



Oscar Santillán

Una Cierta Edad del Mundo

curated by Chiara Ianeselli

Opening on 15th September, 6 pm
16th September - 4th November 2017



After recent exhibitions at institutions such as Witte de With (Rotterdam), MUAC (Mexico City), and LACMA (Los Angeles) the work of Oscar Santillán (Ecuador, 1980) is on show in Berlin for the first time, at Galerie Mazzoli. The artworks on display are a logbook of the invisible: phenomena that deal with an elusive reality; a reality that can be perceived just through its potentials of being. Santillán's eagerness for the unspoken, for unwritten events, acquires shape as art.

The heteromorphic nature of his works discloses the various encounters of the artist, who undertook several journeys to secluded points on planet Earth, to chart realities apparently eclipsed.

In *Bermeja* (2017), Santillán reached the coordinates of an island broadly included in major nautical maps until the mid 20th century, when several expeditions failed to find it. Consequently Bermeja island was officially declared to be a "phantom island". On his own expedition, following the historical location of the island, the artist navigated through the Gulf of Mexico. What he found at Bermeja's coordinates was the absence of Bermeja: just the a flat plain expanse of sea. Santillán gathered many gallons of water, which afterwards were left to slowly evaporate. The phantom began to crystallize, the island has been reconstituted.

The artist's interest for processes of metamorphosis is taken a step further in *Solaris* (2016-17). Glass generated from melted sand, gathered in the Atacama Desert (Chile), is carefully polished and consequently used as photographic lenses.

Mounted on an analog camera, these lenses are used to photograph the desert: The Atacama Desert looks at itself. The landscape is not an object anymore but rather a self-conscious subject.

Water as a crystal continent, sand as glass, glass as photographs, Santillán's poetry is implicated in the potentials of the so called *reality*: through the disclosure of overlooked aspects the world acquires unexpected dimensions. In this regard, the troubled relationship of Friedrich Nietzsche and his faulty typewriter, offered the artist the opportunity to sink deeper into the philosopher's struggle with modernity, and the act of writing. A piece of paper, stuck in the typewriter, is on show in Mazzoli's gallery (*Afterword*, 2015): what can it say about the philosopher continuously crossing out of words due to the malfunctioning of the device? How did Nietzsche dance? A video presents a psychic medium asking the philosopher these questions.

Santillán's deep eyes for oblivionized stories, for uncategorized events, allows the spectator to wander through the gallery space where silent witnesses speak. The material has lost its memory but regained an alternative physicality.

(C. Ianeselli)

On the occasion of the opening on September 15th the artist monograph will be presented, a catalogue that includes all the works of the recent years and texts by Alexia Tala, Robin van den Akker, Timotheus Vermeulen, Chiara Ianeselli and Simone Menegoi.

Artist's bio

Initially a self-taught artist in his native Ecuador, Oscar Santillán (b. 1980) went on to earn an MFA from the prestigious VCU Sculpture Department (US) and has been an artist-in-residence at Delfina Foundation (UK), Van Eyck (NL), Fondazione Ratti (IT), Davidoff Art Initiative (DO), and Skowhegan (US).

His solo exhibitions include *Mácula*, MUAC (MX, 2017); *Una Cierta Edad del Mundo*, Galerie Mazzoli (DE, 2017); *Asterism*, Martin van Zomeren (NL, 2017); *Zaratán*, Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art (NL, 2016); *The Messenger*, Spazio Calderara and Galleria Mazzoli (IT, 2015); *Accompaniment*, FLORA ars+natura (CO, 2015); *To Break A Silence Into Smaller Silences*, Copperfield (UK, 2015); *El Triunfo del Placer*, *NoMiNIMO* (EC, 2015); *On Hesitation Marks*, Kunstraum Munich (DE, 2013); *Lucerna*, Fundación ODEON (CO, 2012); *Azor*, dpm (EC, 2011), among others. His group exhibitions include institutions such as LACMA (US), Kröller-Müller (NL), FRAC île-de-france (FR), Irish Museum of Modern Art (IE), Voorlinden Museum (NL), STUK (BE), IV Trienal Poli/gráfica (PR), Musée Zadkine (FR), Bienal de Arte Paíz (GT), Museo de Arte 'Carrillo Gil' (MX), Centraal Museum Utrecht (NL), X Bienal de la Habana (*Lalimpia* collective) (CU), MUUA (CO), Fundación ICO (ES), SECCA (US), XIII Bienal de Cuenca (EC), Album Arte and IILA (IT), Marres (NL), Passerelle Centre d'art contemporain (FR), CAC Centro de Arte Contemporáneo (EC), Bonnefanten Museum (NL), Oud-Rekem Castle (BE), Nest (NL), and others.

The work of Oscar Santillán is part of the following collections: Art Nexus (US/CO), Adrastus (ES), LACMA (US), FRAC île-de-france (FR), Voorlinden Museum (NL), Silvia Fiorucci Collection (MC), Museo de Arte 'Carrillo Gil' (MX), Bieke and Tanguy van Quickenborne Collection (BE), Colección José Darío Gutiérrez (CO), Balanz Capital (AR), Colección Carlos Marsano (PE), Centraal Museum Utrecht (NL), Colección León Amitai (CO), Colección Elisa Estrada (US), Colección Carlos Wilson (EC), to name but a few.

<http://www.oscarsantillan.com/>