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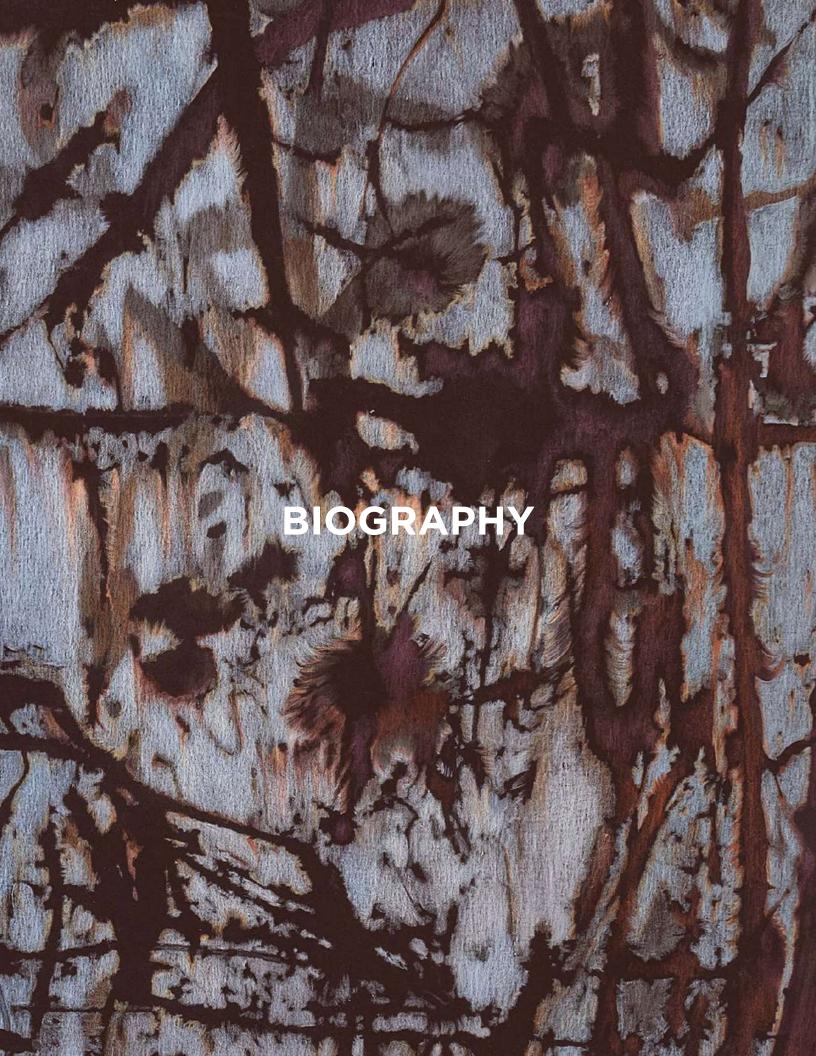
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RAÚL ILLARRAMENDI

b. 1982, Caracas, VE Lives and works in Méru, FR

Raúl Illarramendi produces canvases that represent the "traces" left by human activity in everyday urban landscapes. These "traces" are found on walls, sidewalks, windows, and doors, and are photographed by the artist to evoke their compositional strangeness, elegance, and tactile qualities. After accumulating a repertory of images that serve as inspiration for his compositions, the artist applies coloured pencil on a canvas that has previously been prepared with gouache. Described, by the artist, as "non-drawings," the canvases comprise strata of lines that reveal the foundation of the canvas. Like the urban surfaces he photographs, his canvases are palimpsests of material and action.

Raúl Illarramendi (b. 1982, Caracas, VE; lives and works in Méru, FR) began his artistic training in 1998 as assistant to the painter Felix Perdomo. He then became a member of the Circulo de Dibujo of the Contemporary Art Museum of Caracas Sofia Imber. He followed studies in Visual Arts and Art History at the University of Southern Indiana in Evansville in the United States. Illaramendi is widely exhibited, having held solo presentations with Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, FR; Lieu d' Art Contemporain, Sigean, FR: Carré de Aubusson. Aubusson. FR: Maison de Arts et Loisirs, Laon, FR: Foundation Fernet Branca. St. Louis, FR, among others. He has won several art awards in the United States and France, the most recent of which being the Jean Chevalier Award for Painting in Lyon, which he received in 2012.



