

# A TREE AND ITS SHADOW

Jim Amaral

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Instituto de Visión is pleased to present “A Tree and Its Shadow”, a retrospective exhibition of the work of Jim Amaral (Pleaseanton, 1933), unfolding an intimate and monumental journey through six decades of artistic practice. This ambitious show brings together sixty years of uninterrupted creation, offering a panoramic vision of Amaral’s enigmatic universe, from the very place where his work has taken root: the house where many of the pieces gathered here germinated, and which he shares with Olga, his life companion.

The House is not merely an architectural space; it is a living organism that breathes with the memories, secrets, and emanations of those who have inhabited it. It is, at once, both refuge and mirror. Its walls contain objects and echoes: voices, gestures, decisions that have left their imprint within. Yet the House is not limited to preserving; it is in constant transformation. It feeds on the experiences that cross it, on the shadows nesting in its corners, on the presences—visible or not—that give it meaning. From this perspective, the Amaral house becomes an extension of the artist’s creative body, a living archive of his thought and sensitivity.

#### **The Tree of Life as Curatorial Narrative**

The curatorial structure of A Tree and Its Shadow finds deep resonance in the Tree of Life from the Kabbalistic tradition: a graphic representation of the universe as a living, dynamic body articulated through different emanations of energy. It is a metaphorical map of the cosmos, both material and immaterial, that also represents the inner landscape of an individual’s mind.

The exhibition proposes reading the House as if each room corresponded to one of these vital forces—or sefirot—vessels that reveal different aspects of Jim Amaral’s corpus: form, desire, memory, loss, and search. The House not only contains the work but also activates it, transforming it into an intimate and symbolic experience

that invites visitors to follow an artistic trajectory that is also a subtle map where the visible and invisible coexist in permanent tension.

By adopting the Tree of Life as a narrative strategy, a transversal axis emerges that traverses the universe Jim Amaral has constructed over his career: a world composed of metals, earths, oils, and minerals, where matter becomes a vehicle of thought and mystery.

#### **Hermetic Symbolism and Amaral’s Work**

Amaral, knowledgeable in astrology and possessing a Pythagorean mind, has integrated hermetic knowledge as a fundamental part of his artistic language. For him, numbers transcend their practical function and become keys to access subtle and mysterious dimensions. His work operates as a portal, as a spell, as a potion, or as a symbolic instrument destined to facilitate a deeper understanding of reality.

From this affinity between his symbolic thought and the structure of the Tree of Life, we conceive the Amaral house as a living body, divided into rooms that embody different emanations of vital energy. In Hebrew, the word sefirot means “vessel.” Thus, each vessel becomes a distinct dimension of the artist’s corpus: not as closed compartments, but as interconnected spheres, forming a cartography of material and sensitive transformation.

More than an anthological show, this exhibition is an invitation to peer through the cracks of time and broken vessels, to pause before what matter suggests, and to recognize in each work a possible gateway to other forms of perception.

