

GUSTAVO BONEVARDI **FICTIONS**



Cecilia de Torres, Ltd. is pleased to present “Fictions,” an exhibition of drawings, sculptures and watercolors by Gustavo Bonevardi, on view through September 12, 2015.

Gustavo Bonevardi was raised in New York and trained as an architect before turning to an artistic practice that has spanned 20 years and many mediums, from graphite on paper to the searchlights that make up his best known work, the “Tribute in Light” memorial for the World Trade Center (co-created with John Bennett and other collaborators).

For “Fictions” — a title inspired in part by the Borges story collection of the same name — Bonevardi has created a series of drawings suggestive of trees, which together form a kind of forest, and which on closer inspection also prove to be something more.

When we look at Gustavo Bonevardi’s subtle, evanescent and exquisite recent drawings from any distance, we see small groupings of trees as if through a hazy mist . . . When we move toward the drawings, the trees disappear, or evaporate, revealing countless scattered letters of the alphabet . . . We are obliged to step back and forth in order to sense their extraordinary concatenation of meanings, having to do with nature, speech, writing and seeing. — Edward J. Sullivan, Helen Gould Sheppard Professor in the History of Art at New York University, in “*The Lost Language of Trees*,” his essay for the catalog to this show.

In another catalog essay, Brett Littman, the Executive Director of the Drawing Center in New York, notes that Bonevardi is interested in the “once and future potential [of letters] as building blocks of meaning,” although “not in putting them to work in language himself. . . . Indeed, the very lack of clear linguistic meanings can give the drawings a feeling of pure possibility or, alternatively, utter loss.”

In counterpoint to the graphite drawings’ evocations of nature, the exhibition presents a number of sculptures in black African pyrophyllite stone that also use scattered letters — these ones carved— in ways that seem to suggest lost histories and “urgent if ungraspable meanings,” Mr. Sullivan writes: “The sculptures speak eloquently of places and times that we might know from our dreams. . . . They are cold to the touch, lifeless. Yet they pulsate with intimations of human strength.”

A two-volume catalogue was published especially for this occasion. The first, a 150-page volume presenting both recent and past artworks as well as several urban-scaled public projects, includes a foreword by Cecilia de Torres, Mr. Sullivan’s essay, and brief statements by the artist. The second, with Mr. Littman’s introductory essay, includes the complete suite of drawings on view at the gallery accompanied by works of the late poet Elise Partridge.