

Ariamna Contino: *Manigua*

El Apartamento



Ariamna Contino, *Enredadera*, from the series "Manigua", 2024. Hand-cut paper, Fabriano Watercolour Cold Press cardboard 300 gsm, 160 x 160 x 8 cm.

September 9, 2024

Share

Ariamna Contino

Manigua

September 12–November 2, 2024

El Apartamento, Madrid

Calle de la Puebla #4

Madrid 28004

Spain

artapartamento.com

[Instagram](#) / [Facebook](#) / [Artsy](#)

In her first solo show in Madrid, Ariamna Contino revisits the concept of “manigua,” whose etymological origins can be traced back to the Indigenous Taino language. Historically, this term has been used in Cuba to refer to a tropical forest ecosystem specific to the Caribbean. The primitive meaning of the word is “disorder; abundance of something; confusion.” The artist presents an exhibition in the form of an extended essay in which she combines common knowledge, historical documents, traditional medicine, aesthetic reflections, and a vibrant process of interdisciplinary work. Her creative corpus finds installations, drawings, site-specifics, and oeuvres made on hand-cut paper. In its cultural sense, the exhibition focuses on the rite, identity, and myth. Contino is interested in drawing attention to resistance exercises within popular culture as a space for safeguarding the collective imagination and the political potential of unregulated knowledge.

EL APARTAMENTO LA HABANA | MADRID

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WHITEHOT MAGAZINE

"THE BEST ART IN THE WORLD"
AUGUST 2025

**Dual exhibition: Ariamna Contino & Alex
Hernández-Dueñas: Reverse at Nunu Fine
Art**

MENU



Ariamna Contino, Transition # 11, 2023, Hand-cut Strathmore cold press 300 g acid-free paper and gold leaf, 28 3/4 x 40 1/2 in., (73 x 103 cm)

Nunu Fine Art (<https://www.nunufineart.com/>)

381 Broome Street

New York, NY 10013

Days: Tuesday – Saturday

Hours: 11 a.m. – 6 p.m. |

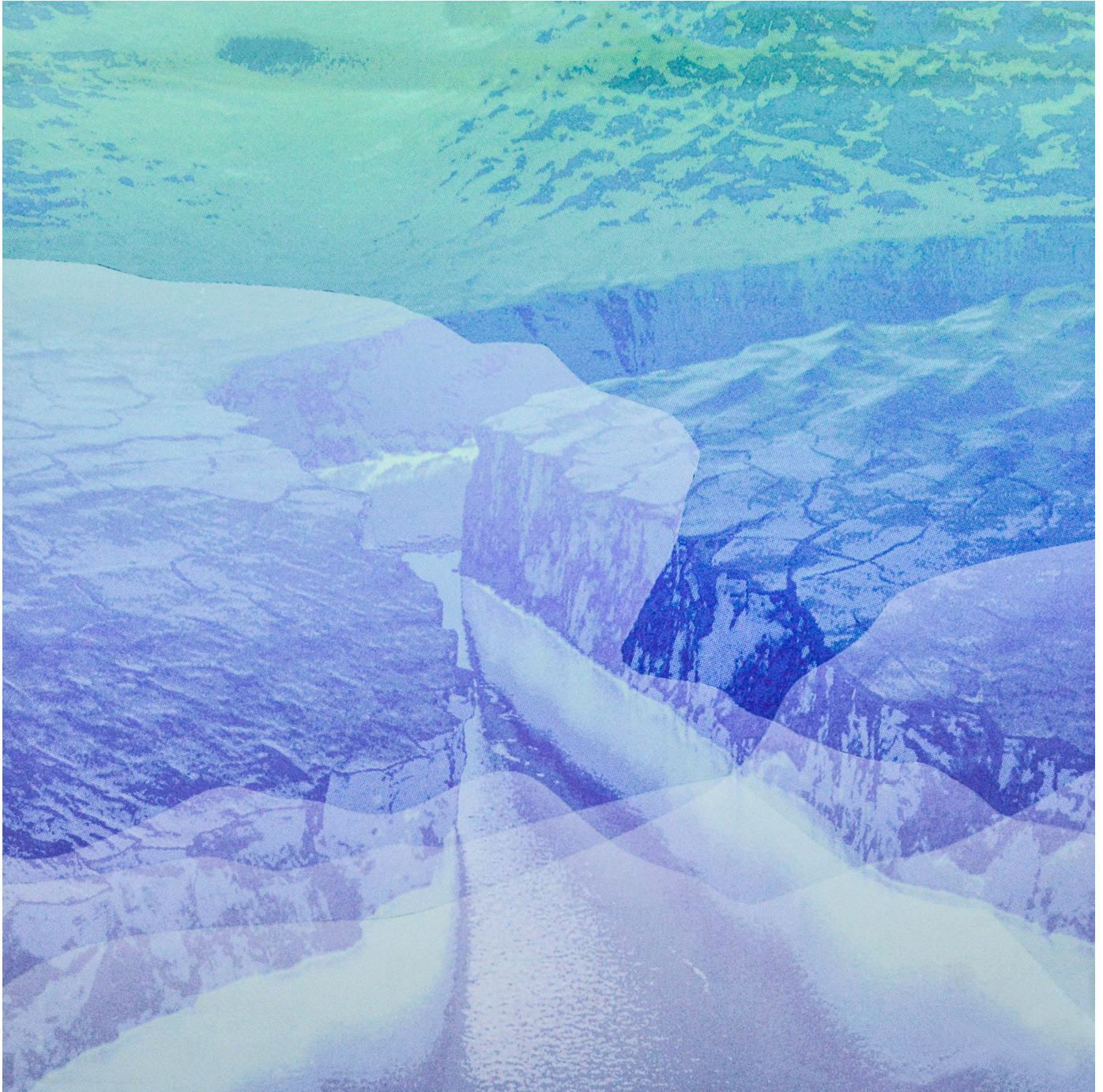
Opening reception: April 27, 2023, 6-8 p.m.

