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sofia táboas

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Sofía Táboas CASA DEL LAGO

Sofía Táboas threw a stone into a lake. She then rowed a tiny boat to where the stone had landed and sunk, placing a buoy there to mark the spot; she threw a second stone and again directed the boat to where it landed. She repeated this sequence, five throws altogether, on one of the lakes in the emblematic and historical Chapultepec Park, the largest park in Mexico City.

Using a simple yet revealing gesture, one we have probably all made at some point—whether skipping pebbles across water, throwing coins into a fountain to make a wish, or playing marbles on the pavement—

Táboas traced a mental map that she then used to situate five floating gardens—titled *Cinco jardines flotantes para cinco piedras* (Five Floating Gardens for Five Stones), 2009—in the lake.

Here, black rubber tires supported five circular platforms accommodating more than four hundred green plants of varying species, provided by Chapultepec's botanical garden and selected by the artist according to size, ability to cope with weather changes, type of leaf, and range of color. Once left to circumstance, these objects began a process of negotiation with their environment, including the hundreds of trees, plants, and birds in the park, the blue-and-white rowboats tied up at the edge of the lake that are constantly in use, and the skyscrapers marking the urban landscape. Although these floating gardens merged with the surrounding vegetation, they still remained independent entities, five units that interrupted the lake's organizing principles and created a new system with which the visiting public had to interact.



Sofía Táboas, *Cinco Jardines flotantes para cinco piedras* (Five Floating Gardens for Five Stones) (detail), 2009, live plants, wood, rubber, plastic, cement, and metal mesh, dimensions variable.

act. Visitors rowed out onto the lake and navigated through the platforms, crashing into them or weaving among them.

An organic entity that created new circuits of movement and a kind of internal poetry, this installation, precarious as it seemed, stimulated heightened awareness of the spatial dimensions and experiences offered by the park and its surroundings. The system Táboas created, meaningful and compact in form, reminded me of the structure behind haiku: an ascetic form that probes language and the interaction between humans and nature. In its simplicity, this serial aggregation of natural objects had an emotional impact, reminding us of the chaos we live in but at the same time emphasizing the possibility of change.

—Jessica Berlanga Taylor