



Antonio Pichillá Quiacaín: In front of the lake, at Elizabeth Xi Bauer, 2023. Photograph: Richard Ivey. Courtesy of the Artist and Elizabeth Xi Bauer Gallery, London.

Antonio Pichillá Quiacaín: Umbilical Cord

Elizabeth Xi Bauer Gallery

20th June – 2nd August 2025

Private View: 19th June 2025

Elizabeth Xi Bauer is proud to announce ***Umbilical Cord***, a new solo exhibition by **Antonio Pichillá Quiacaín**, running from 20th June to 2nd August 2025 at the gallery's Exmouth Market space. This exhibition marks an exciting milestone in Pichillá's ongoing exploration of Maya heritage, cultural resistance, and the intricate relationships between Indigenous traditions and contemporary art practices.

Elizabeth Xi Bauer is also thrilled to announce the representation of Antonio Pichillá Quiacaín. This upcoming exhibition will coincide with the release of *Ombligo Tierra (Navel-Earth)*, a major new publication curated by Pichillá himself. The book offers an in-depth examination of his artistic journey, providing new insight into his innovative work. Featuring contributions from leading scholars in the fields of art and anthropology, the publication highlights the artist's deep engagement with Guatemalan culture and his unrelenting search to connect the ancient with the modern.

Antonio Pichillá's work is a testament to the evolving dialogues between Western contemporary art and Indigenous craft traditions, particularly through materials inspired by Mayan cosmology and the natural world. His art is a "restless search for a bond that integrates with the environment as something inexact, uncoded," reflecting his commitment to embodying the fluid, transitory nature of cultural identity. Pichillá's art, deeply rooted in his Tz'utujil heritage, stands as a statement of resistance against homogenised cultural narratives, celebrating the diversity of Tz'utujil life and identity. His works often combine found natural elements, such as stones and branches, with textiles and handmade objects, grounded in anthropological research into Guatemalan rural and urban life.

In *Umbilical Cord*, Pichillá expands on his long-standing exploration of the knot as a metaphor for life and the challenges inherent in cultural continuity, a knot between the past and present. "The cord is a connection to life," he explains. "And life itself is a knot of problems, metaphorically tied to a day in the Mayan calendar called *B'ATZ*, which means to knot and unknot." This concept runs throughout his work, appearing in textile wrappings, the braids of a grandmother's hair, and candles with knots that are undone through fire.

Referencing a video work previously exhibited at the Barbican, Pichillá extends this motif further in this upcoming exhibition at Elizabeth Xi Bauer. The act of burning, an integral part of his practice, is present in canvases and textiles, reinforcing themes of transformation and renewal. "Since I have developed the concept of the knot over time, I have included textile wrappings, the braids of a grandmother's hair, the candle with a knot that is unknotted through fire, and canvases burned with fire, including textiles associated with works by my grandmother and grandfather," he notes.

By reinterpreting traditional materials and rituals, *Umbilical Cord* invites viewers to reflect on the invisible threads that bind us—to our histories, to each other, and to the ever-evolving process of creation and transformation.

Notes to Editors

Antonio Pichillá Quiacaín (born 1982 in San Pedro La Laguna, Guatemala) lives and works in Lake Atitlán, Guatemala.

Pichillá studied at the Rafael Rodríguez Padilla Art School in Guatemala City. In 2017, Pichillá received the Juannio Award, a prestigious accolade for Guatemalan artists. As a participant in the 2002, 2010, and 2014 editions of the Bienal de Arte Paiz in Guatemala, Pichillá's works were additionally showcased at the 11th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art in 2020.

Exhibiting across international museum shows, recent highlights include, in the summer of 2022, Pichillá's work was displayed in *Inherited Threads* at Tate Modern, London. In 2024, his work was included in the travelling exhibition *Unravel: The Power and Politics of Textiles in Art* at the Barbican Centre, London, and the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. The same year, Pichillá's works were included in a group exhibition at The Institute for Studies on Latin American Art

(ISLAA), New York City, USA, titled, *Threads of The South*. Subsequently his works were acquired by the institution. Further in 2024, Pichillá presented a solo exhibition, *The Offering*, at the MGLC, International Center for Graphic Arts, in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Pichillá has presented works worldwide including exhibitions at Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain; SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin, Germany; Para Site, Hong Kong; the CCS Bard Hessel Museum of Art, New York, USA; and Galeria Luciana Brito, São Paulo, Brazil, among others.

Antonio Pichillá's first solo exhibition in Europe, *In front of the lake*, was held at Elizabeth Xi Bauer Gallery, in 2023. Earlier this year, Elizabeth Xi Bauer marked the opening of its new Exmouth Market gallery with *Inaugural Exhibition*, featuring works by Antonio Pichillá.

Featured in several publications including, *Latin American Artists: From 1785 to Now*, published by Phaidon Press in 2023; *Remains–Tomorrow: Themes in Contemporary Latin American Abstraction*, in 2022; *Who tells a tale adds a tail: Latin America and Contemporary Art*, by Denver Art Museum, in 2022; *Unravel: The Power and Politics of Textiles in Art Exhibition Catalogue*, published by the Barbican Centre, London, and Prestel Publishing, in 2024, among others. In 2025, Pichillá published *Ombliño-Tierra*, (Naval-Earth) offering an in-depth exploration of his oeuvre, thus far, and featuring contributions from leading voices in art and anthropology.

In addition to the Tate Modern, and ISLAA, Pichillá's work has been acquired by worldwide collections, including Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (MALBA), Buenos Aires, Argentina; Collection Luiz Chrysóstomo, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; IL POSTO Collection, Santiago, Chile; Collection Quinto Lojo, Guatemala City, Guatemala; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain; Banco de España Collection, Spain Denver Art Museum, Colorado, USA; Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo, Washington, USA; Kadist Art Foundation, San Francisco, USA; Space Collection, Irvine, California, USA; Poma Family Collection, Miami, USA; Jorge M. Perez Collection, Miami; Juan Carlos Maldonado Collection (JCMC), Miami, and the D+C Family Collection & Foundation, Miami, among other private collections.

Antonio Pichillá Quiacaín: Umbilical Cord will run from 20th June – 2nd August 2025, at Elizabeth Xi Bauer's Exmouth Market location, open Wednesday through to Saturday, 12 – 6 pm or by appointment. We are pleased to announce that Elizabeth Xi Bauer's Exmouth Market gallery has extended opening hours, open Wednesday to Sunday, from 12-6 pm, extended to 8 pm on Thursdays. A Private View will be held on 19th June 2025, 6 – 8 pm. The artist will be available for interviews.

Gallery locations:

Exmouth Market: 20-22 Exmouth Market, London, EC1R 4QE

Deptford: Fuel Tank, 8-12 Creekside, London, SE8 3DX

ELIZABETH Xi BAUER

For further information, press inquiries, or to schedule a visit, contact Paige Ashley at paige@lizxib.com

A Dropbox with additional press material can be found here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/47sbmg9mijdpq52s25m6i/AEA52E4CNFeTPraREWM2CaU?rlkey=j7h5ombm0n17d0nsgs3seaawl&st=57uf5hkl&dl=0>

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<https://elizabethxibauer.com/>

Image credit: *Antonio Pichillá Quiacaín: In front of the lake*, at Elizabeth Xi Bauer, 2023.

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