

DANIEL JACOBY  
CATHARTES  
8 MAY - 4 JULY 2026  
MAISTERRA

*Cathartes* by Daniel Jacoby comprises an audiovisual work and five bronze sculptures. The video, titled *Gallinazo*, constructs a narrative from memory and identity as categories conditioned and traversed by systems of perception, classification, and exclusion. What pervades is the passage of time: childhood impressions, memories triggered by brands and smells, people who change yet whose role remains the same; a private club, a "gallinazo" — known in its classification as the American black vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) — and its gaze.

*"A place. The same place. The same place you came to yesterday, the day before, and the day before that. The same place you have come to almost every day for as long as you can remember."*

The club is visited at distinct moments in the narrator's life: childhood as pure duration, the return after ten years in Europe, reintegration now with a wife and child at the children's pool, and an episode in the eighteenth century, when a European naturalist disembarks sick on the Peruvian coast. These episodes overlap and interweave, connected by a presence that watches from above without being seen — that of a gallinazo.

In this context, the club functions as a symbolic machine of continuity; a space that produces the illusion of permanence through repetition and a sense of belonging, or of not belonging. Everything there seems sustained in an extended present where change is neutralized and history held in suspension. This apparent stability depends on the systematic exclusion of whatever overflows the symbolic order: death, decomposition, the untamed. An ecology of negation in which what cannot be integrated is actively expelled from language.

*"A gallinazo? How strange! You had never seen one inside the club. 'That's not a gallinazo,' one of your friends says. 'Gallinazos eat carrion, and there's no carrion here.'"*

The gallinazo operates as a continuous figure of the limit, a presence that destabilizes the categories that attempt to fix it. Culturally associated with carrion and death, it nevertheless appears as an agent of transformation, capable of purifying what other systems reject. Its appearance inside the club — and the immediate denial of its existence — reveals the definitional and creationist character of language: to say *there is no carrion here* reinforces a produced reality that is the very foundation of the identity of "that place".

This tension shifts toward the episode of the European naturalist, where the violence of classification becomes visible; commissioned by the Crown to name and order the savage territory, he has already reduced the gallinazo to a carrion bird in his manuscripts before falling ill on the shore. As the naturalist lies prostrate with fever, the gallinazo descends: for the first time, their gazes cross, though dissolved in vision and blind spot. The bird extracts the toxins; the naturalist survives and understands that what he named as a scavenger does not feed on death, but purifies it. Yet it is already too late: the manuscripts travel toward Europe with the category fixed and the stigma that will persist for centuries.

Within this framework, the liminal emerges as a persistent and unstable zone where oppositions — life and death, interior and exterior, civilization and the wild, childhood and adulthood — cease to operate as fixed binaries. The gallinazo inhabits that threshold, linking the orders it traverses without fully belonging to any of them. Similarly, the final figure of the bird-man introduces a split subjectivity, simultaneously observer and observed, internal and external to the system it describes. Its appearance at night, outside the club, lit as if to be filmed — or filming itself — turns the self-portrait into an unanswered question: who looks, and from where.

The sonic and visual interruptions that punctuate the narrative — each time more intense, each time less legible — operate as returns of what the symbolic system fails to absorb. Children's voices, monstrous sounds, fragments of language that border on the obscene: manifestations of an excess that overflows the capacity of representation and fractures language from within.

The five bronze sculptures are gallinazos subjected to a disfigurement that displaces their recognition — forms the eye is slow to read, with internal voids and corroded surfaces where formal pressure has eroded the referent without eliminating it. Installed on intentionally tall plinths, the gallinazo exerts its gaze from the distance of elevation, just as the presence that moves through the short film. The exhibition space is covered in blue raffia — an industrial and provisional material — which substitutes the neutrality of the white cube with an environment that is already artifice, a skin that wraps without concealing its condition as construction.

*Cathartes* derives from the Greek: purifier. The genus's scientific name carries inscribed within it a function that the colonial stigma concealed for centuries. The exhibition inhabits the interval between experience and its classification, between what is perceived and what the system admits to naming.

Sandra Cerisola