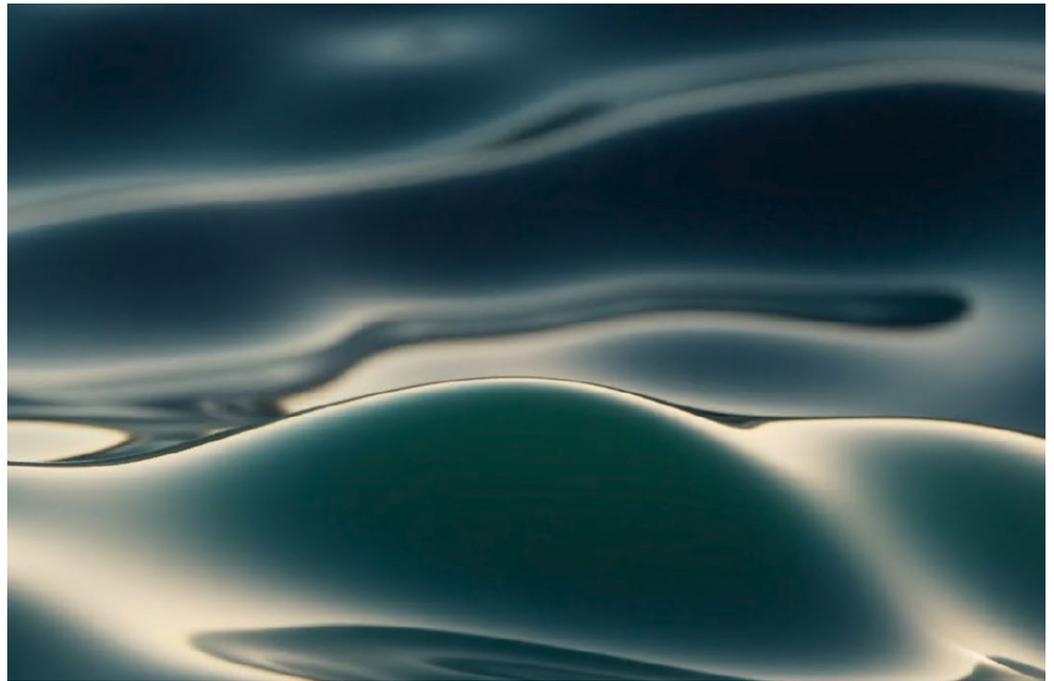


Heaven and Earth

13.03.26 → 30.04.26

Press Release



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Opening on March 13, from 18:00 to 21:00

Quod est superius est sicut quod inferius
Tabula Smaragdina

Principle of Correspondence: As above, so below; as within, so without.
The Kybalion

The second Hermetic principle, which establishes a relationship between opposite extremes, is the most popular formula in the book *The Kybalion*. This important esoteric publication, which presents knowledge, doctrines or rituals reserved for initiates or secret groups, was published in Chicago at the beginning of the twentieth century and gathers the teachings of the mythical Hermes Trismegistus, related to both the classical and modern Hermetic tradition.

This secret aphorism, which has transcended the passage of time, reminds us in its moral that opposites are connected through a deep dependence that keeps them closely united. The exhibition *Heaven and Earth* does not seek to materialize or disseminate through a selection of works by contemporary artists any type of esoteric thought; rather, it seeks to project the sensation of a concordance between what is different or distinct, something that the poetic image of the correspondence between heaven and earth seems to perfectly embody.

In this sense, the relationship between heaven (that which is above) and earth (that which is below) serves as a poetic platform to present a series of artists diverse in their projects, discourses, strategies, forms and materialities, who in some way are interested in these two elements so different yet intimately connected.

We understand earth as the planet we inhabit, but the word also designates a material substance or, according to Empedocles in classical tradition, one of the four roots, or one of the five elements according to Aristotle. Later, this classification was used in the medicine of Hippocrates, as well as in esotericism and astrology. Likewise, heaven, which could be related to the element or root of air, is projected as its perfect opposite: if earth is hard and dark, heaven is light and transparent. However, from a scientific point of view, the holistic dimension between these opposites is evident, since what we call heaven is defined by the atmosphere, that is, the layer of gases (generically called air) that surrounds our planet and makes possible, thanks to its protective action, the existence and development of life on it.

In this sense, the relationship between this system of gases and its dynamics, which constitute the atmosphere, directly influence nature and human life in its multiple cultural aspects such as the economy and politics.

Julia Castagno's work is multiform and addresses all the media and languages of contemporary art. Nevertheless, the artist recognizes that in her earliest childhood painting was her passion, to which she devoted all her time and dedication.

In the last decade, Julia Castagno has approached the practices of sculpture and painting, the first within an original form of abstraction and the second by creating figurative works. In this exhibition a series of paintings is presented in which she represents plants and flowers, entitled *The Gardens of Odilon*.

The artist uses as a support for these works wallpaper, specifically leftover rolls of wall covering. This original canvas is printed with floral motifs. She intervenes, modifies, corrects, repairs or perhaps perfects these industrial representations of nature, generating a complex and effusive network that in some way softens that mechanical and impersonal base.

Although the title of the work may appear as a possible homage to the great French Symbolist painter Odilon Redon, the format of the canvas, with its extreme horizontality, reminds us of the scrolls of Eastern painting (Chinese, Korean or Japanese).

The first reference accounts for the mysteries projected by the work of Odilon Redon, which captivate the artist, and the second revives that moment of her childhood in which drawing was a space for the infinite development of imagination, a practice in which everything was possible, including resilience, overcoming and resistance.

