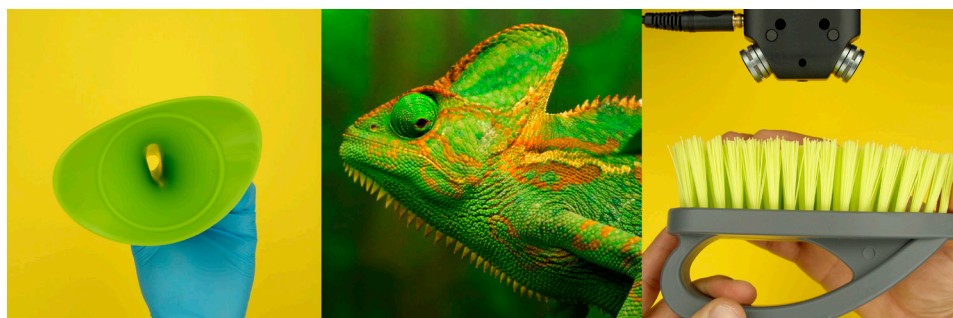


Tropicana

A YOUTH EXHIBITION BY JUAN ORTIZ-APUY

THE EXHIBITION *TROPICANA* IS A GENUINE FORAY INTO THE WORLD OF OBJECTS, EXAMINING THE WAY WE CONSUME TODAY, THE BETTER TO UNDERSTAND ITS FUTURE IMPACTS.



Juan Ortiz-Apuy, *Tropicana*, still, 2020.

AVAILABLE
FOR TOURING
AS OF 2022

When confronting the environmental crisis, in which unbridled production of goods is threatening the diversity of the natural world, it's essential that we take an interest in how things are displayed, commercialized and consumed, whether in brick-and-mortar store windows or online.

This fourth youth exhibition, specially designed for kids and teenagers aged 6 to 14, casts a critical eye on modern consumer society and advertising aimed at children, which often features animals, colours, sounds and shapes designed to appeal to them. For the occasion, Montreal-based Costa Rican artist Juan Ortiz-Apuy has created a visual and sound environment allowing visitors to explore the language of advertising and its ability to act on us, in sometimes unexpected ways. The artist based his research on new marketing strategies that have emerged in the social media era, i.e., the phenomenon of “unboxing” and ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response) videos.

VOX

Centre de l'image contemporaine

The exhibition *Tropicana* was produced by VOX, centre de l'image contemporaine with the financial support from the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec.

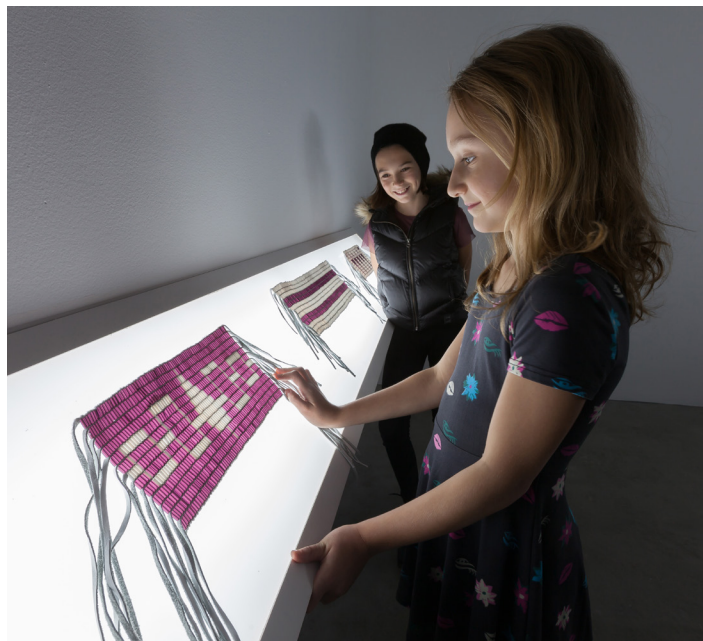
YOUTH EXHIBITIONS: A VOX INITIATIVE

**TROPICANA,
THE FOURTH ITERATION
OF OUR INNOVATIVE
YOUTH-ORIENTED
EXHIBITION MODEL**

VOX has done innovative work to develop its audience and to be recognized as a producer of youth exhibitions.

Although youth-oriented literature and theatre have been established genres for many years, contemporary art exhibitions aimed at children are still rarely seen in Canada. Since 2013, VOX has produced four youth exhibitions, designed by Jonathan Plante, Clément de Gaulejac, Skawennati, and Juan Ortiz-Apuy.

These innovative projects have been hugely successful in terms of media coverage and attendance, with a total of more than 80,000 visitors, young and old, in some thirty institutions in Canada and the U.S. thus far!



IMAGES:

View of the exhibition *Skawennati. Telakwanahstahsontéhrha'*
| *We Extend the Rafters*, VOX, 2018.

View of the exhibition *Jonathan Plante. One-Eyed-Rabbit*, VOX, 2013.

