

Luis Fernando Zapata (Colombia, 1951-1994)

Luis Fernando Zapata was a visionary artist whose work profoundly reflects on the transience of existence and on art as a vestige of collective memory. His practice, influenced by research into Mesoamerican, Egyptian, and Middle Eastern cultures, as well as his personal experience with HIV became a visual testament to resilience and transcendence.

Since 1990, his work focused on exploring the origins of art, its disappearance, and its persistence over time. His iconography, informed by archaeological references and exequial rituals, translates into a contemporary reinterpretation of spirituality and symbols representing the transition between the earthly and the eternal. In this exhibition, his 'Tombes' series presents pieces that reference archaeological remains, conceived as thresholds to an introspective and mystical dimension. Inspired by the concept of Egyptian solar boats, the works in the 'Barge' series symbolize ritual vehicles that embody both physical and immaterial transitions. Finally, 'Objet Rituel' highlights the role of art as a sacred entity, endowed with a symbolic power that excels materiality and serves as a means of connection with the transcendent.

Jean-François Lyotard defines the immemorial as "that which cannot be remembered or forgotten, it is that which returns uncannily". In this vein, Zapata, through his work, projects a narrative that redefines the transience of life, strengthens memory, and explores the eternal.

On the 30th anniversary of his death from complications related to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, this exhibition honors his artistic legacy by bringing together the most iconic works of his career. The Immemorial not only celebrates the conceptual and aesthetic power of his work but also encourages reflection on the permanence of art and its ability to transcend the space and time it inhabits.







Barge, 1992 Hand molded paper pulp, natural pigments, and miscellaneous objects 74 3/4 x 25 5/8 x 4 in. 190 x 65 x 10 cm.





Objet Rituel, 1990
Paper pulp, pigments, and assorted objects
74 3/4 x 37 3/8 x 3/4 in.
190 x 95 x 2 cm.





Stela II, 1988 Hand molded paper pulp, natural pigments, and miscellaneous objects 55 7/8 x 37 3/8 in. 142 x 95 cm.



Luis Fernando Zapata at his studio. c. 1988. Montreuil, Paris.





Stela III, 1989 Hand molded paper pulp, natural pigments, and miscellaneous objects 75 1/4 x 50 in. 191 x 127 cm.



Luis Fernando Zapata at his studio. c. 1989. Montreuil, Paris.





Tombe, 1993 Hand molded paper pulp, sand, natural pigments, and miscellaneous objects 74 3/4 x 25 5/8 x 2 in. 190 x 65 x 5 cm.

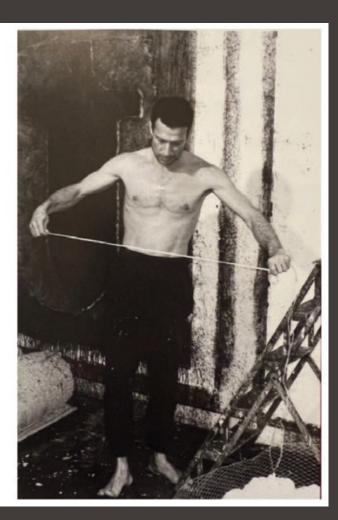




Sarcofagi N° 2, 1992 - 1994 Hand molded paper pulp, natural pigments, and miscellaneous objects 76 3/8 x 27 1/2 x 16 1/8 in. 194 x 70 x 41 cm.







Courtesy of the Estate of Luis Fernando Zapata. © Montreuil, 1993. Photo credits: Miklos Fejes.

Luis Fernando Zapata Chronology

1994	Dies from complications of HIV/AIDS in Bogota, Colombia.
1994	Leaves France for Colombia
1982	Moves to Paris France
1977	Professor. Graphic Design and Plastic Arts Faculty. Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano. Bogota
	Colombia
1976	Studies Diseño Grafico y Artes Plasticas. Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano. Bogota, Colombia
1951	Luis Fernando Zapata is born

Solo Exhibits

2025	Art Basel Miami Beach 2025. Survey Sector. Galeria Elvira Moreno
2024	'What Belongs to Us', MAT. Museum of Art of Tolima, Colombia. In collaboration with GEM
2024	'The Immemorial' Luis Fernando Zapata, Galería Elvira Moreno, Bogotá, Colombia.
1996	'Times of Silence', Museum of Modern Art, Bogotá, Colombia.
1994	Galería Garcés Velásquez, Madrid, Spain.
1994	ARCO 94, Sarcophagi, Galería Garcés Velásquez, Bogotá, Colombia.
1993	Galería Jenni Vilá, Cali, Colombia.
1993	Galería La Oficina, Medellín, Colombia.
1992	Atelirhorf, Bremen, Germany.
1991	Ritual Objects and Excavations, Galería Garcés Velásquez, Bogotá, Colombia.
1989	Galería Biervliet, Amsterdam, Netherlands. Shields,
1988	Galería Garcés Velásquez, Bogotá, Colombia.
1985	Galería Garcés Velásquez, Bogotá, Colombia.

Bibliography

Tiempos De Silencio. Luis Fernando Zapata. Hard and soft bound exhibition catalog. Illustrated in black and white and color. Edited by the Museum of Modern Art of Bogota (MAMBO). 1996.

Collective Exhibits

2026	Institute of Contemporary Art Los Angeles ICA-LA. Speaking in Tongues. Los Angeles,
	California, USA
2025	Ficciones patógenas (Pathogenic Fictions): Seeing Otherwise. Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art,
	New York, New York, USA
2024-25	Colección en escena #5. Fetiche: Material Conversations, Museum of Modern Art,
	Bogotá,Colombia.
2023	Virosis: Art and HIV in Colombia, Museum of Modern Art, Bogotá, Colombia.
1991	Salon Découvertes, Grand Palais, Paris, France.
1991	Salon de la Jeune Peinture, Grand Palais, Paris, France.
1990	Salon de la Jeune Peinture, Grand Palais, Paris, France.
	Centro Colombo Americano, Bogotá, Colombia.
	Colombian Art of the 1980s, Centro Colombo Americano, Bogotá, Colombia.
1990	Galería Negret, Bogotá, Colombia.
	National Artists' Salon, Bogotá, Colombia.
1989	Museo La Tertulia, Cali, Colombia.
1989	Non-Conventional Pictorial Supports, Centro Colombo Americano, Bogotá, Colombia.
1988	New Trends in Colombian Painting, Espace Lucernaire, Paris, France.
1987	La Colombie, Galerie Ecuries, Nîmes, France.
	Galería Garcés Velásquez, Bogotá, Colombia.
1986	Abstract Moment, Espace Pierre-Cardin, Paris, France.
	Small Formats, Galería Garcés Velásquez, Bogotá, Colombia.
1979	Second Young Art Salon, Medellín, Colombia.
1978	First Young Art Salon, Medellín, Colombia.
1977	Professors, Jorge Tadeo Lozano University, Bogotá, Colombia.

Institutional Collections

2026	Bequeathed. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA
2025	National Center for Art and Culture Georges Pompidou, Paris, France.
2025	Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia Madrid Spain
2025	Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art, New York, USA
2024	Museum of the Banco de la República, Bogotá, Colombia.
1994	Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá, Colombia. MAMBO

Notable private collections

2025	Bob Fisher Collection, San Francisco, Karla Harwich Collection-NY, David Ramirez Collection Mexico,
	and The Ernesto and Cecilia Poma Collection, Miami FL
2024	Ernesto Poma Family Collection-Miami FL

