

The image displays a 3x4 grid of twelve square tiles. Each tile features a unique, embossed abstract design in a light beige or off-white color. The designs are intricate, often resembling stylized faces, masks, or organic forms with various indentations and protrusions. The tiles are arranged in three rows and four columns. The name 'Gustavo Pérez' is printed in a bold, black, sans-serif font across the center of the grid, overlapping the middle two rows.

Gustavo Pérez

Gustavo Pérez

Recapitulando

March 19 – April 16, 2011

Front Cover:
detail of
Tablero
2008
stoneware
30 3/8 x 30 3/8 x 2 3/4 inches

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Gustavo Pérez

A Line of Thought

“It seems to me that clarity of thought should be accompanied by clarity of technique.” —Piet Mondrian

Skillful and precise execution of ideas marks the work of Gustavo Pérez as a major and distinctive voice in the world of contemporary ceramics. Throughout his career, as he has explored ideas of containment, openness, symmetry, branching, patterning and line, Pérez has been a master of controlled form. Gustavo Pérez makes vessels and sculpture that are simple, smooth and symmetrical. Their elegance is due to the precision of the incised lines and other markings on the works. As he ventures into the sculptural realm, where the larger vessels have greater reference to the corporeal or organic, there is a remarkable ability to control the medium and to work within its physical properties. He also makes dimensional constructions, a kind of blending of wall relief sculpture and physical drawing in clay, which explore the ideas of branching, abstract patterning, and linear progression. Here, too, Pérez presents clarity of vision, adept execution, and a sense of grace and natural elegance.

For any artist, the choice of medium is of utmost importance; that is obvious. The medium is a vehicle for the expression and transformation of ideas and feelings, and it is certainly not an accident that Gustavo Pérez has chosen clay. As he has stated, “the creative relationship between an individual and clay is always necessarily a deeply personal one, because if the involvement is not deep the results cannot be creative.”ⁱ Clay is a medium with extraordinary properties, among which are plasticity, availability, and tactility. Because of these properties, ceramic artwork is universal. Though its ceremonial and functional histories are ancient, the medium is a valid and relevant means for a contemporary artist. Perhaps because of its tactility, ceramic sculpture holds a place in our experience that is unlike any other. The directness of manual presentation of ideas is nearly as immediate as the art of drawing, yet communicates the sensuality of touch. In a recent essay on the work of American ceramic sculptor Ken Price, the New York critic Peter Schjeldahl wrote: “Painting exercises the eye; sculpture echoes the body. Ceramics express and are addressed to the hand.”ⁱⁱ

While using the same clay body (a sand colored stoneware) throughout his work, Pérez achieves a wide range of form and pattern and includes slowly undulating walls beneath the subtly incised surfaces. When looking back over the many manifestations of ideas in ceramics by Gustavo Pérez, there is a unity provided by his use of ceramics, as well as the unity inherent in his return to themes and compositional elements. The high-temperature stoneware clay body is usually fired above 1200 degrees centigrade, when it becomes vitrified.ⁱⁱⁱ In the hands of Gustavo Pérez, this stoneware clay body has become the basic building material, as well as the canvas for his composition. Whether he plans to engineer a series of lines, develops a pattern of slashes, or chooses to insert other clay elements into the surface of the clay, everything is integrated through this basic medium. Like a painter emphasizing the depth of color, Pérez will also apply glaze into the incised areas on a work, carefully and meticulously drawing our eye to the design.

