

miguel calderón

*neurotics anonymous*

may 1 — june 7, 2025

opening

may 1, 6 — 8 pm

kurimanzutto

516 w 20th street  
new york city, 10011

tue - sat : 11 am – 6 pm

press  
julia villaseñor  
julia@kurimanzutto.com  
+52 55 60 83 41 02

www.kurimanzutto.com  
@kurimanzutto



kurimanzutto presents a selection of sculptures, drawings, photographs, and a film in *Neurotics Anonymous*, Miguel Calderón's first solo exhibition at kurimanzutto New York. Drawing on the visual language of the twelve-step program "Neurotics Anonymous," founded in 1964, Calderón explores themes of desperation, anxiety, and vulnerability. Known for work that incisively and humorously examines human behavior, emotional turbulence, and the social rituals that shape our lives, Calderón brings together a wide-ranging body of work that underscores the breadth of his practice. The exhibition continues his ongoing investigation into the porous boundaries between personal experience and fiction.

A key piece in the show is a marble sculpture in which Calderón reinterprets the visual identity of the "Neurotics Anonymous" program—its flyers, brochures, posters, and graphic motifs—transforming chaotic depictions of inner turmoil into a form that echoes classical allegories of ideals such as Justice, Wisdom, Victory, and Peace. The work also carries personal resonance, as the artist's mother was involved in a similar support group, grounding the project in intimate experience.

Another major work in the exhibition is the ongoing film *Cocteleitors*, presented here as a fragment of a larger project. In it, Calderón explores the subculture of *los cocteleros* ("cocktail hunters")—a group of characters who crash art openings in Mexico City using fake press passes. For them, these events and their complimentary cocktails have become a means of survival. The *cocteleros* form a tight-knit group, bonded by shared experience. Their gatherings offer a space where they are neither judged nor excluded, providing a sense of belonging in contrast to their broader social marginalization. While their lifestyle may appear superficial, it is often rooted in deeper ideological and political positions. By following them through their relentless pursuit of free food and drinks, Calderón constructs a surreal yet biting exploration of access, performance, and the blurred lines that define the contemporary art world. Beyond the film, the exhibition also includes a portrait of one *coctelero* and a sculptural series that expands this critique, satirizing the coded behaviors and unspoken rules of social life.

*Social Climber* is a standout sculptural work consisting of five large metal panels that resemble climbing walls. Embedded with faux stones designed to mimic primitive

anthropological carvings, the panels address the desire for social ascent and the performative nature of success. From a distance, the structures read as abstract compositions; up close, they reveal faces with distinct phenotypes, subtly evoking systems of hierarchy and classification.

Also included in the exhibition is *Revisited Ex-Voto*, a deeply personal work drawn from Calderón's family history. In 1974, his father, a professional race car driver, survived a severe crash. As a gesture of gratitude for what he saw as divine intervention, he created an ex-voto—a traditional votive offering, often in the form of a plaque—using crash site photographs and typed messages of thanks. Decades later, Calderón discovered a photograph by tabloid photographer El Buitre ("The Vulture"), who had often documented his father at races. Taken from a cliff above, the image captured a wreck that transported Calderón back to the moment of near-tragedy. In response, he recreated the scene from memory in *Revisited Ex-Voto*, a large-scale photograph that blurs the line between fact and fiction, raising questions about spectacle, memory, and the compulsion to document catastrophe.

The exhibition also includes a collection of 19 ink drawings developed over time as a form of introspective release. Combining automatic drawing with focused observation, these works map a symbolic universe drawn from Calderón's subconscious. A bizarre real-life event—a snakebite to the artist's forehead while he was asleep in his home—recurs throughout the imagery, serving as both a literal memory and a metaphor for transformation.

Additionally, the exhibition features several photographic series, including one exploring a chromatic range within shades of black, and another from 2005 titled *SOS*, in which the artist attempted to place a phone call from every emergency phone booth along a Colombian highway after becoming stranded when his car broke down.

With *Neurotics Anonymous*, Calderón offers a sharp, ironic, and deeply personal meditation on identity and the structures that shape our emotional lives. Blending intimacy with satire, and documentary with invention, the exhibition invites viewers to reflect on the strange rituals we create to endure, connect, and survive.

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about the artist

Miguel Calderón (b. 1971, Mexico City) received his BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 1994. He has been the recipient of the Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation Grant & Commissions program (2013), The MacArthur Fellowship for Film and New Media (2000), and the Bancomer/Rockefeller Fellowship (1995).

His most important solo exhibitions include: *Materia Estética Disponible. Miguel Calderón*, Museo Tamayo, Mexico City (2022); Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey (MARCO), Mexico (2021); *Interrogatorio Inverso*, Páramo Galería, Guadalajara, Mexico (2020); *El placer después (Pleasure Afterwards)*, kurimanzutto, Mexico City (2019); *Caída Libre*, Luhring Augustine, New York (2017); *Miguel Calderón: Color Bleed*, Rochester Art Center, MN (2012); *Miguel Calderón. Solo Project*, Casa América, Madrid (2010); *Conversations with a Tropical Vulture*, with George Kuchar, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA (2010); *Bestseller*, Museo Tamayo, Mexico City (2009); *Forcing the Forces of Nature*, Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York (2003); *Ridículum Vitae*, La Panadería, Mexico City (1998), among others.

Calderón has participated in numerous group shows and various biennials, including: 7th International Photo-Triennial Esslingen, Germany (2007); Busan Biennale, South Korea (2006); Sharjah Biennial 7, United Arab Emirates (2005); Yokohama Triennale of Contemporary Art, Japan (2005); ARCO '98, Madrid (1998).

The artist lives and works in Mexico City.

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