
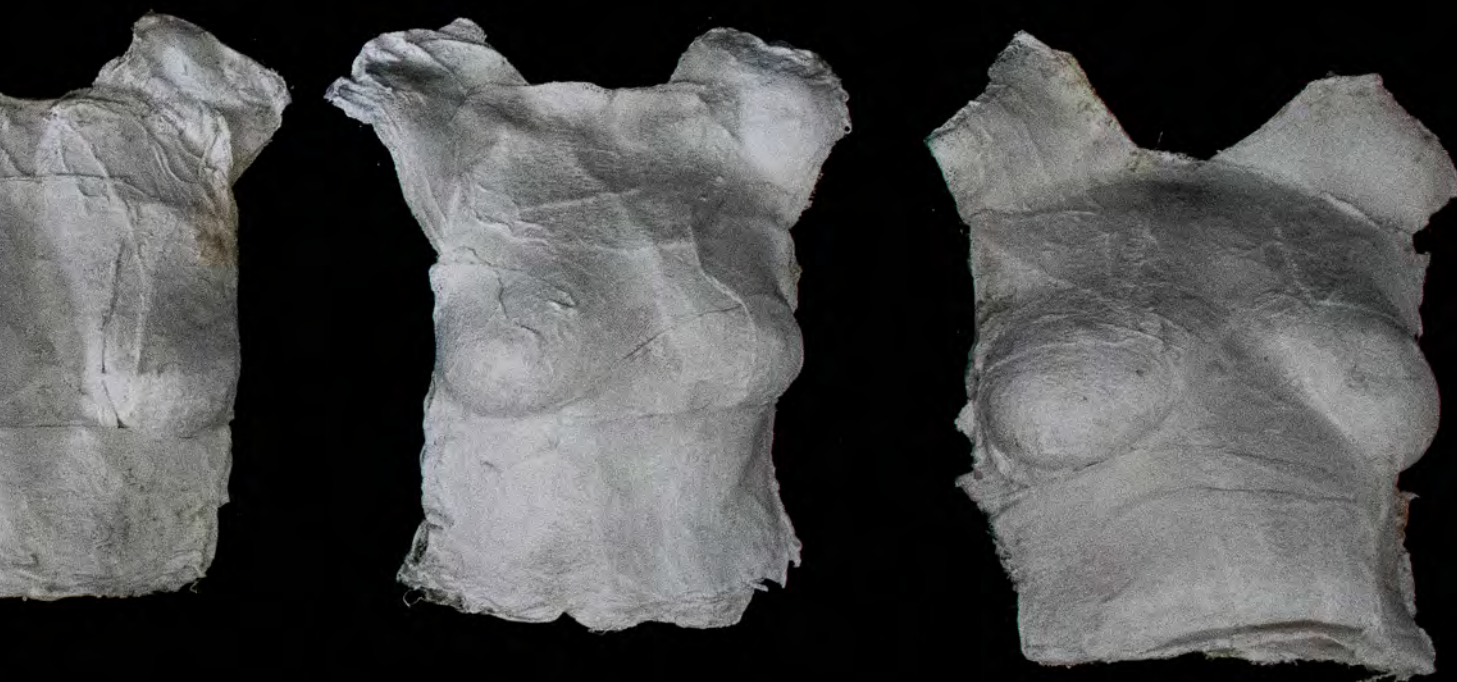


THOUGHT AND FORM



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Abstract

This following article is the result of the development of the project “*Objects and Hands: Heritage and Transgressions*” by *Ganemos Más*, winner of the *Es Cultura Local* Scholarship (Barrios Unidos District, Fourth Edition, 2023) from the District Institute of the Arts – IDARTES, in collaboration with the research project “*Pensamiento y Forma*” of the Unified National Corporation for Higher Education. This project is based on a research-creation process that constitutes a creative journey through three artisanal crafts: ceramics, leatherworking, and weaving, to generate contemporary creative pieces by merging the recognition of traditional craftsmanship with the everyday realities of five students. The result is the creation of objects that bridge the manual craft tradition with an expanded perspective on artistic concepts, offering new ways to understand aesthetic practice. The project develops through the transmission of artisanal knowledge, which subsequently leads to individual artistic development by each student. This process is based on an autoethnographic methodology with a participatory focus, emphasizing individual creative pursuits. The resulting works stem from personal experiences through manual craftsmanship as a method of creation. These objects embody form, material, texture, and symbolism as core plastic mechanisms, reimagining the aesthetic and material potential of the craft.

Keywords: creative process; form; material; texture; symbol

Pensamento e forma

Resumo

O presente artigo é o resultado do desenvolvimento do projeto “*Objetos e Mãos: Heranças e Transgressões*” da *Ganemos Más*, vencedor da Bolsa *Es Cultura Local (Localidade Barrios Unidos, Quarta Edição, 2023)* do Instituto Distrital das Artes – IDARTES, em colaboração com o projeto de pesquisa “*Pensamento e Forma*” da Corporación Unificada Nacional de Educación Superior. O resultado é a criação de objetos que conectam a tradição do fazer manual a uma perspectiva ampliada dos conceitos artísticos, oferecendo novas formas de compreender a prática estética. A pesquisa fundamenta-se em um processo de Pesquisa-Criação, iniciado a partir de um processo criativo que explora a criação por meio de três ofícios artesanais: cerâmica, marroquinaria e tecelagem. O objetivo é gerar peças criativas contemporâneas, combinando o reconhecimento do ofício com as realidades cotidianas de cinco estudantes. Dessa forma, busca-se criar objetualidades que conectem o tradicional do fazer manual com uma visão ampliada dos conceitos artísticos, promovendo novas maneiras de compreender o exercício estético.

O projeto se desenvolve a partir da transmissão de saberes artesanais, que, posteriormente, levam ao desenvolvimento artístico individual de cada um dos estudantes. Esse processo é baseado em uma metodologia autoetnográfica com foco participativo, priorizando as buscas criativas individuais. As obras resultantes têm como origem as experiências pessoais por meio do fazer manual como método de criação. Esses objetos incorporam forma, material, textura e símbolo como mecanismos plásticos fundamentais, reinventando o potencial estético e material do artesanato.