Silvana Cortes Ovalle produces sculptures in which she experiments with the traditions of ceramics and glass blowing. The artist does not use the traditional wheel to construct her works, but rather models them as a traditional sculptor would.

However, in order to color these works she researches the knowledge that comes from the artisanal tradition of the manufacture of earthenware vessels.

These medium-format sculptures stand out for their original organic forms that unfold in space, disturbing our gaze through their extreme ambiguity.

These volumes generate the illusion of living organisms that, in their vital impulse, flow, develop and expand. In this sense, these works are projected as powerful metaphors for the shapeless and uncontrolled life of nature.

Leandro Erlich takes situations from everyday life and extracts objects such as elevators, doors or even entire buildings from their original context. Through the use of trompe l'oeil, mirrors and double structures, he reverses the vision of the world by playing with reality, transforming the banal into an unusual space. Fascinated by the infinite, the observed subject always appears inverted, constructing a timeless imaginary dimension that leads us to places with unstable boundaries. The artist's installations question our relationship with what we see and what we believe. Rarely a simple viewer, the visitor is invited to become an actor within the work. His fascination with distorted dimensions allows the public to immerse themselves in a unique and collective experience.

Carolina Fontana presents in this project works from the series Z-E-N. These horizontal paintings renew or revisit the tradition of landscape by articulating complementary relationships between the representation of precise places, taken from a photograph, and a spectrum of colors that surrounds them, occupying a large part of the pictorial composition.

These vectors, which vaguely refer to vanishing lines in the Renaissance tradition of perspective, project a particular illusion of enveloping space. Indeed, these planes of color, executed with a sophisticated palette, are spatially defined by the dimensions of the canvas but generate the sensation of escaping that physical space and expanding before our eyes. This spatial illusion, in which an image seems to disappear before our presence but at the same time remains physically connected with the space that keeps it at a distance, is projected as a metaphor for remembrance, memory and its inexorable obsolescence.

The two works that **Diego Focaccio** presents in the exhibition are part of the series The Archives of Light and can be understood as a kind of stellar charts that recall fundamental events of humanity.

These events are evoked through the position of constellations and stars at the moment in which they occurred, as well as the position they held from the earthly perspective.

To construct these cartographies the artist uses, as stars, the well-known dried fruits of the Abrojo plant (Tribulus).

The rounded and spiny shape of this fruit allows the physical illusion of a star to be projected while also articulating the metaphor that the artist proposes with these works.

If astrology in its narrative affirms that the position of constellations and their relationships with the planets of the solar system influence the character and conduct of people and therefore human life in general, Diego Focaccio establishes a poetic relationship between terrestrial biological life, human becoming and the stellar movement that we can observe from the earth.

In the paintings of **Vicente Grondona** different modern traditions and aesthetics are condensed and fused. In each new series of works the artist experiments with the relationship between support and pictorial material.

The genre of landscape is one of the recurring themes addressed in his work. The images created are the result of a laborious improvisation, of a conscious automatism that seems to reconfigure itself at every moment in forms that organize themselves through the creative action.

If the work of modern artists is the result of an incessant and infinite negotiation with the representation of the real, the paintings of Vicente Grondona seek to translate the subtle glow of a memory, contaminated by the experience of the sublime.

Thus achieving a pictorial style charged with anachronisms, nostalgia and candor. This is not the result of a calculated postmodern appropriation that seeks, through an intoxication of references, to justify a conservative artistic practice. On the contrary, Grondona's practice relies on a cultural reserve that acts as a vital energy nourishing every moment of his creative labor.

These paintings rehearse an alternative to the obsolescence of memories, always ephemeral, of everyday life and its fragile beauty.

Through his photographs and audiovisual works, **Cao Guimarães** records everyday events that might appear banal or insignificant. However, his poetics resides precisely in the particular singularity of these moments.

On this occasion we present the photographic series *Maré*, in which the artist captures the drawing produced by the movement of water on the sand of the beach. These ephemeral and fleeting designs represent extremely subtle serpentine lines. They seem to recreate the undulating form of a mountainous landscape that we could associate with the memory of the artist's hometown, Belo Horizonte.

Thus we may understand that the series projects a nostalgia for his homeland, since Cao Guimarães currently lives in Uruguay; however, these images suggest an even more subtle narrative.

These waves are the trace left by water and the memory of its passage, something that can only be recorded by the photographic device, since they are condemned to disappear in an instant and at the same time to be recreated in different forms continuously and perhaps eternally through the movement of the sea.

In this sense, difference and repetition seem to merge into a parable in which the sublime is at once instant and eternity.

The paintings of **Dean Monogenis** subtly evoke the European tradition of vedutism. This subgenre within landscape painting, although named and flourishing in eighteenth-century Venetian painting, originated in the Netherlands.

These paintings possessed a will toward remembrance and memory, functioning—through an anachronism—as large tourist postcards, since they were mostly acquired by foreigners.

Likewise, the great representatives of this particular genre created another even more original one: the capriccio. Canaletto (Venice, 1697–1768), one of its most distinguished representatives, created urban views in which real buildings and constructions were mixed with others born from his imagination.

The singular landscapes of Dean Monogenis are products of his imagination and do not reproduce any specific place.

The artist contrasts modern constructions with exuberant natural landscapes. This contrast reveals the omnipresence of human culture on the planet.

In his most recent works the presence of nature occupies more compositional space, in contrast with abstract-geometric compositions.

This strange confrontation between landscape and visual culture is projected as a perfect metaphor for the immeasurable advance of the Anthropocene.

Manuel Neves