

CONCHITAS / CONCHES

CLINT ENNS | 2010, COLLABORATION WITH JORGE LOZANO

Conchitas was made in collaboration with Jorge Lozano, and presents itself as a diptych. One screen sees Gelis sunbathing while the screen is being partially covered in gummy bears. The second screen shows a landscape being partially covered in seashells. One video is shot by Lozano in Canada, the other by Gelis in Panama. The gummy bears are wet and slimy and slide across each other as they are being stacked. The seashells are hard and come directly from the land. The real is juxtaposed with the artificial: the natural landscape with its seashells and the beach with its gummy bears. *Conchita* is a diminutive for *concha*, which means seashell, as well as a diminutive for *Concepción*, which refers to the Immaculate Conception. It is also a region of the Chiriquí Province in Panama.

The two worlds are held together with a text that scrolls quickly across the screen. The text “en una conversación no planificada” is from an unplanned conversation between two women, Cristina Lombana and Elizabeth Pérez, who hunt for seashells and casually discuss their fears including: drowning and river snakes, an asthma epidemic in Chiriquí, and their family dynamics. One woman states, “The seashells look beautiful when you string them together,” to which the other responds, “Yes, I string them together.” Their simple exchange articulates one of the functions of artworks that is too often forgotten, namely, the social function of art making.



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Conchitas is made out of two videos, one by each of us, though that wasn't planned. Alexandra started shooting on a beach in Panama City that is full of little rocks and seashells, which are called *conchas*, or *conchitas*. Her mother and a friend are talking about their fears, fears of the water, of snakes. On the horizon is a mountain, and while her mother talks Alexandra builds a little pile of seashells in front of the camera until the mountain in the background disappears.

Years pass.

Back in Canada we went camping and stopped to get a drink and bags of fruit gum candies, gummy bears. We arrived at a campground in the Bruce Peninsula, which was very beautiful, only there were a lot of noisy people. I said, “Why don't we make those people disappear using gummy bears?” We started looking for a place to shoot but couldn't agree and got into a terrible argument. She lay down on a rock and I framed up a shot, then started building a pile of gummy bears in front of the lens to obliterate her. The candy keeps sliding off, birds come by; she looks up, then settles back again. When I showed it to her we both started laughing and said, “Hey, it looks like *Conchitas*.” So we came back to the apartment and put the two shots together. Both have the tension of building something that falls down.

The good thing about working when the situation provokes you, more than when you provoke a situation, is that it can produce meanings that escape its creators. The artist offers you a path that bifurcates, so you can choose.

Jorge Lozano is a media artist dedicated to the elaboration of impure punk poetic cinema, worlds within worlds.