Palavras-chave: o processo criativo; a forma; o material, a textura, o símbolo

Pensamiento y forma

Resumen

El siguiente artículo es el resultado del desarrollo del proyecto “*Objetos y Manos: Herencias y Transgresiones*” de *Ganemos Más*, ganador de la Beca *Es Cultura Local - Localidad Barrios Unidos Cuarta Versión del año 2023*, del Instituto Distrital de las Artes – IDARTES, en alianza con el proyecto de investigación *Pensamiento y Forma* de la Corporación Unificada Nacional de Educación Superior, el cual se fundamenta en un proceso de Investigación Creación desde la constitución de un proceso creativo que explora la creación a partir de tres oficios artesanales como lo son la cerámica, la marroquinería y el tejido, para generar piezas creativas contemporáneas a partir de la conjunción del reconocimiento del oficio y realidades cotidianas de cinco estudiantes, de modo que se propicien objetualidades que relacionen lo tradicional del hacer manual, con una mirada ampliada de los conceptos artísticos, significando nuevas maneras de comprender el ejercicio estético. Así entonces, el proyecto se desarrolla desde una transmisión de saberes del oficio del artesano, que luego conlleva a un desarrollo artístico individual por cada uno de los estudiantes, basado en la metodología autoetnográfica con enfoque participativo, a partir de las búsquedas creativas individuales, en cuyas piezas se parte de la experiencia individual por medio del hacer manual como método de creación, para así generar objetualidades que reconozcan la forma, el material, la textura y el símbolo, como mecanismos plásticos.

Palabras clave: proceso creativo; la forma; el material; la textura; el símbolo

Ganemos Más and contextualization

Ganemos Más is a sociocultural organization, composed by managers, artists, artisans, educators and professionals from different fields of knowledge, who combine their expertise to contribute to the realization of artistic projects with a focus on craftsmanship and cultural. It is considered essential to relate the transmission of knowledge through cultural teaching, exploring artistic and craft practices, as these ultimately influence configurations that reflect the popular practices of individuals.

This article is the result of a reflective and creative process carried out by five students, who receive the transmission of knowledge from three artisans practicing their creative and human craft through the ceramic trade, leatherworking, and weaving (Figure 1), and later generate a creative process under the mentorship of a visual artist.

Thus, the project fosters relationships that combine the traditional practice of craftsmanship with contemporary arts, in a symbiotic intention to promote new material and reflective conceptions of artistic creation, as both converge in their formal intent to communicate (Garrido, 2021).

The project understands that the transmission of knowledge through manual work leads to a recognition of these trades as relevant elements in the cultural definition of people's everyday realities, to involve individual creative thinking from a perspective that places each student in their environments. From this point, from their specific place, conceptual relationships are defined for the configuration of artistic practice (Parra et al., 2024), since creative processes emerge from the environments themselves, as Mandoki (2003) suggests, knowledge emerges from the relationships the environment establishes for its individuals, with a prosaic intention to reflect their cultural aspects, as it involves the representation of everyday realities of their habitual practices.

Thus, from the interdisciplinarity of the relationship of craft practices, such as the making of ceramic objects, leatherwork, and textile recognition, the expansion of artistic processes that link traditional knowledge of craftsmanship as symbolic craft heritage with visual and plastic arts, through a link that connects the traditional nature of craftsmanship with the contemporary nature of artistic concepts, thus referring to new dialogical and representational relationships both for artisans in their craft and for artists in their material and conceptual creation, through the joint recognition of *thought* and *form* as primary elements in the aesthetic definition of their realities, so that creation emerges from the environments where communities generate their own design and development stances, largely shaped by the indigenous reference of the first inhabitants of the territory. In these creations, there is not only practical value reference in the making, but they also carry references to the relationship with well-being and even social organization (Escobar, 2018), enabling a comprehensive view of knowledge and crafts (Storm, 2020).

The development of the project was initially proposed from the artisan's workshop, as it is grounded as the place of real experience. As Bastidas-Pérez (2022) defines it, "the artisan workshop assumes as its own and intimates the processes, objects, and forms, invoking the knowledge of the past to recognize the present and create new utopias for the future" (pp. 210). It is a space for the exchange of knowledge that influences the ways of learning, creating, producing,

and disseminating the acquired knowledge, as it recognizes the processes from conscious, non-industrialized production. Secondly, a tutored process is generated in which students explore their own creative intentions to shape, based on the methodological postulates, their own plastic conceptions.

This vision of the workshop as a space for knowledge and learning is explored by Richard Sennett, who postulates that craftsmanship is not only about creating products, but also about engaging in the reflective understanding of the environment where the product emerges, which is seen in the repetitive action of making (2008). This leads to the workshop becoming a space where students explore social reality through the very act of making.