Part architecture, part mathematical pattern, and part lyrical movement, the sleek ceramic constructions are grounded in principles that relate to the built environment as well as sculpture. Due to their reliance on geometric form, their symmetrical characteristics, and their construction process, Pérez's forms are clearly architectural. Perhaps this, too, is not an accident, for Gustavo builds his work as if logic and technology were indispensable to art. The progressive principles of making a form, then cutting it into modular units, assembling another form, and integrating the design with the structure are common to architecture and to the work of Gustavo Pérez. He is sensitive to the building of form in his own work, proudly aware of the built environment of his country and especially aware of contemporary Mexican architects. When the artist discusses his country, he acknowledges "the many extraordinary contributions that this oppressed, poor, conflictive and many times neglected part of the world has made to universal culture. And I am not only thinking about the extraordinary ancient Pre-Columbian cultural heritage but also about our century with the contributions of writers...or the architecture of Luis Barragan..."^{iv} While the architect may have other compositional elements at his disposal—such as scale, light and space—there are some similarities. It is evident that there are affinities in architectural form, as Ignacio Diaz Morales states: "The shape of (Barragan's) spaces is clear and simple,

composed of spontaneous, constructive geometry, an essential condition for all architectural form. Space is manipulated with great agility and always aims to express the identity of the Mexican soul, without using inappropriate exoticisms.”^v

Without making specific reference to Mayan culture, the works of Gustavo Pérez are in some ways evocative of that Pre-Colombian culture. Perhaps this is an elusive and poetic quality that Gustavo Pérez shares with his fellow Latin American artists, writers and architects. “The ceramic art of the Maya, the Olmec, the Zapotec as well as the Korean, the Chinese, the Islamic or the Greek is our common heritage. We all profit from knowing it and the aesthetics, the sensibility and the techniques this huge legacy transmits,” Pérez has noted.^{vi}

Yet, worldly influences are certainly a strong part of the evolution of the work of Pérez. He lived for three years in Holland, and has traveled and exhibited in Japan. In more recent years, he has spent long periods of time in France. The Dutch and Japanese influences seem to meld with a sensitivity that is markedly Latin American. To the art historian’s eye, much of the work presents ideas from twentieth-century abstract art. It seems to viewers in the United States that the sensibility of an artist like Gustavo Pérez must involve an appreciation of the great abstract painting of the early twentieth century—the painting of Kandinsky, Malevich, and Mondrian. Some may see a link to Miro, with the playful meander of line—but without any surrealist imagery. Others will note the use of slashes in the surface of the vessel; a territory often ascribed to Lucio Fontana. Still others will see relationships to the work of Spanish sculptor Eduardo Chillida. However, because the extraordinary achievements of Gustavo Pérez include his ability to transpose the ideas of twentieth-century art into his own key, the work is never repetitious or derivative. He has consistently incorporated his knowledge of abstraction and mathematics into a language of line and form that is entirely his own.

The artist has also been a keen observer of the essential, almost mathematical patterns in nature. His use of branching line or a circumnavigation of the vessel by a slashing spiral

seems to mark the growth of seminal form. The kind of synthetic art that Gustavo Pérez practices is related to the working and reworking of some themes that can be found in understanding the physical world. His background in mathematics, engineering and philosophy are evident as we encounter the basic patterns of nature in his work. At times, there may be a connection of dots that seemingly refers to an imaginary constellation. A meandering line, symmetry of outlined form, a reflection of a pattern—each time Pérez takes the line in a different direction.

The pieces also seem to present a vision of nature, whether it is the slow peeling of bark or the architecture of a beehive. There are lessons from the field of mathematics known as topology. Pérez understands the world of topology well, for his patterns and lines must conform to the constraints of space—those dictated by the surface area of the sculpture. In this area, we see how effortless the pieces appear, betraying the complicated process that may have been involved in the planning of the circumnavigation of the pattern or line. In fact, many of these patterns obey strict mathematical laws. They “fall into only seventeen distinct symmetry groups. Every two-dimensional repetitive figure, be it in brickwork, textiles, wallpaper, modules of city planning, or in the arrangement of molecules in the cross section of a crystal, is but a variation on one of those seventeen groups. The groups are made by the regular translation, rotation, and reflection of their parts.”^{vii}

Always keeping a distance from direct quotation of any sources, the pots have a sensuous and musical sense of composition. During the past two decades, Pérez has created a visual language that seems closely aligned with music. Pure in form, with significant structure but without specific associations, his language of line and blending of forms mark his work as lyrical and often intuitive. In this way, the works are not just container and receptacle, they become aligned with the ideas of music, in that themes are repeated and developed. As he circles around and returns to what seems to be a new group of *Formas Abiertas*, the artist now includes the further developments from other bodies of work. Thus, a building of ideas becomes symphonic.

