



# EDUARDO NAVARRO

B. 1979, BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA  
LIVES AND WORKS IN BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

Argentine artist Eduardo Navarro's work incorporates meditative practices, ecological interventions, and the construction of temporary social spaces toward an empathetic consideration of different subject positions. For his participatory, community-based projects, Navarro often collaborates with various specialists, from priests to mountain climbers to homeopaths. For instance, his *Estudio Jurídico Mercosur* (2012) comprised a temporary mobile law firm set up inside a trailer to provide consultations to the public of the politically complex Triple Frontera region, where the borders of Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil converge. Navarro's *Anexo* (2006), a temporary office space installed in the basement of a Buenos Aires newspaper building, became a workspace and film set for several former prison inmates to make work with the artist. *La Sede* (2004) was a wooden shack that the artist constructed and offered for use as a Mormon temple. While in residency at the Skowhegan School of Painting in 2006, Navarro converted his studio into a temporary counseling office where a local therapist conducted sessions with artists and fashioned a plywood pavilion called *Shelter-Shelter* in the surrounding woods to provide passersby an alternative retreat. Navarro's work frequently orchestrates connections between the skills of one public and the needs of another, supplying the scaffolding for experiences or services without directly involving himself in their administration.

Several of Navarro's projects encourage environmental rather than social interactions. *Poema Volcánico* (2014), a "coproduction" with the active Ecuadorian volcano Guagua Pichincha, emerged from the artist's conversations with a volcanologist and a professional mountain climber. Attempting to redirect some of the natural formation's excess energy, Navarro created a series of drawings using litmus paper to register the acidity of gas emitted from fumaroles inside the crater. The artist enlisted local Quito artisans to manufacture a gas-permeable woven reed backpack for the drawings and designed for himself a protective flame-proof suit for his expedition. In *Tratamiento Homeopático para el Río de la Plata* (2013), Navarro took up the theories of Masaru Emoto, who posits that the crystalline structure of frozen water reflects the affective tone of its environment. Navarro liaised with a homeopath, a biologist, and a dual historian and architect local to Buenos Aires—a city that borders the estuary Río de la Plata—to diagnose the state of the river and prescribe a homeopathic remedy. The artist then constructed a "dosing machine"

to slowly infuse the river water with a botanical concoction and documented its effects through a series of microscopic photographs of frozen samples taken at regular intervals.

Navarro has turned his attention to animals and dance in his work for the Triennial, extending the sensibility of *Horses Don't Lie* (2013), a performance he devised for the 9th Mercosul Biennial. For the latter, Navarro collaborated with choreographers from Porto Alegre and five dancers who enacted a three-hour, trance-like performance in a field. Navarro outfitted the dancers with horse-head masks and designed mechanical prostheses informed by equine anatomy to inflect their movements. Focusing his study on the private, isolating experience of an individual with autism, the artist was particularly influenced by animal scientist and autistic activist Temple Grandin, whose challenges with interpersonal conversation drew her to animals. Venturing toward potential avenues for physical and emotional empathy with other species, *Horses Don't Lie* evolved from a meditation on the connection between touch and trust, wherein the dancers emulated horses "not by acting but by reaching a mental and physical state that would allow them to focus on details and cancel language," Navarro explains.

Navarro's work for the Triennial, titled *Timeless Alex* (2015), again departs from conditions of experience determined by the human body to consider the phenomenological position of a turtle. A cross-cultural symbol of tenacity and steadfastness, turtles form the physical foundation for the world in Hindu, Chinese, and Native American cosmological myths. The artist became intrigued by turtles' perception of time—accentuated by the case of Lonesome George, the last living Pinta Island tortoise discovered in the Galápagos in 1971—and how self-awareness of their own longevity might affect cognition. The animal's patient profile is incompatible with contemporary tempos: "I think in a wide way turtles are the opposite of the internet," Navarro suggests. Like *Horses Don't Lie*, this new work consists of a transformational structure—a tortoise shell assembled from cumulative layers of delicate paper—that adheres to the human body of a dancer to stimulate a countervailing quietude or, as the artist describes, a "timeless state of mind" achieved through meditation. The visible infrastructure of the prosthesis in the gallery alludes to the absent body of a dancer who will activate the piece in a protracted performance; alone, the shell represents a fragile, mobile shelter-harness meant to surround and restrain the performer's body. Grandin developed a "hug machine" as a therapeutic, stress-relieving device modeled on squeeze chutes used for livestock, wherein an enveloping pressure calms hypersensitivity. One wonders how a framework likewise designed to both restrict and insulate a body might operate to estrange or desynchronize the dancer from the overwhelming velocities of our twenty-first-century ecosystem. —KS

← *Tratamiento Homeopático para el Río de la Plata* [Homeopathic Treatment for Río de la Plata] at Parque de la Memoria, Buenos Aires, 2013-14. Homeopathic dropper, dimensions variable



↑ *Horses Don't Lie*, 2013.  
Performance: 9th  
Mercosul Biennial, Porto  
Alegre, Brazil, 2013

↑ *Poema Volcanico*  
[Volcanic Poem], 2014.  
Performance: 12th Cuenca  
Biennial, Ecuador, 2013

← *Orbita* [Orbit], 2013.  
Performance: Torcuato  
Di Tella University,  
Ensayo de Situación II,  
Buenos Aires, 2013

→ Study for *Timeless Alex*,  
2015. Graphite on paper

