and color according to time. Each work is based in principles of composition used throughout history. For example: Ruben's dynamic composition, diagonals, curves, spirals, force and rhythm juxtaposed, instability. The typical baroque composition formed by diagonals, compositive resource with such strength that most of the times substitutes perspective with the sense of profoundness.

With my series *Neurological Abstractions*, I represent tension existing between order and chaos in our society. The pieces seem to be chaotic. However, they're structured with solid principles of composition.

To prove that you have to turn the piece in different positions; to the left, right, up and down. If in every turn the work still seems to be balanced it is proof it is well composed. We can see it clearly in the next page, exemplifying order and chaos.

Pepo Toledo





Order and Chaos. All four images are of the same sculpture. It looks like a sloppy doodle. The solid composition allows that when changing position, it 'looks like a new art work. .

# Playing with time

*“There are three things that never come back: spoken word, a thrown arrow, and a lost opportunity”.* Chinese proverb

Today we have a date with time. Cosmo vision is the way you interpret the universe and all that exists. It's also the way you perceive God, your neighbor, and yourself. It determines, according to your culture, how you use your common sense in fields like religion, philosophy, and science. It is vital how you manage time: past, present, and future. The way you do it will have great influence on your life.

The past is like our shadow, ignoring it is not an option. It's always with us, for good or bad. Lack of forgiveness and resentment are self-destructive. They tie you to the past and make it form part of your present at all times. Worrying has the same effect, it makes things worse. It doesn't change the past but it can ruin your present and future.

God didn't design us to bare negative emotions. When you feel them your body complains through stress and diseases, your mind with depression and bitterness. The way to deal with them is putting your life in God's hands. Give Him your mistakes,

problems and needs, also your desires and goals. Live every day with joy and peace, one by one.

History is made up along the way but the past is unchangeable. Although you can repeat making the same mistakes all over again. It is not about wiping the past. Time remembered with a healthy heart lead us with joyful memories and lessons learnt from our mistakes. Learn from the past to build a better future. Give meaning to your present, and focus on the gifts that God gave you.

Time passes and doesn't come back, it doesn't wait. You can't buy it. Life is accrued time. When you give your time to someone else, you're sharing a piece of your life, it is an act of love. Time is finite but if you take advantage of it, it is enough. Other way time claims its own.

God gives us the recipe: therefore, do not worry about tomorrow (Mathew 6:34). Kids know that because they have a pure heart. They are free from worry and teach us to enjoy the present. You can see God in them. That's why I dedicate this work of art to the children that, from now on, will be climbing it, pirouetting, and most of all, playing with time.

Pepo Toledo





*Playing with time* - From the series *Neurological Abstractions*  
Plaza Dinamia Cayalá. Guatemala City, Guatemala, 2017

# *Ode to Creativity*

## *Neurological Synthesis of Abstraction in the Eternal Conceptual Conflict Between Perception and Representation*

From this piece develops my series Neurological Abstractions, which represents how an idea matures in the brain. Assembled to reward creativity during the “Jade Awards” at Festival Antigua of UGAP.

With chaotic appearance but design based on composition principles used throughout history. I tried to empathize with concepts applied in publicity. Man is a highly visual being; communicative power depends on how we interpret the image. To share images is to communicate vivid and structured experiences in a certain way and by doing it creatively we capture the viewer’s attention.

A very thin line separates creativity from craziness. Kids can escape reality easily. They do imaginary trips and have imaginary friends. But if an adult is dreamer things change. We declare him crazy or idolize him as a genius.

I finish with the following quotes of Chilean poet Vicente Huidobro and Guatemalan novelist Mario Monteforte Toledo: “If I didn’t do at least one crazy thing a day I would go madly insane”.

“Fortunately, there’s still crazy people in this world. Fruitful miracle is when they come together”.

Pepo Toledo







*Neurological Synthesis of Abstraction in the Eternal Conceptual Conflict Between Perception and Representation*  
*Neurological Abstractions*. Santo Domingo del Cerro, Hotel Museo Casa Santo Domingo. Antigua Guatemala, Guatemala, 2013

# FLAGSHIP SCULPTURE

El punto, Real Estate Developments.



*Flagship Sculpture*

Meraki 14 building, Guatemala City, 2022.





*Flagship Sculpture*  
Museo San Mateo building, Guatemala City, 2020.



pepo toledo art productions