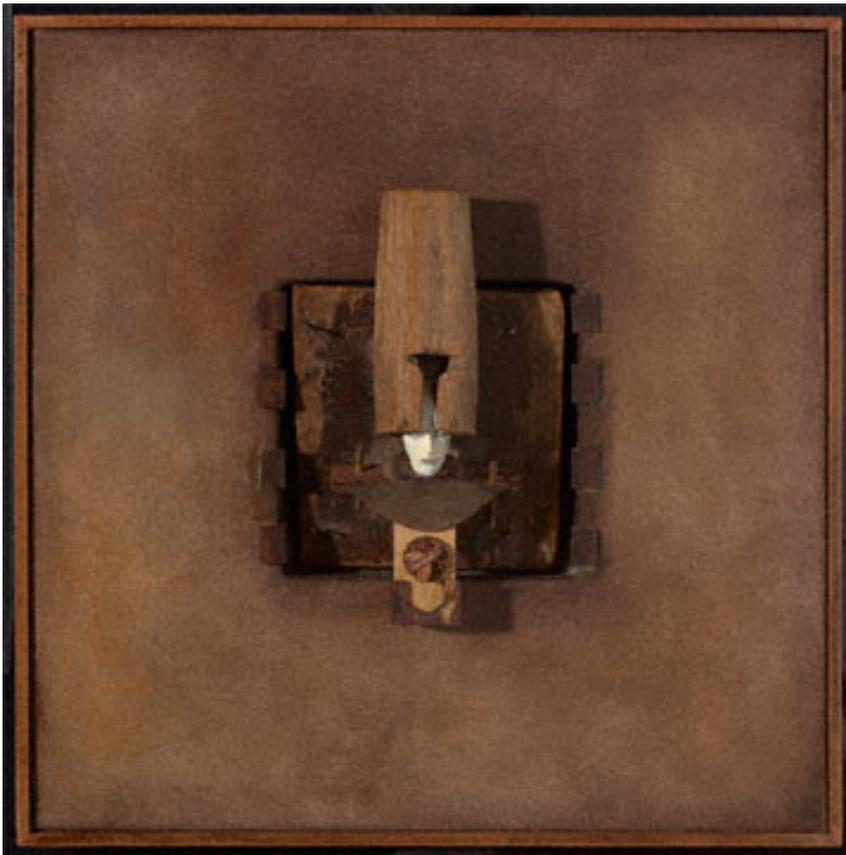


**CECILIA MIGUEZ**

Cecilia Z. Miguez, "The Bee Man"

September 24 - November 7, 2015 at [Louis Stern Fine Arts](#), West Hollywood  
by Simone Kussatz

Finally the cultural treasures of Latin America and its artists are being recognized through major events such as Pacific Standard Time: L.A. /L.A. (Los Angeles/Latin America) scheduled to open in two years from now, but also through its increasing display of Latin American art in galleries nationally, the building of a new Latin American Museum in Miami, and art fairs such as Pinta.



Cecilia Z. Miguez, "The Bee Man," 2015, oil on canvas, bronze, wood and iron, 16 1/2 x 16 1/2 x 3".

Some might be already familiar with Cecilia Miguez's work from the totem exhibit at Riverside Art Museum, featured ten years ago. Others might remember her from a visit at the Robert Gumbiner Sculpture & Event Garden at MOLAA (Museum of Latin American Art in Long Beach), where her impressive bronze and gypsum composite sculpture "Time

Traveler" is displayed. Also, the Montevideo-born and Los Angeles-based artist has been a regular at this gallery since 1998.

Her new exhibit "The Presence of an Absence" includes 18 sculptures. As the title of her show implies, these deal with the absence of an object or, put another way, existence and the presence of a void. This central idea is often suggested through the poses of her elegant and surreal figures, who are either presented alone or in company, gazing sideways into an empty space. Together, they once again reveal Miguez's great imagination, but also her joy for design, the female figure, and the geometric form, which seem to have been developed from her initial interest in architecture and drawing. Some are inspired by Uruguayan mythology and traditions, like carnival, or recall figures of Greek mythology and ancient Egyptian art for their portrayal of composite human-animal creatures.

In "Melencolia," one of the artist's nine wall mounted pieces, a female figure in a tight hooded suit is sitting on a chair embracing her right bent leg, while another figure, standing up straight and dressed in a tight golden suit, topped by a conical hat (perhaps a late medieval hennin) is gazing at her and resting her hand on the back of the chair. Both of the figures' faces are painted white in the manner of pantomime performers. The two are situated within a geometric form similar to the arches of Romanesque architecture. Their poses suggest the interaction between a person in need of support and another giving it. On the bottom of the sculpture appears the word *Melencolia* in golden letters, referencing German Renaissance master Albrecht Dürer's engraving "Melencolia I" (1514). As in Dürer's engraving, Miguez's main female figure also appears to be in a depressed and melancholic mood.

"The Bee Man," another wall mounted work, which has a sister piece titled "The Story of my Life," demonstrates Miguez' appreciation of the hexagons in honeycombs, but also her concern about the recent decimation of these flying pollinators. If one looks closer one can find a tiny bee on the chest of a female figure, whose upper body appears in the middle of a square. Once again, there is a mythological element here, because bees also play a role in the oracle at Delphi, since one of the temples to Apollo was built by bees of wax. At the end of the Homeric "Hymn to Hermes," Apollo gives Hermes three oracular bee maidens, the Thriae, who have the power of divination. Miguez's love for bees is also expressed in the color combination of many of her pieces, often employing amber, gold and brown hues and her repeated use of designs reminiscent of honeycombs.

In addition, the show consists of three wall panels in red, brown and white, representing suits of armor, titled "Ritual Armor," "Armor for Courage," and "Armor for Eternity." The latter is made of white pencil points. And pencils are among Miguez's favorite found objects, perhaps because they're the humblest of all art supplies, which she also integrated in her pieces "Literary Acrobat," "Applause," "Observer," "The Offering" and "Ritual." Since armor was used for protection, here they suggest more a person's various psychological means of self-preservation. "But since the owner of these suits of armors is absent, the three together create the presence of that absence," Miguez explains, returning us to the title given to the collected works.