Exhibition: April 27 – June 10, 2023

By STEPHEN WOZNIAK April, 2023

Before I write articles, essays and show critiques for fine art publications, I often take a crash course in a featured artist's background, primary media and exhibition history. I try to pay attention to important personal moments, career highlights and what's been said to define the work. But lately, for reviews, I like to go in blind, so to speak, and just settle briefly with the exhibit without reading the object placards, catalog content and, perhaps, the show title, if I can help it. It gets me closer to the work, the process and the artists, even. Then – in the gallery or my office – I ask the

inevitable, inherently subjective *and*, hopefully, universal “whys.” The coolly displayed, acutely poignant, *almost* otherworldly, and nearly abstract “landscape” wall art of Ariamna Contino and Alex Hernández-Dueñas in the upcoming *Reverse* exhibition is such a show that works with both my not-so-cursory direct gallery space engagement *and* dip-in-the-contextual-depths approach. That’s because their art is just that sophisticated, deceptively simple and works on more levels than you or I could likely identify at first glance.



Alex Hernández Dueñas, Specter #1, 2023, Pigment ink print on Hahnemühle paper and layers of 2mm cut glass, 36 5/8 x 36 5/8 in., (93 x 93 cm)

There are really three segments to the dual exhibition at the newly opened New York branch of the Taipei-based NuNu Fine Art gallery. The first features Ariamna Contino's hand-cut, heavy-duty, archival paper *Transition* pieces, which look like lost, loose lace across the room but that we realize – close up – are ghostly, crashed water wave images. The sinewy fibers and holey layers of each piece grant some sort of grace and give grains of truth that subtly show nature in its finest form, but also a disheartening color-drained image of what-once-was. Smaller, centered, open, gold leaf rectangles reiterate the overall form of each sizeable, framed work – preserving the life lost of the ocean represented just below it – in precious metal. As it turns out, Contino's pieces refer to annual climate study results and fluctuating Havana sea level readings, while the varying superimposed gold blocks indicate related bar graph data, which also, poetically, refocus our attention on the environment we deeply depend upon and are intrinsically a part of. *Transition* # 7 is one of my favorites in the exhibition, showing us serene, horizontal, waning wave forms; a reminder of the energy expenditure and deflation of our resources and their sheer power, which we should not expect to automatically renew at the blink of an eye or in spirited wishful thinking.

