Alan Sierra

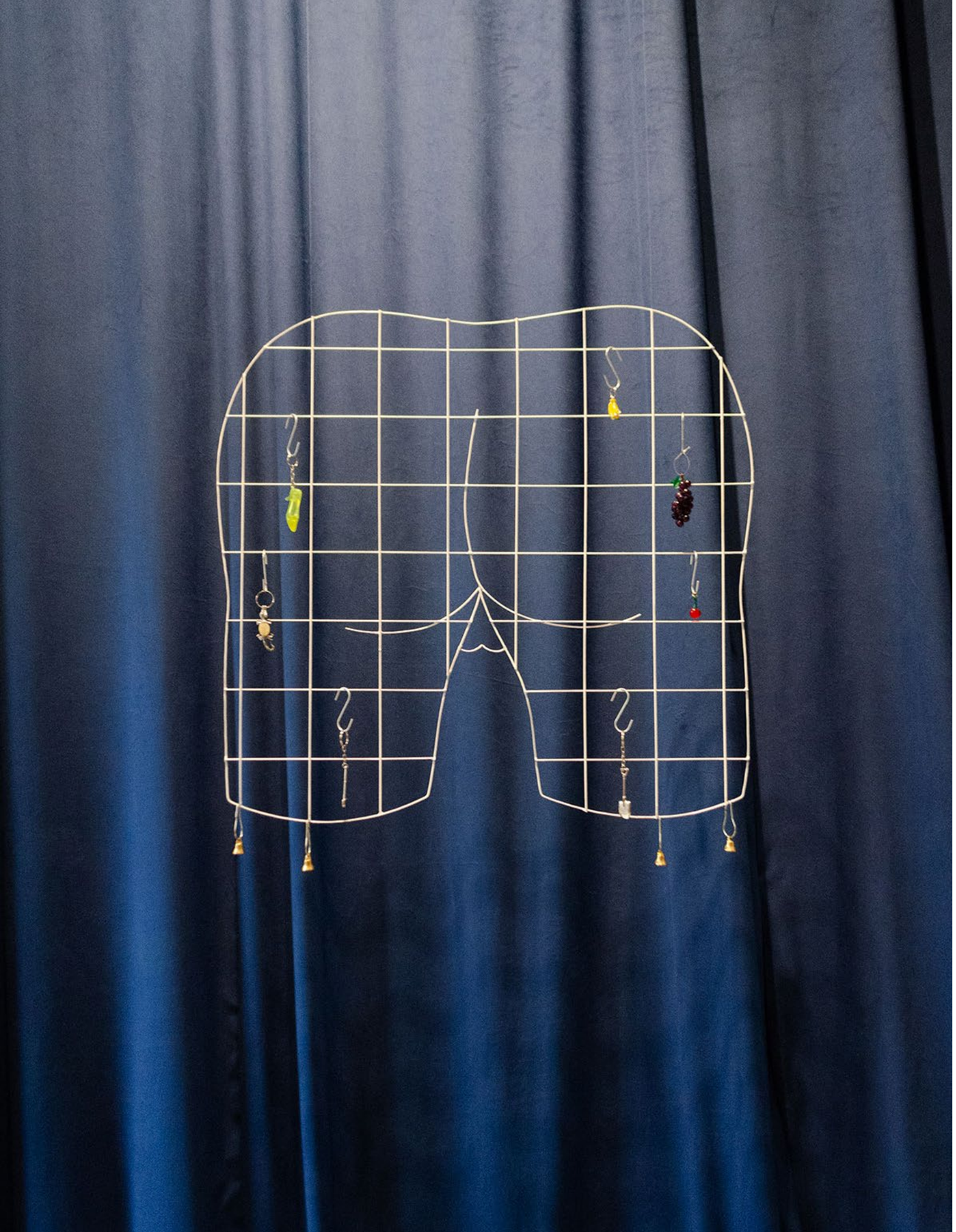
PEANA

Alan Sierra (b. 1990, Hermosillo) is an artist who also works as a writer, editor, and educator. His practice includes drawings, texts, sculptures, and live actions. In his projects, he positions reading as an authorial task that goes beyond a receptive activity. He also engages with professions parallel to literature—such as editing, translation, and illustration—to create conditions that allow for a more complex understanding of written culture.

He has participated in solo and group exhibitions in Mexico at Museo Panteón de Belén, 2025; PEANA, 2025; Casa del Lago, CDMX, 2024; Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, CDMX, 2021; and Museo Cabañas, GDL, 2022. His work has also been exhibited internationally at Castello di Rivoli, Turin,2023; La Capella, Barcelona, 2022; and the Denver Art Museum, Denver, 2021.

In 2019, Gato Negro Ediciones published Nonverbal, his first book of drawings, and in 2021 the same publisher released Fábula encinta, an essay centered on the metaphor of male pregnancy and its instrumentalization in literary practice.