In fact, it is this very musical building and repeating of themes that is, in retrospect, the essence of the work of Gustavo Pérez. As we look at the evolution of the work, from the earliest vessels of the 1970s through the more recent open and sexually suggestive forms, we see an evolution and a transformation. The works open up, and then become incised with line, rhythmic patterns are applied over and around the curved surfaces, and vessels are cut open and re-assembled. As time goes on, the trajectory includes the building of more complex forms, still using the sinuous line and feeling of rhythm—a re-introduction of the established themes. *Formas Abiertas* become something else, a sequence of vessels that illustrate a line of thought. The clear horizontal lines, following the form of the pot, waver slightly, as the hand caresses the interior of the vessel. As the artist returns to the works again and again, every moment in the studio is brought to bear on the later work, and the compendium of experience produces an extraordinary caress of the forms, a trajectory of ideas that transforms and enriches our perception.

To all of these elements—the material specificity, precision, architecture, natural pattern, mathematics, music—Gustavo adds the poetry of sensuality and intuition. This is what makes all great art sing, and when sensuality is composed in concert with the tactile medium of ceramics, the result is magical.

Frank Lloyd

ⁱ Pérez, Gustavo, *Ceramics From Another Point of View*, text of lecture given to the World Ceramic Millennium Conference, Amsterdam, Holland, 1999, p.1

ⁱⁱ Schjeldahl, Peter, *The Art World: Feats of Clay*, *New Yorker*, October 6, 2003, p.134.

ⁱⁱⁱ Hammer, Frank and Janet, *The Potter's Dictionary of Materials and Techniques*, A & C Black, London, 1997, p. 327.

^{iv} Pérez, Gustavo, *Ceramics From Another Point of View*, text of lecture given to the World Ceramic Millennium Conference, Amsterdam, Holland, 1999, p.4.

^v Morales, Ignacio Diaz, *The Harmony of Space*, in *Barragan*, published by Rizzoli International, New York, New York, 1992, p.16.

^{vi} Pérez, Gustavo, op. Cit., p. 5

^{vii} Stevens, Peter S., *Patterns in Nature*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1974, p. 49.



Vaso (5-05-96), 1996
stoneware
10 ¼ x 12 ½ x 11 inches



Vaso (GP99 Y), 1999
stoneware
12 ¼ x 10 x 5 ½ inches



Sin Titulo (Vaso LA-204), 2000
stoneware
11 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 5 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches



Sin titulo (Vase 01-28), 2001
stoneware
12 x 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches



Sin titulo (2000-98), 2000
stoneware
10 x 8 ¼ x 8 ¼ inches



Plate, 03-1, 2003
stoneware
18 ½ x 18 ½ x 1 ½ inches



Vase (05-351), 2005
stoneware
11 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 6 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches



Vase (05-357), 2005
stoneware
14 ¾ x 6 ¾ x 6 ½ inches



Vase (06-572), 2006
stoneware
13 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 10 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches



Vase (06-331), 2006
stoneware
12 x 11 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches



Vase (06-37), 2006
stoneware
6 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 4 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches



Vase (06-88), 2006
stoneware
4 ½ x 5 ¾ x 5 inches



Vase (06-215), 2006
stoneware
6 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 13 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 12 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches



Vase (06-279), 2006
stoneware
9 ¼ x 24 ¾ x 3 ½ inches



Vase (06-369), 2006
stoneware
7 x 8 x 8 inches



Vases (06-125/126/127/128), 2006

stoneware

5 1/8 x 16 1/2 x 3 7/8, 4 3/4 x 16 1/2 x 4 1/2, 5 1/8 x 16 1/2 x 3 1/2, 5 1/8 x 17 1/8 x 4 3/8 inches



Vase (06-530), 2006
stoneware
10 x 7 ⁵/₈ x 7 ⁵/₈ inches



Vase (06-545), 2006
stoneware
12 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 5 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 5 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches



Sin titulo (Vaso 09-392), 2009
stoneware
8 ⁵/₈ x 8 ⁵/₈ x 9 inches



Sin titulo (Vaso 09-202), 2009
stoneware
10 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 8 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches



Sin titulo (Vaso 09-382), 2009
stoneware
9 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches



Sin titulo (Vaso 2010-78), 2010
stoneware
13 ³/₈ x 7 ⁷/₈ x 7 ⁷/₈ inches



Sin titulo (Vaso 2010-30), 2010
stoneware
9 ½ x 7 ¼ x 7 ¼ inches



Sin titulo (Vaso 2010-04), 2010
stoneware
11 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches



Sin titulo (Vaso 2010-03), 2010
stoneware
14 1/8 x 9 x 9 inches



Sin titulo (Vaso 2010-101), 2010
stoneware
12 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches



Sin titulo (Vaso 2010-58), 2010
stoneware
9 x 17 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 17 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches



Sin titulo (Vaso 2010-102), 2010
stoneware
13 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 9 inches



Sin titulo (Vaso 09-385), 2009
stoneware
7 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches



Sin titulo (Vaso 09-407), 2009
stoneware
7 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 7 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 7 inches



Sin titulo (Vaso 2010-85), 2010
stoneware
12 ⁵/₈ x 4 ³/₄ x 4 ³/₄ inches



Sin titulo (Vaso 2010-66), 2010
stoneware
11 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches



Sin titulo (Vaso 51-11), 2011
stoneware
6 ¼ x 10 ¼ x 9 ½ inches



Sin titulo (Vaso 2010-471), 2010
stoneware
10 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 10 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 10 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches



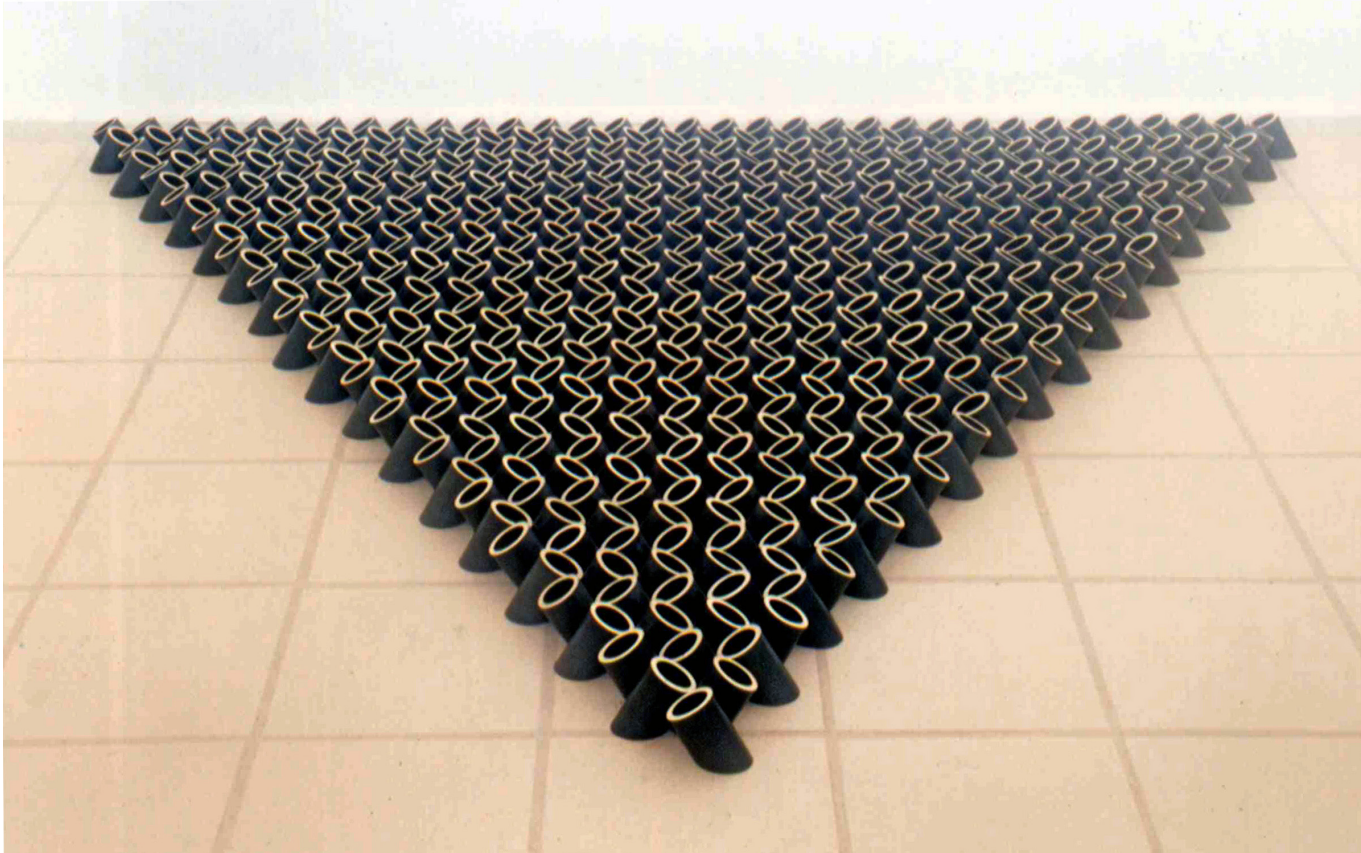
Sin titulo (Sculpture 52-11), 2011
stoneware
5 ½ x 12 ⅝ x 8 ⅝ inches