Alex Hernández-Dueñas' *Specter* series of works in the show refer to the ongoing polar ice cap melts and glacial recessions worldwide. Like Contino, Hernández-Dueñas utilizes rich scientific data that helps determine formal elements of his art. The works are largely photographic, depicting abstract, fractured, yet elegant glaciers that pack their square frames. The artist chose specific colors, tones and hues that indicate ongoing temperature changes as his palette for each piece. Thin layers of carved and carefully broken glass sit atop the haunting imagery below, acting as simpler silhouettes that hover, like the series namesake, above the degraded strength and staunch of these once-powerful and very necessary "land" masses.

MENU



Ariamna Contino & Alex Hernández Dueñas, Laboratory documentación P-1 through P-7 (Installation view), 2023, Pigment ink print and hand-cut paper on, Hahnemuhle paper, 15 3/4 x 11 3/4 in., (40 x 30 cm), Edition of 3

The third portion of this dual exhibition between the two artists – who are also married to one another – is a series of seven collaborative limited print editions called *Laboratory documentación*. These smaller works feature what look like sober local news photos of shoreline destruction, flooding and other progressive assaults on both coastal Havana nature sites and highly populated residential housing. Other works in this series show us the creation of a collaborative sculptural work the couple created for the 2018 Havana Biennial, which was based on a city sea wall. Superimposed over some of the photos are color-keyed data graph curves. Other print pieces feature map imagery seated next to some of the photos, which give us the bigger, drier picture of the sheer area affected by climate change. I particularly like the piece *Laboratory documentación P-5*, which shows a close up of the couple's Biennial geometric sea wall surface, its profile view and a 3-D topographic grid map of what could indicate flood zones or land masses. It's more abstract than the other works, providing an existential thump on the head instead of allusive instructions on what to do next.

The works offer new views on perennial concerns, which have now become worldwide *and* local emergencies. Some of the pieces, especially those of Hernández-Dueñas, remind me of the dreamy, layered great works of Patti Oleon and Paul Paeiment, but with the use of direct photographic imagery. The funny thing about the show title, *Reverse*, is that it sounds like a call to action for viewers and legislators to recognize our direct contribution to the horrors of environmental destruction and actually do something about it. But both Contino's and Hernández-Dueñas' wondrous, introspective and delicate works put us in a position to lament the utter destruction as if all of it has already happened. (Of course, some of it has).

Is this dramatic license the kind we see in big budget disaster movies? I'd say yes, but the work is so much more than a lesson in "too little, too late." It gives us an appreciation for the majesty and might of our seas and glaciers, but also a concrete focus on how environmental problems have been reviewed with hard irrefutable science and – in the case of the *documentación* series – the very real effect on our lives that (living up to the title) ultimately *does* prompt action to restore or, at least, halt the destructive path we've laid everywhere.

To see the new *Reverse* exhibition, go to the Nunu Fine Art (<http://www.nunufineart.com>) gallery on 381 Broome Street in New York at the opening reception on April 27, 2023 from 6-8 p.m.



STEPHEN WOZNIAK

Stephen Wozniak is a visual artist, writer, and actor based in Los Angeles. His work has been exhibited in the Bradbury Art Museum, Cameron Art Museum, Leo Castelli Gallery, and Lincoln Center, among others. He has performed principal roles on *Star Trek: Enterprise*, *NCIS: Los Angeles*, and the double Emmy Award-nominated *Time Machine: Beyond the Da Vinci Code*. He is a regular contributing critic for the *Observer* in New York City and writes essays for noted commercial art galleries and museum exhibition catalogs. He co-hosted the performing arts series *Center*

Stage on KXLU radio in Los Angeles and guest hosts *Art World: The Whitehot Magazine of Contemporary Art* podcast in New York City. He earned a B.F.A. from Maryland Institute College of Art and attended Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. To learn more, go to: www.stephenwozniakart.com (<http://www.stephenwozniakart.com/>) and www.stephenwozniak.com (<http://www.stephenwozniak.com/>). Follow Stephen on Instagram at @stephenwozniakart and @thesteppenwozniak.

