



Maria Camila  
Sanjinés

# Fang

# Maria Camila Sanjinés

Fang

**This project delves into the intricate process of forging identities, weaving its narrative through the transformative medium of clay.** Clay is earth, landscape, a living material that constantly mutates. These artifacts serve as poignant reflections of both geographical and emotional bodies, capturing the essence of a ever-evolving existence.

**Upon migration, the notion of identity tends to oscillate, navigating the delicate balance between renunciation and anchoring.** Existing in the liminality of neither here nor there, the experience becomes synonymous with a non-place—a crack, a void. This perpetual mourning, paradoxically, metamorphoses into a profound aspect of one’s own identity. We cling to identity to mark borders between us and the “others.” Not having to choose grants permission to inhabit, fostering **the genesis of cultural elements** within the realm of *Nepantla* as **an act of both resistance and affirmation**. It is recognizing and valuing the richness that arises from the mix, hybridity, and interaction between different cultures, traditions, and experiences. In doing so, **that “crack,” that feeling of emptiness, begins to be filled with new meanings, narratives, and forms of expression.**

Video Links:

<https://youtu.be/OUdwHm0WBZU>

[Entrevista TV3](#)





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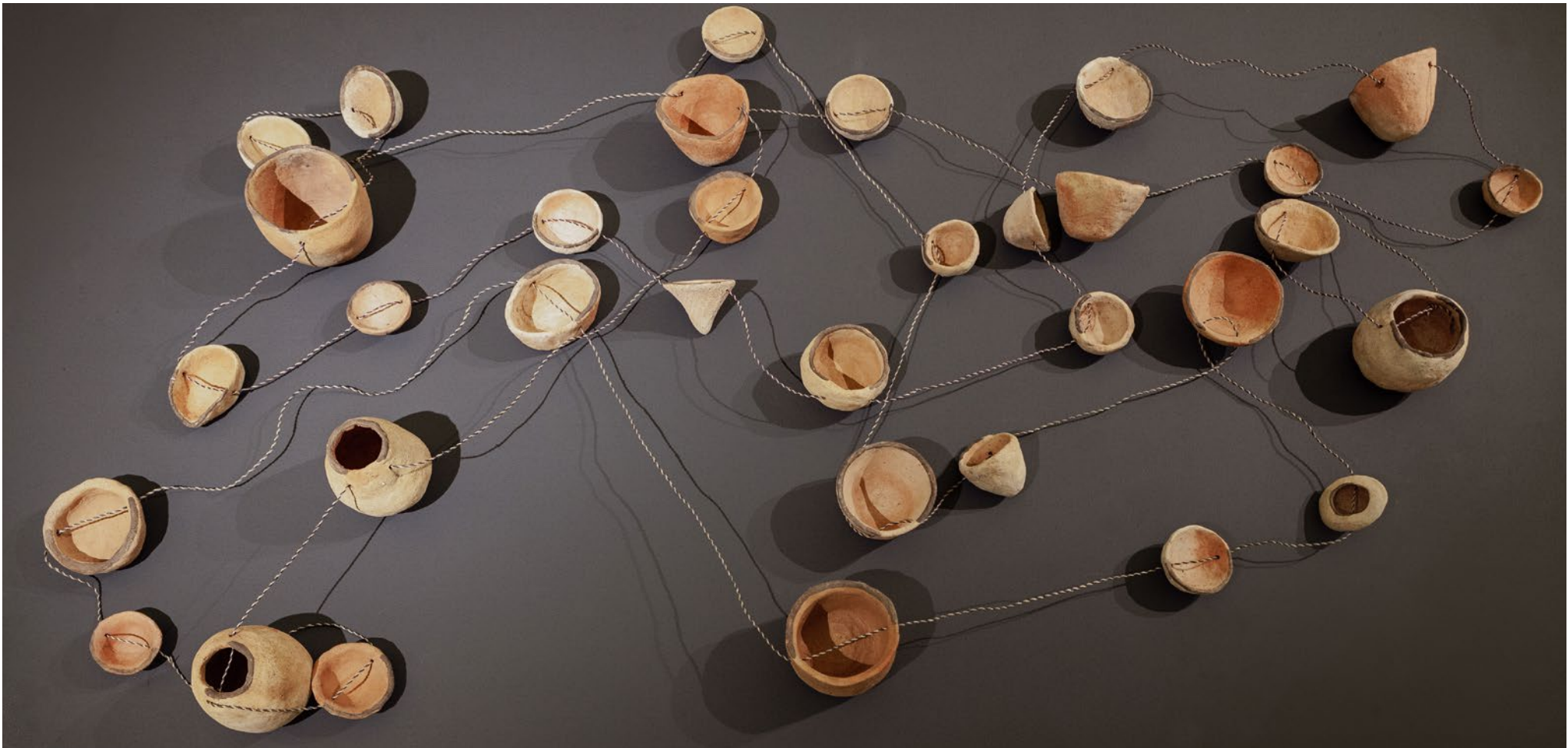