Raúl Illarramendi, 2011. Photo: Thierry Chassepoux





EA n°244, 2022 Oil pastel, wax pastel and gouache on canvas 90 1/2 x 72 7/8 in 230 x 185 cm (RIL23.001)

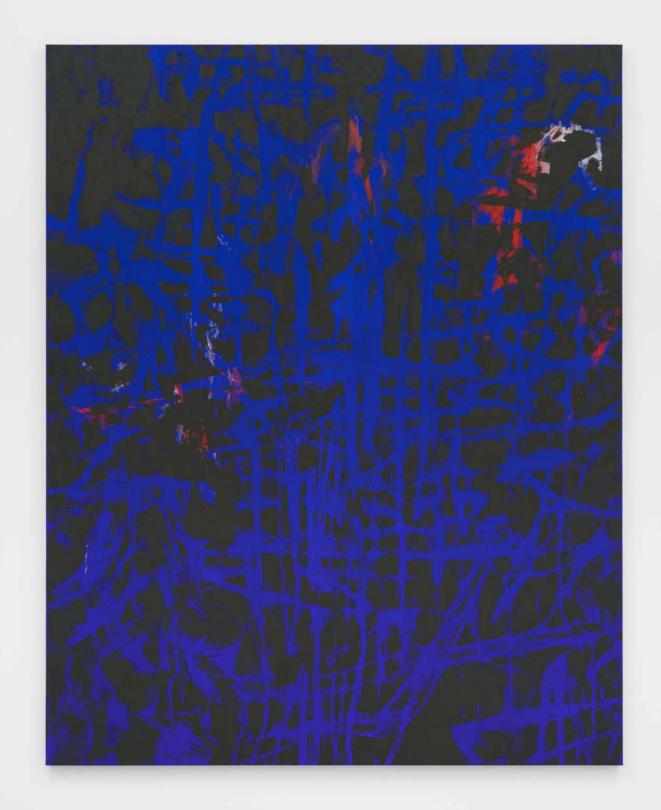
EA n°274, 2022 Color pencil and gouache on canvas 59 x 39 3/8 x 1 1/8 in 150 x 100 x 3 cm (RIL22.003)





EA n°275, 2022 Color pencil and gouache on canvas 59 x 39 3/8 x 1 1/8 in 150 x 100 x 3 cm (RIL22.004)

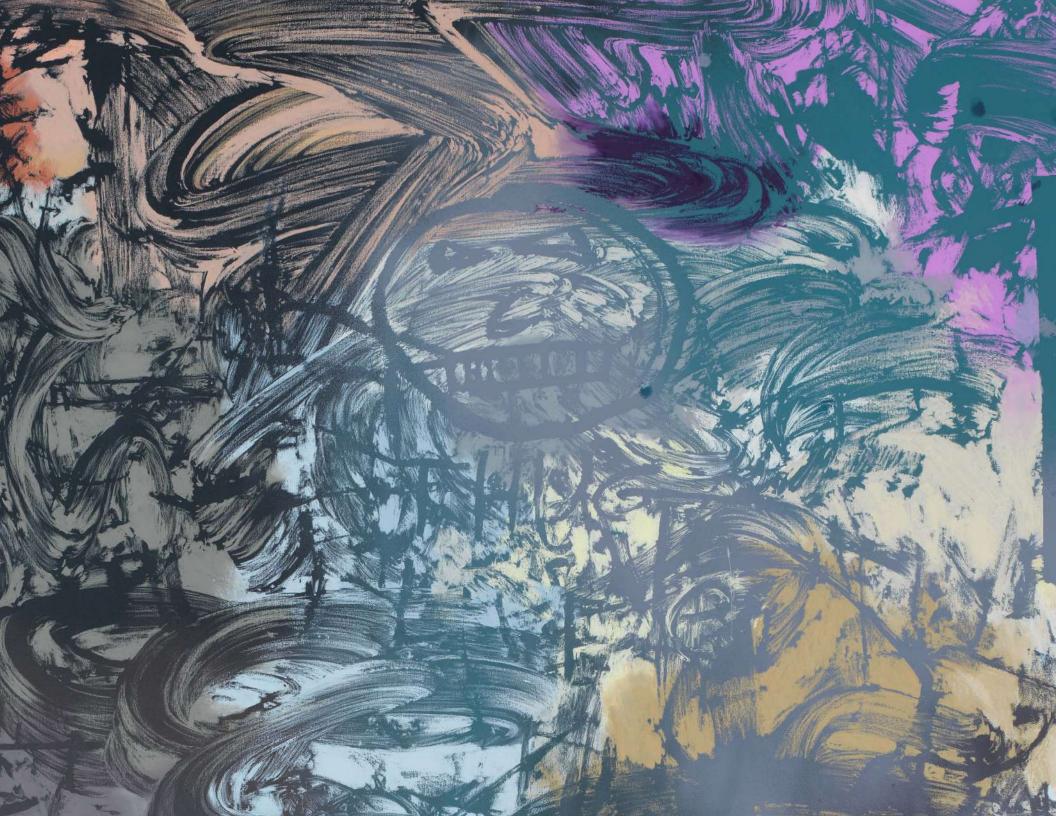
 $EA~N^{\circ}259,~2022$ Oil pastel, watercolour stick and gouache on canvas 78~3/4~x~63~x~1~1/8 in 200~x~160~x~3~cm (RIL23.002)







EA n°277_smokers, 2023
Oil and wax pastel, and gouache on canvas
78 3/4 x 63 x 1 1/8 in
200 x 160 x 3 cm
(RIL23.007)





