

It is presently on view at the Ruiz-Healy Art Gallery, a gallery space in the upper East side that has the distinction of having hosted many years ago the famous CDS gallery from Caracas under the direction of the late Clara Sujo who was fundamental in promoting Latin American artists Soto and Matta.

The artist is featuring herself in the works, which are series of photographs that depict her investiture into a painted, and wrapped subject that covers the entire work. Her body is carefully painted with the same patterns of the textiles that cover her partially; this is the performance part as the painting of the body can take up to nine hours of excruciating detailed work, that matches the textile she has partially incorporated into her body wrapping/covering. Some of the photo performance inkjet prints, like *Whisper* also integrate her face into the composition, where she appears to emerge quite literally from an enchanted garden, an exotic jungle of leaves and flowers that we perceive simultaneously as forms in nature but processed as a framework of processed images derived from patterns in textiles. The eye recognizes that these forms come from human, rather than nature's invention, but the volume of the body, indicating a sculptural presence to what we see, makes the photograph appear closer in perception to a sculptural relief.

Cecilia's work elicits allusions and commentary on the discourse that contemporary artists have been having about the fragility of nature, our recent realization of the emerging new dangers of over production and usage by large post-industrial populations on natural resources and the well-being of nature at large.

Her subtle commentary is best illustrated in her impressive work, *Constellation*, which is described in the gallery notes on the piece as made from discarded and intentionally aged materials. A circle inside a square composes the center of the work, which are sewn and layered fringes of intentionally aged used cloth of dark color upon which we see the constellations as they would appear in an antique globe depicting the heavens. Around the circle, in a light shade there are more fringes with what looks like writing from ancient manuscripts.

Cecilia Paredes. *Constellation*, 2021. Felt, printed silk. 50 x 50 in. (127 x 127 cm)



The general impression is perfectly described in the gallery description of the piece in the notes where it is stated that *This work is an allegory of how we humans accommodate and re-accommodate our ways to insist repeatedly on living without caring for the planet.* The reconstruction of the heavenly map indirectly points out as well the tragedy of lost knowledge and culture that has been endemic to human civilizations since the very beginning of history and weaves that narrative into the contemporary challenges of conservation. As a Peruvian artist the presence of the cloth fringes is also referencing the *quipus*, which were the cloth knotted strands used by the Incas to keep records.

Another piece, *Proud Waves*, also draws inspiration from the quipus, which were also used as depositories of census information. Here Paredes aims to make us participate in a real life story that punctuates the struggle that women still have to undertake in traditional societies that keep them tied to old beliefs. The silk she used for this piece is originally from India and is collected from the rims of women's garments that are cut off before they are allowed to enter temples because they are considered impure.

A piece that relates to the theme of endangered species is beautifully expressed in *Of Wings and Thorns* where only her head can be seen from behind, emerging from what looks like a conglomeration of birds. Upon close examination some have labels hanging, with the classification names written out as if these were taken from a book of species, such as the famous Audubon series on birds of America which brings to mind the idea of encyclopedic fauna and floral books that were published in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when more species started becoming extinct than at any other point in history, although that is not precisely the reason that the publications appeared, but rather because it was also a process of providing illustrations of faraway places that were quickly colonized by the European powers, eager to expand their spheres of influence in all continents. Due to the quick development of industries the natural environment was infringed on and the living spaces of animals threatened by the consequences of pollution, which came to the fore in increasing waves as the century progressed, and spreading from the industrial nations to the colonies later.

This exhibition is the first for the artist in New York and very much in good timing with the pandemic that has brought renewed attention to conservation and the reality of climate change that will carry on, beyond the new 'normal' time that has now become an everyday reality for all.

ALBERTO BARRAL

## Catalina Chervin Hutchinson Modern & Contemporary

Catalina Chervin's exhibition at Hutchinson Modern & Contemporary is a refreshing and new addition to the numerous exhibitions of high-quality contemporary art that have been opening up at an accelerated rate since the beginning of the summer, which was the time when New York city was finally able to make a comeback in opening more spaces to art viewing after the pandemic restrictions.

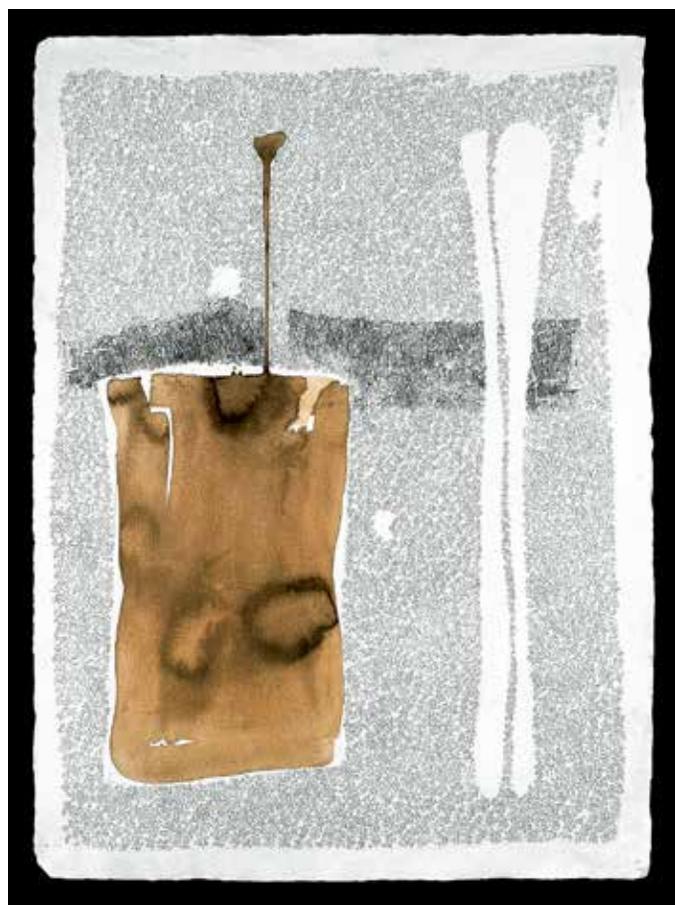
As if it were a coordinated effort, New York galleries have been exhibiting important and exciting work to lure back the regular traffic of the art world which had been missing from the cultural landscape since last year, when most of the important collectors disappeared from the city and created a relocation pattern. Divided between the summer in the Hamptons and Palm Beach in the winter, the art scene

