

# JUAN MAIDAGAN

Argentinian, b. 1957, Rosario, Argentina  
Lives and works in Baltimore, MD and Berlin, Germany

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“A satisfactory translation of this chapter is, I believe, perfectly impossible. It contains the book. I think of it as the Aleph, in Borges’s story: if you see it rightly, it contains everything.”

-Ursula K. Le Guin

As noted in her rendition of Lao Tzu’s Tao Te Ching

The reflective, undulating surfaces of Juan Maidagan’s *Artifact-Built I* complicate the precise naming of its form. The object has both a shape, akin to a column, and a quality of movement, approaching a fold, turn, or spiral. Its title locates the object in the human-made world, and produced from bronze, it speaks to the bronze architectural fixtures throughout the Kreeger building. Yet, the sculpture’s curves suggest something organic, and it is animated by the passing people and changing landscape mirrored in its polished surfaces as it hangs in a gallery across from a window.

The paradoxical mysteries of the piece continue as one contemplates whether the piece is all surface or holds something hidden in its interior. The work is also hung unusually high on the wall to complicate its function. It is not located at eye-level as art typically is, so might it have some other addressee or function? Maidagan offers Jorge Luis Borges’ short story *The Aleph* as a clue for grappling with, if not fully determining his piece. Borges’ Aleph is an impossible gazing globe, a non-descript point hidden in a cellar from which “all the places of the world, seen from every angle, coexist.” In contemplating the multifaceted-ness of being—locations of beauty and devastation, of happiness and heartbreak, of vast grandeur and minute detail—revealed simultaneously through the Aleph, the infinite overtakes one sense of self.

Juan Maidagan and Dolores Zinny have worked independently, and as a collaborative duo since 1989. From 1995 to 1996, they attended the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program. They received a Guggenheim Fellowship, 1998; a Pollock Krasner Fellowship, 2000; and a DAAD Artist in Berlin Program Fellowship Award, 2002. Recent commissions and work in public spaces include projects such as: *Word for Word: decór, for distance*, 2017, for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art’s façade during the Getty Foundation’s *Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA* and *Trade Winds*, 2023, for the Singapore National Gallery.

In 2022, they presented *Not a Flag in the Sun*, a comprehensive solo exhibition at the DAADGALERIE Berlin. Their work has been exhibited internationally in venues such as the 50th Venice Biennial, 2003; the 2nd Sevilla Biennial, 2006; the 5th Berlin Biennial, 2008; and the 8th Gwangju Biennial, 2008. They have also created special projects for MIT List Visual Art, 2001; The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, 1999; and Artist Space, New York, 1999. Other selected solo exhibitions have been at the Lund Konsthall; The Showroom, London; Sala Rekalde, Bilbao; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Museo Tamayo, Mexico City; and MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt. Their work is represented in many public collections, among them: MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; MGK Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Siegen; Daimler Chrysler Collection, Berlin; Bundeskunstsammlung, Bonn (Federal Contemporary Art Collection of Germany); and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.