



Olga de Amaral, *POZO AZUL 10*, 2013,
fiber, gesso, and acrylic, 27½" x 29". Bellas Artes.

Olga de Amaral

Bellas Artes *Santa Fe*

Trained in fiber arts at Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan, the Colombian

artist Olga de Amaral has been blurring the boundaries between sculpture, tapestry, and weaving for more than 40 years. These days, her work is bound to draw comparison with the more widely exhibited African artist El Anatsui—but rather than using found materials like Anatsui, de Amaral creates her works on a loom, applying gesso

and then paint or gold leaf to make tessera-like squares between strands of fiber. The results, which recall the stunning pre-Columbian gold artifacts from her native continent, can be either monumental or intimate, and hang suspended in space or like reliefs against a wall.

The nine pieces in this show—all of them a deep, earthy red or cobalt blue, shimmering with flecks of gold leaf—were drawn from her recent “POZOS AZULES” (blue wells) and “SOLES ROJOS” (red suns) series. The luminosity of each work—mounted on top of frames and jutting out a few inches from the walls—varied from subtle to intense as the viewer moved around in front of them. Each is a kind of diptych, appearing torn in the middle, with individual strands of blue and gold describing a roughly circular shape. De Amaral has said that her inspiration derives from the architecture and landscape of Bogotá—and these particular works seem to allude to the moonlike shapes and vivid blues that decorate the interiors of local houses.

Displayed in another room were three of de Amaral’s earlier works, all in gold leaf, demonstrating the range and variety of her approach. But these newer works have an intimate quality, sharing with certain mandalas the ability to induce a hypnotic effect; they are, in short, mesmerizing. Simultaneously subtle and showy, hers is an art that rewards sustained viewing.

—Ann Landi

