

# *Invitation to a Mystical Dreamland: Kenia Almaraz Murillo*

27 February – 6 April 2024



Custot Gallery is delighted to present the first solo exhibition of Bolivian artist Kenia Almaraz Murillo in the region. A combination of 6 new and 5 existing works come together to give the viewer a glimpse into the oneiric world of the artist, built in 6 chapters, representing 6 different dreams.

At nightfall, Kenia embarks on a journey into a dreamlike universe where her dreams blend vivid memories with powerful symbolic language.

Kenia meticulously notes and illustrates her most striking dreams with detail and precision. Her dream journals are intimate and secret treasures. From these nocturnal odysseys, Kenia extracts the most significant visions, the most mystical scenes, and the most singular beings she has encountered.

In her dreams, Kenia traverses landscapes that blur the lines between reality and imagination. Familiar places take on new meanings, and encounters with strange beings leave lasting impressions. Each dream is a tapestry of experiences, weaving together fragments of her subconscious with symbols that resonate deeply within her psyche.

As she flips through the pages of her dream journals, Kenia revisits these otherworldly adventures, seeking insight and understanding. The characters and landscapes she encounters become guides on her journey of self-discovery, leading her to uncover hidden truths and untapped potential within herself.

Image: *La Ciudad de Oro*, 2024, 130 x 119 x 10 cm.

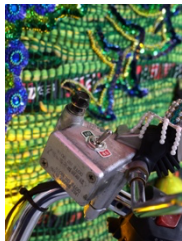


### Chapter 1: The Golden City

This weaving represents a frozen moment in time taken from one of Kenia's dreams, where she observes from afar a village made of gold being struck by a powerful earthquake. In the foreground, she spreads her arms towards the disaster. The blue embroidery symbolizes the sacred geometry of this golden city, the ornamental balance facing the powerful forces of nature. The circle of light surrounding it represents a sense of protection that Kenia tries to create to safeguard the village.

### Chapter 2: The 27th Eyelash

This weaving depicts a surreal and almost psychedelic scene from a long dream. Kenia finds herself being made up by a young woman preparing her for a dance performance. As the young woman passes her hand over Kenia's eyes, she tells her that she cannot continue to apply makeup because she has just plucked her 27th eyelash, which is connected to Kenia's inner chaos. As she says this, she shows Kenia the suddenly fallen eyelash in the palm of her hand. Kenia then discovers an extremely wrinkled hand, as if this woman were hundreds of years old, with infinite wisdom. The eyelash is symbolized by the luminous shape, while the blue ridges symbolize the wrinkles of the centenarian hand.



### Chapter 3: Torito

Torito is a somewhat special weaving because it is not taken from a specific dream. It is a tribute to the three-wheeled vehicles, motorcycle-taxis, in Bolivia. Kenia holds a very strong attachment to these small vehicles, as if they were wild animals (bulls in this case). These mini-ships are often decorated by their owners and become small mobile artworks, covered with short lucky phrases resembling Japanese Haikus such as "Rompo motores, no Corazones" (I break engines, not hearts).

### Chapter 4: Polar Bear

In one of her dreams, Kenia finds herself in a sort of interior landscape of the North Pole, where she sees a splendid polar bear, in a moment of softness and rest. This vision of tranquility contrasts with the next moment, where Kenia looks through a window and sees a dirty city full of garbage, as if she had seen behind a movie set. She retains from this dream a feeling of strangeness, as if she were living in an artificial world. The light in the weaving symbolizes the tender gaze of the bear, but its cold colors and futuristic appearance recall the world in which it lives.



### Chapter 5: The Scorpion's Tail

This weaving comes straight from a dream in which Kenia, walking in a desert, comes across a scorpion that has lost its tail. Presumably attacked, it is now blind, without its tail or pincers lying beside it. Kenia then tries to heal it, and suddenly has a strong vision of the scorpion's tail floating above its body, as if levitating and ready to reform onto the body. It is this levitation of the scorpion, almost schematic, that Kenia wanted to transcribe with this dancing scorpion figure.

### Chapter 6: The Two-Headed Serpent

This weaving was born from a dream where Kenia sees two serpents fighting near a small lake, as she passes over a bridge. As she approaches to understand this dispute, she realizes that it is a single serpent, with two heads. A few weeks after having this dream, she is given a Caporal costume featuring a two-headed serpent motif dating back to 2011. This beautiful coincidence inspired her to transcribe this internal battle within every being. This dream signifies for Kenia the different polarities within each of us, the different battles we fight within.

