

(un)realities



MuseoRalli
Marbella

The project_pag. 2

Territory_pag. 4

Memory_pag. 8

Identity_pag. 12

Rituality_pag. 16

Visually active ethnography_pag. 20

Embodied mediation_pag. 21

(un)realities project

Exhibition *Memory of the land.*

Leónidas Gambartes

15/02/2025 - 19/12/2025

Organized byr Museo Ralli Marbella

Works belonging to the Ralli Collection

Texts

Silvia Sánchez Ruiz

Translation

Sarah Clark Garcés

Miryam Herraiz Salamanca

Design

Raquel Gallart

(un)realities project (brochure) © 2025 by Museo Ralli Marbella is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>



The project

(un)realities

(un)realities is a curatorial and educational research project that seeks to generate a social impact through art by using methodologies like **visually active ethnology** and **embodied mediation** to promote critical reflection, collective creation and social transformation. With the exhibition "Memories of the land. Leónidas Gambartes" as a starting point, this participatory educational programme, which will culminate in a second exhibition, will reflect both the creations and the processes and any reflections developed throughout the year.

This education programme will be based on different themes present in the exhibition – **territory, memory, identity and rituality** – which will lead us to reflect on our own individual and collective identity based on artistic and participatory processes. The programme is made up of activities within the museum's programme, as well as pedagogical tools found within the exhibition and also on the project website. The intention here is to bring about a change in role: from the visiting public to participants, we invite you to experience for yourselves the transformational capacity of art in your own bodies.

The project seeks to build a visual narrative that defines the community that has arisen around the museum. This is a changing, diverse, partial and totally subjective discourse, although none less true, on the modern society we live in.



Territory

In this project, "territory" is understood beyond its physical dimension as an idea of space as a social and cultural construct, influencing human relationships, symbolic meanings and power structures that have developed within their limits.

In anthropology, a significant space is understood through social practices, symbolic relationships and cultural meanings attributed to communities, reflecting the identity, memory and history of a community.

This is fundamental when building community identity and cohesion, taking shape in a feeling of belonging and cultural practices. Societies create constructs like property, the division of public and private spaces, and visible or invisible borders, which are the foundations of collective identity.

Territory is interpreted through the meanings and values that people and communities attribute to them, through symbolism and legends, and acting as deposits of collective memory.



> Territory in Gambartes's work

Leónidas Gambartes's work is deeply linked to telluric aspects, a concept that refers to the vital force of the land and its influence on culture and identity. Several authors agree that his representation of the land and, even more so, the indigenous past of this land, constitutes the deepest layer of his content. Gambartes does not stop at portraying the land as a physical scenario; rather, he presents it as a space loaded with memory and symbolism.

This fusion intensifies with the constant presence of indigenous aspects, not just through the depiction of characters and practices, but also in the exploration of the magical, superstitious world that permeates the worldview of these peoples. In this sense, the land becomes a space of revelation, where the hidden and the primitive come together to produce an artistic identity linked to roots from the Americas.



Memory

Memory is essential for the construction of a collective identity, not just as a record of the past, but also as a dynamic process that can be reconfigured. Cultural narratives and practices transmitted across generations keep a community's history and values alive, creating a sense of continuity and belonging. Cultural memory, which includes rituals, myths and legends, provides a shared frame of reference, connecting individuals with their ancestors and their community.

But memory is also an active resource when facing present challenges and building a shared future, with institutions like the family, school and the media playing key roles in its transmission.

Culturally, memory covers different expressions and acts as a vehicle to preserve and reinterpret the past in contemporary life, allowing communities to maintain their identity whilst incorporating new influences and experiences. Memory is thereby a continuous process of the construction and reconstruction of collective identity.



> Memory in Gambartes's work

In his work, Gambartes does not just try to represent the past through memory, but rather to activate it in the present through artistic creation, merging individual, collective and ancestral memory.

In his desire to recover immaterial memory, Gambartes appeals to ancestral memory. This is nourished by Pre-Columbian iconography and indigenous myths and legends. Likewise, his personal memory of childhood feeds his imaginarium on indigenous culture.

Memory is also present as an active construction process in his work. Through his repetition of techniques like plaster chrome, Gambartes sought an almost hypnotic rhythm that was to allow him to access a state of creation connected to the ancestral world.