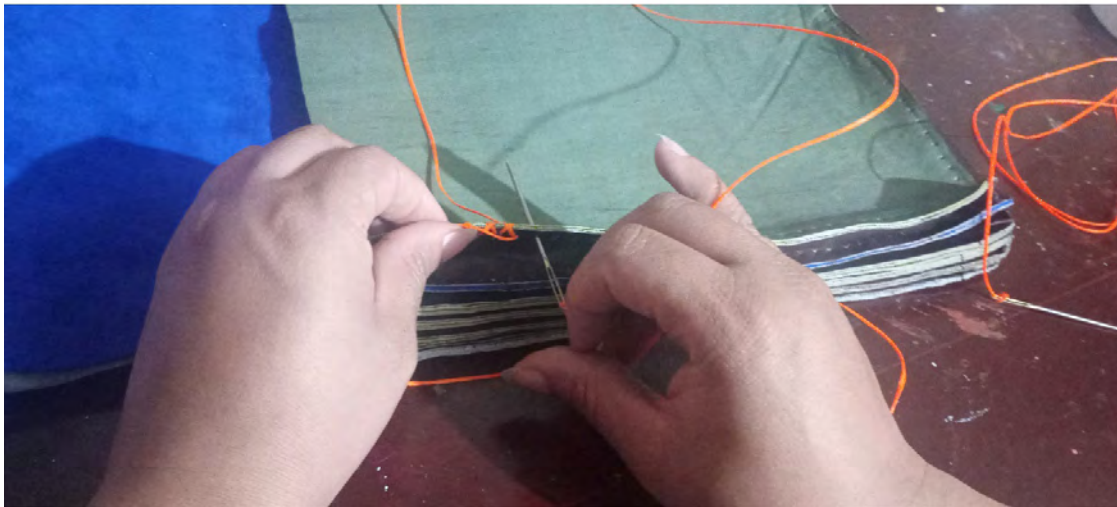
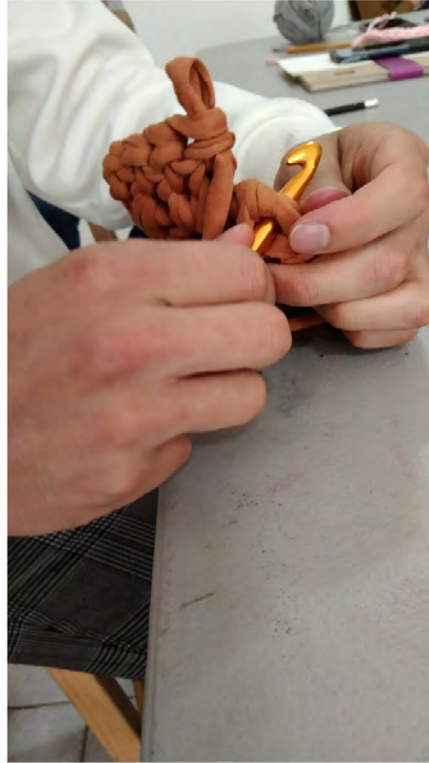


Figure 1. *Process Registration Ganemos Más (2024)*

Methodology

The methodology proposed for the realization of the project is based on the transmission of knowledge from craft trades, aiming to generate autoethnographic processes with an approach that intertwines the personal experiences of students with the knowledge of artisans. This approach acknowledges the importance of local contexts, as Isabel Álvaro points out in her text on decorative arts, where she argues that the arts should not be reduced to a mere aesthetic exercise, but are intrinsically linked to everyday practices and the cultural values of communities (Álvaro, 2001).

It is worth noting that, by incorporating this knowledge into the learning processes, the goal is not only the mastery of techniques, but also a deep understanding of the cultural and symbolic meanings that permeate craft practices. Thus, students are invited to situate epistemologically within their contexts, recognizing and valuing the historical and cultural particularities of the places where creative practices are developed.

Similarly, this approach finds affinity with the ideas of Larry Shiner (2001) in his analysis of the invention of art, where he argues that the modern notion of art, as an autonomous sphere disconnected from everyday life, is a historical construct that has distorted our understanding of artistic practices. Shiner highlights that in premodern societies, art was not separated from everyday work but was deeply integrated into social and utilitarian realities. Thus, the proposed methodology aligns with this view, recognizing that the creative process is a consequence of the environment, as argued by Gabriela Montes (a student of visual arts), who notes that “the creative process is always a consequence of the environment and the relationships one has had with it.” In this sense, artistic creation emerges from the needs, relationships, and contextual knowledge of the participants, and it is constituted not only as an aesthetic act, but also as a process of critical and situated understanding of the world in which one lives.

Table 1. *Route Process investigation-creation*

Transmission of knowledge	Aesthetic inquiry	Argument
Ceramics	<i>The shape</i>	Personal experience
Marroquinería	<i>The material</i>	Cultural context
Weaving	<i>The textura</i>	Social interaction
Artistic creation	<i>The symbol</i>	Inherent meanings

Thus, the research-creation process is established based on three fundamental axes (Table 1), which include the *transmission of knowledge* in ceramics, leatherworking, and weaving as the first event. This aims at recognizing the manual craft and its importance regarding the dedication and meticulousness that each craft involves, an event clearly defined by Olaya (2023) who states: “Cultural manifestations are preserved thanks to memory, which can be transmitted through artifacts and places that define each society in its context” (p. 205).

This transmission is related to *Aesthetic inquiry*, which serves as the second axis. It involves reflection on the techniques of each craft in relation to form, material, and texture, with the intention of formally cultivating sensitivity to aspects inherent in both artisanal and artistic conception (Pastorino, 2022). Such aesthetic inquiry encompasses the formal relationships that making requires through technique, in the consolidation of the piece whose characteristics allow for a

formal understanding of the creations, articulating the notion of *know-how*.

As the third axis, an *Argument* is established, which is related to both the transmission of knowledge and aesthetic inquiry (both from the crafts and the formal aspects), to generate situated inquiries about the meaning of creation itself. This encourages participants to question and recognize that their work is shaped by *personal experience, cultural context, and social interaction*. As defined by Balbi (2020), referring to the relationship with a profound and transformative experience of the spaces they inhabit, derived from the popular and tacit knowledge these environments imply, thereby generating alterations to normality. This affirmation is corroborated by Juan Sierra, an 8th-semester student of plastic arts, who states that “every creative process must have a relationship between one’s own feeling and the interpretation that the public makes of the context, because if these are disconnected, in the end, it is not generating memory, which means it does not transcend”.

As a result, the individual creative process of the five students, derived from the transmission of knowledge, aesthetic inquiry, and argument, is mentored by a visual artist in an experimental creative process (Serrano-Macias, 2022), with the aim of consolidating formal and conceptual intentions that transcend artistic creation through the symbol and inherent meanings (Figure 2), thus, materializing their processes as results, since meanings are the individual consequence of the reflection

on their environments and needs. Paola Méndez, a student of performing arts, states that “creation is an individualization of the circumstances exposed to generate expanded relationships with others”.

This individual creation constitutes a fundamental axis of the project, as the personal intention, defined from one’s own perspective, is a social response to the aesthetic symbols that act as elements of deep significance in the unique viewpoint of each participant. This inquiry leads to interpreting the environment where life takes place and its contextual relationship, as these symbolic intentions allow for critical reflection and self-exploration, which ultimately becomes formal, since they are manifested in their material results. It also contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage by keeping traditions and collective identities alive through an intention of individual craftsmanship.

