



LUIS GONZÁLEZ PALMA, *Jerarquías de la Intimidad (La Anunciación)*, *Hierarchies of Intimacy (The Annunciation)*, (series), 2006. Photograph, dimensions variable. Courtesy Sol Del Rio, Guatemala City.

loop of a coin that rotates, endlessly, on its axis. An awe that has been delegated to affairs concerning a more scientific approach to things, brings out — nevertheless — the beauty of physical awareness in Alejo's work. Laconic, almost Zen-like in his settings and scenarios, he reveals essential physical notions that have been taken for granted since ancient Greece.

Air — not the notion of air, but air — becomes the essential material for his slight tower built upon bubbles. Surface, light and tension are examined as a precarious landscape, but also as the minimal prodigy it contains beyond its commonplaces. Its organic construction appeals to a heaven-like tissue, detached of its earthly attributes, unsustainable beyond its documentation for a show. The unsustainable is a topic for Mauricio Alejo. To sustain the unsustainable, at least, has always been one of his quests. That status may be awarded to the white thread that traces a line through a table. Beyond chance and pattern, the thread clings beyond the border of the table (as of the border of things) as a container. It is air. It clings through the thread, it's contained by it, at least for a moment or two. The water vapor is more consistent when it fills up the room. Still, it won't last.

An empiricist, Alejo details the indistinct relation perceived between time and space. A discussion that offers a glimpse over temptation; to art or to science? That is the question.

It's not that Alejo tries to answer it. He just marvels at it, malignantly.

Ricardo Pohlenz

GUATEMALA CITY

LUIS GONZÁLEZ PALMA

SOL DEL RIO

There are several positively surprising changes in Luis González Palma's latest exhibitions in his hometown, Guatemala City. Firstly, it seems that he has certainly moved away from what, for years, was his preferred subject, the typical indigenous Guatemalan individual, and has traded it in for subjects that yield a wider spectrum of possible readings. Secondly, he uses a much wider color palette for the first time, drifting away from his traditional black, sepia and silver or gold monochromes in a successful attempt to renovate his formal vocabulary. And finally, although the human relationships have always been one of González Palma's main artistic concerns, they have never been simultaneously so violent, spiritual or metaphysical, both subtly and literally. *Jerarquías de la Intimidad (La Anunciación)*, [Hierarchies of Intimacy (The Annunciation)], a contemporary re-interpretation of Gothic and Renaissance paintings of the Annunciation, is an accurate final shift towards what seems to be new formal and semantic research. Despite this, it retains a close and coherent relationship with his career, and in particular the other series "Hierarchies of Intimacy." It is also a further step into the heart and soul of human beings — two symbols

which are fundamental to the Catholic, colonial context in which González Palma was raised and which he continues to scrutinize here as in the past. The show presents a selection of the artist's latest episode of this ongoing project, started in 2004.

Not coincidentally, *Jerarquías de la Intimidad (La Anunciación)* is wisely complemented by *Tu/Mi Placer (You-Your/My Pleasure)*, a visually exquisite set of images hosted by a series of urban advertising structures scattered around the city's commercial and business districts. Like in previous González Palma's works — *Tensiones herméticas (Hermetic Tension)*, 1999, for example — it deals with issues of miscommunication and conflict. If *Tu/Mi Placer* focuses on the space rather than on the individual or the gesture, the two together effectively convey an atmosphere; they (re)discover and elaborate the setting for some of humanity's deepest struggles.

