



MUSEO JUMEX PRESENTS *GABRIEL DE LA MORA: LA PETITE MORT* A THEMATIC SURVEY OF THE ARTIST'S PRACTICE OVER THE PAST TWO DECADES

OPENING SEPTEMBER 25, 2025, THE EXHIBITION EXAMINES DESIRE, LOSS, AND MATERIAL TRANSFORMATION IN DE LA MORA'S WORK

25.SEP.2025 – 08.FEB.2026
GALLERY 3

Mexico City, September 4, 2025 — Opening September 25, 2025, Museo Jumex presents *Gabriel de la Mora: La Petite Mort*, an in-depth survey of the artist's practice over the past two decades. The exhibition brings together nearly ninety works with minimal and often monochromatic surfaces that belie great technical complexity, conceptual rigor, and embedded information.

Born in Mexico City in 1968, Gabriel de la Mora is known for transforming found, discarded, and obsolete materials through seemingly alchemic processes into exquisite objects and lustrous and alluring finishes. Installed in the museum's 3rd floor gallery, the exhibition explores the recurring presence of desire and eroticism in De la Mora's practice, engaging both the surface tension of the works and the deeper unconscious creative drives that inform them. There is also an implied loss, a symbolic or physical death involved in the majority of De la Mora's artworks, most often displayed through the materials he uses.

Co-organized by Museo Jumex and Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey (MARCO), *La Petite Mort* is guest-curated by Tobias Ostrander with coordination by Museo Jumex Curatorial Assistant Carolina Estrada Garcia.

EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

Structured around six thematic sections—*Bodies, Erasure, Heat, The Edge of Desire, Touch*, and *The Pleasure of the Viewer*—the exhibition explores two central preoccupations found in De la Mora's work, that of death itself and that of ecstatic sexual pleasure. The title *La Petite Mort* refers to a French expression for orgasm or "the little death." The exhibition follows these and the related senses of loss and abandonment that run through De la Mora's practice. By exploring the physical encounters between the works and their viewers, *La Petite Mort* recognizes the conceptual intricacies of the works within the exhibition, while questioning their aesthetic purity and objective beauty.

Bodies, the first of the six thematic sections within the exhibition, features works that explore human and inanimate bodies through portraiture, physical presence, and transfer-impressions. In *Memoria I*, 24.10.07 (2007), De la Mora casts seventeen resin reproductions of human skulls representing living family members, as well as his deceased father and sister. Since 2004, the artist has employed human hair as a drawing method and as a material imbued with DNA to question the boundaries between drawing, sculpture, and portrait as seen in *1951-G.M-25-1993* (2007), which depicts the artist's father. The use of hair can also be found in *Adam II* (2006), a portrait of a young man. These works are in dialogue with abstract pieces such as *CBMX-S XIX I* (2017), in which the dissected "body" of an 1870s upholstered chair reveals its fabric "skin" and wooden "skeleton," evoking themes of age and loss.

Erase highlights works that involve images and materials whose original state has been altered, either through the artist's direct intervention in the form of physical abrasion or through his recontextualization of found materials that have been deteriorated by use, age, or wear. Two altered works of male pornography, an untitled acrylic painting (2003) and *Página 42 / 25 de agosto de 2009 / 6.6 gramos* (2009), present pages from magazines that have been erased by the artist, disrupting the viewing of explicit images. Other works in this section recontextualize found materials, such as torn street posters and fragments of century-old building roofs, into tactile abstractions that challenge conventional notions of permanence. The section also includes de la Mora's *Originalmente Falso* [Originally Fake] series, in which the artist reworks forged paintings attributed to renowned artists such as Arnold Böcklin, Mathias Goeritz and Mario Carreño, through destructive processes like scraping off paint or using unconventional materials to mimic aging.

The section titled **Heat** centers on works shaped by fire, both as a material process and a metaphor for physical intensity. Here, heat evokes intense sensations experienced by the human body during moments of heightened pleasure. Featured in this section are pieces from De la Mora's *Introduction* (2003-2009) series, consisting of six pages from the artist's master's thesis that have been burnt. The charred pages have been transformed into delicate sculptures, whose black lyrical forms were made by the fortuitous movements of flames and air. Also on view are a series of found antique landscape paintings that have been exposed to heat and the elements, including *81 días I* (2019), in which Cyprus trees and a Tuscan-like landscape are barely recognizable in chips of cracked paint.

The Edge of Desire highlights De la Mora's fascination with edges, cuts, and borders and the tension between surface and depth. In *3,936 capas de pintura 1A - 1B* (2011), two objects are made from nearly four thousand monochrome layers of acrylic paint. While the top layer of one of the objects appears completely white, its cut edges reveal a canyon of kaleidoscopic colors. Another highlight is *89,911 - An.* (2021), a large square mosaic formed by tiny pieces of andesite, a gray stone produced by lava and a material used in pre-Hispanic sculpture in Mexico. These thousands of randomly shaped fragments, with sharp edges and angular surfaces, are arranged so that each stone leans on the other, creating a textured monochromatic pattern.

