

Illusive Places

May 11 – June 15, 2024

267 Itaewon-ro

Seoul



Alejandro Garmendia, *Jessica Descending & Ascending in the North Sea*, 2007 © Alejandro Garmendia

Pace is pleased to present *Illusive Places: Thomas Chapman, Alejandro Garmendia, Louis Jacquot, Lucy Mullican, Milko Pavlov*, a group show curated by Cy Schnabel, at its gallery in Seoul. This exhibition, on view from May 10 to June 15, brings together works by artists who, in one way or another, share an interest in reinventing landscape painting. These five artists—Thomas Chapman, Alejandro Garmendia, Louis Jacquot, Lucy Mullican, and Milko Pavlov—use landscape as a point of departure to create nuanced approaches to subject matter, form, and content.

Throughout this exhibition, natural settings turn into imaginary realms that suggest new perspectives of the physical world and life in general. An abstracted sense of space in the pictures on view gives way to unstable compositions that are charged with desire, fantasy, and sometimes loneliness. A range of psychological views carry their own resonances and connect through each artist's interest in presenting a distinct *irreality* in their work. Utopias, nightmares, hallucinations, and fragmented memories all materialize in these illusive places.

Schnabel's curatorial writings on the five artists in the show follow below.

Thomas Chapman

After experimenting with shaped canvases for more than 20 years, Thomas Chapman (b. 1975, San Diego, California) has returned to figurative painting, developing a style that is heavily influenced by his drawings of everyday life. Like his *Lake Paintings*, the works on view in *Illusive Places* are voyeuristic studies of leisurely moments. Layered imagery resulting in a dense atmospheric haze makes the figures who populate these invented scenes barely perceptible. Throughout his oeuvre, found fabrics, collage, stolen typographies, markers, paint, pencil markings, glue, and many other elements comprise the surfaces of his paintings. The unorthodox shapes of some of Chapman's early canvases are inspired by a variety of subjects: astronomy, mythology, and ancient history. Taking an unconventional approach to painting, Chapman makes use of supports and many layers of sometimes conflicting visual information as common features in his diverse practice.

Alejandro Garmendia

The two works on view by Alejandro Garmendia (b. 1959, d. 2017, San Sebastian, Spain) are from his *Pinturas Sucias* (Dirty Paintings) series. But why *dirty*? Surely it has to do with the murky appearance of these paintings. Their messy execution with a muddy color palette, which reflects the artist's embrace of accidents and imperfections as part of his practice, confirm that his process for these works is consistent with their conceptual underpinnings. The very idea of a landscape as "dirty" suggests that Garmendia was questioning the legitimacy of the act of painting itself, and, more specifically, the

impulse to make something even remotely pastoral in contemporary times. This was yet another ironic and subversive gesture, illustrating an awareness of the risk involved in his chosen subject, given that the pictures seem so opposed to avant-garde tendencies and the general trajectory of contemporary art. In any case, these works serve as pretexts to his experimentations with the surrealist lineage he so admired, along with other art historical references. Garmendia documented the nonexistent, created physically impossible compositions, and ultimately presented a distanced metaphysical vision of the world that evokes estrangement and disorientation.

Louis Jacquot

Louis Jacquot's (b. 1994, Paris, France) practice hinges on relationships between objects and pictures. The artist's sculptural paintings combine minimalist gestures with iconographic elements. *Blinky* (2022) and *Imi* (2022), the two works present in this exhibition, turn intimate spaces and domestic objects on their sides to create illusive perspectives. In Jacquot's hands, the intimate subject transcends the image to encompass the entire painting. Both the material—bedding—and the shape of the canvases—like that of a pocket notebook—speak to direct contact with the body. In the past, during his BFA at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, the artist maintained a workspace more akin to a woodworker's shop than a painter's studio. He avoided his "own" mark-making in favor of objects that were practically devoid of any graphic elements. In the few cases where pigments are applied, Jacquot chooses images that could belong to anyone. His previous works show an impersonal vocabulary of generic found symbols appropriated from the street—any universal emblems became subjects of interest for him.

Lucy Mullican

Lucy Mullican's (b. 1994, New York) paintings use the horizon line as a compositional device to create a tension between gravity and the human spirit, which, in contrast to the former, is always in a state of ascension. We can trace maps of ethereal worlds in her works, which are ultimately self-portraits. The artist has experienced a spiritual transformation that is evident in her departure from painting waterfalls, islands, and rivers in favor of a more contemplative, inward consideration of the mind and the organs. Exterior environments blend with bodily forms, creating anthropomorphic landscapes. Her delicate paintings on wood consist of many layers of mineral pigments and pulsating lines, which create translucent surfaces. What the artist refers to as "pockets" or "holes" within her compositions function like portals, allowing the viewer to travel back and forth between pictures. The natural pigments of the watercolor and the wood receivers become one, reflecting the artist's innate ability to understand her medium and employ technical fluidity. Mullican's penetrating vision goes beyond the surface to reveal what we cannot see and bring us closer to what we feel. Transient moments flooded with light embody the artist's representation of spirit.