He was part of the SOMA Educational Program from 2019 to 2021 and completed a master's degree at the Institute Art Gender Nature in Basel, Switzerland.



LIVES AND WORKS

CDMX, MX.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2025 Declarata, Museo Panteón de Belén; GDL, MX.
Escribir un libro, poner un huevo, PEANA; CDMX, MX.
2022 Vísperas, La Capella; BCN, ES.
2018 Signos en los bolsillos; Carta Blanca; CDMX, MX.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2025 Ficciones. Narratividad en el arte contemporáneo. Centro Cultural de España en México; CDMX, MX.
Ciel de Nuit. Espace Big Bang; SI, CH.
Galería hablada. Casa Margarita; CDMX, MX.
Abrideras y votivas. NIXXXON en Salón ACME; CDMX, MX.
2024 Fe y alegría. Galería Agustina Ferreyra; CDMX, MX.
La noche. Programa de performance; Pequod Co, CDMX, MX.
Dibújame un mapa de lo que no verás. Casa del Lago; CDMX, MX.
La voz de la montaña. XV Bienal FEMSA; GTO, MX.
2023 Sensing Painting. Castello di Rivoli, TUR, IT.
El Gran Grito. Kunsthaus Baselland; BS, CH.
2022 Who Tells A Tale Adds A Tail. Denver Art Museum, DEN, US.
Escrituras en presente continuo. Museo Cabañas; GDL, MX.
2021 ¡Banquetera, únete!, Museo de Arte de Zapopan; ZAP, MX.
2020 Omissísimo. Galeria Cavalo, RJ, Brasil.
2018 When I'm Lost I'm Curious. Alumnos47, CDMX, MX.

RESIDENCIES

2024 Lagos; CDMX, MX.
Casa Wabi; OAX, MX.
2022 Bar Project; BCN, ES.
2016 Días de campo: ¿Quién nos necesita?, Caborca; SON, MX.

PUBLICATIONS

2022 Fábula encinta, Gato Negro Ediciones.
2019 Nonverbal, Gato Negro Ediciones.
2018 Sobre el posible paradero del libro sagrado y sustraído de Xocén, Servicios.

EDUCATION

2023 MA of Fine Arts, with distinction, Institute Art Gender Nature HGK; BS, CH.
2021 Programa Educativo SOMA; CDMX, MX.
2017 BA of Philosophy, Universidad de Guadalajara; GDL, MX.
2011 BA of Fine Arts Universidad de Guadalajara; GDL, MX.

Selected Projects

Declarata
Museo Panteón de Belén; GDL, MX. 2025.

Escribir un libro, poner un huevo
PEANA; CDMX, MX. 2025.

Abrideras y votivas
NIXXXON en Salón ACME; CDMX, MX. 2025.

Juegos florales at XV Bienal FEMSA
GTO, MX. 2024.

Dibújame un mapa de lo que no verás
Casa del Lago UNAM; CDMX, MX. 2024.

El gran grito
Kunsthaus Baselland; BS, CH. 2023

Who Tells A Tale Adds A Tale
Denver Art Museum; DEN, US. 2022.

¡Banquetera, únete!
Museo de Arte de Zapopan; ZAP, MX. 2021.

Signos en los bolsillos
Carta Blanca; CDMX, MX. 2018.

Declarata

Museo Panteón de Belén; CDMX, MX. 2025.

Declarata brings together a group of recent works by Alan Sierra—drawings inspired by the X-ray scanners used in airport security. This body of work revisits the allegorical language of votive sculptures, saintly martyrdoms, and other medieval imagery to create still lifes or vanitas, proposing narratives that bind the mundane with the sacred. For Sierra, the container object is not merely an extension of the body; it is also a medium for mobile historicities connected to its materiality.

Confronting the promise of permanence offered by metals, Sierra turns toward the finitude of paper and flowers—a profound and continuous dependence on the time and space in which they exist. His still lifes overflow with objects recognizable to migrant communities. As in the vanitas tradition, the lines connect to remind us that before us lies the very finitude of life. We stand before fortune and chance—I reign, I have reigned, I have no kingdom, I shall reign—a phrase that recalls the impossibility of certainty but carries within it a halo of hope for what is yet to come. Floating, as the heads of kings once floated, is a triad of declarations: the customs declaration that accompanies one's journeys, confessing the values carried within; and the declaration of intent, as in a secret confession, where the vase offers itself both as offering and confession.

Declarata arrives fittingly at the Chapel of Santa Paula as a declaration of principles: the Museo Panteón de Belén opens its doors to a program focused on contemporary art as a shared space for thought and sensibility within and from this architectural complex—an opening to its poetic possibilities and to a reconsideration of what this space has inscribed for over two centuries.