Touch brings together works that trace the evidence and absence of physical contact, including the artist's first artwork, *m-294* (1972), which he created when he was four years old. De la Mora, who is dyslexic, originally wrote the letter "m" backwards. After correction from his teacher, he repeatedly drew the letter properly, until as an act of creative defiance, he drew it upside-down on the back of the same sheet, offering mirrored copies of the letter. This section will also feature *B-55 izq. / 55 der.* (2016), a large installation composed of framed fabrics from 55 pairs of antique speakers, each marked by sound movements, creating symmetrical compositions. *1,152 - I / Pi.* (2014) furthers this exploration of trace and memory, featuring over a thousand used leather shoe soles, showcasing varied patterns of wear due to habitual movement.

The exhibition closes with the section ***The Pleasure of the Viewer***, which directly acknowledges Roland Barthes' seminal 1973 essay titled "The Pleasure of the Reader," foregrounding the active role of the viewer in artworks. These works invite engagement and interaction, whether through text that demands to be read, surfaces that show marks that beg to be deciphered, or references to eyes and reflective surfaces that implicate the viewer in the act of looking. Large-scale examples of the artist's recent work are textured monochromes involving thousands of fragments of eggshells. These include both pale green-blue or pure white eggs shells, as in *467,685* (2020). The pieces draw viewers in with their seemingly miraculous surfaces, provoking questions about their making and the time involved in their production. Eggs, as symbols of potential life, and their discarded shells, suggesting loss, are here engaged in a process of transformation and regeneration. Another highlight is the artist's recent series on butterfly wings exploring their vivid colors and unique iridescence. Works in this series require the viewer to move back and forth to fully capture the visual effects. *LO QUE NO VEMOS, LO QUE NOS MIRA* (2014) features letters carved from black obsidian, appearing to float off the wall, reflecting on the subconscious and hidden aspects of the viewer that art can reveal. Works such as *G.M.C. O+ / 14,565.6 cm2* (2009) and *10,000 cm2 II - G.M.C. O+* (2009) reference the AIDS crisis, Catholic and Aztec rituals, and blood's potent symbol of divine transfiguration. *Prótesis oculares del artista a color* (2014) features prosthetic reproductions of De la Mora's own eyes. Placed on a small shelf, they appear as a surrealist offering, perhaps expressing his desire to share with us the most significant anatomical part of himself as an artist.



EXHIBITIONS ALSO ON VIEW AT MUSEO JUMEX

Museo Jumex's fall and winter 2025 exhibitions showcase the depth and range of its curatorial program, reaffirming its role as a platform for world-class international art.

Works from the Colección Jumex

10.SEP.2025 – 08.FEB.2026 | Gallery 2

Works from the *Colección Jumex* brings together artworks that explore concepts of time through various scientific and belief systems, and reflect on lifespans, momentary events, growth, and decay. The exhibition includes significant works created over the past five decades by artists such as Lara Favaretto, Hans-Peter Feldmann, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Gordon Matta-Clark, Yeni Mao, Bárbara Sánchez-Kane, Álvaro Urbano, and Frida Orupabo, among others. All works on view are recent acquisitions or major artworks that have not previously been presented at the museum.

The Tiger's Coat

25.SEP.2025 – 08.FEB.2026 | Gallery 1

The Tiger's Coat is a curatorial project by Rodrigo Ortiz Monasterio that examines the complex life and legacy of Tina Modotti (1896–1942)—a photographer, activist, and enigmatic cultural icon. Born in Italy and later emigrating to the United States, Modotti ultimately settled in Mexico, where she created her most significant body of work and developed close relationships with key artists and intellectuals. In an era of anti-communist repression, she was forced into exile in 1930, later returning to Mexico under a false identity. The exhibition moves beyond Modotti's celebrated photography to construct a broader narrative about her influence. It interweaves historical documents with historic and contemporary artworks by artists such as Danh Võ, Edward Weston, Pati Hill, and Rodrigo Hernández to offer new perspectives on her enduring impact.

Elsa-Louise Manceaux: Voice Notes

25.SEP.2025 – 08.FEB.2026 | Gallery -1

In Voice Notes, Elsa-Louise Manceaux (b. 1985, Paris) expands the definition of painting by integrating voice, text, typography, moving images, and sound. Describing her works as “Radio-Paintings,” the artist weaves together voice notes, literary fragments, and archival recordings, creating a space where listening and visuality converge. The project examines how painting—traditionally a silent medium—can serve as a vibrant conduit for dialogue and connection in an era dominated by digital communication.

MUSEO JUMEX

Museo Jumex, Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporáneo's main platform, opened its doors to the public in November 2013 as an institution devoted to contemporary art. Its aim is not only to serve a broad and diverse public, but also to be a laboratory for experimentation and innovation in the arts. Through its exhibitions, publications, research, and public programs, Museo Jumex familiarizes audiences with the concepts and contexts that inform current art practice. Through the use of critical and pedagogical tools, the museum's educational programs further the institution's commitment to build links between contemporary art and the public.

PRESS CONTACTS

RUTH OVSEYEVITZ
ruth@fundacionjumex.org

MUSEO JUMEX
MIGUEL DE CERVANTES
SAAVEDRA 303,
COLONIA GRANADA,
11520, MEXICO CITY

T.
(55) 5395 2615
(55) 5395 2618

FUNDACIONJUMEX.ORG