Text by Beatriz López





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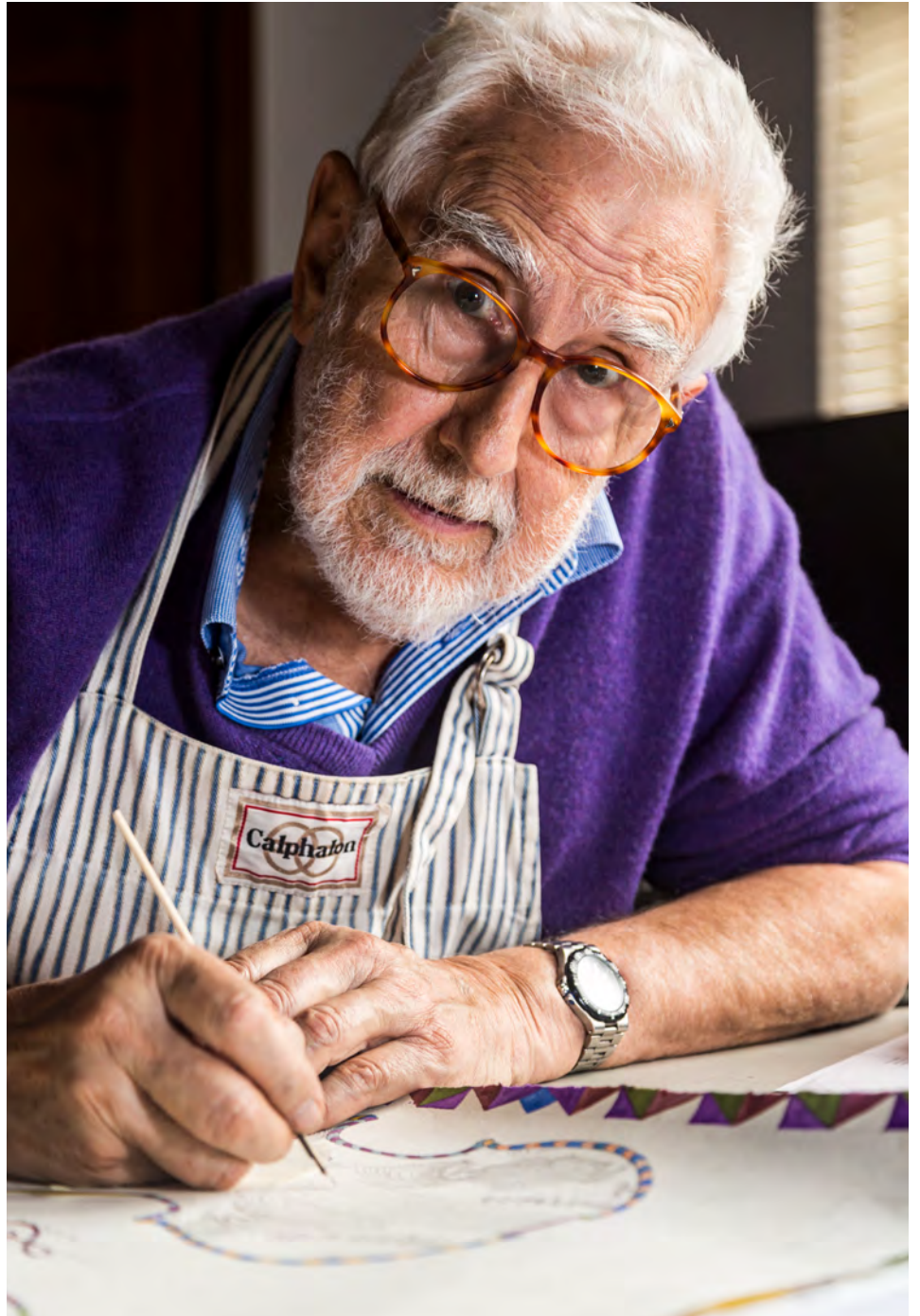


## ( Jim Amaral ) California, 1933

The extensive body of work of Jim Amaral (California, 1933) spans decades, encompassing a wide array of styles, materials, and conceptual and poetic inquiries. His early creations—primarily work on paper and paintings—unveil subconscious landscapes, offering the first glimpses into a universe deeply informed by literature, astrology, and human anatomy.

Renowned for his monumental sculptures and bronze works, Amaral conjures fantastical beings and pantheonic deities to evoke archetypal manifestations embedded within cultural memory. His artistic presence has profoundly shaped the urban landscape of Bogotá. Today, following a meticulous process of documentation and conservation, Amaral's world is being rediscovered and shared through diverse exhibitions that chart a cartography of his rich and layered legacy.

Influenced by the most daring movements of the early twentieth century—such as surrealism and automatic writing—and profoundly shaped by psychoanalytic thought, Amaral's work invites viewers to engage with sculpture as both playful objects and metaphysical portals. His art beckons the spectator toward a transcendent experience that blurs the boundaries between form, meaning, and mystery.



Jim Amaral, 2013.  
By Diego Amaral · Artist archive