

**NEARCH****Imagining : Artists in residence – Maastricht  
Leyla Cardenas**

**Leyla Cardenas** Visual Artist from Bogotá-Colombia.

She Received her BA in Fine Arts from Los Andes University and her MFA from the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA).

Cárdenas installation, sculpture, mixed-media work delves into urban ruins and city landscapes as indications of social transformation, loss and historical memory.

Her work has been shown at Casas Riegner gallery-Bogotá, Palais de Tokyo-Paris, CAM-Raleigh, Institute of Contemporary Art-SanJose (SJICA), José Bienvenu Gallery -NY, Maison de l'Amérique Latine-Paris, Apexart-New York, Banco de la República Bogotá, Museo La Tertulia-Cali, among others,

additionally to solo exhibitions in Bogotá, San Jose (CA) and Los Angeles.

Recent awards and commissions include: Winner of the 2012 Biennial Award of Bogotá, selected for LARA (Latin American Roaming Art) a project of Asiaciti Trust 2012, Winner of a research fellowship with the collective: The Cooperative - Ministry of Culture-Colombia 2011, she was selected to participate in a workshop with Mona Hatoum at Fundación Marcelo Botin-Spain 2010, and she was also an Associate Artist-in-Residence at the Atlantic Center for the Arts (ACA) in 2007. She was also the winner of the Grand Prize MOLAA Awards 2008-Museum of Latin American Art, CA.

She has worked as a lecturer at Universidad de los Andes, Jorge Tadeo Lozano and Nacional-Bogotá.

Cárdenas work can be found in public and private collections in Bogotá, South America and throughout the United-States.

**Statement:**

I explore reality through a sculptural gaze. For me, it's inevitable to see the objects of the world as ruins of what they used to be. A parallel to the procedure of an amateur archaeologist can be made. I learn from my work by un-doing instead of doing, de-constructing instead of building. The materials I interact with are literally pieces of a fragmented reality. What can I learn from un-doing or dissecting objects or surfaces from a specific place? What can I discover from items that allow a certain un-raveling of time? Is it possible to spatialize and materialize time? Is time weightless?

My research has taken me to understand how time and space are understood from an archaeological point of view. For example, I have used stratigraphy techniques. This allows me to correlate findings by their relative position in strata, as well as see materials as palimpsests, the fragments as humble documents where present, past and future times are contained and recorded.

Consequently, I´m permanently looking for the layers of meaning that compose the fabric we call reality. The material I work with comes from abandoned spaces, demolition sites, and urban ruins. Mostly abstract iconographic fragments used as sign or signal; consisting of archival documents, pieces of furniture, accumulated layers of paint and old photographs.

**What does it mean for you as an artist to work with universities and research institutes as the NEARCH project offers?**

I think it would be a very challenging and life changing experience. It is such an ideal situation for new explorations and encounters. As artists, it is so important to get away from our usual comfort zone and rethink completely and constantly what we are doing and why we are doing it. I am looking forward to the experience of witnessing closely how from different disciplines we can approach common subjects. How to elaborate for example; on questions of time, place, presentation and representation. The space for thought and reflection that only projects like these can provide is very valuable.