EA n°284, 2023, Color pencil, oil and wax pastel and gouache on canvas, 55 1/8 x 63 x 1 1/8 in, 140 x 160 x 3 cm, (RIL23.013)



EAD n°1, 2017 Pencil and guache on metal 34.5 x 24.5 x 4 in 87.5 x 62 x 10 cm (Galerie Karsten Greve)





Losanges 1, 2016
Pencil on paper
29.75 x 22 in
75.8 x 55.8 cm
(Galerie Karsten Greve)



EAD n°9, 2018 Wax pastel, oil pastel and gouache on metal 16.75 x 27.5 x 2 42.5 x 69.5 x 5.5cm



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS AND PROJECTS

INTRUSION

2022 GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE PARIS, FR

RAÚL ILLARRAMENDI

2017 FONDATION FERNET-BRANCA SAINT LOUIS, FR

THE SPIRIT LINE

2015 GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE COLOGNE, DE

NINO MIER GALLERY

Galerie Karsten Greve is pleased to present "Intrusion", the new solo exhibition of the Venezuelan artist Raúl Illarramendi, his fourth in our Parisian space. The artist unveils a new set of reworked photographs from the beginning of his career, alongside new paintings from the series "Evidence of Absence" (EA). "Intrusion" marks a new chapter in his work, an evolution in materiality: from the first lockdown in Spring 2020, the artist has experimented with new materials, exploring the potential of superposition. This "novelty" is experienced intensely, which makes it appear intrusive at first, before being gradually tamed.

"The 'then' meets the 'now' in a burst of light. For, is a print the loss of the origin or a connection to it?" The art historian and theoretician Walter Benjamin asks us about our relationship to the notion of origin. An imprint—or in the case of Raúl Illarramendi's work, the reproduction of imprints — produces a form and a counterform, two opposites united by their direct physical contact at a given moment. The characterisation of the physiognomy, that of the initial form, make it an infinite source of paradox and speculation. "The imprint is the dialectical image," writes the philosopher Georges Didi-Huberman. Although convincing, an imprint is not a phantom subject, addressing both the presence and absence of the referent and questioning the contact and loss of contact.

Raúl also finds his subjects in the traces left by the processes of urban development, focusing on large concrete surfaces. The manipulation of these surfaces, but also the weather and the passing of time leave traces and alter the colours. The artist is thus confronted with a new dialectic, which gradually becomes a source of meanings and visual information. Raúl Illarramendi positions himself as the heir of these changes, in an in-between space where abstraction imposes itself, from the outside world into the intimacy of his studio.

The imprints documented by Illarramendi retain the memory of the person who left them and become an effigy of their passing.

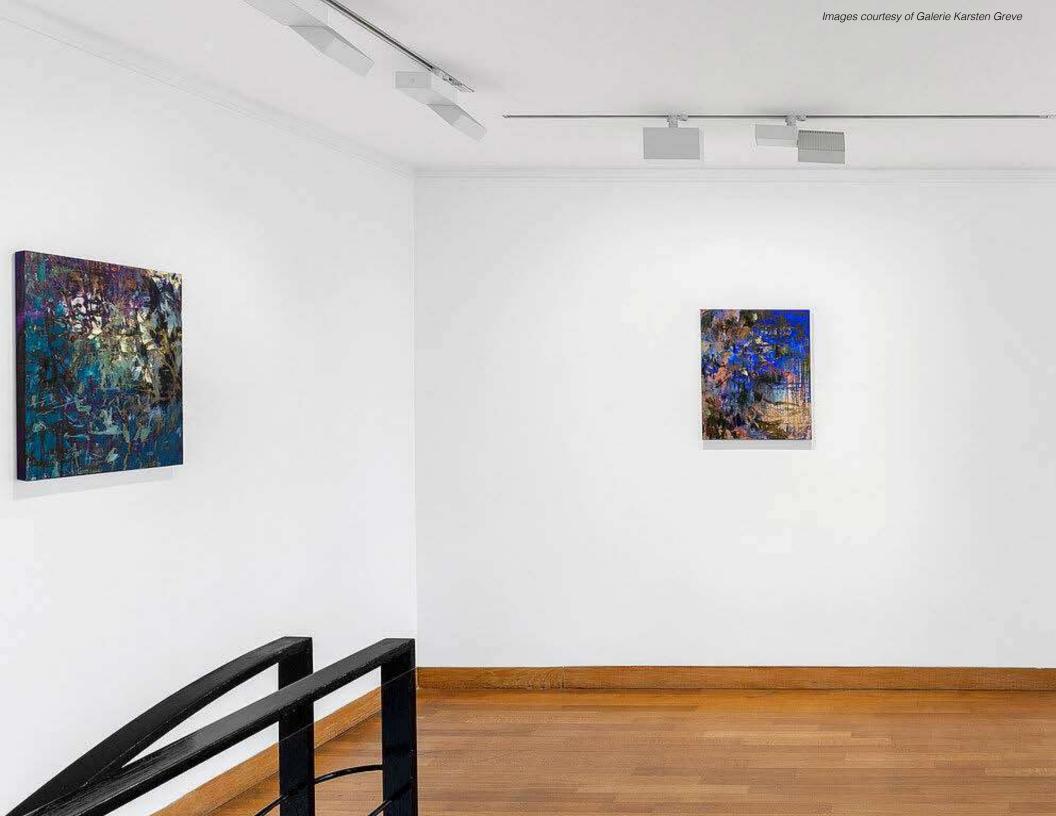
In the photographs, the captured and catalogued surfaces are removed from their context, and the framing prevents them from being attached to a specific place. In his paintings, the artist creates a portrait from these traces, superpositions, and cracks, a portrait of something destined to disappear. This way, he renders these marks perennial, the only witnesses of a vanished referent. Chance is the master here, for it is impossible to foresee neither the birth nor the duration or the disappearance of these markings. By observing the anonymous traces that have been left on the walls

