

CATALINA CHERVIN ATMOSPHERES AND ENTROPY: WORKS ON PAPER

November 17, 2016 - February 4, 2017

“Atmospheres and Entropy” presents a selection of works on paper by Argentine artist Catalina Chervin (b. Corrientes, 1953). Focusing on the otherworldly effects achieved through an intense, and dedicated artistic practice, the exhibition explores Chervin’s unique and masterful technique, characterized by meticulous mark making that is worked and reworked for extensive periods that often stretch into years. Over time, these carefully rendered graphic traces build into dense layers that seem to hover on the edge of entropy, yet remain balanced by Chervin’s controlled erasures and studied manipulation of voids and blank spaces.

Working from her studio in Buenos Aires, Chervin describes her practice as an effort “to understand the graphic chaos which is my interlocutor when I begin a dialogue with a blank sheet.” This balance between chaos and the blank sheet, entropy and order, is revealed in the precise lines, careful shading, and “accidental” imprints drips and smudges carefully calibrated into the composition – that extend across the paper, drawing viewers into seemingly timeless spaces, inviting careful and considered examination. Indeed, Chervin’s artworks evoke a sensation of deep perspectival space that alternately conjures forth landscapes, emotional states, or haunting presences.

Since the early 2000s, Chervin’s practice has undergone a perceptible shift, her previous proto-figurative forms gradually giving way towards more abstract marks. This transition is palpable in her drawing series, “About the Darkness,” first begun in 1999, revisited in 2006, and finished in 2010. These heavily worked drawings still bear traces of the bodily, near-organic shapes from Chervin’s original composition, though these forms are now subsumed within the deep shadows and numinous spaces that are characteristic of much of Chervin’s more recent work.

The “About the Darkness” series is included among the over twenty works by Chervin on view. Ranging from small-scale intimate reflections (*Maternidad*, 2003) to nearly life-size, immersive images (*Untitled*, 2001), the exhibition showcases Chervin’s artistic practice in her first solo exhibition in the United States.

Now exhibited for the first time, *Untitled* (Collage Diptych), 2014-2016, Chervin’s most recent large-scale work, measuring 2 by 3 meters, is the culmination of three years of tireless working and reworking of the surface of this extraordinary collage. The work is a layered composition of discrete drawings and etchings, bonded by soft traces, cleaves and hard strokes of graphite, creating a rich, three-dimensional surface. From afar, the piece appears to be a balanced landscape of intense black and white shapes, whose intricate textures beckons. Upon closer inspection, the powerful imagery leads the spectator’s eyes through a journey of indecipherable mysteries.

- Susanna V. Temkin, PhD.