

Melanie Smith
CLUSTERFUCK

PROYECTO
PARALELO



clusterfuck (noun)

clus· ter· fuck 'klə-stər-fək

vulgar slang

: a complex and utterly disordered and
mismanaged situation : **a muddled mess**

There is no typical Melanie Smith
Melanie Smith

At this point in **Melanie Smith's** career, we can confidently appreciate that the main constant in her work is not at all formal. Instead, it has to do with how she has been weaving relationships between themes that in retrospect, reveal themselves as a tight-knitted web that works in different registers and that links a series of recurring subjects that come up with different intensities in a myriad of projects: **nature, science, art history, technology, modernity of course, and the body.**

The formalization of these processes is equally elaborate and fascinating and gains special force in the recent works -painting, works on paper, and textiles- that she is presenting in **Proyecto Paralelo** for her **fourth solo show** at the gallery.

The presence of time in representation is one of the great axes in Smith's work, usually in the form of the tension that arises from the relationship between the moving image (film and video) and the fixed image (painting and photography). In contrast to the dread-tinged speed of the video *Fifteen Minutes of Sublime Meditation* (2020) -which premiered in her last show at the gallery- each of the hand-crafted images and textile patterns included in **CLUSTERFUCK** stop time, producing instead complex, static forms for spatial and material dwelling.

These forms become dynamic through an installation that establishes multiple semantic, formal, historic, thematic, and chromatic relations that go across the works at different levels, functioning in a way that mirrors montage in cinema.

Thus, the show as a whole appears as one enormous palimpsest in which we recognize the imaginary world that lies beneath all of Melanie Smith's practice and that, within this particular iteration privileges references to European Art History: from the Romantic and Sublime landscape to cosmic-driven Symbolism, scientific sketching and contemporary images of technology.

In this complex web of relations the most hand-driven work in the exhibition points with more insistence to the technical and mathematical realms. The knitted works made in collaboration with Annuska Angulo are made with linen and knitting needles -not crochet- resorting to knitting points that are commonly used to imitate lace knitting. Each piece is an intuitive, open, and tentative response to Smith's drawings in which Angulo recreates juxtapositions between the micro and the macro, maps and patterns, controlled explosions, and moments of chaos. In relation to the rest of the works, they seem to demonstrate the extent to which this universe is linked, has its own rhythm and presents to us like a dance between matter and vacuum.

Melanie Smith (Poole, Reino Unido, 1965) earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Reading. Her production has been defined by a revision of the formal and aesthetic categories of the avant-garde and post-avant-garde movements problematized in the place and horizon of heterotopias. She has developed her career in the Mexican art scene since the 1990s where she has witnessed the impact of capitalist modernization, neoliberal globalization, and hyper-consumerism, the development of an informal economy parallel to traditional forms of manufacturing, and the continuous failures or collapses of modernity. Both contexts - the Mexican or, in a broader sense, Latin American, and the British or, more extensively, the Anglo-Saxon or Eurocentric culture - are essential in her work. Although Smith does not define herself as a painter and works with a wide variety of media, all of them are imbued with a unique and persistent reference to painting. In her work, Smith displays a continuous game between farce (in the sense of absurdity, mockery, or parody) and artifice (understood as artificiality and deception and, ultimately, as the "artifice of reason") and applies these concepts to the contemporary society and what has been called "baroque modernity". The artist herself has defined its corpus as a "giant palimpsest". A large anthological sample of her work traveled between 2018 and 2020 at the MACBA in Barcelona, the MUAC in Mexico City, the Amparo Museum in Puebla, and the MARCO in Monterrey. In 2011 she represented Mexico at the 54th Venice Biennale. Her work is part of important institutional collections in Mexico and abroad.

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