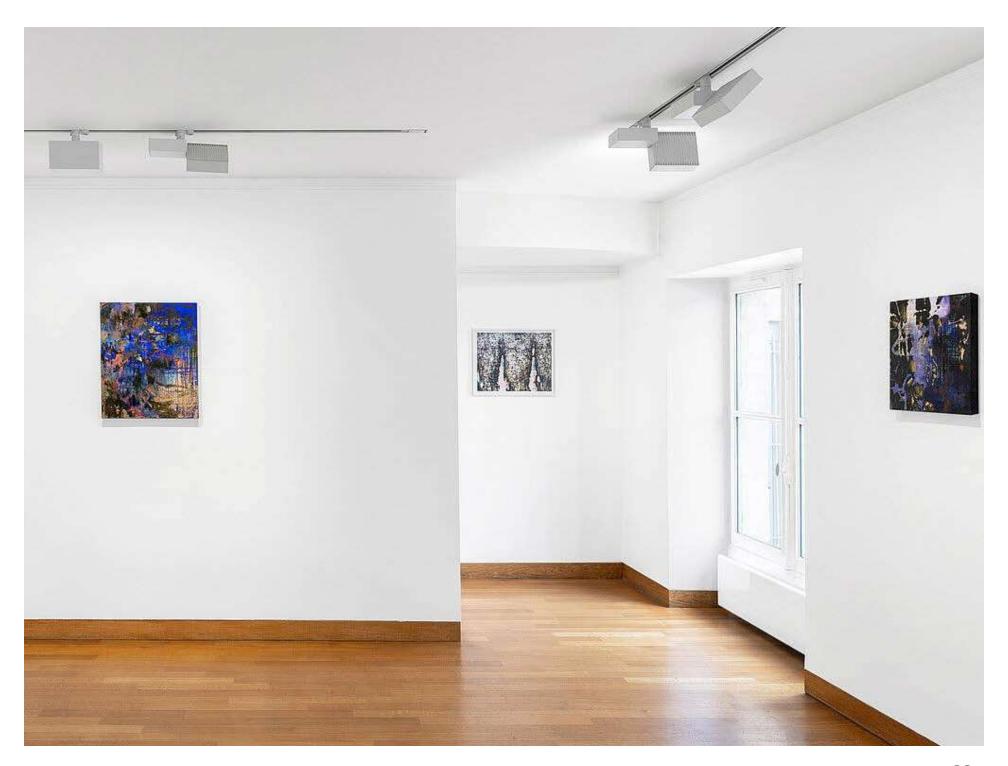
of cities, emerges a testimony of the presence of its inhabitants, of the appropriation of the place. Raúl Illarramendi captures these messages through the accumulation of spontaneous shots that he overlays to create a multitude of strata. While observing walls and public spaces, the artist documents the life of the inhabitants, their familiarity with these places, their way of "having been there".

"I represent marks and traces left by a spontaneous act, but the marks and traces that I use to make them, disappear in the act", continues the artist.