Sin titulo (Sculpture 07-11), 2011
stoneware
7 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 16 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches



Sin titulo (Sculpture 36-11), 2011
stoneware
5 ½ x 25 ⅝ x 12 ⅝ inches



Triángulo, 2005
stoneware
3 ½ x 88 ⅝ x 94 ½ inches



Tablero, 2008
stoneware
30 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 30 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches

Gustavo Pérez

1950 Born in Mexico City, Mexico

Education

1971- School of Design and Art, Mexico
 1973 Studied with Enrique Rangel, Felipe Barcenas and Martin Lima

 1967- UNAM, Mexico
 1971 Studied Engineering, Mathematics and Philosophy

One Person Exhibitions

2011 *Recapitulando*, Frank Lloyd Gallery, Santa Monica, California
 Puls Ceramics, Brussels, Belgium
 2010 *Recapitulando*, Centro de las Artes de San Agustín, Oaxaca, Mexico
Obra reciente, Galería Quetzalli, Oaxaca, Mexico
Gustavo Pérez à Sèvres, Galerie de la Manufacture de Sèvres, Paris, France
 2009 Museo de Antropología de Xalapa, Mexico
 Galerie Loes en Reinier, Deventer, Netherlands
 2008 Puls Ceramics, Brussels, Belgium
Reunión en la Memoria, Museo de Arte de Querétaro, Querétaro, Mexico
New Work, Frank Lloyd Gallery, Santa Monica, California

2006 Frank Lloyd Gallery, Santa Monica, California

2005 *Cambios*, Frank Lloyd Gallery, Santa Monica, California

Gustavo Pérez: A Retrospective View, Franz Mayer Museum, Mexico, D.F.
 Galería López Quiroga, Mexico, D.F.

2003 *Cambios*, Frank Lloyd Gallery, Santa Monica, California

Galería Artur Ramon, Barcelona, Spain
 Galerie b15, Munich, Germany
 Galería López Quiroga, Mexico, D.F.