*Herência*









*Rfag n'timgharine*









*The Nomads*













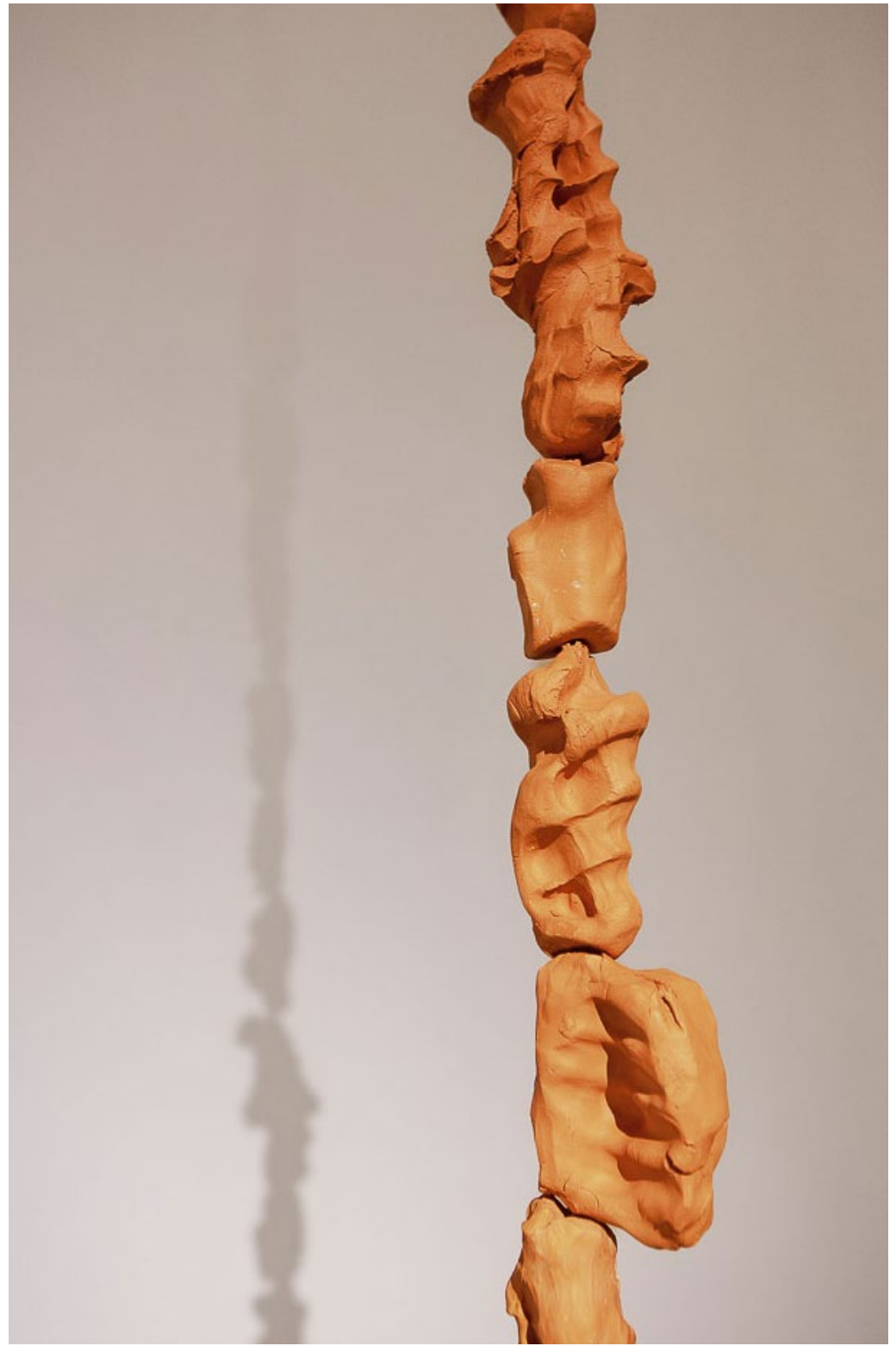






