

Art in America

First Look: Sofía Córdova
Brandon Brown
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Sofía Córdova:
Echoes of a Tumbling Throne (Odas al fin de los tiempos) #8: COOERPOH a COOERPOH, 2016,
video, 28 minutes,
20 seconds.

Sofía Córdova

by Brandon Brown

THE WORLD'S ECOLOGICAL catastrophe and our stubborn apathy about its arrival are key themes in the work of Sofía Córdova, an artist based in Oakland, California, who casts the grim consequences of climate change in painting, sculpture, installation, video, and performance. Córdova has been developing intense sensory experiences of grief and celebration for several years now, rendering vivid our oncoming extinction.

A video and works on paper by Córdova figure prominently in "Sooner or Later: Non-Euclidean visions of the future as a place to be," a group show at Southern Exposure in San Francisco. In the series "The Kingdom Is Me" (2014–), she paints on magazine pages with black and white acrylic, obscuring the images until only dissociated fragments—a human body, a little animal, a glass of champagne—survive. The artist, who earned her MFA at the California College of the Arts in 2010, presents these images as ciphers for post-apocalypse communities attempting to reconstruct our world. For us, beholding them in the present, they constitute a dire warning, a harbinger of dissolution.

The centerpiece of "Sooner or Later" is the epic *Echoes of a Tumbling Throne (Odas al fin de los tiempos) #8: COOERPOH a COOERPOH* (2016). Imagining our planet more than a thousand years in the future, the ongoing project's videos and live performances offer a fractured narrative for those who live after the end of the world as we know it. Passages of original music made using chance operations, in addition to American pop songs rewritten in Spanish, score our species' downfall and tattered survival.

The eighth installment in the series takes place in Los Angeles and La Joongla, the ruins of an irradiated jungle in what used to be South America, in the year 3616. With extensive scenes set in a dance-club-cum-oracle-site, the video is a fable about the hubris of a wealthy white man who wants to be a god but gets reincarnated as an impoverished laborer. It's as melodramatic as any example of Hollywood eschatology, but also heartbreaking: a world where primal ritual returns after today's natural world disappears. Between Córdova's wild extremes of feeling, we viewers are left hanging around, coolly administering the burning trash. ○

CURRENTLY ON VIEW
Work by Sofía Córdova in "Sooner or Later: Non-Euclidean visions of the future as a place to be," at Southern Exposure, San Francisco, through Feb. 27, 2017.

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