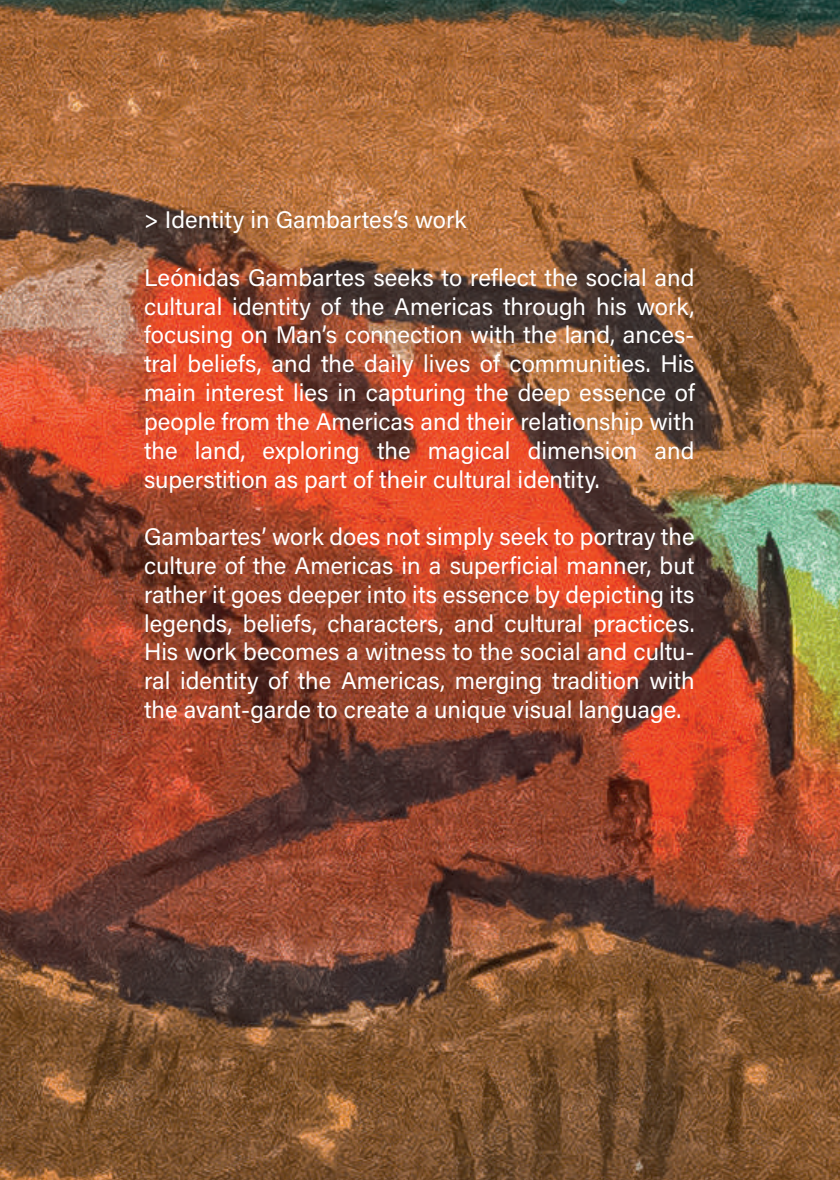
Identity

Identity is the result of the way in which individuals and groups perceive themselves and are perceived by others within a specific cultural context. This identity is constructed and expressed through cultural practices, rituals, myths, languages and symbolism that transmit a community's traditions and values.

Anthropological identity focuses on how cultural and social aspects mould the awareness and sense of belonging of individuals, highlighting the importance of shared narratives and experiences on the formation of collective identity.

Seeking identity through art is essential in artistic and cultural creation. By recovering the past, questioning colonialism, the influence of globalisation, and the inclusion of gender perspectives and collective memory, Latin American artists continue exploring and affirming their identity within a constantly evolving dynamic context.





> Identity in Gambartes's work

Leónidas Gambartes seeks to reflect the social and cultural identity of the Americas through his work, focusing on Man's connection with the land, ancestral beliefs, and the daily lives of communities. His main interest lies in capturing the deep essence of people from the Americas and their relationship with the land, exploring the magical dimension and superstition as part of their cultural identity.