- Mayra Vineya

Exhibition view
Photo by: Lazarillo
Museo Panteón de Belén; GDL, MX. 2025

Escribir un libro, poner un huevo

PEANA; CDMX, MX. 2025.

In Escribir un libro, poner un huevo (Writing a Book, Laying an Egg), a group of objects unfolds that, at first glance, appear to serve a utilitarian and decorative function. The sculptures, however, point toward a broader reflection on the modes of labor involved in the creative act.

Laying an egg, like writing a book, is a bodily action that requires specific conditions. In contrast to heroic narratives of exceptional creation, these works suggest a different temporality: that of the body doing something simply for its own sake. The insistence on the egg is not merely humorous—it is a concrete form that oscillates between the trivial and the irreplaceable.

Against art-world discourses that exalt genius, the exhibition proposes another rhythm: that of work sustained by habit. The title draws a simple comparison between two actions that, while different, share something in common—the wear and tear of constant production, the absurdity of endless deadlines, and the unrelenting pressure to have something visible to show.

Abrideras y votivas

NIXXXON en Salón ACME; CDMX, MX. 2025.

In his practice, Alan Sierra reconfigures fragments to tell intimate stories. His body of work is composed of elements that operate like short poems, proverbs, and jokes, as well as expansive, long-form narratives.

His larger projects involve research processes in which he gathers elements of cultural history, later transforming them into images and texts with the aim of generating new stories. Through his chosen mediums, he seeks to translate the experience of reading into a spatial form—one that derives meaning from movement and circulation.

For this show, Alan Sierra presents a new group of sculptures made from wire and found objects, inspired by the white metal racks used by street vendors in Mexico City's historic center. The works also draw from the form of the Virgen Abridera, a religious figure banned during the Council of Trent, which revealed inner imagery when opened. These two references merge into a sculptural exploration of line drawing in three dimensions, through open and expandable structures.

Installation view
Photo courtesy of NIXXXON
Salon ACME; CDMX, MX. 2025

Juegos florales at XV Bienal FEMSA

GTO, MX. 2024.

This installation recreates a poetry salon modeled after the literary competitions historically organized by government offices in Mexico. It brings together sculptural elements that reference official events witnessed by the artist during the 1990s in various Mexican regions. Polystyrene figures are mounted on a felt-covered backdrop, evoking the temporary stages adorned with institutional slogans and union logos common at political rallies. Thirty metal folding chairs—deliberately chosen for their discomfort—are engraved with the title Juegos florales, anchoring the setting to its ceremonial function. A hundred brass trophies shaped like chamomile flowers recall the golden roses once awarded to winners of similar state-sponsored contests. The installation also includes staged opening and closing ceremonies, performed by a fictional representative of the state's cultural apparatus, who delivers speeches on the relationship between poetry and power. An open microphone invites participation from regional poets.

By placing the official aesthetics of literary patronage in dialogue with the scale of an artist-led poetry salon, the work examines how poetic practices—and the bodies that carry them—might inhabit institutional space with greater complexity. It reflects on the layered dynamics of sponsorship and complicity, mentorship and emancipation, submission and resistance between artists, mediators, and the structures of cultural authority.

Installation view
Photo by: Ramiro Chaves
XV Bienal FEMSA; GTO, MX. 2024

Dibújame un mapa de lo que no verás

Casa del Lago UNAM; CDMX, MX. 2024..

This group exhibition showcases artistic practices that explore maps and cartographic languages which subvert the mathematical, objective, and colonial vision of the discipline, favoring instead the political dimension of the creative act and shaping new notions of place and territory.

The work Sierra presented consists of a neon sign modeled after the commercial signage commonly found along the U.S.–Mexico border—especially outside pharmacies, barbershops, and bars. Rather than referencing the use of neon in contemporary art, it draws on everyday visual culture shaped by utility, visibility, and limited resources. Installed high above eye level, the sign is deliberately placed out of reach, creating a subtle bodily experience of distance and inaccessibility. The gesture evokes the physical and symbolic limits associated with the border, highlighting the gap between presence and passage.

The work was developed some time after the artist returned to his hometown in Sonora during the COVID-19 pandemic. That period prompted renewed attention to the material and social conditions of his upbringing—marked by economic constraint, geographic remoteness, and limited mobility. The use of a familiar format anchored in border-town commerce becomes a way to reflect on aspiration, visibility, and the enduring structures that shape access across social and geographic lines.

Exhibition view
Photo by: Ramiro Chaves
Casa del Lago UNAM; CDMX, MX. 2024

El gran grito

Kunsthaus Baselland; BS, CH. 2023.

EL GRAN GRITO (The Great Scream), the 2023 graduation exhibition of the Institute Art Gender Nature at the Basel Academy of Art and Design FHNW, takes the form of a collective call for liberation rather than a cry of pain. Co-curated with the Spanish artist duo El Palomar, the show brings together works by graduating BA and MA students that invite viewers into a shared space of presence, dialogue, and connection.