underwent a high degree of migration and the most important galleries in the city were literally obliged to open temporary spaces in both places to be in contact with their clientele during what can best be described as the pandemic diaspora.

The artist's work could not have been more poignant within the context of the elegiac mood of the pandemic itself; this Argentinian artist has a unique relationship to drawing and printmaking that recalls the best efforts of traditional Chinese and Japanese black and white landscape painting, though most of the work in the exhibit were abstractions, the treatment of details and the inclusion of a landscape series revealed the attention paid to shadowing and texture that makes the works remarkable. It was particularly present in the large drawing in the first viewing room at the gallery, where *Untitled I (Street Art Series)*, 2014-16 makes a striking impression on the viewer. The layers of black ink and charcoal spread over two panels, each one looking like a photo taken from a plane at great distance of terrain that uncovers the ruins still buried underground of a past civilization. The layering of inks and charcoal in some pieces also recall the unearthing of shapes that takes place in archeological excavation sites.

Another piece in the exhibit, *Portrait II*, displays a figure emerging from the shadows, not quite revealed, while the one designated as *Portrait I* can be interpreted as a whirlwind of desert sand about to take form, both portraits pertain to the subject of what's left behind, the remains of another object, or design, that is a particular signifier that informs Chervin's work. Her creations give the impression of some tracks/tracings that have been left engraved or drawn, traces of what

**Catalina Chervin.** *Untitled IV, Series of Blots*, 2018. Pen, pencil, walnut ink and charcoal Khadi Papers - handmade paper. 30 x 24 in (76 x 57 cm). Photo: Pablo Messil



was once and is now no more or indications of something coming into the possible formulation of a shape from a background of perfectly controlled chaotic energy.

Her use of ink is masterly, and the delicacy of the work is comparable to the most intricate and detailed 19th century Japanese woodcuts. The artist has used these techniques to demonstrate her struggles to come to terms with her memories of migration and displacement. Her work reflects the idea of incompleteness and the unfinished, as well as fissured and broken materials, are key components of her practice. Also, the resemblance of some markings and stains in her drawings are reminiscent of the evanescence of memory, and that even if recorded, memories can be faulty or incomplete, due to the circumstances of forced displacement which can be traumatizing and less likely to be accurately evoked or recorded.

Chervin's work, though largely abstract, nevertheless addresses the issues of an unsecured sense of history that so strongly refers to the memory loss of entire cultures in the past turbulent century, a process which has continued worsening in the present one, as more nations were affected by emigration, repatriation, and displacement due to wars, famine, and economic collapse. A work on paper, *Untitled (Apocalypse series)*, 2003 is a good example of this, as a rendition of an abstracted explosion/implosion process. Another piece reflecting the elegiac atmosphere that is characteristic of this series is *Untitled (Portfolio Apocalipsis)*, 2004.

In yet another series, *Untitled IV (Series of Blots)*, 2018 the composition features a series of walnut ink blots, that looked blurred and cream colored, and which appear off center on hand made paper, on top of charcoal designs that reminded me of Marlene Dumas' gray tones on some of her works on paper, and how in both cases it translates as melancholic yet expressive desolation and alienation.

In a more lyrical mode, her *Canto Portfolio*, which are prints in editions of 20, was exhibited with three pieces: *Song 1 (Portfolio Canto)*, 2010 had the striking effect of a geyser or fountain emerging from the ground, *Song 2 (Portfolio Canto)*, 2010 which looked like a sea scape from the shore and *Song 3, 2010* depicting a series of islands scattered in a lake/sea. The three prints show the artist's incredible attention to her shading and highlighting techniques Her successful meandering between abstraction and very evocative realities affirm in the viewer new impressions on impermanence, reminiscence and the making of art for our time.

ALBERTO BARRAL

## PARIS / FRANCE

### Marco Maggi Xippas Art Gallery

Abstraction as an international movement was the product of groups and movements that disseminated its principles, but few individuals, committed to constant change, have made substantial contributions. In the exhibition "The Revolt of Detail" (La révolte du détail), at Xippas Gallery, in Paris, Marco Maggi (Uruguay, 1957) invents a new plastic philosophy: another way of approaching language through thirteen ensembles made in 2020.

Obsessed with the quest for details on surfaces, this Uruguayan artist tears, pierces, cuts, chisels, reverses, folds, attaches, overlaps.