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ART / DEAD SERIOUS

## DEAD SERIOUS: GRIMANESA AMORÓS

by VIOLET



Maurizio Cattelan

ART / DEAD SERIOUS

## MAURIZIO CATTELAN

by CASSIE

Is it just me, or is this: and this: and even this: way more interesting and thought-provoking than this: Maurizio Cattelan has some awesome work, but somehow all of it thrown together dangling from the ceiling of the Guggenheim isn't doing it for me. This installation makes for a really chaotic (not in a good...



ART / DEAD SERIOUS

## EL ANATSUI

by CASSIE

"Art grows out of each particular situation, and I believe that artists are better off working with whatever their environment throws up." -El Anatsui, 2003 I have seen El Anatsui's sculptures in person quite a few times (the first time being at Jack Shainman Gallery almost two years ago) and they are pretty magnificent things...



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ART / DEAD SERIOUS

## DEAD SERIOUS: GRIMANESA AMORÓS

by VIOLET

WE like interviews that are interviews.  
WE like pictures that are pictures.  
WE like people speaking for themselves.  
WE like work speaking for itself.  
WE like **Grimanesa** being Grimanesa.



*All images courtesy of Grimanesa Amorós Studio*

1. One of the principle preoccupations we have at WE SWEAR is the breaking down of binaries in modern day society and culture, a huge one for us is the idea of “natural” and “artificial.” When you speak about your work, much of your inspiration and subject matter come from “organic” or “natural” elements, yet you use “artificial” mediums to realize your ideas and vision. Was this a conscious decision? And how do you view this binary in art? In contemporary life?

The natural world moves me, but obviously cannot be replicated. As an artist, I have always been interested in different materials and what they bring to my work. Living in a world surrounded by artificiality, I sought to bring

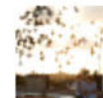
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DEAD SERIOUS: GRIMANESA AMORÓS



MAURIZIO CATTELAN



THE EXPLODING GIRL, 2009

EL ANATSUI

the natural world into these artificial materials. Since I work with a lot of technology, I thought merging the two worlds would bring fascinating results.

**2. In your earlier work (2001-2009) you used “artificial” mediums, like silicone and encaustic, but your pieces had very organic and visceral shapes, textures and surfaces. Now with the light bubble forms, everything is clean, smooth. Please tell us about this transition.**

I think this was a reaction to working in New York City, which surrounds us with tall buildings and geometric architecture. This is in stark contrast to when I was growing up in Peru, where I was surrounded by organic, natural forms – such as water, mountains, vineyards, and even deserts. My current work is a merger of my Peruvian upbringing with now being part of New York City.

**3. Your current signature forms are the light bubbles. They are used in different pieces and often represent different inspirations (the most recent grapes in Racimo, foam in Uros series, life-qualities in Terrarium.). How did this form come to represent so many things for you?**

When I was a child living on the coast of Peru, I have always loved the beauty of the ocean; everything from the tides to the colors, to the bubbles and the foam. I remember growing up, I would cover my entire body with this foam, in a way becoming a 'living sculpture' – with my mother of course yelling at me in the background. The structure of water, foam, and bubbles have been recurring themes that seem to permeate throughout all my life and, in turn, my work.

**4. How were the light bubble concept and structure first formed?**

My Peruvian roots and personal history influence my work; I have many good memories of times spent at vineyards in my native Lima. My fascination of the grapes lead to my research on the natural form of the raceme. This clustering became the initial inspiration for Racimo – a light sculpture under the bridge of Royal Caribbean International's Allure of the Seas that has influenced the current direction of my light sculpture work. Whether it is a simple shape of a grape, or an intricate element like parts of a human body, the natural world moves me.

**5. When did you first start to use light in your work? Why?**

In 2004, I remember finishing my Rootless Algas installation at Art Space in North Carolina, and wanting to communicate with my viewer in a deeper way. I felt that incorporating light would close the gap between spectator and the piece. When people view the sculptures, they become part of the artwork, even if it's only for a few seconds. The amazing part is that when people view my work, they 'get it' – they feel the pieces communicate with them on some level.

After working with many different media, I felt that incorporating light would bring the magic I was looking for to my work. Light engages the viewer – my sculptures are one with the light and one cannot be separated from the other. The custom lighting sequence in each piece is carefully engineered, from each shade of color to every transition made.

**6. We first met you at the opening of Uros for the ISSEY MIYAKE store in Tribeca. Tell us about your piece for that space.**

Tribeca ISSEY MIYAKE is very dear to me. I am in love with the clean and modern aesthetic used in tribeca ISSEY MIYAKE, the Miyake US headquarters which collaborated with Frank Gehry for their flagship store carrying all Issey Miyake collections. I created Uros to reflect and enhance this modern practicality. It is a merger of the old with the new, and together they create something entirely different.



**7. How was creating for a retail space different than creating for a public socially conscious space? Or is it not different?**

For me, there is no difference. I have tremendous respect for the location surrounding the piece. The artwork always emerges from the space. I carefully consider the history and logistics of each site to determine what I think would best enhance and reflect the space where the artwork will be installed.