Gambartes' work does not simply seek to portray the culture of the Americas in a superficial manner, but rather it goes deeper into its essence by depicting its legends, beliefs, characters, and cultural practices. His work becomes a witness to the social and cultural identity of the Americas, merging tradition with the avant-garde to create a unique visual language.



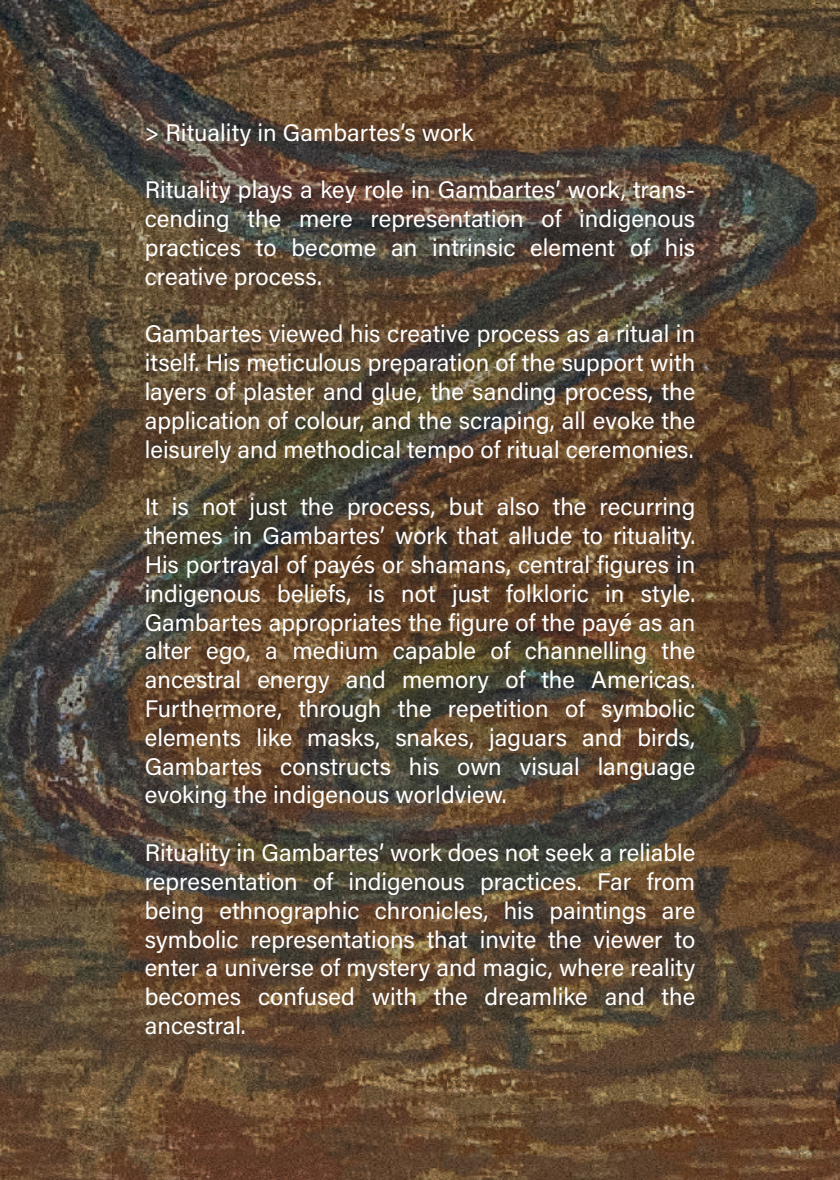
Rituality

Rituality, present in all the world's cultures, acts as a powerful element of social cohesion. Throughout history, rituals, whether religious ceremonies, dances, offerings or festivities, have expressed worldviews and connections to nature and ancestors or other beings with higher wisdom, reinforcing cultural identity and transmitting knowledge from generation to generation.

As societies change, so do their rituals, adopting new forms without losing their essential function. Globalisation and modernity have created new opportunities for ritual expression, leading to the hybridisation of rituals by combining elements from different traditions. In modern society, secular rituals like graduation ceremonies, sporting events, and festivals complement traditional ones, whilst technology introduces new rituals, like product launches and interactions on social media.

Rituality continues to be essential to structure society, channel emotions and transmit culture, demonstrating its vitality and adaptability.





