

Curatorial text by Nathália Grilo

Paula Garcia's art is, above all, a radical invitation to physical, mental, and spiritual presence. Her movements confront the forces that guide human steps in a compulsive, vivid journey, fruitfully intertwined with metallic noises enveloped by groans of exhaustion.

What emerges carries the energy of an army concentrated in a corporeal mass, paradoxically industrial, that blossoms and transfigures into clusters of steel. A super-body constructed in the dreams and childhood astonishments of the artist; a body that not only finds action as the most crucial element of its practice but primarily seeks to reflect on what is intrinsic to that action.

Paula orchestrates a series of works that explore the metaphorical and physical concepts represented by the magnet, such as attraction and repulsion. She intuitively elaborates on the magnet's ability to attract specific metals and reflects on concepts of affinity, identity, and essence. In metaphysics, this can be compared to how certain ideas or entities have a "natural attraction" to others, contemplating what it means to be or exist in relation to other things.

To examine this relationship, she starts from the body, noise, and art, through long-duration performances in which she positions herself as a totem and engages in sculptural introspection. The aesthetic significance of her work becomes evident, as if it were a painting, filled with gestures that are heavy, dense, and exhausting, putting a body to the test as it insists on resisting. Paula is deeply concerned with the quality of the audience's experience, revealed through her presence, direction, and unwavering attention to every second of her performances. She understands that this plastic space expands her work; it is materiality infused with choreographed gestures, a visual poetry that transcends dramatic intensity.

Recognizing that art should transform our identity, Paula reflects on the act of transmutation of the human body's material organism, the identity disseminated within the body. By drawing on art history to contextualize the elements, concepts, and experiences within her artistic practice, she constructs an ambitious project that probes and manipulates the remnants of a civilization forged in iron and oppression. She approaches the magnet not only as an object but as a representation of visible and invisible forces: human relationships, socio-political control systems, and the particular notions of magnetism that her trajectory reveals.

Paula's work is rooted in the avant-garde traditions of performance art, stemming from a profound relationship with the Marina Abramović Institute (MAI), an entity dedicated to long-duration work. Her actions thus suggest the insertion of the audience into the aesthetic experience of exploring the body and risk as forms of artistic expression and confrontation with the conflicts that permeate reality.

In her first solo exhibition, Paula presents a collection of works that bring together her experience over the past two decades and her development of experimental actions in curatorial and production fields. Through records and performance documentation—comprising photography, video art, and installation works—she showcases four pieces that carry the energy of a mytho-poetic universe of colossal weavings. Performances that utilize languages where tension and conflict materialize in structures laden with palpable and abstract forces. This is the kind of field Paula calls "Noise Body."

Sound emerges as a prominent and defining element, giving her work robustness. The amplification, gathering, and flow of captured noises align to form a final material that constitutes sound art. These noisy soundscapes, adorned by the clanging of iron against iron—sharp, jarring crashes—penetrate the audience's skin with the violent roar of a body that bends, leans, yet persists and breathes. This

sonic landscape arises from the friction between the materials Paula works with, functioning as bodies detonating another body.

The agony of bruises, the stitched wounds in the artist's flesh, conveys the symbolic significance of exhaustion and rest as representations of wholeness. These images exert a magnetic effect on the audience. Conversely, the moments of rest and nourishment—water, food, washed sweat—gain new meanings, leading to an imagination that sharply critiques art that avoids risk. These aspects reveal the centrality of altered states of consciousness in performance, as Paula uses these conditions to challenge corporeal limits and create “trance works.”

The intensity of Paula's work is grounded in presence, a radicalized presence of total attention to the now. This focus leads her to brutal labor experiences, requiring hours of dedication to her craft, utilizing her human material as both subject and object, theme and medium of expression.

Rawness, weight, and force translate her performance into something plastic. Her efforts grow increasingly ambitious, culminating in complex projects like *Cru/Raw*, marking a moment of maturation. Perhaps the most defining feature of her work is her commitment to operating at the limit. In several instances, one observes a persistent attempt to engage with extremes: pain, the body, equipment, experimentalism, and even art itself. It is a continuous action aimed at ecstasy through boundary-pushing. Along this path, Paula debates constructions of gender, human strength, and internal and external politics.

She reminds us, at every moment, that the body acts as a political tool for decentralizing the stable notion of corporeality. She demonstrates that the voice emanating from the body, combined with the iron within the space, is noise. Time becomes a central element, with Paula often challenging conventional perceptions of duration and rhythm. This results in a meditative and active experience for both the artist and the audience, questioning established norms about art and aesthetic experience.

In this context, her work points to a radical corporeality defined by the intersection of at least three factors: precariousness, uncertainty, and risk. Whether in *Cru/Raw* or the pieces in the *Noise Body* series, the artist seems intent on achieving the impossible and breaking boundaries, seeking balance in moments of extreme instability. Sensory exploration of the relationship between danger and altered states, so ambivalent, reveals that any situation requiring the body and senses to step beyond ordinary activity will inherently feel risky. However, Paula shows us that exposure to the abyss compels the body to use its senses in extraordinary ways, leading into the realm of the sublime.