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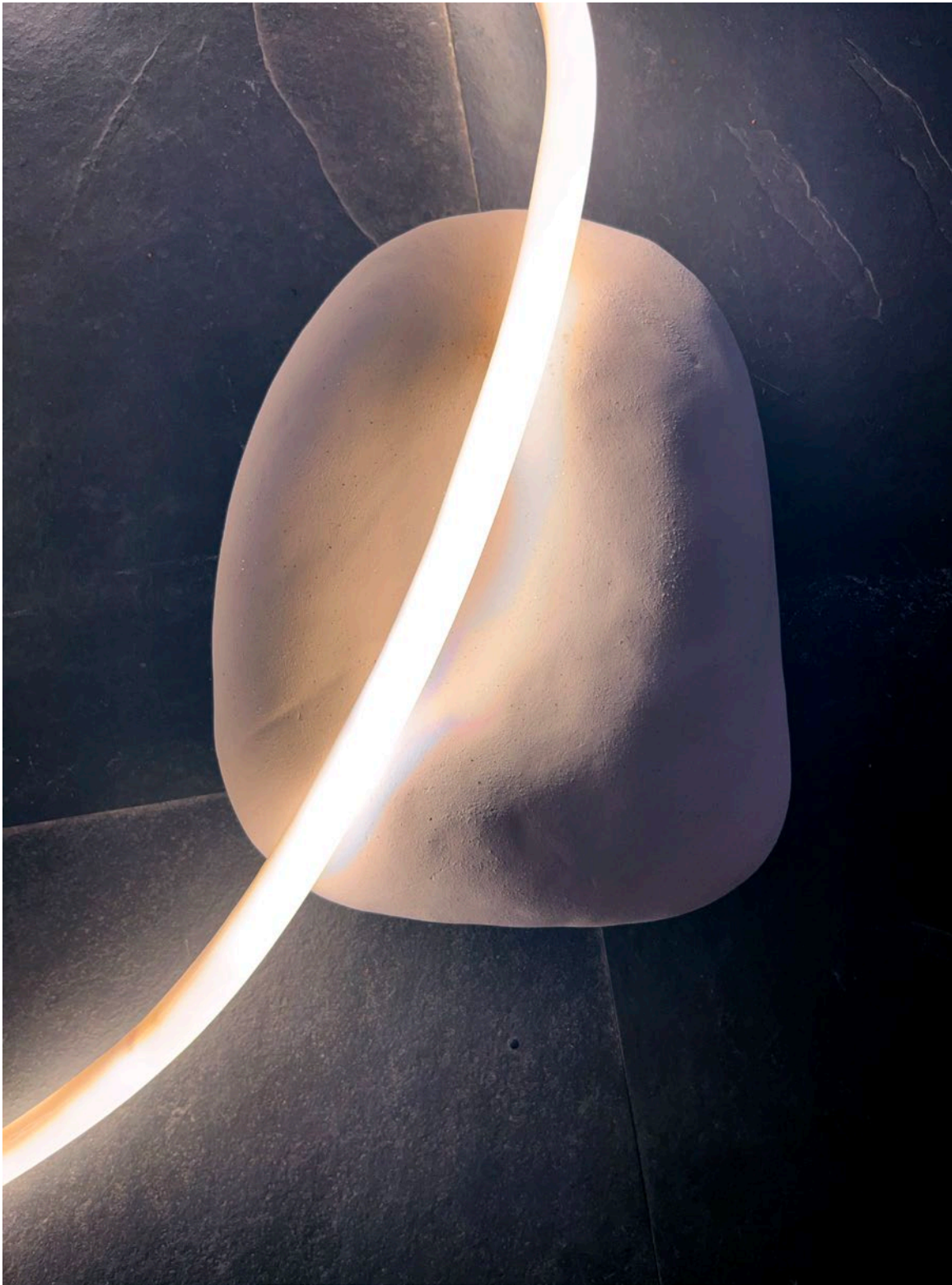