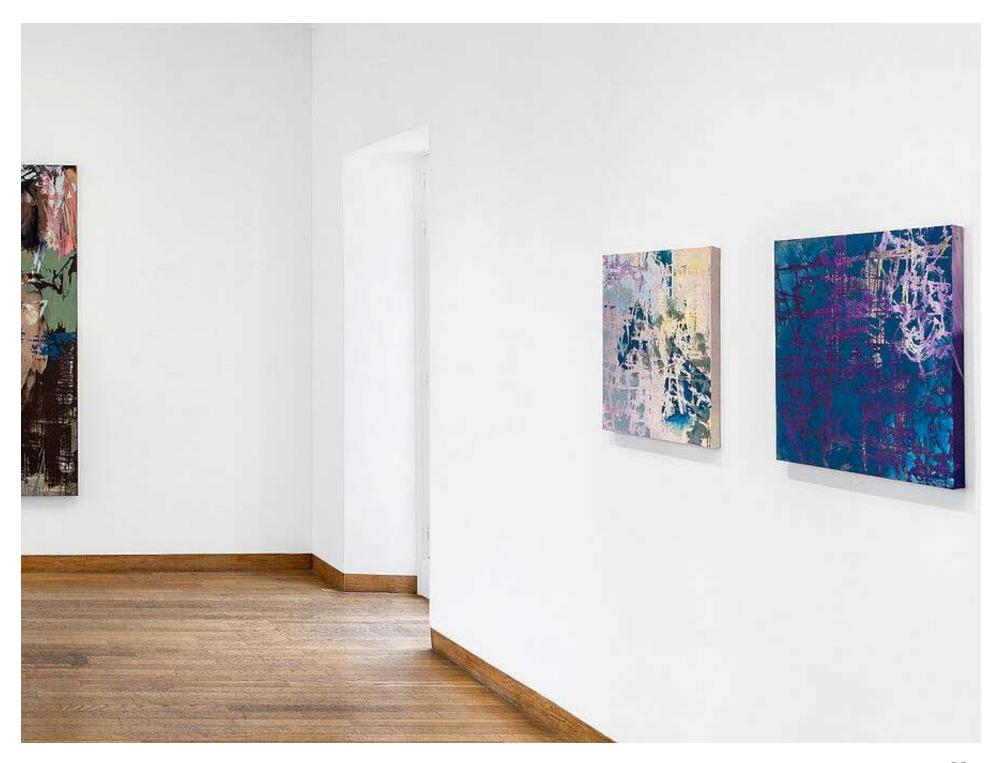
The painting EA n°267, along with all the other works exhibited, was born from the appropriation of these spontaneous accidents. By inviting colour and matter, the "stains" blossom into coloured sparkles that imitate accidental streaks or writing on urban walls. The result is a dichotomy between abstraction and figuration, an almost amorphous image ready to bend to the viewer's imagination. "I am interested in developing a coherent and factual representation of a subject that is not really a subject, where drawing is not really drawing but something rather closer to painting, both mechanically and conceptually," explains the artist. This 'non-subject' stands on the line between figuration – it shows things that have existed – and abstraction – the subjects are not really subjects after all. In his new paintings, Illarramendi leaves an impression on the canvas, that of protection boards coated with oil ink, which enables him to explore gestures, materials and techniques in a new way.

In his work, Raúl Illarramendi makes a difference between drawing and painting. Drawing is considered to be factual, direct and precise. Painting, on the other hand, is deceptive, seductive. Its fluid nature is opposed to the dryness of the pencil, which the artist handles with a mastery that allows him to mask and conceal it, imitating a fluid substance. In fact, the artist's faith in drawing allows him to imitate these traces through pure skill, making us forget his strokes and the traces of his pencil: "The drawing is forgotten in two ways: firstly, by the use of a polished technique, leaving little evidence of the mechanic traces of the pencil, and secondly, by the image produced, representing the aesthetics and sensory experience of a completely different medium." The artist raises the question: "at what point does the accident (like the drips of paint) definitively enter the artist's studio without being chased away?" How does the accident end up being absorbed into the studio? By reintroducing paint, the artist regains freedom in his strokes, which he must learn to consider this new material intrusion, both in the studio and on the surface of the canvas.









RAÚL ILLARRAMENDI

2017 FONDATION FERNET-BRANCA SAINT LOUIS, FR

Images courtesy of Fondation Fernet-Branca













THE SPIRIT LINE

2015 GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE COLOGNE, DE

Images courtesy of Galerie Karsten Greve



THE SPIRIT LINE

2015 GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE COLOGNE, DE

After presenting his works in Paris (Drawing from Nature, 2013) and St. Moritz (2014), Galerie Karsten Greve is pleased to dedicate a solo exhibition in Cologne to Venezuelan-born artist Raúl Illarramendi. The title The Spirit Line refers to a concept from the North American Indian culture, which Illarramendi borrows to acknowledge the importance of the 'mistake' or the 'accident' in his work. This spirit line describes a common practice within the Navajo weavers, where the artist deliberately makes an obvious discrepancy in the pattern, represented by a line that runs from the center of the composition all the way to the outer edge of the fabric. This line also represents the path through which the spirit that inhabits the piece is to enter and exit the patterns.

The subjects of Illarramendi 's paintings are just those irregularities, imperfections, traces of waste and wear found in public space. These traces or marks bear witness to human presence and activity, manifesting themselves in smudges, fingerprints, paint residues, dust layers etc. found on walls, sidewalks, garage doors, dirty car windows and other surfaces of lesser interest to the eye. Starting point for Illarramendi 's works is an accumulation of spontaneous photographs taken during walks in his urban surroundings. This repertory of images is transferred on to canvases or metal sculptures, often of a large format, in a time consuming technique that ingeniously combines painting and drawing.