Emiliano Valdés

BANGKOK

SOPHEAP PICH

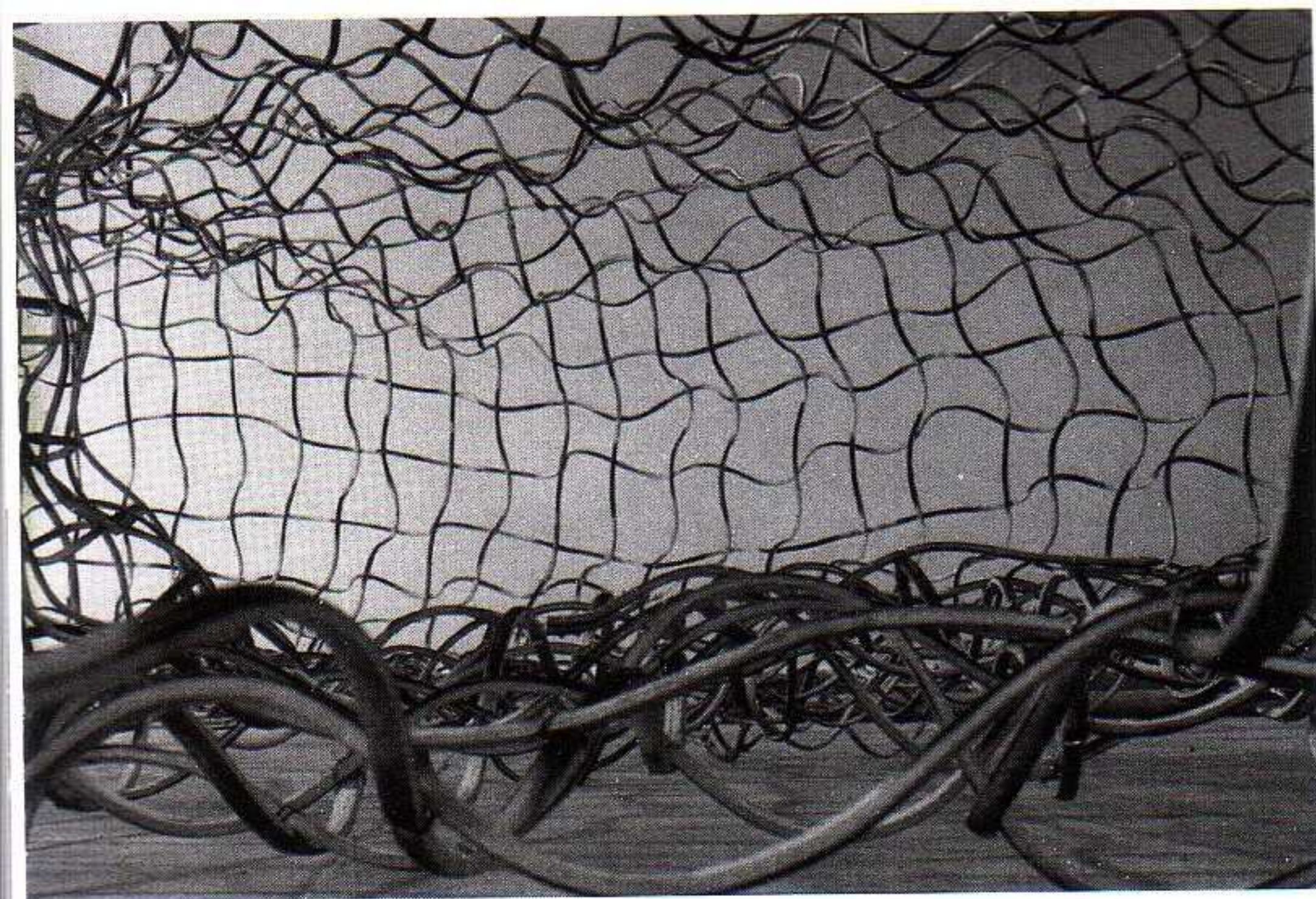
H GALLERY

Rattan is Sopheap Pich's primary material, which he manipulates and weaves into symbolic forms. A row of small phallic shapes emerge, in different stages of erection, from the wall; a grouping of dog-like forms stretch and squirm; and a giant undulating replica of a stomach hangs from the ceiling. Sculptures of abstracted water vessels complete the exhibition.

Light and shadow are essential to the experience of the artworks because of rattan's reflective qualities and Pich's method of weaving. While the exhibition was of individual sculptures, the shadows cast by their skeletal structures create an overall coherence that gave the sense of an installation. This was the strength of the exhibition. Light and shadow belie the hardness of the rattan and Pich's labor-intensive method. Moreover, the undulating forms themselves provide a great sense of fluidity for and between the sculptures.

The sculptures prove less interesting in individual terms. Pich is based in Phnom Penh and draws on Cambodian culture, if not other aspects of Southeast Asia, for inspiration. Symbolically, the sculptures read quickly as signs of degraded social circumstances: the dogs for scavenging and the stomach for hunger. According to accompanying notes, Pich is concerned with a current failure to irrigate Cambodian land as a reason for widespread poverty, so hence the water vessels. Certainly the fluidity of the exhibition as a whole alluded effectively to the idea of water, but it would be reductive to strictly situate this in local contexts. Likewise, rattan as a signifier of vernacular craft is importantly resisted. We can hope that Pich continues to transcend the particular conditions of his artworks' creation.

Brian Curtin



SOPHEAP PICH, *Delta (detail)*, 2007. Rattan and wire, 340 x 480 x 70 cm. Courtesy H Gallery, Bangkok.