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Ariamna Contino & Alex Hernández Dueñas Duo:Penitence



〈懺悔：尤加利樹 | Penitence (Eucaliptus)〉

阿拉姆娜·孔蒂諾 | Ariamna Contino, 2021, 手工裁紙 | Hand cut paper, 127 x 127 cm | 50 x 50 inches



Exhibition

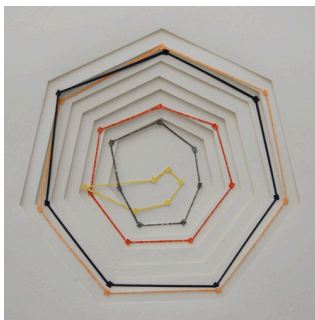
The use of paper is central to the works of Ariamna Contino, as she demonstrates her laser-like paper-cutting technique through the completed piece. It seems through the colossal spread of paper trees that interlace to make up Penitence, Contino makes her awareness of a cost that is well beyond the socio-political urgency of artistic expression rather clear.

Contino calculated the amount of 7 years old Eucalyptus that she needed to take to make these two works. As a result, the summation is equivalent to 265 trees. While the works are exhibited, she also bought 265 potted plants to give to people who will plant them, which is the reason why she named the works "Penitence." Contino creates what she deems a "closed circuit" both literally and

figuratively. In the first sense, the seedbeds were determined in correspondence to the paper used to create her paper landscape. On a more metaphorical level, the potted plants are distributed to people creates a balanced and self-sufficient cycle.

In creating a hypothetical dialogue between the artist and Mother Nature, Contino seems to bridge the highly conceptual politics of the creative process with the ethical considerations of our exceedingly literal environment. She seems to give a voice to the once silent earth, questioning the morality of draining its reservoir of resources in the artist's quest to enlighten society and enrich its culture. Creating a space that is simultaneously provocative and meditative, Contino invites viewers to ruminate the burden carried by the individual ego, the significance of expanding beyond one's own mind and body as the definition of existence, and the embrace of the collective environment as an equally discernable factor of a person's identity.

Artist



ARIAMNA CONTINO & ALEX HERNÁNDEZ
DUEÑAS



Nunu Fine Art, New York

381 Broome St, New York, NY 10013, USA

Gallery Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 11:00 am to 6:00 pm

T: +1 (917) 965-2070

E-mail: galler@nunufineart.com

Nunu Fine Art, Taipei

No.5, Lane 67, Section 1, Jinshan S.Rd,

Zhongzheng District, Taipei, Taiwan

Gallery Hours: Wednesday - Sunday, 11:00 pm to 6:00 pm

T: +886-2-3322-6207

E-mail: galler@nunufineart.com

ARIAMNA CONTINO



HAVANA, CUBA, 1984

Ariamna Contino's work is based on the ritualistic and extremely meticulous technique of "openwork paper". Her procedure, whose origin can be found in the tradition of engraving, contrasts with the themes she deals with: they are related to controversial and paradigmatic phenomena that can be found in the dense plot of the socio-political reality of the contemporary world. She is seduced to investigate conflicts and issues that are tangential to the narratives currently defended by contemporary states within their self-conceptualizations. From the analysis of statistics and data of all kinds, he develops demanding investigations that he generally approaches from a transdisciplinary perspective: chemistry, quantum physics, anthropology, sociology, materials technology, biology, history, geopolitics, art history, linguistics, among other fields of encyclopedic knowledge. In his imaginary we can identify as core themes the "narco-aesthetics", the illegal trafficking of substances, goods and people, the underwater economies of Latin America, the trade of classified information, among others. Recently, he has approached interstitial zones between the natural world and contemporary culture. From there he ventures into sharp approaches to national identity.

He has participated in the Venice Biennial and the Havana Biennial. His work has been presented in institutions and museums such as the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (MNBA), Cuba; the Museum of Concrete Art in Ingolstadt, Germany; and the Museum of the Americas (USA). To this must be added a wide range of personal and group exhibitions such as Adquisiciones 2019-2020 (MNBA, Havana, Cuba); Deriva (Galería Habana, Havana, Cuba); Nada personal (MNBA, Havana, Cuba); Diagramas pintados. Bauhaus, art and infographics (Museum für Konkrete Kunst in Ingolstadt, Germany); Requiem for a failed state end (Contemporary Art Center, Germany); The Cuban Matrix (Torrance Art Museum, USA); Co-lectiva (Centro

Cultural Montecarmelo, Chile). His work is part of important institutional collections such as the Pérez Art Museum (PAMM), Miami; the Gilbert Brownstone Foundation, Wisconsin; the National Museum of Fine Arts, Havana; and the Ella Cisneros Collection, Miami.