After coating the canvas or raw material surface with up to seven layers of primer, which is finely sanded and finished with a final coat of gouache, to give it the matte finish of paper, Illarramendi carefully covers large areas with dense lines of colored pencil. In this highly controlled process, Illarramendi erases all spontaneity found in the original gesture.

The lines or markings that appear to be the drawing itself, are really sectors that have been left out of the filling-in with color, and emerge as traces of an absence of drawing. It is for this reason that Illarramendi understands his works to be "Anti-Drawings", a concept he consequently pursues and brings to a particularly striking visual result in his series "Evidence of Absence".

Illaramendi 's impressive depictions of urban impressions that tend to be disqualified as low, are worthy of being labeled "Water-lilies of the digital age", using Sébastien Gokalps fitting comparison to the great Impressionist Claude Monet.

Images courtesy of Galerie Karsten Greve.













SELECTED PRESS

TIMAX

AUGUST 2020 BY TIMAX EDITORIAL STAFF

ANAHITA'S EYE

MARCH 2020 BY ANAHITA VESSIER

ARTDAILY

SEPTEMBER 2019 BY JOSE VILLARREAL



Miss Discovering New Artists? Here Are Five Up-And-Coming Talents Whose Work You Can Check Out This Summer

By Timax Editorial Staff



Raul Illarramendi, Offering Fragment No 1 (2019). Courtesy of Galerie Karsten Greve.

August is typically a sleepy month in the art world, but in this unusual year, it marks the reopening of many galleries internationally, which have finally been able to hang new shows and welcome (limited) visitors by appointment. It's been a long running tradition at galleries to debut their lesser-known artists during the summer lull, and in that sense, this year proves no exception with galleries showcasing the work of a range of talented artists whose work you might not know yet—but should. Here are five artists with work on view this summer that you can see in person, in cities around the world, or virtually.

Raul Illarramendi, "Offerings" at Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris

Venezuelan-born artist Raúl Illarramendi's third solo show with Galerie Karsten Greve, "Offerings," takes inspiration from an event in his native Caracas: On the night of July 29, 1967, a major earthquake shook the city and surrounding towns, resulting in a scene of devastation. The Caracas Cathedral, however, was left mostly untouched, except for the cast-iron cross that fell from its spire. In the days that followed, accounts emerged that the earthquake ceased the moment the cross touched the ground, leading witnesses to claim a miracle. After a few days, the government confiscated the cross and it disappeared from view. Illarramendi uses an enigmatic historical photograph of the cross tumbled onto the asphalt as his inspiration for this new series of works, in which he creates tracings that mix his family history, memory, political upheaval, and surreal sensibility to create layered ghostly compositions.



MARCH 2020

RAUL ILLARRAMENDI

Drawing the traces of time

By Anahita Vessier



Photos by Anahita Vessier

As soon as you enter Raul Illarramendi's studio, you feel the dynamic creative energy of this Venezuelan artist. Having left Venezuela 18 years ago, he reconnects with his origins in his latest work. Fascinated by the traces of time and their identity, he investigates in his new exhibition "Offerings" the story of the double cross that feel off the roof of Caracas Cathedral during the earthquake in 1967. He reproduced the imprint of the cross silhouette on the asphalt with high-precision and impresses the spectator with his large size pencil-paintings by applying a technique that employs drawing in an unusual way.

Raul Illarramendi lives and works with his wife, the artist Georgia Russell, and their two children next to Paris. His work is regularly shown in solo and groupe shows in Europe, Latin America and the United States.

You're from Venezuela where you began your artistic training in Caracas as the assistant of the painter Felix Perdomo. You continued then your studies in Evansville in the United States before moving to France and doing an MA of visuel arts at the University Jean Monnet in Saint Etienne. Now you live and work next to Paris, in Méru, with your wife, the Scottish artist Georgia Russell, and your two kids. What a journey driven by your passion for art! What did you learn in each country in terms of art and the way of approaching it as a painter?

Even though I've lived in these countries for long periods of time, I don't consider myself as a well-traveled individual. Now don't get me wrong, I've been to places, but my work has always anchored me down. I like

absorbing the identity of the place I'm in, and that takes time. I think that artists look inwards before they look outwards. In my case I need to know where I am and what the context is in order to create. Every place, every studio has brought a different experience, taught a different lesson and left traces that have shaped my identity as a painter.

These traces of life are a very important subject in your work, expressed through traces of dust, dirt, scratches or fingerprints on walls, on doors, in an urban environment that usually people like to erase or clean up. You however reproduce them by showing every single detail in your very own style.

Yes, but to me the whole picture is as important as the detail. Perhaps it is my fault, that the physicality of that new surface lures the viewer towards the detail. Every trace represents an individual event, identity, intentionality, an accident that I construct, compose and control. Then there is the composition.

Since the beginning of abstraction, many artists have looked into these stains, willingly or not, like a throw of dice, searching for a Gestalt.

Talking about accidents and control, do you like to let go sometimes and accept unpredictable accidents while working on a new painting? Or are you an absolute control freak?