Finally, art stands not only as a source of aesthetic pleasure but also as an agent that explores its social environment, acting as a catalyst for creative innovation that fosters a continuous dialogue between the past and the present, as well as between various perspectives and ways of understanding artistic and craft practices. a reality consistent with Gabriela’s statement that ‘all creation is the use of the past to break the present,’ which challenges the concept of art as merely an institutionalized event, since many of its references stem from the appropriation of the most everyday realities of society, the result of artisans and individuals in their daily practices.



Figura 2. Process records. *Ganemos Más* (2024)

Results

Knowledge transmission

Ceramics, Leatherwork, and Weaving

The *transmission of intergenerational artisanal knowledge* is of utmost importance, as it ensures the preservation and continuity of knowledge derived from social and human traditions, which are synonymous of cultural heritage (Sandoval, 2021). It also represents, in any case, a continuity of the intangible heritage of communities and their knowledge (Nardone and Ariotti, 2023). Thus, this process not only facilitates the learning of specific techniques (ceramics, leatherwork, and weaving), but also involves the constant acquisition of manual skills that promote the professionalization of technical crafts. Knowledge resides in the act of making, which fosters an understanding of the objects crafted by individuals and, consequently, the result of their historical, economic, social, and symbolic contexts.

Diana Cruz states that “all creation occurs as a response to environmental conditions,” as she also places creative options and people’s responses to buying or acquiring an object within this context. These materialities are the ways of recognizing the work of individuals in specific contexts that respond to the heritages and legacies that are formed between generations, also denoting the transgressions and changes that reference the contexts (Peixe et al., 2020). Diana continues: “People don’t just buy objects; they inevitably buy the objects that are available and being displayed.” This, although a simple statement, reveals that it is not only an object, but also the material conception and tradition that exist in the environments from which it is obtained. It refers to what people use as decoration, gifts, and so on, but it is not always what they truly want, but rather what is available.

This argument reflects the views of Glenn Adamson (2021), who positions craft as a dynamic process of intergenerational transmission of technical and cultural knowledge, in which materiality and social legacies play an essential role. He highlights craft not only as a practice that responds to specific historical and social needs but also as a means of perpetuating cultural practices within an increasingly industrialized context.

In this sense, involving students in dialogues with experienced artisans (Figure 3) facilitates the adaptation of traditional knowledge to contemporary settings, thereby ensuring the sustainability of cultural practices. This process occurs almost imperceptibly, as an act of both cultural preservation and adaptation, keeping it alive and relevant across generations. It ensures that future generations can



sustain and reshape this knowledge within their own contemporary contexts, establishing cultural practices that persist not only through the act of creation but also through what such insistence defines as culture because it happens, often, without realizing that it is being perpetuated.

Ceramic craftsmanship, for example, is deeply rooted in human history and represents a fundamental pillar in contextual processes, as its materiality has always been present across various human communities as both a means of sustenance and a resource for creation (Rodríguez & Díez, 2021). It is well known that in ancient times it encompassed some of the earliest advanced pottery techniques, particularly in Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt, where ceramics enabled the storage of food and liquid, thus signifying the possibility of transcending time and ensuring the care of future generations (Saldívar, 2021).

Gradually, its singularity has permeated the rituals of human groups, even functioning as a form of memory through the representation of scenes that embody beliefs, both mythological and everyday depicted on the amphoras. In other words, ceramics have served as a medium for transmitting history to new generations, sustaining the timeline of social memories and fulfilling both domestic and ceremonial purposes (Salem & Splendido, 2020). In this sense, its continued presence remains a reflection of social practices centered on invitation and collective gathering.

In pre-Columbian America, Moche and Maya ceramics provide valuable information about their cultures and religious practices (Padilla, 2021), and many of these objects decorate Colombian homes, signifying a memory of the past and, at the same time, a need to keep that legacy alive in people's homes.

Today, ceramics persist as a material due to their versatility and relevance. It not only refers to the use of utilitarian and decorative objects, which lead to their constant use in everyday life from an artistic perspective and as transmitters of cultural narratives, but it has also found innovative applications in fields such as architecture, biomedical engineering, and technology. For example, it is used in spacecraft equipment due to its ability to withstand high levels of heat (Fernández, 2022), which implies that it serves specific human needs. Technically, it transforms into complex relationships, such as modeling, firing, and glazing techniques, which reflect dedication and respect for the material. These aspects are essential for creation, ensuring that objects possess aesthetic and symbolic value at every moment of human development.



Figure 3. Process records. 2024. Ganemos Más

In Bogotá, as in many areas of Colombia, ceramics are a symbol of social identity and community cohesion, as its legacy remains implicit in places such as Ráquira, La Chamba, Tolima, and El Carmen de Viboral, where its symbolic intent refers to designs inspired by the local flora and fauna (Fontecha, 2023). The traditional geometric patterns and representations of everyday life contribute to tangible expressions of the aesthetic identity of their environments and the prevalence of primary communities. These refer to intentions that speak of the social and ancient history of the country. As these objects, often used as decorative pieces, are found in homes, they emphasize the need for a cultural and aesthetic identity tied to memory (Dissanayake, 2000).

The craft of leatherworking (Figure 4), from a technical perspective, involves an exhaustive mastery of specific actions such as cutting, embossing, and dyeing, each of which requires precision and skill that can only be acquired through years of practice and learning. Richard Sennett (2008) states that “Technical skill is the result of long dedication and continuous repetition, allowing the possessor to achieve a deep connection with both the material and the practice” (p. 25). This exhaustive process leads to placing students in a knowledge that requires dedication and respect for the material, events that are essential for the creation of durable and meaningful objects, which, in relation to the social and cultural environment, remain a fundamental pillar in the local economy of many people. It fosters the creation of networks of collaboration and solidarity between artisans and their communities (Orozco et al., 2023).

Their processes —closely tied to products such as handbags, belts, and accessories— reflect a material significance for entire families. Over time, through the tradition of the craft, this becomes a form of cultural heritage rooted in the continuity of artisanal practice. It reinforces a sense of belonging and generational continuity, as it serves as the livelihood for many families.



Figure 4. *Process records. 2024. Ganemos Más*

The craft of weaving (Figure 5) is also largely a legacy of Indigenous communities, which have not only persisted over the centuries but also fosters the intention of always thinking of others. In many cases, it refers to a tangible expression of both personal and shared identity, grounded in cultural patterns and their deep connections to ancestral communities (Vargas, 2022).