> Rituality in Gambartes's work

Rituality plays a key role in Gambartes' work, transcending the mere representation of indigenous practices to become an intrinsic element of his creative process.

Gambartes viewed his creative process as a ritual in itself. His meticulous preparation of the support with layers of plaster and glue, the sanding process, the application of colour, and the scraping, all evoke the leisurely and methodical tempo of ritual ceremonies.

It is not just the process, but also the recurring themes in Gambartes' work that allude to rituality. His portrayal of payés or shamans, central figures in indigenous beliefs, is not just folkloric in style. Gambartes appropriates the figure of the payé as an alter ego, a medium capable of channelling the ancestral energy and memory of the Americas. Furthermore, through the repetition of symbolic elements like masks, snakes, jaguars and birds, Gambartes constructs his own visual language evoking the indigenous worldview.

Rituality in Gambartes' work does not seek a reliable representation of indigenous practices. Far from being ethnographic chronicles, his paintings are symbolic representations that invite the viewer to enter a universe of mystery and magic, where reality becomes confused with the dreamlike and the ancestral.

In the original cultures of Latin America, **magic** was understood as the manipulation of supernatural forces using rituals, amulets, and specific words and actions. Shamans and other practitioners were intermediaries between the human world and that of spirits and deities. Magic and rituality were essential in their worldview, reflecting religious and mythological beliefs and helping maintain cosmic balance and social prosperity.

In the present day, magic persists and manifests itself in different ways, adapting to new contexts thanks to syncretism. From an anthropological and cultural perspective, this continuity can be seen in traditional practices, popular beliefs and modern adaptations that include ancient elements with contemporary technologies and social contexts.



> Magic in Gambartes's work

The magic in Leónidas Gambartes's work is a window onto the worldview of the rural communities of north-east Argentina, where the supernatural and the everyday merge into an inseparable whole. Through his work, Gambartes preserves and celebrates traditions, myths and magical practices, offering a unique and deeply rooted perspective of local culture. His work is testimony to the spiritual wealth of his region and an affirmation of the importance of magic and ritual in constructing cultural identity.



Visually active ethnography is a research and creation methodology set out by Eva Marxen between 2002 and 2012. Here, she explores how art can be a social and political instrument that can articulate the experiences and perspectives of diverse communities, in this case the Raval neighbourhood in Barcelona and its relationship to Barcelona's Museum of Contemporary Art (MACBA).

This methodology is based on the idea that reality is not only described, but that it is built alongside our use of tools to capture this reality. A text or an image can be, and normally is, altered by the eye that sees it, subjectivised by the experience of each person that captures a reality; this is not always the same for everybody. Therefore, if we are going to tell the story, our story, visually active ethnology states that it should be the protagonists themselves that tell it.

Based on this methodology, the idea is to produce an ethnological record of the community within the museum's ambit, whether physical or virtual, permanent or transient, through which to reflect on the themes that are tackled in the exhibition, and how these make up and form part of today's society and us as individuals.

Embodied mediation seeks to create new forms of thought released by the prevailing mental structures imposed by the constructs of our society.

It is important to break away from the idea of body and mind as separate entities, in which the former is under the control of the latter, invalidating our emotions and leaving them relegated to the sidelines. This responds to a system that prioritises productivity over wellbeing.

By putting the body into play, by using it to think and feel, by expressing our needs and emotions, new forms of thinking and new realities are generated that are more in accordance with human beings.

This methodology has been inspired by thinkers like Minna Salami, Silvia Ribera Cusicanqui, the Mujeres Creando Comunidad collective, and indigenous feminism and ecofeminism movements.

Free entrance

Opening times

Tuesday to Friday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

including holidays

Closed

From 22 Dec. to 31 Jan.

Address

Urb. Coral Beach Ctra. Nac. N-340.

Km. 176, 29600, Marbella, Málaga.

Contact

www.museoralli.es

marbella@museoralli.es

Tlf. 952 857 923

How to get

· By bus. Lines 1, 12, 13, 79

(Hotel Coral Beach stop)

· Walking. The Ralli Museums has a direct access from the seafront, just 50 metres away

· Own vehicle. The surroundings of the museum have free parking areas



@mrallimarbella



@museorallimarbella

MuseosRalli

Punta del Este - Santiago de Chile - Casanova Rulli 1 y 2 - Marbella
Fundadores: Harry y Martine Recanatì