I don't control everything, no.



Photos by Anahita Vessier

It is true that I like pushing drawing as far as I can into its technical frontiers. There are remarkable artists that push much further, to the point of erasing the hand. I know my limits and have learned to use those limitations as yet another tool. If you solve all the problems technically, then there is nothing left to solve. And painting is about solving problems.

And if you're not finding a solution, do you ask your wife, the Scottish artist Georgia Russell, for her advice or opinion when you feel stuck with a painting?

We do visit each others studios to give our opinions, specially at the most critical moments, when we are hating and doubting everything before a show. We encourage what's good and call out the bad choices. Even though I would agree to being less accepting when it comes to criticism, we both come out stronger at the end.

Right now you're showing your latest exhibition "Offerings" at Gallery Karsten Greve in Cologne that is about the traces of the cross of the Cathedral in Caracas that feel from the rooftop during the big earthquake in 1967 that hit the city. Was it important for you to reconnect again through your recent work with Venezuela that you've left 18 years ago?

Yes, distance and time became catalysts for this series. Like many of my subjects this project came to me without looking for it. The premise was very simple. A spiritual event that sits on a historic account full of wholes, a symbolic metaphor to the current state of crisis in the country, a personal connection and a painting challenge.

When I was visiting your studio, first thing you did, before starting to work on your paintings, was to put on a record. Is music important for you?

Yes, I'm very much attached to my music. There is almost always some sound coming from my stereo. When I'm not listening to my records, I am on the radio or an audiobook, the only literature I have time to consume now. I like my records because my siblings, who are much older than me, had a record player that I love but was not allowed to touch. Now I have my own and love the sound and can play with it.

I've been listening lately to "Cantos Campesinos" from Isaac Sasson, who plays many instruments from Venezuela, and mixes folk and traditional sounds. Also this fun Turkish band Altin Gün, it get's me dancing.

What comes to your mind when you think of Iran?

My perception of Iran is very limited but I can think of rosewater and safran, the prince of Persia (the game that occupied much of my screen-time during the nineties), good friends, beautiful people.

With very different histories, there is a real connection between Venezuela and Iran that I can only wish would go beyond geopolitics and special interests, and focus more in culture and fraternity.

Iran, a place I would very much like to visit.



Photos by Anahita Vessier



SEPTEMBER 2019

Comprehensive solo exhibition featuring works by Raúl Illarramendi opens at Galerie Karsten Greve

By José Villarreal



Portrait Raúl Illarramendi, Méru © Lisa Preud'homme. Photo: Lisa Preud'homme. Courtesy Atelier Cruz-Diez Paris.

COLOGNE.- Galerie Karsten Greve is presenting for the second time a comprehensive solo exhibition featuring works by the Venezuelan-born artist Raúl Illarramendi in Cologne. The exhibition contains his most recent work series.

Raúl Illarramendi's fascinating œuvre impresses viewers by presenting a technique that employs drawing in an unusual way, meticulously pushing its boundaries to reproduce a spontaneous visual experience. Illarramendi focuses on the reproduction of traces, accidental gestures, and anonymous markings, often respecting the compositions of the original photographs. These snapshots are taken spontaneously in urban spaces. They are more like discovered situations which carry an aesthetic presence worthy of a portrait. Illarramendi portrays these situations in order to produce a new image, referencing not only abstraction, but also other historic painting traditions. Illarramendi uses photographs, usually taken during his city walks and explorations through urban spaces, as a starting point. The objects of his meticulous observations are the manifestations of traces of everyday life that we tend to perceive subconsciously but which in turn inform the visual representations. Such incidental relics in the urban realm tell of a presence or event that becomes visible as a result of markings or imprints. Consequently these traces are witnesses and at the same time signs of what has happened, which the artist then catalogues and visually implements.

Born in Caracas, Venezuela, in 1982, Raúl Illarramendi began his artistic career as an assistant to the painter Félix Perdomo, who was working as a professor at the school of visual arts Cristobal Rojas, Raúl Illarramendi

became a member of the Circulo De Dibujo del Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Caracas Sofia Imber. He studied visual art and art history at the University of Southern Indiana in Evansville, USA. He subsequently switched to the Université Jean Monet in St. Étienne, France, to acquire his Master of Fine Arts.

The works of the young Venezuelan artist, who has received a number of scholarships and prizes (2018/19 Jean Chevalier Prize; 2004 National Prize, USA), are regularly shown in solo and group exhibitions in Europe, Latin America and the United States. Since 2013 the Galerie Karsten Greve has represented and presented the artist internationally. The Centro de Artes Visuales-Fundación Helga de Alvear in Madrid, Spain, and the Stichting Paul van Rensch Art Foundation, the Netherlands, have acquired some of his works for their collections. The artist lives and works in his adopted home Méru, in France.

