



## ICA Miami Launches New Annual Sculpture Prize with \$500,000 Gift from Ezratti Family

New Ezratti Family Prize Created to Support Major Commissions by Exceptional Artists  
Working in the Medium, and an Award of \$15,000

Inaugural Prize Awarded to **Damián Ortega** with Commission to Debut in November 2019



Damián Ortega, *Viaje al centro de la tierra: penetrable*, 2014. Photo: Keith Park. © Damián Ortega  
Courtesy of the artist, kurimanzutto, Mexico City, and Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels

**Miami, FL – July 25, 2019** – The Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami (ICA Miami) today announced the creation of a new sculpture prize, made possible with the support of the Ezratti family, whose \$500,000 gift launches the annual initiative. The **Ezratti Family Prize for Sculpture** is awarded by ICA Miami to a living artist in recognition of her or his exceptional contributions in the area of sculpture and supports the creation of a new commission to be presented in the museum’s Sculpture Garden, as well as an award of \$15,000. Building on the museum’s history of commissioning and presenting new works, the prize reflects ICA Miami’s ongoing commitment to promoting experimentation in artistic practice and providing an international platform for influential voices in contemporary art.

The inaugural recipient of the Ezratti Family Prize for Sculpture is **Damián Ortega** (b. 1967, Mexico City), whose new work, entitled *Replicant Stone*, will debut at ICA Miami in November 2019. Recognized for his monumental installations and sculptures, Ortega employs honed wit and intellectual rigor to highlight the unrealized social and political undertones of everyday objects.

“We greatly admire ICA Miami’s dedication to commissioning and showcasing large-scale, ambitious sculpture by the most significant contemporary artists from around the world,” said Itchko Ezratti. “My family and I are thrilled to make this significant initiative possible, and to be a part of strengthening ICA Miami’s efforts to support the visions and ambitions of exciting artists working today.”

“ICA Miami plays an important role in enabling artists to pursue their most innovative and ambitious projects, with large-scale sculptural commissions serving as a core element of our year-round programming,” said **ICA Miami Artistic Director Alex Gartenfeld**. “We are deeply grateful to the Ezrattis for their visionary support in the creation of this prize, which allows ICA Miami to deepen and build upon this history of championing the creation of new works. As an artist known for his pioneering contributions to sculpture, Damián embodies the commitment to experimentation and excellence.”

*Replicant Stone* is a tribute to nature, geometry, and the legacies of Geometric expression. Using the form and effect of Pyrite stone, *Replicant Stone* considers sculpture as an act of replication. Deeply engaged with the geometric forms of modernism and the mathematics recurring in the world, Ortega proposes a synthesis of manmade and natural forms.

*Replicant Stone* will be on view beginning November 2019 in the Petra and Stephen Levin Sculpture Garden, alongside large-scale works by George Segal and major commissions by Allora & Calzadilla, Pedro Reyes, and Mark Handforth. In addition to these sculpture garden commissions, ICA Miami has commissioned and presented major new works by Thomas Bayrle, Abigail DeVille, Charles Gaines, and Chris Ofili since 2016. ICA Miami’s programming dedicated to sculpture also extends to its annual public sculpture initiative, presented in collaboration with the Miami Design District and launched in 2017.

### **About Damián Ortega**

Damián Ortega was born in Mexico City in 1967, where he still lives and works. Emerging mid-way through the 1990s, Ortega began his career as a political cartoonist and his works retain the balance between humor and intellectual rigor. His incisive observations on political, social, and economic conditions permeate his conceptually driven installations, performances, sculptures, and videos. He uses objects from his everyday life to highlight the latent poetry of everyday objects as well as their complex social and political implications, making spectacular sculptures which suggest stories of both mythic import and cosmological scale.

In many of the artist’s sculptures, vernacular objects are presented in precise arrangements—often suspended from the ceiling or as part of mechanized systems—that become witty representations of diagrams, solar systems, words, buildings, and faces. Recombining and disassembling mass-produced and vernacular artifacts, he charts the constellations of social, economic, and political forces that underlie material culture. These shifts in perception are not just visual but also cultural, as the artist draws out the social history of the objects featured in his sculptures, films, and performances.

Damián Ortega’s work investigates systems, volumes, and forms with an experimental curiosity in a range of different media including sculpture, installation, photography, film, drawing, and performance. He sees art as a process of “unlearning,” dependent on a sense of mobility, whereby the energy residing in inanimate things is revealed through both the successes and failures in a work’s production. In his sculptures, everyday objects such as bricks, rubbish bins, or tortillas are subjected to his characteristically “mischievous process of transformation and dysfunction,” creating a surreal unhinging of reality through the use of subtle and personal irony.

### **About the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami**

The Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami (ICA Miami) is dedicated to promoting continuous experimentation in contemporary art, advancing new scholarship, and fostering the exchange of art and ideas throughout the Miami region and internationally. Through an energetic calendar of exhibitions and programs, and its collection, the ICA Miami provides an important international platform for the work of local, emerging, and under-recognized artists, and advances the public appreciation and understanding of the most innovative art of our time.

Launched in 2014, ICA Miami opened its new permanent home in Miami’s Design District on December 1, 2017. The museum’s central location positions it as a cultural anchor within the community and enhances its role in developing cultural literacy throughout the Miami region. The museum offers free admission, providing audiences with open, public access to artistic excellence year-round. [www.icamiami.org](http://www.icamiami.org)

The Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami is located at 61 NE 41st Street, Miami, Florida 33137.

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