

Wilde

PRESS RELEASE

JAVIER PÉREZ

INFINITO PRIVADO

09.02. – 23.05.2020

WILDE GALLERY, BASEL

Wilde is delighted to present *INFINITO PRIVADO*, a solo exhibition of Spanish artist Javier Pérez, featuring new sculptures and photographs, and recent works on paper. This is the artist's fifth solo exhibition with the gallery. Through this diverse media, the artist explores the notion of time and the perpetual cyclicity of life and death.

Last year, Javier Pérez turned 50. This semicentennial juncture brought with it a year of reflection and production (Pérez made all but one work in the exhibition in 2019). *Autorretrato 1995-2019* consists of two photographs and two sculptures, the latter serving as props within the photos. A young Pérez is featured in the earlier black and white image, gazing away from the camera with his hands connected through a self-made silicone glove. In the more recent photograph, the artist wears the same suit, but here he looks directly at the viewer. He has replaced his silicone glove with one made of parchment, a natural material that reveals the imperfections and wrinkles of the artist's hands. The gloves are hand-sewn, with the threads left loosely hanging as if they are roots from a dangling plant. For Pérez, the differences in these works mark the passage of time and call to mind the words of the Greek philosopher Heraclitus: "No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man." Change is inevitable, yet there is an essential part of one's identity that remains through to the end.

In the opposite room on the ground floor, one can find *La Despedida* (2019), which means farewell in Spanish. These images emerged spontaneously, documenting the moment during which the artist felt a strong urge to remove the gloves, effectively shedding his skin and bidding it farewell. This new work illustrates the Pythagorean idea of the body as a "prison-house of the soul." Pérez made the initial photograph in the mid-90s as a self-portrait and an investigation into his essence. Later, *La Despedida* became a physical device to mark the emotional and mental abandonment of the past, ultimately leading him to acceptance of the present and what the future may bring.

For Pérez, time is not linear but rather aspheric; it is "a vision of time in which present, past, and future would behave like particles colliding within a spherical shape, giving rise to constant encounters and unexpected and uncontrollable combinations." This idea is evident in *Infinito Privado*, a sculpture depicting the stages of the artist's face as it evolves through time. One can read the work from left to right or equally from right to left. Things don't need to have a definite end or beginning. Instead, they are cyclical.

The artist's interest in the connection between all that exists in nature and the ambiguity that exists in hybrid forms led him to make *Médula*. *Médula* depicts something very essential and fragile in the human body,

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namely the spine and its nerves. From here, organically-shaped roots grow both upwards and downwards, connecting the most central part of the body with nature above and below. The concept behind *Médula* is similar to that from his series called *Brotos* (2017), made of bronze sculptures in which branches sprout from the human heart. For Pérez, these sculptures offer a physical representation of the prolongation of energy; life originates at a focal point then grows outwards. Together with *Infinito Privado*, *Médula* forms a cross. The works exist on a horizontal and vertical axis and together expand outwards in two directions. One could imagine an explosion of energy.

Like striations of a cliff or the rings of a tree, Pérez represents time in his drawing series: *Revelaciones III* (2018), *Cimas y Simas* (2019), *Vibraciones* (2019), and *Estratos* (2019). For the latter three, he begins by creating a mold, which looks like a mini-lake, layered, and quite deep. Then, using mineral pigment and water, he pools the mixture into the center of the paper so that most of the pigment collects in the middle, and the rest spreads outwards. Despite being made with the same technique, the results are varied. Drawings with different layers and forms begin to appear, over a few hours to weeks, in very unexpected ways. He also incorporates a fan to create vibrations in the water, which gives the works strata. For Pérez, the world is full of vibrations, waves, and resonance; may they be carried in sounds or physical phenomena. By leaving room for accidents to happen, Pérez sees these drawings as a collaboration with natural processes like sedimentation, stratification, decantation, oxidation, and evaporation.

Pérez has received several accolades. Among these are the award Premio Ciutat de Palma Antoni Gelabert d'Arts Visuals (Palma de Mallorca, Spain, 2008), El Ojo Crítico award (Madrid, Spain, 1998) and the Gure Artea award from the Basque Government (Spain, 1998). His numerous solo exhibitions in galleries and art centers include those at Transpalette Centre d'Art Contemporain (Bourges, France, 2018), Art Bärtschi & Cie (2017, 2012, 2010, 2005), Museu de Montserrat (greater Barcelona, Spain), Karl-Böhn Saal, Salzburg Festival (Austria, 2012), Nasher Museum of Art (Durham, USA, 2011), Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen (France, 2006), Museo Reina Sofía (Madrid, Spain, 2004), Carré d'Art (Nîmes, France, 2003) and at the Spanish Pavilion, 49th Venice Biennale (Italy, 2001). Numerous group shows have featured Javier Pérez's works including recent ones at Albertina Museum (Vienna, Austria, 2019), San Telmo Museoa (Donostia, Spain, 2019), Wilhelm-Hack-Museum (Ludwigshafen, Germany, 2018), Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao (Spain, 2018), Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris, France, 2017), Dordrechts Museum (Dordrechts, Netherlands, 2016), Kunsten - Museum of Modern Art Aalborg (Denmark, 2016), Art Bärtschi & Cie (2015, 2014, 2010), and Glasstress at Venice Biennale (Italy, 2019, 2013, 2011).

The following public and private collections include Javier Pérez's works: Museo-Guggenheim Bilbao (Spain), Centre Pompidou (Paris, France), Corning Museum of Glass (New York, USA), Museo Nacional Reina Sofia (Madrid, Spain), Fonds National d'Art Contemporain (Puteaux, France), Fondation Guerlain (Les Mesnuls, France), Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain (Strasbourg, France), Toyama Glass Art Museum (Japan), Würth Museum (Germany), MOCAM, Museum of Contemporary Art (Krakow, Poland) and Cathedral of Our Lady Antwerp (Belgium).

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