Milko Pavlov

Milko Pavlov's (b. 1956, Aytos, Bulgaria) paintings depict an imaginary natural world where rock formations, trees, water, and other organic matter have been rendered unrecognizable. The artist's pictorial blend of naturalistic representation and abstraction creates a vast scale within the picture plane that is an everchanging way of seeing. In Pavlov's oeuvre, form, surface, and composition develop in response to paint itself as a subject. His black and white frottage works—a technique he now applies to canvas—are continuations of the graphic work he was making in Bulgaria in the early 1990s. The artist's colorful palette derives from his early exposure to 18th and 19th century Bulgarian Icon painters, which shifted his attention towards religious works of art instead of assimilating formal ideas related to the socialist realist aesthetic dominant in the country in the 1970s. With his titles, Pavlov is interested in a conceptual dimension that reflects an intersection of different moments in time. In many cases, his artwork titles can contain multiple dates yet to come, as with *2133-2 MPT 2042* (2024) and *B.V 2099 MPT 2065* (2022), both of which are included in the exhibition at Pace in Seoul. Through these references to futuristic times, Pavlov is challenging the life expectancy of everything: himself, the viewer, the painting itself. The way the artist organizes space in his paintings—in other words, the composition—loosely resembles mountains or landscapes, a subconscious gesture which perhaps illustrates the mountainous nature of his native country.

About Cy Schnabel

Cy Schnabel (b. New York, 1993) is an independent curator and the founder and director of Villa Magdalena, a gallery based in San Sebastian, Spain since 2020. The gallery focuses on contemporary Spanish painting and works with international mid-career and emerging artists.

In 2017, Schnabel worked as an assistant curator at the Centro Cultural de España en México (CCEMX) in Mexico City, making his curatorial debut with the group show *Horizontes Imaginarios*. In 2018, Schnabel co-curated the posthumous retrospective *Alejandro Garmendia: Paisajes, enigma, y melancolía* at the Sala Kubo Kutxa in San Sebastian. Schnabel has presented two exhibitions at Galería Mascota in Mexico City—*Mie Yim: New Works on Paper* (2022) and *Lucy Mullican: Veils* (2023)—which marked each artist's first solo exhibition in Mexico. In collaboration with Spazio Amanita, Schnabel curated *Felicidad Moreno: Form and Formlessness* (Miami, 2022) and *Cristina Lama: Música para un murciélago* (New

York, 2023), both artists' first solo presentations in the United States. He was also the author and co-curator of *Schnabel and Spain: Anything Can Be a Model for a Painting* at the CAC Málaga, a 2022 survey of 23 paintings made by his father between 1997 and the present, showing the artist's works in the context of Spanish painting and the evolution of his practice during this period.

Pace is a leading international art gallery representing some of the most influential contemporary artists and estates from the past century, holding decades-long relationships with Alexander Calder, Jean Dubuffet, Barbara Hepworth, Agnes Martin, Louise Nevelson, and Mark Rothko. Pace enjoys a unique U.S. heritage spanning East and West coasts through its early support of artists central to the Abstract Expressionist and Light and Space movements.

Since its founding by Arne Glimcher in 1960, Pace has developed a distinguished legacy as an artist-first gallery that mounts seminal historical and contemporary exhibitions. Under the current leadership of CEO Marc Glimcher, Pace continues to support its artists and share their visionary work with audiences worldwide by remaining at the forefront of innovation. Now in its seventh decade, the gallery advances its mission through a robust global program—comprising exhibitions, artist projects, public installations, institutional collaborations, performances, and interdisciplinary projects. Pace has a legacy in art bookmaking and has published over five hundred titles in close collaboration with artists, with a focus on original scholarship and on introducing new voices to the art historical canon.

Today, Pace has seven locations worldwide, including European footholds in London and Geneva as well as Berlin, where the gallery established an office in 2023. Pace maintains two galleries in New York—its headquarters at 540 West 25th Street, which welcomed almost 120,000 visitors and programmed 20 shows in its first six months, and an adjacent 8,000 sq. ft. exhibition space at 510 West 25th Street. Pace's long and pioneering history in California includes a gallery in Palo Alto, which was open from 2016 to 2022. Pace's engagement with Silicon Valley's technology industry has had a lasting impact on the gallery at a global level, accelerating its initiatives connecting art and technology as well as its work with experiential artists. Pace consolidated its West Coast activity through its flagship in Los Angeles, which opened in 2022. Pace was one of the first international galleries to establish outposts in Asia, where it operates permanent gallery spaces in Hong Kong and Seoul, along with an office and viewing room in Beijing. In 2024, Pace will open its first gallery space in Japan in Tokyo's new Azabudai Hills development.

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