The current exhibition Raúl Illarramendi *Offerings* in the Galerie Karsten Greve in Cologne features two work series – Offering no1 – 12 and Offering Fragment no1 – 13. The starting point this time was a historical black and white photograph that depicts the silhouette of a double cross in the asphalt. It is an impression of the cast-iron double cross that fell off the roof of Caracas Cathedral during a devastating earthquake on 29 July 1967. According to tradition the cross did not just leave its trace on the asphalt, its impact also miraculously brought about an end to the earthquake. Raúl Illarramendi used the exact imprint of the cross silhouette as a template for his current series *Offerings no1 – 12 –* twelve large-format pictures in gouache and coloured pencil on acrylic resin. He had several casts of the cross made and subsequently worked the picture surfaces made of acrylic resin on the low-relief. Using gouache and water he painted several areas and supplemented them with colour by means of countless coloured pencil lines. The artist chose the colour spectrum in reaction or in harmonious partnership with further photographic templates. For example, Raúl Illarramendi portrays the effect of the coloured reflections from the stained-glass windows, flooding the interior of the church in which the imprint of the cross is kept. Just as religious belief and Venezuelan popular piety attributes healing powers to the cross as a votive image, Raúl Illarramendi's gesture is an Offering that heralds hope for an end to Venezuela's current critical state.



RAÚL ILLARRAMENDI

b. 1982, Caracas, VE Lives and works in Méru, FR

EDUCATION

Visual Arts and Art History, University of Southern Indiana, Evansville, US

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2023	Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US (forthcoming)
2022	Intrusion, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, FR
2020	Offerings, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, FR
2019	Offerings, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, DE L.A.C Lieu d' Art Contemporain, Sigean, FR
2018	Raúl Illarramendi, Carré de Aubusson, Aubusson, FR
2017	Raúl Illarramendi, Foundation Fernet Branca, St. Louis, FR Evidence of Absence, Galerie Karsten Greve, St. Moritz, CH
2016	Raúl Illarramendi, Maison de Arts et Loisirs, Laon, FR A Solow Show of Raúl Illarramendi, Salon du Dessin 2016, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, FR
2015	Incarner la Poussiere, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, FR The Spirit Line, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, DE
2014	Raúl Illarramendi (with Hervé van der Straeten), Galerie Karsten Greve, St. Moritz, CH
2013	Drawing from Nature, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, FR
2009	Noir Papier, Galerie Schumm-Braunstein, Paris, FR
2008	Brushstroke Compositions and Finger Paintings, Galerie Schumm-Braunstein, Paris, FR
2007	L'artifice d'une tâche, Galerie L'ici-Là, Saint-Étienne, FR
2004	Small Format Works, 321 Gallery, Evansville, IN, U.S.
2003	Man and Orchid, Synchronicity Gallery, Evansville, IN, U.S.
2002	Works on Paper, Maison Vaugt, Evansville, IN, U.S.
2001	The Line and The Rub, Kathy Pohl Gallery, Tell City, IN, U.S.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2020	Ailleurs, Ici, Maintenant, Espace Séraphine Louis, Clermont-de-l'Oise, FR
2018	Accrochage, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, FR
2017	Herbst Accrochage, Galerie Karsten Greve, St. Moritz, CH

	Summer Show, Galerie Karsten Greve, St. Moritz, CH Drawing Now, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, FR
2016	Summer Show, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, DE Identités plurielles, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, FR
2015	Accrochage, Galerie Karsten Greve, St. Moritz, CH
2014	Accrochage, Galerie Karsten Greve, St. Moritz, CH Künstlerräume, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, DE
2011	On Paper III, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, FR Outre-Forêt, Le 6b, Saint Denis, FR
2010	Blanc Papier, Galerie Schumm-Braunstein, Paris, FR New Entries, Galerie Dukan et Hourdequin, Marseille, FR On Paper, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, FR Suddenly Last Summer, Artists in Residence, Beauchery Saint-Martin, FR
2009	Slick 2009, Galerie Dukan et Hourdequin, Paris, FR Bientôt 4 ans, Galerie Dukan et Hourdequin, Marseille, FR
2004	Working Together concours, Evansville Art Museum, Evansville, IN, U.S. Nude Night, Synchronicity Gallery, Evansville, IN, U.S.
2000	El Circulo de Dibujo en el Metro, Galería del Metro, Caracas, VE Artistas del Circulo de Dibujo, Galería del MACCSI, Caracas, VE
1999	Grandes Maestros y Jóvenes Artistas II, Grupo Li Gallery, Caracas, VE Subasta Internacional por el Estado Vargas, MACCSI, Caracas, VE
1998	Grandes Maestros y Jóvenes Artistas I, Grupo Li Gallery, Caracas, VE Maestros y Jovenes Artistas del Thaller, VITECH, Caracas, VE

PUBLICATIONS

- 2019 Offerings, Galerie Karsten Greve Köln, Paris, St. Moritz
- 2015 The Spirit Line, Galerie Karsten Greve Köln, DE

AWARDS AND HONORS

2012 Jean Chevalier Award for Painting, Lyon, FR