**8. Although your body of work is visually diverse, it all feels very mythical to us. Has the concept of myths played a role in your work and process?**

I think this question goes back to my history of being a traditional painter. I have always been fascinated by Pre-Columbian and African history, the latter particularly after my visit to the west coast of deep black Africa. The richness of the cultures in Africa changed my perspective of time and composition that continue to influence my work today.

**9. Or even larger, how have myths played a role in your life?**

As an adult, I became very interested in the Moche sacrificial patterns to honor the earth, the moon, and the sun.

**10. It is obvious you love Peru, for many reasons. But as we are New Yorkers, have to selfishly ask, what is it that you enjoy about New York? Has it ever been inspirational to you? (Be honest, we can take it.)**

When I moved to the United States in 1984, I loved the smell of freedom you had when you were walking the streets of New York City. Walking the streets of NYC – especially by 42nd street, Times Square – I immediately said to myself, “This is my city.” I loved the pornography, the pimps, the 25 cent machines, the energy - it was just like being part of a movie, like the ones I saw growing up. I was overwhelmed by the convergence of different people and cultures, from the food, the languages and the customs.

The excitement of starting a new life, not knowing anybody in a foreign country, was intoxicating...

I've traveled extensively since then, but still have never seen any place as diverse as NYC. Whenever I'm away, after three weeks, I long to return. The city is like a drug to me, everything about it inspires me.

**11. Sometimes we feel like artists have something they wish were asked of them during interviews, but never are. What do you wish someone would ask you during an interview? (Really, anything, we want to know.)**

People don't often ask me how I balance my personal and professional life. I myself like to hear this in other interviews, but it is rarely asked. I wish I would be asked about balancing being an artist and traveling with being a mother and sharing your life with a significant other.

**12. And your answer?**

I am constantly trying to balance my life. For me, balance is another word for happiness.

**13. Okay, here's where we ask you if there projects are you working on at the moment? Upcoming shows?**

We are currently doing a piece for the La Torre de los Vientos as part of the Patronato Ruta de la Amistad A.C. and the World Monuments Fund in Mexico City.

My light sculpture, Uros Island, that is currently on exhibition at the Wereldmuseum in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, will be traveling to the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts in Taichung, Taiwan, as part of the traveling exhibition Future Pass, which began at this past year's 54th Venice Biennale in Venice, Italy. The exhibition will open this May.

We are also discussing a Retrospective of my work in Peru scheduled for 2013 at the Instituto Cultural Peruano Norteamericano (ICPNA).

I have several private commissions to create large outdoor light sculptures, one of which is for the gardens of a private collector in Vienna, Austria.

Lastly, I am in conversation with Broadway Housing Communities regarding the design & construction of a piece for their new development in West Harlem, which will include the Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art and Storytelling and is scheduled to open in Spring 2014.



# Grímanesa Amoros's PROUST QUESTIONNAIRE

THE PRINCIPAL ASPECT OF MY PERSONALITY. Loyalty

THE QUALITY I DESIRE IN A MAN. Honesty ☺

THE QUALITY I DESIRE IN A WOMAN. Practicality

WHAT I MOST VALUE IN MY FRIENDS. Truthfulness

MY PRINCIPLE DEFECT. "Being a Perfectionist"

MY FAVORITE OCCUPATION. Artist

MY IDEA OF HAPPINESS. Balance

WHAT I BELIEVE TO BE THE GREATEST MISFORTUNE. The word "NO"

WHAT I SHOULD MOST LIKE TO BE. Dancer

THE COUNTRY WHERE I SHOULD LIKE TO LIVE. USA / Peru

MY FAVORITE COLOR. Purple

MY FAVORITE FLOWER. Casablanca

MY FAVORITE BIRD. Toucan

MY FAVORITE PROSE AUTHORS. Oriam Fallaci.

MY FAVORITE POETS. Neruda.

MY FAVORITE HEROES OF FICTION.

Jack Sparrow from  
Pirates of the Caribbean.

MY FAVORITE HEROINES OF FICTION.

Super Woman,

MY FAVORITE COMPOSERS.

Hilmar Örn Hilmarsson

MY FAVORITE PAINTERS.

Knox Martin, Delacroix, Titian.

MY HEROES IN REAL LIFE.

Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Dalai Lama.

MY HEROINES IN REAL LIFE.

my Mother, Mother Teresa of  
Calcutta.

MY FAVORITE FOOD AND DRINK.

Fried Yucca and a Bourbon on the rocks

MY FAVORITE NAMES.

"Shammuel"

WHAT I HATE MOST OF ALL.

Rats

HISTORICAL FIGURES I MOST DESPISE.

the conquistadores

EVENT IN HISTORY I MOST ADMIRE.

Berlin wall coming down.

THE NATURAL GIFT I WOULD MOST LIKE TO POSSESS.

To Sing

HOW I WOULD LIKE TO DIE.

Looking at a Sunset with my  
Disco Sours drink.

MY PRESENT STATE OF MIND.

→ Best ever

THE FAULTS FOR WHICH I HAVE THE MOST INDULGENCE.

eating chocolate

THE FAULTS FOR WHICH I HAVE THE MOST TOLERANCE.

lack of knowledge

MY MOTTO.

"We are Beautiful Human  
Machines."