2002 Frank Lloyd Gallery, Santa Monica, California

Galerie Handwerk, Koblenz, Germany
 Galerie Fusion, Toulouse, France
 Garth Clark Gallery, New York
 Danmarks Keramikmuseum Grimmerhus, Grimmerhus, Denmark

2001 Galerie Besson, London, United Kingdom
 Galerie Orillés-Fourcat, Paris, France
 Galería ARTE3, León, Mexico

2000 Frank Lloyd Gallery, Santa Monica, California

Gallery Sjokando, Kyoto, Japan
 Gallery Move, Yokohama, Japan
 Keramikmuseum, Höhr-Grenzhausen, Germany
 Galería de Arte Contemporáneo, Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico

- Garth Clark Gallery, New York
- 1999 Frank Lloyd Gallery, Santa Monica,
California
Cultural Center of Mexico, Copenhagen,
Denmark
Museum of Porcelain, Rostrand, Switzerland
Variations in Ceramics, Casa Oaxaca, Oaxaca,
Mexico
Gustavo Pérez. Ceramics, Museum of Modern
Art, Mexico, D.F.
Gallery Sjukando, Kyoto, Japan
- 1998 Gallery of the University of Foreign Studies,
Kyoto, Japan
Gallery Yamaki, Osaka, Japan
Gustavo Pérez and Koie Ryoji, Recent Work,
Matsue Kaikan, Shimane-Ken, Japan
Gallery Meitetsu, Nagoya, Japan
Cultural Center of Mexico, Paris, France
- 1997 *Escultura y pintura*, Juan Martín Gallery, Mexico,
D.F.
Con la música, Theater of the State, Xalapa,
Veracruz, Mexico
Ceramics, International Festival of Biarritz,
Biarritz, France
- 1996 *Pruebas y errores*, Library of Mexico, Mexico,
D.F.
- 1995 *Cerámica*, Casa Diego Rivera Museum,
Guanajuato, Mexico
- Cerámica*, Manuel Doblado Theater, León,
Mexico
Cerámica, Museum of the Arts, Guadalajara,
Mexico
- 1994 *Cerámica*, Museum of Contemporary Art of
Oaxaca, Mexico
- 1993 *Penúltimas con secuencias*, Juan Martín
Gallery, Mexico, D.F.
Mexican Cultural Institute, San Antonio, Texas
Gustavo Pérez, Ceramista, Alfa Cultural Center,
Monterrey, Mexico
Cerámica y Dibujo, Gallery of the State, Xalapa,
Veracruz, Mexico
- 1992 *Mudanzas, El Dibujo en la Cerámica*,
Metropolitan Gallery, Mexico, D.F.
- 1991 *Cuadernos* (with Gabriel Macotela), Gallery
Ramón Alva of the Canal, Xalapa, Veracruz,
Mexico
- 1990 *Forma Abierta*, López Quiroga Gallery, Mexico,
D.F.
Vasos Comunicantes, Carrillo Gil Museum,
Mexico, D.F.
- 1988 Gallery of the Veracruz Institute of Culture,
Veracruz, Mexico
The Art Center, Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico
- 1986 *Vasijas*, Gallery of Mexican Art, Mexico, D.F.
- 1984 Galería Het Kapelhuis, Amsterdam, Holland
- 1983 Sint Joost Akademie, Breda, Holland
Zeeus Kultureel Centrum, Middelburg, Holland

- Kultureel Centrum, Bergen op Zoom, Holland
- 1980 Galería Teorema, Mexico, D.F.
- 1979 Gallery of the School of Design and Artesans,
Mexico, D.F.
- 1978 Radio Educación, México, D.F.
- 1977 House of Culture, Querétaro, Qro., Mexico
- 1976 House of Culture, Querétaro, Qro., Mexico

**Museum
Collections**

- Carrillo Gil Museum, Mexico City
- Cultural Center of Contemporary Art, Mexico City
- Keramikmuseum Westerwald, Höhr-Grenzhausen,
Germany
- Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles,
California
- Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, California
- Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Quebec,
Canada
- Museum of Art from the Prefecture de Saga, Saga, Japan
- Museum of Art, Querétaro City
- Museum of Contemporary Art, Oaxaca City
- Museum of Modern Art, Mexico City, Mexico
- Racine Art Museum, Racine, Wisconsin
- Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park, The Museum of
Contemporary Ceramic Art, Shiga Prefecture, Japan