Photos: Michel Brunelle.



View of the exhibition Juan Ortiz-Apuy. *Tropicana*, VOX, 2021. Photo: Michel Brunelle.

TROPICANA

2020
INSTALLATION,
INFLATABLE SCULPTURE,
STUDIO LAMP, VIDEO, SOUND,
7 MIN 32 SEC

UNBOXING: ENTERTAINMENT OR “STEALTH” ADVERTISING?

The artist is also fascinated by the phenomenon of “unboxing.” In this type of video popularized on YouTube, people unpack new products of all kinds, ranging from toys to tech gadgets and accessories, and even food. This content is often produced by influencers—sometimes children!—who are paid by companies to promote their goods. The goal: capture our attention, pique our interest . . . and induce us to purchase (to excess, in many cases)!

“ASMR, YOU SAY?”

Juan Ortiz-Apuy is interested in the properties of objects: their colours, shapes, textures and even the sounds they can make. For the video *Tropicana*, he was inspired by ASMR videos, which are very popular online. ASMR refers to the “feel-good” or relaxing sensations we can experience listening to certain sounds, like whispers, rustling packaging materials or sounds made by handling things like play dough and toys.

ANIMAL ATTRACTION

Juan Ortiz-Apuy has included many exotic species in his video, a very popular strategy in the advertising world. This is significant: animals have a very strong power of attraction among young and old alike. It’s hard for us to resist these unique, fascinating creatures! The artist has played up correspondences of shapes and colours between the animals and objects: for example, the chameleon with its crest is juxtaposed with a funnel and a scrub brush. The living things are presented the same way as the inanimate objects, as if they were goods ready to be consumed.

**MIDNIGHT RAIN
MIDNIGHT POISON
MIDNIGHT SUN**

2020
COMPUTER-RENDERED IMAGE,
INKJET PRINT ON BACKLIT FILM,
LIGHT BOX



MIDNIGHT POISON

2020
ANIMATION, SOUND,
1 MIN 20 SEC



TROPICANA

2020
INSTALLATION, LIGHT TABLE,
111 MISCELLANEOUS OBJECTS



TROPICANA'S ACCOMPANYING ACTIVITIES ARE DESIGNED TO AWAKEN THE SENSES AND CRITICAL THINKING, ENABLING PARTICIPANTS TO DECODE ADVERTISING MESSAGES AND LEARN HOW TO CONSUME RESPONSIBLY. OBSERVATION GAMES TO BE COMPLETED WITH FAMILY MEMBERS ROUND OUT THE EXPERIENCE.

**COLLECTION
OF 111
INTRIGUING
OBJECTS**

**36-CARDS
MATCHING
GAME!**

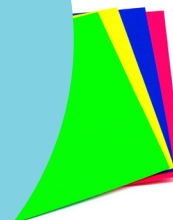


**FAMILY BOOKLET
IN ENGLISH,
FRENCH AND
SPANISH**

**SCENARIO
FOR THE VISIT,
THE WORKSHOP
AND ALL THE MATERIAL**

+

**PREPARATORY DOCUMENT
AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY
TO DO IN CLASS**



THE CARD GAME, THE FAMILY BOOKLET AND THE CREATIVE MATERIAL HAVE BEEN DESIGNED IN DURABLE AND REUSABLE FORMATS. TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19, A QUARANTINING OR CLEANING PROCEDURE MAY BE FOLLOWED IN ACCORDANCE WITH CURRENT HEALTH REGULATIONS.

JUAN ORTIZ-APUY

Costa Rica-born Juan Ortiz-Apuy has lived and worked in Montreal since 2003. He is an assistant professor in the Department of Studio Arts at Concordia University. Working in his favoured techniques of collage and assemblage, he makes art driven by thinking around consumer goods, often employing humour to explore the advertising and media strategies associated with them. His works—which he presents in the form of multimedia installations—draw inspiration from design, art history and pop culture.

His work has been shown in several museums and art centres across Canada as well as abroad, including the Fondation Phi pour l'art contemporain (Montreal), Birch Contemporary Gallery (Toronto), OPTICA, centre d'art contemporain (Montréal), ARTSPACE (Peterborough), the Carleton University Art Gallery (Ottawa), the IKEA Museum (Älmhult, Sweden), as well as at MOMENTA | Biennale de l'image in Montreal and Manif d'art 7 in Quebec City. In 2011 he was the beneficiary of the Halifax Regional Municipality Contemporary Visual Art Purchase Program. Upcoming projects include a solo show at Open Space (Victoria), and residencies at MASS MoCA (North Adams, MA, USA) and the Zentrum Für Keramik (Berlin).

Juan Ortiz-Apuy holds a BFA from Concordia University, where he now teaches, along with a postgraduate diploma from the Glasgow School of Art and an MFA from NSCAD University.

Interview with
Juan Ortiz-Apuy,
VOX, 2020.

