

ROPES FOR FREEDOM

By Miranda Bruce-Mitford

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Some time ago I received by e-mail an invitation to see the work of the Costa Rican artist Paulina Ortiz in her home land. A friend from Guatemala, Marcela Valdeavellano sent me the invitation. Marcela is an artist, an expert in art marketing and a university professor as I am. In that mail she invited me to look closely at the work of Paulina; she qualified the work of this artist as one of the truest searches she has found lately in High Art in Central America

Being inquisitive by nature as I am, I decided to go inside the work of Ortiz and I discovered, somewhat surprisingly, that she really sends the spectator to a powerful and archetypical spiritual and interior world

The pieces she exhibits as from August 27 in the Enrique Echandi Gallery in San José, are strong calls to the rupture of the captivity of the known. The subtlety with which she goes from the soft lyricism of the strings as reed grass in the water, playful, mixed, recently cut to build a roof or a canoe, into the dramatism of those that, anointed with blood, raise looking for redemption, produce a powerful attraction on me.

The selection of the thread as leit-motiv in Paulina Ortiz is not by chance. For western imagery it represents the umbilical cord between heaven and earth. The string is synonymous with hindrance and captivity but also the possibility of life; it is the symbol of human destiny.

For this reason, being in contact with the work of Ortiz is an initiation ritual, it is the entrance way to the rupture of norms and conventionalities in artist expression, not only textual but also contextually.

The ropes, the strings, cut to the base or to the middle, in the hand of the gods of ancient times symbolized the defeat of ignorance and thus, liberation. In the hands of Paulina, they also represent the conflict that is overcome, the rupture of traditional media and artistic fashions; they mean her personal commitment with freedom of expression.

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