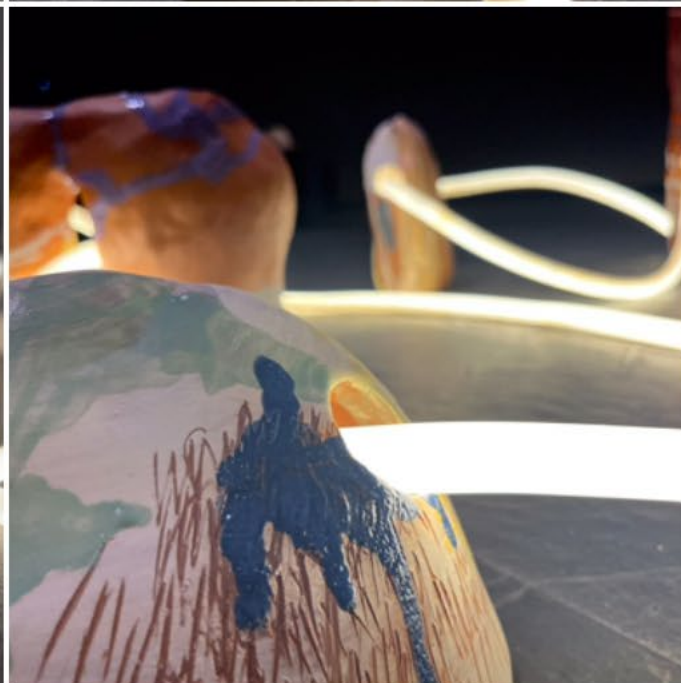
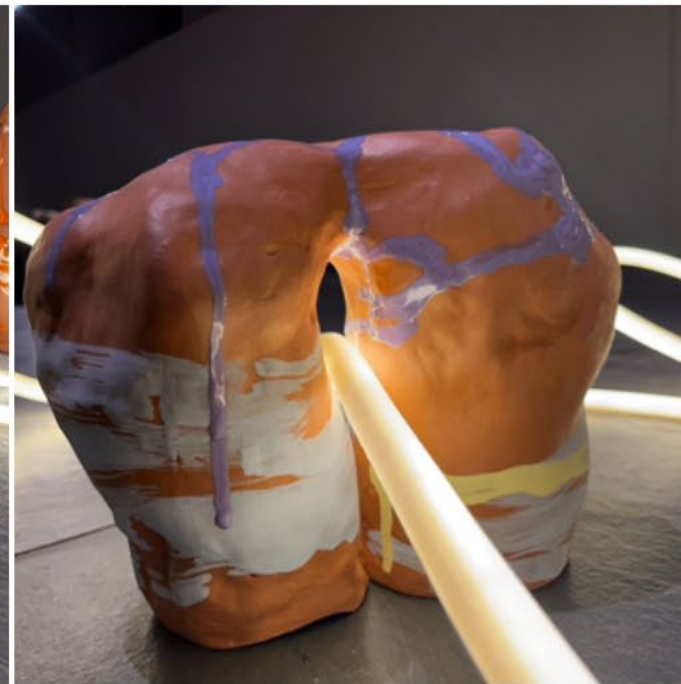
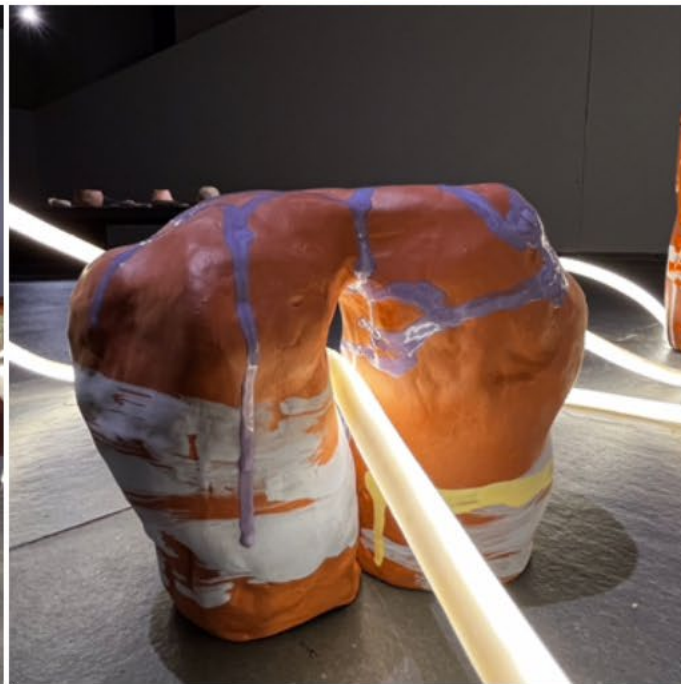




