

Artist Biography

For the past five years, Mariana Acosta-Contreras has been a professor at Universidad Gestalt de Diseño in her hometown Xalapa, México. In her studio class "Precious Waste, The Art of Transforming Post-Consumer Waste", she challenges notions of perception about waste where students experiment with discarded goods, transforming them into intricate art jewelry objects.

In 2010 she was conferred the "Niche Award" by Niche Magazine. Her work has been exhibited at the MAD Museum (New York), Bellevue Arts Museum, (Seattle, WA), Estonian Museum of Art and Design (Tallin, Estonia), Wiloa Arts and Cultural Center (Hawaii), The Society of Arts and Crafts (Boston, MA), and most recently her academic work was showcased at Rhode Island School of Design (Providence, RI) as a precedent of pedagogical alumni work.

In 2015 she was invited to speak at a TEDx event in Laredo, TX., about her sustainability oriented class-project. In 2016 her article "When Life Gives you Shit, Use it as Fertilizer" was published in Art Jewelry Forum's website in both English and Spanish languages. Mariana Acosta received an MFA from RISD (2009) and a BA from Universidad Gestalt de Diseño (2002).

Group Exhibitions

Sol Koffler Gallery, RISD, Providence, RI
Formative and Persisting. How the Thesis Lives On, 2016

Society of Arts and Crafts, BOSTON, MA.
From Minimal to Bling, 2015

Wiloa Arts And Cultural Center, HILO, HI
Reimagining Paper and Fiber, 2014

Museo Franz Mayer, México City, MX
Think Twice Exhibition, 2014

Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design, Tallin, Estonia
Think Twice Exhibition, 2013

Bellevue Museum Seattle, WA
Think Twice Exhibition, 2011

SOFA Chicago, IL., EUA
Sculpture Objects, Functional Art and Design Fair, 2010

MAD MUSEUM New York, NY., EUA
Think Twice Exhibition, 2010

Niche Awards 2010, Philadelphia, PA
Wearable Fibers, Winner, 2010

Mariana Acosta Contreras

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Teaching Philosophy

Since my first day at RISD my sight was drawn to materials that had little to do with the language of conventional jewelry. Exhausted from trying to fit materials into a specific design paradigm, I began an intense process of experimentation that eventually forced me to let go of my expectations. Then something happened- an honest process of flow, leading to a transformation that triggered responses in the form of art, emerged as an acuity of mind that enabled a straightforward dialogue with the core language of materials. Orange peels, chewing gum foil, and hot glue became materials that reshaped my definition of wearability as a jeweler.

Now, as an educator in my country, I rely heavily on my "RISD -earned- acuity" as a navigation device in my teaching practice,—a kind of freedom that becomes a large responsibility in itself. I request from my students to unearth unconventional knowledge from the depths of their own intuition, negotiating with the rationality of the trained designer's brain as they develop an open dialogue with everyday, discarded materials.

Lectures / Publications / Exhibitions

400 Designs in Contemporary Jewelry, 2016
Nicolas Estrada. Promopress.

When Life Gives You Shit, Use it as Fertilizer, 2016
Article in English & Spanish by Mariana Acosta Contreras.
artjewelryforum.org

This Jewelry is Trash, Literally It is Jewelry Made From Trash, 2015 / Interview with Mariana Acosta Contreras.
FAST Company. CO.Exist.com

TEDx LAREDO. UNCOVER / "Precious Waste", 2015
Conference / TAMIU, TX.

Precious Waste Exhibition, Sustainable Contemporary Jewelry, 2015, Universidad Gestalt de Diseño / Xalapa, Veracruz, MX

Showcase 500 Art Necklaces, 2013
Ray Hemachandra & Chunghi Choo. Lark Jewelry & Beading

Color In Fusion, a Thesis, 2009
By Mariana Acosta Contreras. Blurb.com