

Wilde

PRESS RELEASE

Javier Pérez

POLARIDAD

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WILDE | GENÈVE

Wilde is pleased to present **POLARIDAD**, Javier Pérez's sixth solo exhibition at the gallery. Among the works on display are three series of drawings and three new bronze sculptures, in which the artist stages the confrontation of seemingly opposing concepts, such as light and darkness, figuration and abstraction, or geometric development and organic growth. He succeeds in showing that these notions should not necessarily be considered as antitheses, but that they can be understood as different degrees of the same reality or experience.

One day in November 1619, René Descartes recorded three successive dreams. These dreams, charged with terror and dread, were to be the foundation of the philosopher's approach. In the chaos of his nightlife, the father of rationalism drew the determination to carry out one of the most ambitious adventures of the human mind. How can we understand this path from a tormented psyche, full of fears and anxieties, to an effort to systematically rationalise the world and reduce reality to a set of laws?

This question led Javier Pérez to design **LOS TRES SUEÑOS DE DESCARTES** (The Three Dreams of Descartes). The artist exhibits three bronzes, made from a single branch that is moulded and then worked with wax. The piece is twisted, deformed, and constrained until it tends towards a cubic shape. In this way, Javier Pérez explores a difficult solution of continuity between, on the one hand, the living, the organic, which constantly transforms itself and, on the other hand, geometry, the product of human intelligence, a possible rationalisation of the living, but which is no longer living. A tension is then revealed, subtly evoking the opposition between intuitive thought and logical thought, between the unconscious and the conscious.

The set of drawings **QUIMERAS DE LA RAZÓN** (Chimeras of Reason) allows Javier Pérez to continue the exploration by featuring the cube, a simple and seemingly elementary form for the human mind. This geometric model, as well as all the variations of the rectangular parallelepiped, is so familiar to us - think of our homes, for example - that we readily forget that there is no equivalent in nature. But in Javier Pérez's drawings, life is always there, stretching, cracking, overflowing the geometry from which it will eventually escape. It is infinite movement, expressing itself in the language of the unfinished, of imperfection, whereas geometry expresses itself in the language of finished, perfect forms.

Nature is also at the heart of the **CAMINOS** (Paths) series. In order to create this set of twelve drawings, the last three of which are presented here, Javier Pérez photographed a nearby environment, the woods where he likes to walk. The photographs were taken at night, using artificial lighting. The artist has endeavoured to capture an atmosphere, an ambience. In this way, he allows the "path" to unfold its full allegorical force and become a metaphor for our lives. Which path to follow? One path may seem reassuring and familiar; another may seem winding or fraught with pitfalls; here, the crossroads appear, announcing the choices to come. At the heart of this work is the light, which seems to be emitted by the spectator himself. In the end, it is the viewer's gaze (or perhaps the artist's) that lights the way, and nothing else. Javier Pérez has thus chosen to start from darkness, a black cardboard sheet, and to make the forms of the landscape appear by touches of

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light, applied with pastels. From darkness to light, a solution of continuity is also possible, all-in nuances. But to see it, you have to keep your eyes open.

The series of thirteen drawings that make up **FUERA DEL CAMINO** (Out of the Way) unfolds in the same natural environment and is similarly concerned with the opposition between darkness and light. But in a completely different way. Here it is the natural light that is shown at different times of the day and year. The viewer is simply a witness to the play of hours and seasons, seeing the light gradually invade the landscape, from suggestion to saturation. As before, Javier Pérez works on a black background, but this time in watercolour. His use of the medium is unconventional, as it is loaded with metallic pigments that cover the paper in a delicate texture and, above all, catch the light, like gold threads embroidered in dark velvet.

The triptychs in **TRANSICIONES** (Transitions) also sparkle with metallic pigments. For this last series, Javier Pérez proceeds by successive applications of horizontal stripes, using a broad brush, loaded with pigmented ink and water. The gesture is gentle but systematic. By dint of repetition - several hundred passes - the wet paper eventually reveals its structure and manifests a will of its own. It breathes, transforms, warps, and forces the ink to settle where it decides. Subtle, organic forms appear. Each drawing, made in a single work session, ends up translating an energy, a mood, an atmosphere. It keeps a trace of a moment of life, like a pictorial diary.

About Javier Pérez

Javier Pérez was born in 1968 in Bilbao, Spain. He studied fine arts at the University of the Basque Country and at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris, France, where he lived between 1992 and 1997. He lives and works in Barcelona.

His works are characterised by a certain syncretism, both in the method and in the materials used. Sculpture, photography, drawing, video and performance are used independently or together to create installations where interaction and exploration are essential.

Pérez's work has been widely exhibited in several galleries and museums, including Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museo Guggenheim Bilbao; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Palacio de Cristal, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; Sala Kubo Kutxa Fundazioa, San Sebastián; Chapelle du Centre de La Vieille Charité, Marseille; Kunsthalle Wien; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; ARTIUM, Centro - Museo Vasco de Arte Contemporáneo, Vitoria; Carré d'Art - Musée d'art contemporain, Nîmes; Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain de Strasbourg; Musée des Beaux - Arts de Rouen.

Large-format installations are common in his career. In 2001, he represented Spain at the 49th edition of the Venice Biennale, with the installation *Un pedazo de cielo cristalizado*. In 2004, he presented the installation *Mutaciones* at the Palacio de Cristal, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid. In 2007, he collaborated with Mozas + Aguirre Arquitectos to create the permanent work *Pieles de luz vegetal* for the headquarters of Caja Vital Kutxa in Vitoria. In 2009 he presented *Lamentaciones* in the cloister of Burgos Cathedral and in 2012 he exhibited *El Carrusel del tiempo* for the Karl-Böhm Saal, a commission from the Salzburg Festival.