

Press Release
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CIFO x Ars Electronica Awards 2026

45,000 USD Awarded to Innovative Media Artists from Mexico and Peru

The Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation (CIFO) x Ars Electronica Awards honor artists from Latin America who stand out through innovative and creative approaches and demonstrate pioneering work in digital art. In its fifth edition, the awards go to Berenice Olmedo Peña (MX) and Lorena Solís Bravo (PE), who were selected from more than 100 submissions from 11 Latin American countries.

In *Sinécdoque*, Berenice Olmedo Peña (MX) examines the human body's dependence on political and technological conditions—from prosthetics and artificial organs to issues of social inequality. With *Entre Barros y Fragmentos / Among Mud and Fragments*, Lorena Solís Bravo (PE) addresses the colonial erasure of queer Moche ceramics in Peru, which are brought back into view by being digitally reconstructed and presented in a multimedia installation.

To realize their works, the two media artists receive a total of 45,000 US dollars in prize money. Their works will be presented for the first time at the Ars Electronica Festival from September 9–13, 2026, in Linz. Afterward, they will become part of the Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation (CIFO) collection, which specializes in contemporary Latin American art.

ars.electronica.art/festival/en/cifo2026/

30,000 USD for Berenice Olmedo Peña

Berenice Olmedo Peña (MX) questions the Western myth that humans act autonomously and independently when, in reality, we constantly reinvent ourselves through tools, technologies, devices, and relationships. She sees prosthetics and artificial organs as material expressions of this transformative capacity. Following this approach, she has been creating sculptures since 2018—working in collaboration with medical institutions in Mexico—using discarded orthoses alongside patient body molds and digital body scans.

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In her latest work, *Sinécdoque*, Berenice Olmedo Peña draws inspiration from “ex vivo perfusion,” a biomedical procedure that keeps human organs alive outside the body. The result is a sculpture devoted to the increasingly blurred boundary between organism and machine, bringing together pneumatic systems, orthopedic–prosthetic materials, and medical devices. The artist develops this work with reference to conditions in her home country, where precarious healthcare, high amputation rates, and chronic shortages of transplant organs prevail.

For her interdisciplinary and critical approach, Berenice Olmedo Peña is honored with the CIFO x Ars Electronica Award and receives prize money of 30,000 USD.

jan-kaps.com/artists/berenice-olmedo

15,000 USD for Lorena Solís Bravo

Lorena Solís Bravo (PE) brings the ceramic art of the Moche into focus—a culture that inhabited northern Peru roughly 1,000 years before the Inca. *Entre Barros y Fragmentos / Among Mud and Fragments* centers on erotic ceramics that were subject to colonial censorship and destruction, including many depicting queer intimacy.

Entre Barros y Fragmentos uses AI to develop counter-archives: A GAN model is fed images of traditional ceramic artworks, field drawings, museum documentation, colonial chronicles, and oral histories, generating speculative sculptures that are then realized through 3D printing. They imagine a past that Catholic morality once sought to erase. Together with video, sound, and archival fragments, the installation creates a multimedia archaeology that reflects how histories are constructed, erased, and reimagined.

For this historically critical and locally grounded concept, Lorena Solís Bravo receives 15,000 USD as part of the CIFO x Ars Electronica Awards.

lorenasolisbravo.com/

Additional Projects Honored

In addition to the award recipients, the international jury honored two further concepts that made it to the final selection round: one project by Indira Montoya and another by the collectives Arte+Ciencia and Bios ex Machina. Their remarkable works stood out for their compelling themes and critical engagement, underscoring the diversity of the Latin American creative scene.

Sergio Fontanella

Director of Operations & Collections of CIFO

"Once again, the CIFO x Ars Electronica Awards present both a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge lies in the utopic task of representing a culturally rich and profoundly diverse ecosystem of artists from the region through only two awardees. The opportunity, in turn, is the possibility of accompanying—over the coming months leading up to the next Ars Electronica Festival—the creative process and the challenges the winners may encounter. With this new cycle of the Award, CIFO strengthens its collaboration with Ars Electronica and reaffirms its mission of supporting the arts, with a particular focus on Latin America."

Christl Baur

Head of Ars Electronica Festival

"The fifth edition of the CIFO x Ars Electronica Awards once again highlights the impressive diversity and conceptual depth of Latin American media art. The submitted projects stood out for their critical engagement with social, technological, and historical issues, making the selection process both challenging and inspiring. The two awarded works exemplify the region's artistic innovative power. They connect local perspectives with global debates and underscore the growing relevance of Latin American voices in the international media art discourse."

About the Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation (CIFO)

Ella Fontanals-Cisneros established the non-profit Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation (CIFO) in 2002. The foundation's mission is to support and foster cultural understanding and educational dialogue among Latin American artists and global audiences. CIFO serves as a platform for emerging, mid-career and established Latin American artists through the Grants & Commissions Program, including the CIFO x Ars Electronica Awards; the CIFO Collection; and other related art and cultural projects in the USA and internationally.

cifo.org/