In Bogotá, this tradition has adapted and merged with urban influences, creating a diversity that connects the contemporary aspects of society with the tradition from which it originates. Many weaving processes are inspired by nature and the indigenous worldview, to be integrated into textile products such



Figura 5. Process records. 2024. Ganemos Más

as blankets, bags, and garments. These elements not only beautify the objects but also tell stories and embody the cultural identities from which they originate. This is clearly reflected, for example, in the clothing worn by Francia Márquez during her presidential inauguration, as it alludes to cultural roots seen through the creation of a young designer (Alonso, 2022).

Aesthetic Inquiry

Form, Material, Texture

Aesthetic inquiry arises from the need to reflect on the technical processes of making, as it is fundamentally necessary to establish a profound and enriched understanding of what will become the spark for the creative experience in every artistic piece.

Firstly, it provides essential tools for analyzing and appreciating the formal elements of a work, such as composition, form, color, among others whose formal analysis helps to unravel the technical relationships and strategies used. From these, visual meanings emerge, enabling not

only interpretation but also the development of critical and analytical abilities regarding what is observed.

Ticio Escobar (2004) highlights how, since Enlightenment thought, the binary division between “higher arts” and “lesser arts,” or “fine arts” and “arts and crafts,” has been a reductive category that hinders a comprehensive understanding of craftsmanship practices and folk art. These forms of expression do not fit within a hierarchical framework. Furthermore, Escobar (2004) suggests that rather than being an exclusive opposition, these categories can interlace and enrich each other by emphasizing the importance of an approach that values the diversity of knowledge and crafts. This situates the act of making within a specific time to better understand its cultural and social intention, ultimately referring to the works emerging from that making and thinking as responses to the contextual influences from which they emerge.

This temporal condition allows aesthetic inquiry to generate a dialogue with audiences, as being situated within specific environments, it promotes reflection on the role of

art in society, its ability to evoke thoughts and its potential to influence social and cultural change. As such, it transforms symbolic enrichment by changing the possibilities of perception and thoughts. Diana points out that understanding ceramic processes is not only about mastering clay handling but also recognize all those who have held and shared this craft, sharing their experiences of what works and what does not in the creation of a piece. This perspective reveals that even a failed process contributes to the learning experience, helping to prevent future difficulties. The same occurs in the cutting of leather templates or the stitching of woven textiles. A failed process already contributes to future knowledge, helping others avoid the same obstacles.

It is through aesthetic inquiry that connections with cultural foundations and their situational relationships, even across historical comparisons. It is this inquiry that defines the understanding of forms and techniques used in a specific moment in time.

Form, for example, understood through the craft of ceramics, is conceived as contributing to sculptural action through modeling. It is regarded as the starting point for any aesthetic analysis and formal understanding, as it determines the structure and visual organization of artisanal pieces. Form guides the viewer's perception by establishing spatial and hierarchical relationships among the elements composing the piece. In the act of making, form is constantly transformed, shaped by the hands that mold it, generating greater or lesser visual weight to one side (of the form) with just a few movements with each of these movements, proportions and contours are altered, so that the form is not merely the shape itself, but rather the visual configuration of the space that redefines it, allowing it to emerge as form. It means everything that surrounds and contains it gives it its formal appearance and meaning, defining its distinction and uniqueness among other forms. In this sense, form is not only a matter of aesthetic concern, but also one of communication and significance.

In the workshops, working with ceramics enabled participants to recognize how the singular weight of each person's hands could alter the material. For instance, Álvaro, who has a larger hand, often found that his clay dried more quickly. Reflecting on this, he noted, "It's interesting to see how, in the end, I'm not only shaping a form through the movement of my hand, but I'm also compelled

to understand the timing of the material —and, from there, my own physicality once again".

Material, as the second focus of analysis in aesthetic inquiry, is explored in relation to leatherwork. It is not merely a surface that can be shaped through cutting, but a materiality suspended between the organic and the human-induced transformation by tools. This signifies a conjunction of the natural and the intentional, of the organic and the rational. Gabriela states, "*Any poorly made cut alters the material, and consequently the form,*" while Juan adds in a reflective tone, "*So if the form changes, its meaning does too.*" A slight difference in thickness or length of a leather piece can change the size and, therefore, the intended use of the object.

Material defines the physical properties and technical possibilities of objects (Figure 6), as each material carries unique characteristics that affect both the creative process and the interpretation of the finished piece. For example, the use of hard materials such as marble in sculpture suggests permanence and solidity, while leather evokes lightness and fluidity. Therefore, its function is not only formal but also defines durability and temporal capacity. Diana confirms that she prefers working with leather because it allows her to make prior decisions, and for her it is important to think before acting, a process that, in ceramics, occurs more organically.

Each material directly determines and influences how a piece can be manipulated and presented, which signifies a transgression of its formal intention, as it introduces new relationships into it. The material is subject to the historical and cultural context in which it is executed, as it responds to the technological and resource realities of the time in which it is used. Throughout history, the materials used in creation have been deeply linked with the cultures and technologies of their respective eras. For instance, with leather, cuts were once irregular because they were made with stones, in contrast to current processes that use specialized blades, or even tools like lasers.

The use of certain materials can evoke traditional craftsmanship and ancestral techniques, while also innovating and reflecting contemporary technological advancements. For instance, it is well known that the use of natural pigments in cave paintings was not only the result of available resources but also of the knowledge and skills they had at the time. In contrast, today's use of industrial

or recycled materials often responds to environmental concerns and consumer culture. In this way, the material acts as a symbol of time and the meaning it seeks to convey, a bridge between the past and the present, enriching the creative possibilities within its meaning and context.

The material is itself an expressive event, conveying much of the meaning, not only in its formal condition, but also when combined with form, it refers to the complexity of what is evoked. In every sense, it holds a powerful capacity to communicate and elicit sensory, cognitive, interpretative, and emotional responses in the viewer.

