

# Pia Camil

## A Pot for a Latch

In her paintings, sculptures, performances, and installations, artist Pia Camil (b. 1980) draws inspiration from the urban landscape of her native Mexico City and engages with the history of modernism. Her projects transform the remnants of dysfunctional commercial culture, revealing the inherent problems as well as the latent aesthetic potential within inner-city ruin. Often using laborious fabrication processes in collaboration with local artisans, Camil deaccelerates the frenetic pace of mass commodification through the handcrafted production and intimate quality of her works. In recent projects, she has expanded the scope of her practice to create theatrical environments that invite the viewer to navigate the exhibition space and experience shifting viewpoints and juxtapositions.

For “A Pot for a Latch,” her first solo museum exhibition in New York, Camil presents a participatory sculptural installation produced specifically for the Lobby Gallery. Inspired by the modular systems typically used by vendors, Camil has constructed a succession of gridwall panels of her own design, complete with built-in hooks, shelves, and other fixtures for displaying items. Composed of grids, lines, and geometric shapes, the structures form a volumetric drawing within the space of the gallery, referencing cheap commercial constructions as well as the serial patterning of paintings and sculptures made by Minimalist artists such as Sol LeWitt and Agnes Martin.

The title of the exhibition refers to the potlatch, a ceremonial gift-giving festival practiced by the Native-American peoples of the Pacific Northwest coast, for whom it was a central system of wealth redistribution. Camil invites the public to participate in the ongoing creation of her piece on designated days, during which visitors are encouraged to exchange their own unique items for others in the installation. The composition on the gridwall panels is thereby in flux and is repeatedly altered throughout the course of the exhibition. With “A Pot for a Latch,” Camil transforms the Lobby Gallery into a shop of sorts, in which the monetary value of an object is supplanted by its personal history and significance.

Visitors are invited to exchange items for those in the installation during a series of five public events. Please refer to the artist’s invitation handout for more information.

“Pia Camil: A Pot for a Latch” is curated by Margot Norton, Associate Curator.

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“Pia Camil: A Pot for a Latch” is made possible by the generous support of:



Additional support is provided by the Toby Devan Lewis Emerging Artists Exhibitions Fund. The Producers Council of the New Museum is gratefully acknowledged. Special thanks to Blum & Poe and Galería OMR.

The accompanying exhibition publication is made possible, in part, by the J. McSweeney and G. Mills Publications Fund at the New Museum.