



Un cuerpo extraño en el ojo

Exhibition design: Amadeo Azar

In this exhibition, Silvia Gurfein presents a substantial group of works produced over the past three years. At first glance, they may appear as a form of pure visual poetry, articulated through a lyrical and refined sensibility. Yet Gurfein situates her practice within a broader field of inquiry: alongside a sustained reflection on painting, her work engages with time, presence and absence, the ephemeral and the enduring, the eye—what we see and what unsettles vision—as well as connection and the body.

“Painting contains time; it carries history in its DNA,” the artist notes. One of her methods for activating this accumulated time is to recover the remnants of oil paint left on her palette at the end of each working day. She allows them to rest for months or even years, until they dry and take on the appearance of small precious stones, before reincorporating them into new works—releasing the time they hold. “In each fragment of oil paint, time is condensed. My work can be read as an extended conversation between references to the image as absence and a practice grounded in remnants and traces—what seems to have fallen out of view, discarded throughout the history of painting. It is a conversation internal to painting itself, a dialectic among the elements of its own history.”

Connection is a central thread in the works on view. Gurfein observes that the visual metaphors through which this idea manifests often take the form of lines—roots, cables, synapses, lightning, currents, hair, mycelium.

In her paintings, these lines emerge over backgrounds built through glazes: complex chromatic fields that subtly reveal underlying layers without accumulating material density. Painting is conceived here as a sensitive medium capable of registering a state. In the drawings, lines become trajectories—marking territory while conveying an inner vibration. In all cases, the surface operates as a space that could contain a world, while the lines propose ways of inhabiting it.

In one of the galleries, the works are arranged in a wave-like formation, recalling the trace of an electroencephalogram. Gurfein has employed this display format before, referring to it as an “electromentalogram”—a mode of installation that foregrounds the nervous pulsation arising from the mind–body connection. It can be read as a metaphorical record of the mind’s micro-movements, unfolding in continuity with painting, or as painting itself being driven by a kind of “mental musculature” to generate these forms.

“The making of these works had a performative dimension,” Gurfein explains. “A certain preparation and bodily gesture, a sense that there is a body thinking it all—a brain that extends to the tips of my fingers. A strange dance.” This is evident in the paintings, but above all in the drawings. “Drawing brought me back to the body. While I have the illusion of dancing, I move the pencil or brush, following the path suggested by my state of mind—my mental body.”

Silvia Gurfein

(Buenos Aires, 1959) is a multidisciplinary artist. Before dedicating herself to the visual arts, she worked in theater, dance, and music. In 2010, she founded *El texto de la obra*, a writing workshop for artists that she has taught at institutions across Argentina and Brazil. Since 2015, she has also been active as a curator. Although her practice spans multiple media, her research consistently returns to painting—its questions and its continued relevance.

Her distinctions include the Konex Award for Distinguished Figure of the Decade in Visual Arts/Painting (2022), the 8M Visual Arts Acquisition Prize (2019), First Prize in Painting at the National Salon of Visual Arts, First Prize in Painting from the Central Bank of Argentina,

First Prize in Plataforma Futuro (Ministry of Culture, 2016), the Bicentennial Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (2014), the URRRA International Artist Residency (Buenos Aires, 2012), and the First Prize of the Klemm Foundation Award in Visual Arts (2011), among others.

Her work has been exhibited both individually and collectively at institutions including the Museum of Modern Art of Buenos Aires, MACRO (Rosario), the Museum of Contemporary Art of Buenos Aires, Fundación Proa, CCK, and Centro Cultural Recoleta, as well as at galleries such as Nora Fisch, Casa Triângulo (Brazil), and Alejandra Von Hartz (USA). Her work is held in numerous public and private collections in Argentina and internationally.