Rather than following a fixed theme, the exhibition unfolds as a continuous flow, linking diverse practices that address pressing social, cultural, and political conditions. Central to the curatorial vision is the belief that art education is less about the production of objects than about fostering relationships, empathy, and collective experience. In a world marked by polarization and loss, EL GRAN GRITO positions the act of coming together—through art—as an urgent tool for imagining and shaping more connected futures.

The work presented by Sierra, El libro vacío, draws inspiration from Josefina Vicens' novel of the same name, in which a character struggles to write his first book. The installation stages a "theatre of authorship" through the arrangement of curtains and a series of blank books, each featuring a bellybutton on its cover. These sculptural elements point to the material anatomy underpinning acts of creation, referencing both the physical and symbolic labor involved. Though seemingly empty, the books embody the often overlooked tasks required to make something appear as a book, engaging with the myth of the blank page and the tensions between inspiration and production.

Installation view
Photo by: Saturne Camus-Govoroff
Kunsthaus Baselland; BS, CH. 2023

Who Tells A Tale Adds A Tail

Denver Art Museum; DEN, US. 2022.

Who tells a tale adds a tail: Latin America and contemporary art presents mostly site-specific, commissioned artworks by emerging artists in dialogue with the unique architecture of the DAM's Hamilton Building. The exhibition highlights the work of 19 contemporary artists connected to Latin America and the ways in which their work reflects and interacts with relevant themes ranging from technology to ideas surrounding identity, to broader social and political issues.

Reflecting this theme of interaction between artist and audience, the exhibition title is inspired by a proverb from Brazil. "Quem conta um conto, aumenta um ponto" directly translates to "who tells a tale, adds a point," stressing the significance of pushing a momentum forward by continuing a conversation, something each of these artists strives to do through their work. The exhibition is designed to demonstrate how the ideas of storytelling and dialogue are essential to contemporary art practice; many of the pieces on view incorporate elements from the artists' own life stories or historical narratives, and invite the visitor to create their own stories and responses to the works.

The ambiance of 'Discreet Club', Sierra's artwork, emulates an intimate queer club, where reading, imagining, and flirting intermingle. In this space you are invited to listen to readings of homoerotic Latin American literature from the 1920s to the 1980s. The interplay between sound and space creates the opportunity to reckon with the interrelations between desires, bodies, fetishes and sexual identities.

Exhibition view
Photo courtesy of Denver Art Museum
Casa del Lago UNAM; CDMX, MX. 2024

¡Banquetera, únete!

Museo de Arte de Zapooan; ZAP, MX. 2021.

¡Banquetera únete! is composed of five works created by artists from sexual dissident communities, addressing the most pressing questions that arise when rejecting gender norms, the beauty of our ways of being and loving, and the most radical and tender forms of our resistance. Each work was accompanied by posters designed to be taken to the streets; these also include references to support networks for LGBTQ+ individuals and families, thus becoming both propaganda for equality and a helping hand for those who encounter them when they need it most.

Because, despite everything, it is important to claim public space—to make ourselves visible so that those who have yet to know us can realize the city is more diverse than they imagined; so that those who say they disagree with us might reflect on how what divides us harms us all; and so that those who need to see us, to know they are not alone, can indeed see us.

This neon sign takes inspiration from the illuminated advertisements commonly found outside bars, hotels, and pharmacies—commercial formats designed to draw attention through direct and emphatic language. The image of two hands in close proximity invites reflection on gesture, contact, and the quiet forms of intimacy that can exist in public space.
The accompanying text addresses the role of families in society, framing difference not as a deviation but as something both “rare and good.” By reclaiming terms often used to marginalize, the work challenges normative narratives and affirms the presence of diverse family structures. Through its visual clarity and use of commercial language, the piece subtly subverts the codes of signage to propose new modes of recognition and belonging.

Exhibition view
Photo courtesy of MAZ
MAZ; ZAP, MX. 2021

Signos en los bolsillos

Carta Blanca; CDMX, MX. 2018.

Signos en los bolsillos (Signs in the Pockets) presented a series of drawings/poems inspired on routinary images. Through theses scenes of everyday life, anatomical details, animals, and domestic objects, Sierra explores the narrative possibilities of drawing while highlighting the allegorical relevance of ordinary situations. These works were installed on a foldable screen that took the shape of a spiral.

The show also features sculptures that investigate the potential of materials outside the artistic tradition, playing with their dual appearance. These artworks were made from materials available at the site of the exhibition: a hand built with toasted pumpkin seeds, a complete set of teeth made from mint flavored chewing gum and a belt made from paper scraps.

Installation view
Photo courtesy of Carta Blanca
Carta Blanca; CDMX, MX. 2018

PEANA

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