In the workshops, the process of leathercraft was inevitably slower, as it required a full conception of the intended outcome. Therefore, its impact not only referred to the temporal moment, but also to the understanding, or at least a broad intuition, of what needed to be achieved. This is because, to make the stitches that join the pieces and define the shape, it was necessary to know that flaps must be left so that the burin can create the incisions for sewing, thus requiring an understanding that sees the result as an imminent possibility.

Finally, texture, primarily explored through the craft of weaving as a surface quality of the material, adds a tactile and visual dimension that enriches the aesthetic experience. Texture constantly affects the perception of the piece, as it involves the qualities of the surface of objects and influences how it is understood. Whether real or implied, it creates an illusion that guides the appearance of the works, or in other words, the intention of how the piece wants to be understood. This, in turn, can alter its perception and sensory experience, allowing for diverse interactions with the viewers. Ultimately, it is the culmination of the intended meaning, serving as a relevant input for what will later become its symbolic value.

It is worth noting that when texture is added, it is a modification, one that evokes narrative relationships that shape surfaces or patterns referring to the author's own relationships and creative intentions. This modification allows for a new connection with meaning, as it operates between the formal and the symbolic, communicating ideas and concepts through its interaction with form and material.

To a grade extent, texture evokes the technical decisions of the artist, as it can either make the material used evident or, conversely, its coating to generate a diverse notion. This, in turn, affects the artisanal as well as the artistic intention. Texture, therefore, adds a sensory dimension to the aesthetic experience, enriching visual perception and influencing the emotional response of the viewer, as it works together with form and material to create a cohesive and multifaceted aesthetic relationship.





Figure 6. Process records. 2024. *Ganemos Más*

Thus, the use of ceramics, leathercraft, and weaving has been a diverse excuse for sensory experimentation around form, material, and texture, not separately, but as “conceptual steps” to understand creative complexity, stemming from the variety of decisions and situations that must be assumed in the making of artistic pieces and objects. These offer a holistic and deep vision that ultimately serves as input for the meanings of creation, being the synthesis of the underlying intentions of the maker. All of them also refer to the technical mastery of the artisan, as well as their conceptual experience regarding the reflections they aim to evoke. Álvaro offers a compelling reflection, stating that perhaps creation does not exist, but rather the modification of form, material, and texture that brings about meanings through difference, which is in the end, what we call a creative piece.

Argument

Personal experience, cultural context, social interaction

The argument is explored through the relationship between *personal experiences, cultural context, and social interaction*, as these postulates, derived from the consequence of exploring crafts and technical intentions, also contribute to the expansion of the meaning of object creation, as they are intrinsic and multifaceted in each of the participants. Sennett (2008) argues that “true skill in every craft is forged when the creator faces the needs of the specific context in which they work” (p. 33), highlighting how craftsmanship is deeply influenced by the concrete realities of the artisan’s environment.

These practices, as the author points out, are shaped by both personal experiences and interactions within the community and society, giving a unique and contextualized meaning to the experience of making. In this way, personal experiences are the origin of meaning and creative individuality, as every creative act emerges from singularity. Juan, in one of the sessions, states that “creation is always mediated by the relationship one has with their own thoughts and the individual circumstances that define those thoughts.” This statement is true, as thought is mediated by the circumstances of the environment, family, social, and other, so that individuality is situated in a specific place of reflection (Villa, 2019).

The cultural context provides the framework within which individual experiences are formed and understood. It affects beliefs, values, practices, and traditions in the environments where the individual is located, thus acting as references that guide perceptions, behaviors, and decisions of the individual. This cultural context not only determines what is considered meaningful or valuable for each person but is also permeated by what happens in the interaction among social individuals, as these interactions give rise to the identities of reflections. This means that individual experiences cannot be fully understood outside of the cultural context from which they have emerged, beyond a sense of wonder (Mansoa, 2023).

As a result, cultural context determines social interaction, through which individual experiences are shared, interpreted, and validated within a community (Helbo, 2021). Interpersonal relationships and communicative processes allow individuals to generate collective practices that must be reciprocal. It is within this mutual relationship that traditions and collective needs are defined and, through their continuity, the cultural context—and, consequently, the labor and legacy of individuals—are established.

Through their persistence, they define the cultural context and, consequently, the work and heritage of individuals, as all these practices are the result of social expectations, which are products of the context, thus determining how individuals behave and relate to one another. According to Sennett (2008), “skill is not only perfected in individual work, but is cultivated within social interactions that allow people to learn from each other and adapt the craft to common needs” (p. 72). This implies a cohesion of artisanal work with the community, which intertwines with individual inquiries, as skills are enriched within the framework of cooperation and mutual exchange.

Through social interaction, individual experiences are integrated into a broad social fabric, thereby reaffirming social roles. This interactive dynamic contributes to social cohesion and the formation of a collective identity, while allowing individuals to find their place within the community. Gabriela states that “her context has determined her artistic process”, being a woman, from Pereira, and surrounded by aesthetics where women are constantly subjected to social beauty stereotypes. This also happens to Diana, when she says that aesthetics always defines how women should look in the eyes of others.

Finally, the relationship between individual experiences, cultural context, and social interaction constitutes a bidirectional process in which not only does the context influence personal experiences, but personal experience also transforms cultural context itself. Consequently, the involvement of the parties in social relationships plays a key role, as it is through these actions and reciprocal relationships that cultural and social changes are generated. Through their actions, individuals question and redefine cultural practices, as these practices also define the ways of thinking and acting of each individual. This process is crucial in social transformation, as it ensures that the movement continues to happen perpetually.

The craft of ceramics, approached from the perspective of personal experience and derived from form as an aesthetic inquiry, places both the artisan and the student in a position to understand their own making and thinking through a purely individual investigation. This is because both the ideas and the execution processes are transformed not only by personal implications but also by the bodily nature that defines these objects, as well as by the conceptual intention embedded in the forms that one ultimately seeks to create.

Thus, ceramic creation is a craft intimately intertwines to touch and direct manipulation of materials. The hands become observers of the material through sensitive and precise attention, recognizing the clay’s drying temperature or the pressure and weight the hands they apply to the substance. This act of modeling and transforming the clay can be seen as an extension of the artisan’s own identity, where the textures, shapes, and finishes of the ceramic pieces become a tangible expression of their personal experiences, as they are the tacit manifestation of their thoughts materialized in the object.