*Nepantla*



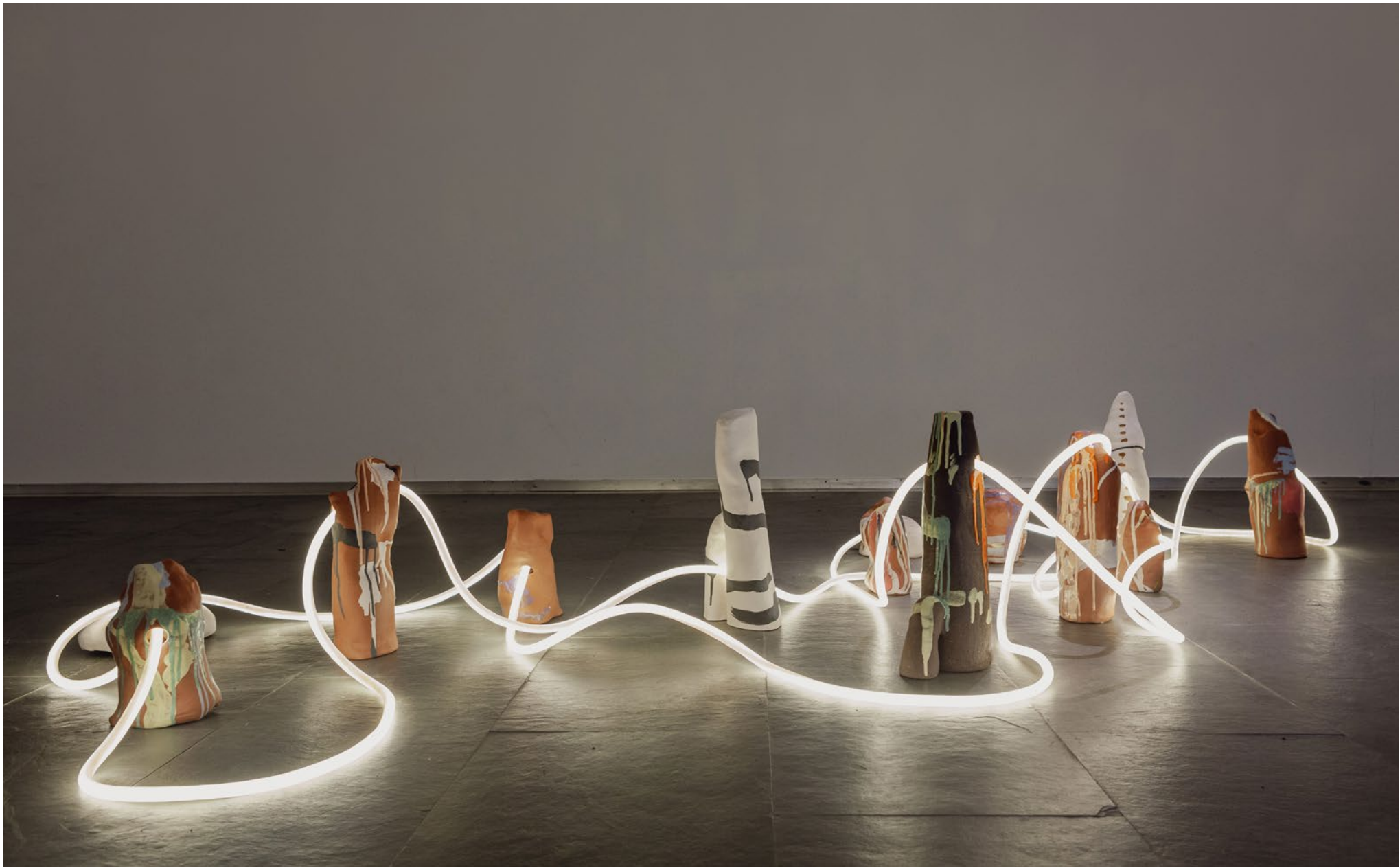
















# Maria Camila Sanjinés

# Fang

## **Background**

FANG is a long-term research project that explores notions of home and belonging, geography, disorientation, and the mixed cultural identity of the artist Maria Camila Sanjinés. It focuses on the themes of uprooting, migration, the heritage of material culture, and how these topics are reflected in her ceramic work.

This project is a further stage of an investigation into the construction of identity through clay, the construction of culture through hybridization, and how to create representation and a sense of belonging within cultural spaces. This ongoing research has oscillated between expeditions and workshops that the artist has conducted with different communities to the production of pieces by the artist in her studio, which often translate or give voice to these encounters.

This research began in Colombia, in the town of Ráquira (in the Muisca language Ra: means pot, Quira: means town), a place of potters with more than 8,000 years of tradition. For over a year, Maria Camila created a series of pieces with Laureano Melo, a local craftsman. The result of this exchange has been exhibited in various contemporary art cycles and won the grant for artists and artisans from the Department of Culture of Colombia.



The second stage of the project took place in Beni Boufrah in the Rif Mountains of Morocco with the support of the cultural space L'apartment 22 in Rabat, thanks to the invitation of curators Natalia Valencia Arango and Abdellah Karroum director and founder of the space.

In the third phase of the research, Maria Camila was invited by the Museo de la Garrotxa to develop and exhibit a new stage of her work. Collaborating with a group of migrant women from the city of Olot, she engaged in a series of encounters where notions of migration and identity were explored through the medium of clay. Symbolically, clay served as a tool for conversation. Following these interactions, Maria Camila created a series of pieces intended to materialize the conversations.

