



Founded by María Inés Sicardi in 1994, Sicardi Gallery was among the very first in the United States to represent avant-garde and contemporary artists from Latin America. As of today, the gallery is known as **Sicardi | Ayers | Bacino** in recognition of its founder's eighteen year partnership with Allison Armstrong Ayers and Carlos Bacino.

The gallery represents a provocative range of artists, from such modernist masters as Jesus Rafael Soto, Gego (Gertrud Goldschmidt) and Carlos Cruz-Diez, to internationally recognized contemporary artists, including Oscar Muñoz, Liliana Porter, Miguel Angel Rojas, Marco Maggi and Gabriel de la Mora, as well as the Estates of León Ferrari, Manuel Espinosa, Mercedes Pardo and Alejandro Otero. These artists have been instrumental in shaping the character and dynamics of the gallery, inspiring an innovative program of solo and cross-generational exhibitions as well as promoting experimental artistic urban projects, worldwide.

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Growing in tandem with the emerging field of modern Latin American art in Houston and the US, **Sicardi | Ayers | Bacino** extends its reach by advancing new models of artistic production and intellectual collaboration with universities, museums and other cultural organizations. Through strong relationships with artists, curators, art historians, and art collectors, the gallery continues to place its represented artists' work in seminal museums and collections, build and disseminate research on these artists, and remain a stimulating platform for intellectual debate and creative exploration within the community.

Designed by Brave Architecture, the gallery building is located in the heart of Houston's Museum District, directly across from The Menil Collection. The 5,900 sq.ft. gallery includes two floors of exhibition space and a research center with art archive and a library. **Sicardi | Ayers | Bacino** is a member of the Art Dealers Association of America (ADAA), an invitation-only organization that recognizes the highest levels of expertise and professional standards in the art market.

March 29 to May 18, 2019



Untitled, 1990
Drawing and mixed media on marble
20 13/16 x 2 5/16 x 7 1/16 in.
(53 x 6 x 18 cm.)

*"Ideas are not eternal like marble
but immortal like a forest or a river."*

Jorge Luis Borges
Fervor de Buenos Aires, 1923

Over the past forty years, Marie Orensanz has explored notions of incompleteness and fragmentation through a unique artistic practice that mixes linguistic and visual modes of representation.

Orensanz studied painting in Buenos Aires before moving to Milan where the proximity to the Carrara marble quarries had a long-lasting influence on her work. Since 1975, found fragments of marble have been a primary material in her artistic practice. These blocks of marble are "fragments of time, past and future." She keeps the traces of separation of the fragments from the quarry visible, and on them, she writes, draws, and paints, projecting the material towards multiple interpretations. As she stated in her *Manifesto of Fragmentism* (1978)¹, "*fragmentism seeks the integration of a part within a totality, transformed by multiple readings of an object which is both incomplete and unbounded.*"

Orensanz's starting point is the history of the fragments she collects; not the history of marble, nor the history of its human exploitation and industrialization, but that of the accidental pieces with which she works. That is to say, she works from an ontological history that records not only the past, when the fragment was lost in a larger whole, and not only how it came to be when it was mined and separated from the rock, but also the future of the fragment after it is recontextualized. The tension between past and future and the idea of separation open up a multitude of new connections, which operate as a metaphor for the relations between the agents of a social body.

Reflecting on the materiality of marble, she challenges the constellation of static meanings attached to it to create, as Umberto Eco would describe it, an "open work" that suggests a circulation of energies and a constant renewal of forms. Her focus on this material deconstructs the classic notion of sculpture: Carrara marble has been used for architectural and sculpting purposes since ancient times, predominantly by

male artists, to transmit a long-lasting representation of religious, economic, and political power. Orensanz does not carve big pieces of marble; she contests the gesture of force and power that consists of breaking matter to reveal a figure. Instead, she transforms marble by the inscription of language and thought.

For Orensanz, ideas can also be fragmented: her visual compositions inscribed on marble present isolated words combined with pictograms and symbols from different disciplines. These inscriptions should be understood as a material gesture, analogous to that of molding in classical sculpture. Her drawings are some-times accompanied by large touches of color in tones of green and ochre that merge with the veins of marble or by external elements, like old rusted working tools, which create a visual and semantic contrast with the smooth surface of the sculptures. She seeks a "painting without ornaments,"² populated by elements that are reminiscent of descriptive geometry and electro-dynamic diagrams but whose ultimate meaning remains semantically incomplete, calling for the viewer's own thoughts and experience to interpret them.

At a time in which political actors are ever more forceful in their intent to control thought, it is refreshing to read the final words of Orensanz's manifesto: "*the interpretation of my work will only be found by turning towards it, not by what I am able to say about it.*"

Martina Sabbadini
Independent Curator

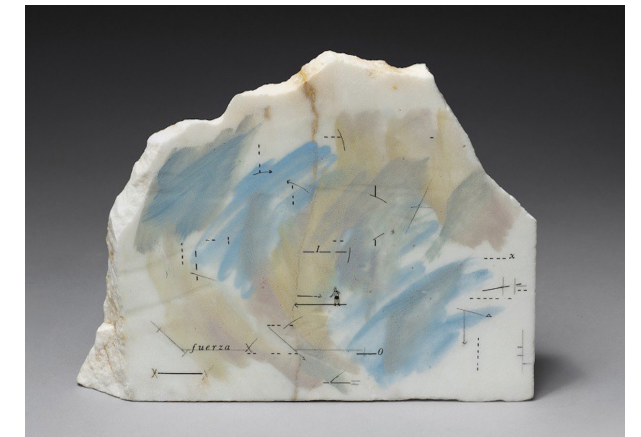
1. Written in Spanish, French and English, with the "*Manifest of Fragmentism*," Marie Orensanz theorizes the basis of her artistic practice.

2. In an interview from 1975 with Lea Vergine and Gillo Dorfles she said: "*I use the symbols of physics, numbers, words, to make a kind of painting without any ornament, to leave to the public a chance to choose.*"



Untitled, 1990
Drawing and paint on marble
22 × 2 5/16 × 2 5/16 in. (56 × 6 × 6 cm.)

Untitled, 1980
Drawing and paint on marble
7 7/16 × 13 3/4 × 1 15/16 in. (19 × 35 × 5 cm.)



Untitled, 1991
Drawing and mixed media on marble
14 15/16 × 4 5/16 × 2 3/4 in. (38 × 11 × 7 cm.)