

## Yolanda Gutierrez

Born in Cozumel, Mexico, Yolanda Gutiérrez Acosta is part of a growing movement of artists addressing habitat issues in their work.

Using reeds, shells and organic materials found on site, Gutiérrez creates large floating sculptures which rest like enormous serpents and serve as habitat for sea birds. She also works in her studio using found (and often natural) materials to explore coastal themes and myths.



In 1995 a wildlife reservation on the island of Cozumel off the coast of the Yucatan peninsula inspired a major project by the artist called "Santuario" (Sanctuary). "Two successive hurricanes had devastated the area, alarming biologists who feared native birds might not return to the area if nesting materials were not available. Working closely with biologists from the Mexican Ministry of the Interior, Gutierrez created nesting structures that successfully drew the birds back to their native shores."

One of her other works, "Umbral", is an installation of 28 pairs of cattle jawbones placed to resemble a flock of birds in flight. The traditional Mexican skeleton is transformed overhead. Bones become birds as they sweep upwards. According to the artist, "A new cycle of life emerges from the death of another. Death is not the end but a transition from one life to the next." Her exploration of our larger relationship with the natural world as well as the coastal issues of her home in Cozumel make Gutiérrez's art a welcome voice.