## **Artist's workflow notes:**

### ***Rfag n'timgharine***

*For 15 days, I immersed myself in the world of traditional Amazigh ceramicists, working alongside them in their craft. It was an experience where I not only worked, but lived, ate, and communicated with these talented women through this material. They generously shared their expertise and taught me the unique properties of the clay they worked with, distinct from any I had encountered before.*

*This clay, though resistant and less elastic, demanded hours of dedication to mold and shape. Despite its challenges, the process became a journey of collaboration and cultural exchange. It was within this intensive engagement that the installation took shape—a constellation of pieces reflecting the intricate network that binds these women together. Through their support and the transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next, a profound connection emerged.*

*Upon completing this work expedition, I found myself compelled to extend my collaborative efforts with women. The experience not only enriched my artistic journey but also strengthened the bonds forged through shared creativity and communication through clay.*

### ***The Nomads***

*I have been building this series for over two years, since I migrated again. It started as a mantra: building small vessels and then adding legs to them. This mantra has transformed a feeling into an object. These vessels are not only migrating but also beings that are rooting. It is a beginning, a meanwhile, and an end.*

*In the history of ceramics, humans create utilitarian objects when they settle, to store food and bring water. In the past, when we were nomads, objects were symbolic. The Nomads inhabit these two places, the settlement and the nomadic, the vessel and the legs.*

*This series aims to give voice to the pendular phenomenon of detachment and attachment, constantly rooting while walking, simultaneously carrying a language and knowledge that you don't want to lose in your new identity*

