

Geometry and Territory Patrick Hamilton

Geometry and Territory is the name of the first solo exhibition at the Livia Benavides Gallery in Lima by Chilean artist Patrick Hamilton, who lives in Madrid. Both concepts, intimately linked, allow the artist to poetically address notions such as spatial representations, measurements, divisions, organizations, limits and the intervention of spaces, both physical and social.

For more than twenty-five years Hamilton has focused his artistic practice and research on the relationship between art, politics and economics in the context of the last decades in Chile. He has taken both references to the history of his country and the history of universal art, to create a "visual thought" that interrogates our ability to see and reflect on art, visuality and the world around us.

The exhibition presents two bodies of work that the artist has been developing in recent years and in which he uses geometry and copper to conduct an acute investigation into the notions of history, politics and economics in the context of Chile over the last few decades.

On the one hand, in the series "Wall drawings" (2010-2025), a name that cites the famous mural compositions of American artist Sol Lewitt (1928-2007), Hamilton uses the iron defenses used to protect the walls of houses and businesses in the city of Santiago, Chile. This precarious system of protection can be seen, in different formats, throughout much of Latin America. The wall protections are very sharp and refer to the fight against crime, as well as to the protection of private property. Copper-plated, the artist creates minimalist murals with them, using simple geometric compositions. The protections are arranged on the wall, creating a relationship of tension with the space and with the body of the viewer, as their edges point towards the room creating a strange game between intimidation, danger and the formal and ornamental beauty of copper.

These works respond to a constant in the production process of the artist's work in relation to the manipulation of everyday objects loaded with content from the social, economic and cultural point of view. Hamilton's "Wall drawings" speak of limits and confinement, as well as segregation and social division, in a very simple way, drawing very basic and eloquent figures such as the square or the rhombus, which are -from a geometric point of view- the simplest act of delimitation.

On the other hand, Hamilton presents a new series of works that are part of his project Atacama (2021-2025). A mural, specially made for the gallery, and a set of intervened photographs that dialogue in the space as a visual essay. First, the mural on the main wall of the exhibition hall is inspired by the Viracocha notebooks, American decorative drawings published in Buenos Aires (1923) by architect Alberto Gelly Cantilo and sculptor Gonzalo Leguizamón Pondal. The purpose of these notebooks was to teach technical drawing in Argentine schools, introducing motifs from pre-Hispanic cultures. All this in a political and cultural context of strong rescue of indigenous roots and cultures in Latin America as part of a process of formation and questioning of identity in our continent at the beginning of the 20th century. On this geometric mural, there is a series of photo-collages of various formats consisting of photographs of the Atacama Desert intervened with copper plate. These simple virtual interventions on the landscape, which superimpose the red metal on stones, sands, ravines, hills and mounds, make reference to the multiple histories -past, present and future- that the "driest desert in the world" holds.

Paraphrasing Chilean documentary filmmaker Patricio Guzman, author of *Nostalgia for the Light*, the artist understands the Atacama Desert as a great open book and a repository of our memory from different points of view: archaeological, astronomical, political, economic and cultural. A place full of history that was conceived as an unpopulated space, a natural frontier of Chile and a zone of mining extractivism during the 19th century, and later, during the 20th century, as a zone of labor and political slaughter. It is a punished land, full of salt, where beings are mummified and objects remain. It is also an area of archaeological vestiges, such as the Chinchorro mummies (the oldest found in the world), and poetic interventions such as that of Raúl Zurita (*Ni pena ni miedo*, 1993). Astronomers from all over the world also gather in the Atacama Desert to observe the stars, since the transparency of the sky is such that it is possible to observe even the farthest reaches of the universe.

From its entrails is extracted, among other minerals, copper, raw material and fundamental base of Chile's economy in the last century. A mineral with a long history, which had a turning point on Sunday, July 11, 1971, when the Allende government enacted its nationalization, unleashing the fury of the U.S. government of the time.

The works of *Geometría y Territorio* can be read from this complex crossing between copper and desert. A crossroads that produces a wedging and a mismatching of the gaze, that allows us and prevents us from seeing in order to liberate and put into play an endless number of metaphors. A double and superimposed gaze in a game of planes that go from image to material; from landscape to history; from human to nature; from art to mining; from poetry to economy.