

MATTEAWAN GALLERY

Paola Ochoa

What the Thunder Said

March 10 - April 15, 2018

Opening reception Saturday, March 10, 6-9 pm

Matteawan Gallery is pleased to present Paola Ochoa: What the Thunder Said. The exhibition includes drawings from several bodies of work created over the past decade. This is Ochoa's first exhibition at the gallery. The show opens on March 10 and there will be an artist talk on Sunday, April 8 at 3:00 pm.

The title of Paola Ochoa's exhibition, What the Thunder Said, is borrowed from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, the ancient Hindu spiritual and philosophical text. It focuses on the nature of reality and the identity of the Self. Ochoa writes: "In these ancient texts it is the Thunder who speaks the meaning of life - to man, to the demons, and to the gods. They all hear a different meaning." Each of the five bodies of work represented carries a mantra:

Ariadne's Thread: I see myself in subconscious space - I see myself in the illusion - I see myself beyond my form - I see myself as formless - I see myself - I don't see anything - I feel connected.

Mother and Child with Inorganic Beings: My child is me and I am my mother.

Second Nature Drawings: Remake myself- Rebuild myself - Unlearn myself - Erase myself. Patience. Trust. Beauty. Compassion.

Cosmic Giggle: I don't understand anything at all - I see the miracle, laughter.

Confidence Test Drawings: I'm trying too hard, stop trying.

Ochoa creates her drawings using ink, gouache, and graphite on Mylar. Mylar's slight opacity and smooth silvery quality provide an ideal surface for her intricate drawings. The large drawing *Ariadne's Thread*, for example, is extremely detailed, yet there is a sense of spontaneity and movement. Ochoa worked on this drawing for a period of 9 months while working on 9 other works of a similar size. The works in this series are about the process of acceptance and forgiveness, and Ochoa sees them as internal/emotional landscapes. Another series might employ a different process. In *Second Nature*, Ochoa works on several drawings at once in order to wait for the layers of ink to dry. She starts out in a burst of energy and over time tightens her marks. These drawings can take from one to several months to complete. She thinks of them as portraits.

For the large collection of 15 drawings titled *Mother and Child with Inorganic Beings*, Ochoa had small increments of time to work while caring for her newborn son. Over the course of four months she made a series of drawings on Mylar with black and white permanent ink, graphite, and concentrated fugitive water colors in red, blue, and yellow. When the drawings were finished she put them away for a year to "cure" knowing that the watercolors she used could change over time. Other works such as *Cosmic Giggle* and the *Confidence Test Drawings* are completed more quickly, often in one sitting.

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Some of the imagery in Ochoa's work seems to come from the natural world, and she admits that nature provides an entry point into drawing in as far as it is an accessible space to see the patterns and geometry that permeate our reality. However, Ochoa asserts that she is not abstracting an exterior reality, but rather capturing something that comes from within. Ochoa's approach to drawing is intuitive and spontaneous. She draws as a way to encounter herself and to find silence and direction. She says: "In the absence of thought, I am able to consciously merge into a flow with an energy that seems infinite. I set to work, by applying ink on Mylar, with trust that by taking action, all else will follow."

Paola Ochoa has exhibited throughout the US, with a solo exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver, CO and group exhibitions at the Wassaic Project, Wassaic, NY; A.I.R. Gallery, Brooklyn, NY; Hebrew Union College Museum, New York, NY; J. Cacciola Gallery, New York, NY; Celery Space, Berkeley, CA; White Box, New York, NY; Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, Los Angeles, CA. In 2012 Ochoa was a Summer Resident at A.I.R. Gallery, New York, NY. She received a NEW PICK #1 Residency from the Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver, CO, where she created two site-specific video installations: *True Love* and *The Mirror of Reason*. Her work is in the collection of The Bass Museum of Art, Miami, FL as well as numerous private collections. Ochoa holds a BFA with a concentration in Eastern European experimental animation and painting. She was born in Medellin, Colombia, and moved to the US when she was a child. She currently lives in Beacon, NY.

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