### ***Heritage***

*During the first session with the group of migrant women from Olot, we decided to create a chorote<sup>1</sup> as an offering to our maternal grandmothers. We shared where we came from, the smells, tastes, cooking, and*

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<sup>1</sup>“Chorote” (COL. RÁQUIRA): Small clay cup or pot, a ceramic bowl







*plants that each one had inhabited. We were also able to mention some things we carry and things we no longer want to carry, things we wish to leave behind.*

### **Untitled** (An Object)

*In this session, each of us brought an object. An object that, if we had to leave, we would take with us. Starting from this object, we spoke about the journey, detachment, and longing. The object also makes us think about the gamble of seeking a better life, holding onto a burning nail. After the session and materializing this conversation in clay, I understood that inevitably, this piece also speaks about the people who don't make it to the other side. The thousands of people who are left along the way.*

### **Nepantla**

*This work is a manifesto. Beings crossed by a permanent and permeable flow that shapes us and that we shape as it passes through us in an endless negotiation, a constant open dialogue. A space to think about all the hybridizations that have built culture for thousands of years. A Darwinian call to new artistic manifestations, from the crack, as these are the ones that are truly innovative. We mutate to survive and to become stronger.*

***“The resistance to change in a person is in direct proportion to the number of dead metaphors that person carries,”***<sup>2</sup> Gloria Anzaldúa sought, through her writing practice, **to create new metaphors, metaphors that would cast out false visions of purity, embrace blended diversity, and offer hope and healing.**

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2. Nepantla (náhuatl): concept coined by Gloria Anzaldúa, a Chicana scholar, cultural theorist, and writer. It is central to her work, particularly discussed in her book “Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza.” Nepantla is a Nahuatl word that roughly translates to “in the middle” or “in the middle of it.” In Anzaldúa’s context, it refers to a state of in-betweenness or liminality.

Anzaldúa uses the term to describe the psychological, spiritual, and cultural borderlands that individuals, especially those of mixed heritage or marginalized identities, navigate. Nepantla represents the space where different aspects of one’s identity, beliefs, and experiences intersect, often creating a complex and challenging terrain. It is a zone of ambiguity, transformation, and constant negotiation.

In the context of her work, Anzaldúa encourages embracing the complexities of nepantla, viewing it not as a source of discomfort, but as a site for personal and collective growth. It’s about acknowledging and navigating the multiple layers of identity and experience that individuals may find themselves in, especially in the context of cultural, linguistic, and social diversity.

Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. Aunt Lute Books.





# Maria Camila Sanjinés

## Bio

Maria Camila Sanjinés focuses her artistic research on understanding politics, gender, displacement, diversity, and legality. With a special emphasis on the concept of the frontier as a liminal space between territories, emotions, and various disciplines, her work gives voice to processes that have often been collective. Her background work often involves collaborations with communities or geographies, gathering conversations and exchanges to shape her work.

Her work has been featured in: Museu de la Garrotxa (Olot), Viu Montjuic, Teatre Lliure (Barcelona), Firatárrega (Tarrega), L`appartement 22 (Fez), Sismògraf (Olot), Salmon, Mercat de les Flors (Barcelona), Fundación Telefónica - ARCO (Madrid), ARTLIMA (Lima), Director of Educational Pavillion ARTBO (Bogotá), Can Felipa (Barcelona), Santa Mónica art center (Barcelona), Casa Encendida (Madrid), Mapping Festival (Geneva), Sonic Circuits-National Museum of Women in the Arts (Washington DC), White Box Gallery (New York).

Notable publications include: “Un árbol llamado Kevin”-Fundación Tiempo de Juego, “La vida láctea”-Editorial Planeta, “Tree School”-São Paulo Biennial. Drawing journalism projects: Sismógraf 2021-2024 (Olot), HAY Fest (Cartagena), and FLECHO (Quibdó).



© MARIA CAMILA SANJINÉS  
camila.sanjines@gmail.com  
<https://salchichas.art/camila>  
+34 625554907



Fotos: @leilacherifi @carlesmandala

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