On the other hand, leathercraft, in its cultural context argument, requires not only individuality but also an understanding of the need for connection with the environment, shifting from purely personal settings to those more intertwined with the social context for its production. It recognizes the importance of the material in its collective production, where the collaborative approach involves artisans, designers, and communities in the product creation process, as this union brings a benefit to the collective.

This approach not only respects and preserves traditional techniques but also integrates new ideas and

perspectives, promoting expanded work for all parties that benefit from it. It even serves as a dynamic synthesis of diverse knowledge, as much of the participation is inter-generational and multidisciplinary, allowing artisans to share their experience and skills, while designers and other participants bring fresh perspectives to the design, functionality, and aesthetics, resulting in objects that are more aligned with the realities of specific environments. This not only strengthens shared cultural identity but also empowers communities to value their knowledge and practices, by recognizing an expanded network of participating agents.

The work of leathercraft, in its cultural context, aims for a commerce that avoids industrialization, striving to be both fair and sustainable. It seeks to be ethical with the needs of all the knowledge of the experts, offering economic opportunities to local communities that have been part of the processes. It is important to note that the integration of local cultural elements into the final designs reinforces cultural identity and allows the resulting products to tell stories that resonate both locally and globally, in a manner that is both artisanal and artistic. This synergy between tradition and innovation fosters a deeper appreciation of cultural heritage, promoting sustainable development. Adamson (2013) reflects on how the distinction between art and craftsmanship has evolved over time, explaining that

these categories have historically been used to impose social and cultural hierarchies, where “artistic” is associated with status and exclusivity, while “craft” is often seen as inferior, overlooking its ability to convey identity and meaning. (Adamson, 2013, p. 48)

Finally, weaving is an act of social interaction, in which the aesthetic inquiry of texture, as a decision about form, is a decision about the collective. This is because weaving is a practice that has historically brought individuals together, especially women, in a shared space of production and communication.

In many cultures, weaving workshops take place in family environments where people gather informally around conversation, making them spaces for socialization, or places where individuals shape their realities as they create texture with their hands. This socialization is a political act of social interaction, as in this conjunction, stories are shared, knowledge is transmitted, community bonds are strengthened, and conscious thinking takes place. This social aspect of weaving creates a sense of belonging and solidarity, promoting social cohesion and collective identity.

Weaving is inevitably a tangible reflection of social and cultural interaction. For example, in the workshops, participants shared stories, memories of lessons from their grandmothers, to express changing situations and decisions through their designs, as each stitch defined an intention about the process. These textiles not only have aesthetic and functional value, but also act as bearers of memory and tradition, transmitting values and knowledge from generation to generation.

It is worth considering that the act of weaving itself can be seen as a metaphor for social construction, as intertwining threads to create a cohesive fabric reflects the way individual interactions contribute to the formation of an integrated social structure. Each thread, though independent, is part of a greater whole, where the collaboration and interdependence of each part is essential for the determination of the complexity of all (Hernández-Bolívar & Echeverry-Arias, 2021). This metaphor of weaving emphasizes the importance of cooperation and connectivity in social life, highlighting how individual actions and interpersonal relationships intertwine to form the foundation of community cohesion and solidarity.

Conclusions

Individual Creation

Artistic creation, the symbols, inherent meanings

The individual creation is defined from the personal perspective of each student, based on their search for personal creative meaning. From their own experiences, knowledge, and meanings, symbols emerge, generating interconnected relationships that place their own artistic definition and interpretation. Thus, creation is a process that allows each person to express their thoughts through

unique artistic conceptions, as they manipulate this experience through their craft. In this creation process, they use symbols that represent their intentions to communicate the meanings of their worldview. In this regard, Shiner's (2001) postulates place the understanding that what we perceive as "art" is, in fact, a historical constructive concept that gradually developed and is deeply connected to the idea of personal expression and individual creativity.

This modern conception of art has not always existed; rather, it was a response to a specific era, and this invention has conditioned the way we think about and produce art and craftsmanship. Thus, the creative process of every individual is not only a manifestation of their personal vision, but also a participation in a historical and cultural framework that assigns specific meanings to the symbols and expressions they use. Symbols, by their nature and multiple meanings, stem from a subjectivity shaped by the cultural, historical, and personal contexts in which they are immersed. These symbols act as bridges between an individual's condition and the interpretation the audience makes of the work. They constantly share the duality of personal meaning and universal connotations, while also influencing how the viewer perceives the work, as the viewer's own condition and cultural background impact their interpretation, allowing for a dynamic diversification of meaning. Therefore, this process of interpretation and re-signification transforms creation into a field of expanded symbolic interaction, where layers of meaning coexist and engage in dialogue between parts and individuals.

Personal meanings emerge from the intersection between individual intention and the nature of the symbols used, which in turn stem from the cultural practices of the environment, ultimately being perceived by the viewer. They are not subjected to a simple one-way transmission of ideas but instead allow for a constant dialogue between meanings that are continuously negotiated and reconfigured.

Framing individual creative processes, Juan Sierra (Figure 7) explores urban fabrics, focusing on weaving as a metaphor for society, where the environment is defined in relation to the other, and where the constant act of weaving becomes sculpture because of the conversations and reflections that took place during the workshops. The material, in its own condition, created a spiral in which each color represents the participation of the other students, with the life stories of each one embedded within. The object is thus an event of listening to the other, implying a conception of art that is built with others.



Figure 7. *Processd records. 2024. Ganemos Más*

Jenny Cruz's process (figure 8) focuses on ceramics, investigating the concept of androgyny (Andró-Gino), with the intention of highlighting the human body while abolishing gender as a determining factor in society. This challenges the excessive need to classify people based on fitting into social environments. Through a broad

form, she questions the idea of beauty, and by delving into texture through color, she generates a sense of strangeness in what is considered standardized. This approach can be analyzed through the ideas of Ticio Escobar who, in his reflection on fine arts and crafts, questions the rigid boundaries between the artistic and the artisanal. He notes that folk arts and crafts are not simply reduced to a functional or decorative scheme but instead embody a symbolic depth and cultural weight that can challenge traditional conceptions of beauty and art. Jenny's ceramics, by subverting beauty and gender norms, not only use the object as an artifact but as an aesthetic proposal that destabilizes established standards.



