

Mariana Castillo Deball (Mexico City, 1975)

Drawing on archeology and ethnography, as well as the history of both science and culture, Mariana Castillo Deball constructs works that interrogate the ways in which apparently contrary forces such as order and chaos, logic and chance, common sense and irrationality contribute to the development of knowledge and its systematization. Employing different techniques, including performance, sculpture, video, and drawing, or working in collaboration with other artists, Castillo Deball also turns to writing, often dwelling on anecdotes and stories that recount unusual events, apparently suspended between fiction and reality.

In *Klein Bottle Piñata, Torino, 2009*, the artist draws inspiration from the typical Mexican piñata. Triggering an unusual relationship, Castillo Deball's vision unites the concept of the pot/container — which, in popular tradition, is broken during celebrations, its contents spilling out — with a topological two-dimensional space in which the exterior and interior surfaces coincide. Attributed to the German mathematician Felix Klein, the Klein bottle is, in fact, a container that contradicts itself, since there is no possibility of it containing any contents.

The work forms part of the narrative in the video *Blackboxing, 2005*. Created in the form of an educational documentary, the video brings together objects, tools, people, and stories in an unusual totality. From the Enigma machine used during World War II to compose messages in code, to the accidental discovery of X-rays, the various examples focus on complex inventions, chance discoveries, and researchers moved by tireless curiosity. These cases are interpreted in relation to the abstract notion of blackboxing, a concept referring to the way scientific and technical work is made invisible by its own success. According to the artist, "Paradoxically, the more science and technology succeed, the more opaque and obscure they become. I am interested in devices, individuals, and events, which evade the blackboxing effect: unfinished stories, ambiguous characters, incomplete objects, and so on. Usually, they belong to a process from which they were finally excluded, or their interests and links belong to different categories, so it is impossible to fix them in a specific place. These fragmented pieces of imaginary machinery lead to chain reactions, as if the fragments might be trying to find a connection, a tiny place to settle for a while." (MB)