Figure 8. *Process records. 2024. Ganemos Más*

Paola Méndez's process, "In My Image and Likeness" (figure 9), questions the figure of Christ by replacing the masculine image with a female figure. It is, therefore, a piece that fragments, finding its meaning in the

accumulation of symbolic elements such as the crown of thorns, which seeks to explore the submission of women as secondary beings, as she defines the idea of Christ as being female as well. This is an inquiry into making and thinking because of history and the very imaginaries we establish as societies around our collective beliefs and their replication.



Figura 9. *Process records. 2024. Ganemos Más*

Diana Cruz's process is permeated by the question "What is habitat?" (Figure 10), to which she responds, "Here I survive, therefore, this is my habitat," implying reflections on the spaces we all inhabit, from social differences and the necessity to coexist, where each one nourishes the others. Her thinking is relevant in that it defines that

"It is based on the idea that a habitat is not just a place where wild animals live, but a place with the appropriate conditions for survival, whether for an organism, an animal, or in this case, a community of people."

Thus, in an act of map-like embroidery, she situates the inhabitants of the neighborhood who coexist with one another.

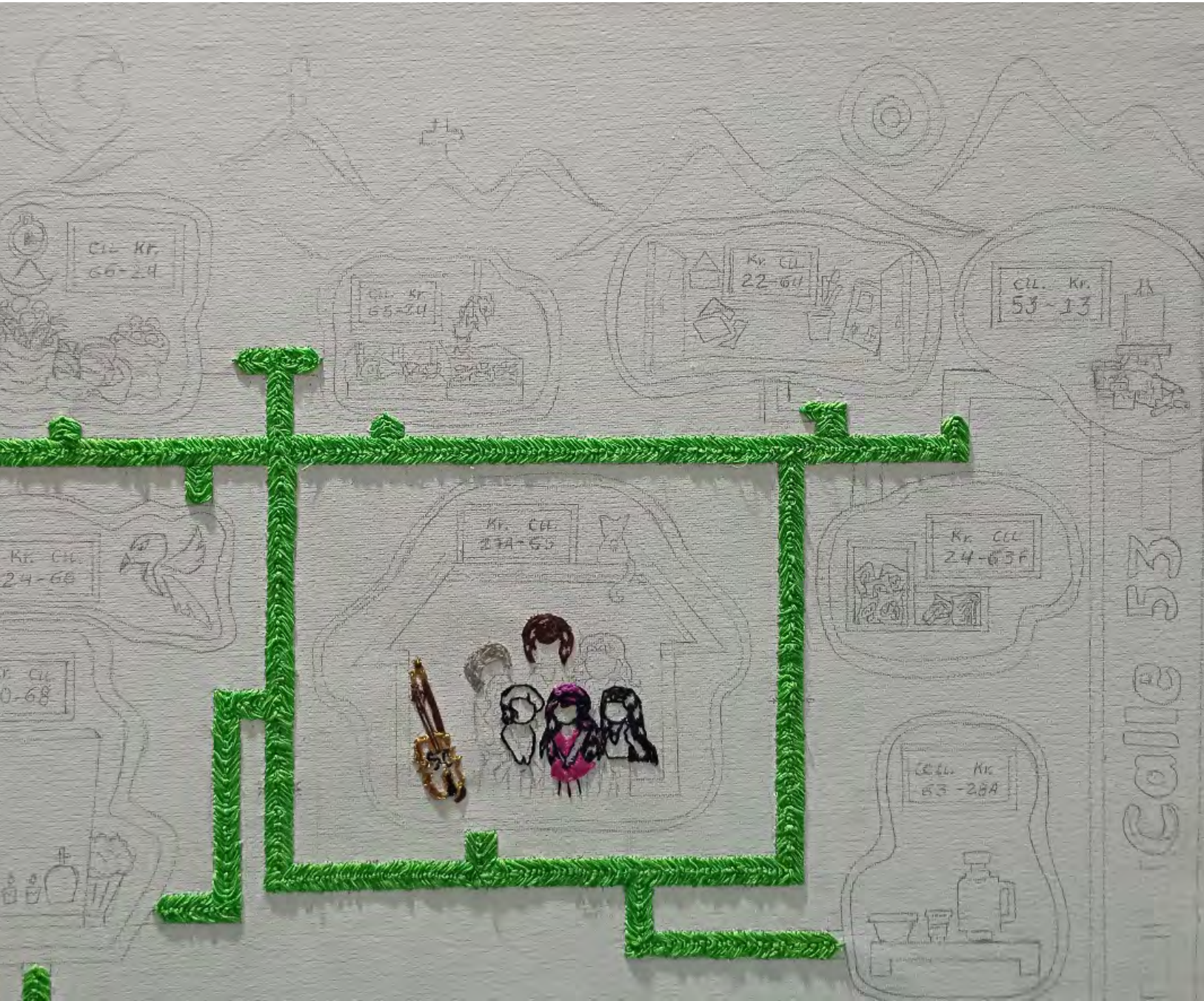


Figure10. *Process records. 2024. Ganemos Más*

Finally, Gabriela Montes (figure 11) investigates the beauty standards in Colombian society through five pieces that combine plaster and ceramics, omitting the polished finish to demonstrate the difference between the bodies that are part of the concrete reality of people. So that her intention is not to exalt a particular form, but rather to suggest the real diversity of everything present in society.



Figure 11. *Process records. 2024. Ganemos Más*

Lastly, the creative process is constituted as a unique manifestation that connects personal expression with a broader historical and cultural context, where the symbols used are the central point of convergence. They no longer refer to an individualized conception but instead participate in a constant dialogue with the environments from which they emerge and where they ultimately return for the interpretation of the public, who, influenced by their own conditions, give meanings that transfigure the creation, allowing for new meanings.

Artistic creation, consequently, is a symbolic interaction in which meanings are negotiated, re-signified, and expanded. Finally, supported by Shiner's postulates, it shows how the modern conception of art is a historical construction intertwined to personal expression, allowing each work to become a point of encounter between individuality and the collective, between the personal and the universal.

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