Aesthetic Militancy. Gallerie Andreas Binder, Munich, Germany (Bi-personal exhibition with Alex Hernandez)
2015

Road to EdenZona Franca, Collateral exhibition to the XII Havana Biennial, San Carlos de la Cabaña Fort, Havana, Cuba.

2014

AtlasHabana Gallery, Havana, Cuba.

COLLECTIVE EXHIBITIONS

2024

Kaléidoscopes-Cuba: Regards ContemporainsGalleria Continua, Les Moulins, France.

2023

"Das grosse Tableau / The Big Picture"., HALLE 14, Zentrum für zeitgenössische Kunst, Leipzig, Germany.

White LayersPAAP, Pan American Art Projects, Miami, Florida, USA.

2022

You know who you areThe Space 23, Miami, USA.

Artists in production, Estudio 50, Havana, Cuba.

PlantationIslandSPACE Caribbean Museum, Miami, USA.

Cuba in Sacrow, in the labyrinth of time, Sacrow Castle, Berlin, Germany.

Behind the WallHispano-American Center of Culture, Havana, Cuba.

2021

Acquisitions 2019-2020, National Museum of Fine Arts of Havana, Havana, Cuba.

The weight of an Island in the love of a peopleLa Sindical in collaboration with Florafairbairn, Online exhibition.

2020

Matter of the Mind, The Olympia Project, Online exhibition.

2019

May you live interesting time (sobering environment), Cuban Pavilion. 58th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy.

Nothing Personal, National Museum of Fine Arts of Havana, XIII Havana Biennial, Havana, Cuba.

Painted diagrams. Bauhaus, art and infographics, Museum für Konkrete Kunst of Ingolstadt, Germany.

The labyrinth is entered from the side, The apartment, Havana, Cuba.

No more. Says the hard, Nunu Fine Art Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan.

Detrás del Muro (Behind the Wall), site specific in the Malecón of Havana, XIII Havana Biennial, Havana, Cuba.

Illness Has a Colour, Collateral exhibition to the XIII Havana Biennial. Studio 50 - The Apartment. Havana, Cuba.

*El circuito del arte cubano*El Apartamento, Havana, Cuba.

Behind the wall. XIII Havana Biennial. Havana Malecon. Havana, Cuba.

2018

Untitled Art Fair 2018 (With El Apartamento, Havana, Cuba). Miami, USA.

South, Public Works Project located in the entrance channel of Havana Bay. Havana, Cuba. *Diamond in the rough* Continua Gallery, Havana, Cuba.

2017

Watchtower, Taller Gorría-El Apartamento Gallery. Havana, Cuba.

2016

Assembly 2 Estudio Taller Gorría. Havana Cuba. Strength and Blood, Cuba Pavilion, Havana Cuba.

2015

New Colors Robert Miller Gallery. New York, USA *Behind The Wall II*. Collateral exhibition to the XII Havana Biennial. Malecon and Genius. Havana, Cuba.

Stealing Base: Cuba at Bat Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory. Kentucky, USA

2014

Stealing Base: Cuba at Bat Oglethorpe University Museum of Art, Atlanta, USA.

30th Anniversary of the Havana Biennial Center for the Development of Visual Arts. Havana, Cuba.

Behind The Wall The Rockefeller Brothers Fund. New York, USA.

2013

Behind The Wall The 8th Floor. New York, USA.

Bridge Helen Day Art Center. Stowe, USA

Stealing Base: Cuba at Bat The 8th Floor. New York, USA.

Baseball Classics CAIC Film Cultural Center. Havana, Cuba.

2012

The right art sport 2 Espacio Abierto Gallery. Havana, Cuba.

Maretti Award Wifredo Lam Contemporary Art Center. Havana, Cuba.

Pinta, The Modern & Contemporary Latin American Art Show. New York, USA

Houston Fine Art Fair Reliant Center. Houston, USA

Behind the wall. XI Havana Biennial. Marina and Malecon. Havana, Cuba.

Art Shanghai Latin-American Pavillon (LAP). Shanghai, China.

Scope 2 Third edition of the Latin American Photographic Day, Casa Oswaldo Guayasamín. Havana, Cuba.

Collective photography exhibition, Miramar Genesis Gallery. Havana, Cuba.

2011

Unique Art Auction, Panama, Panama. XX Great Auction of Excellencies, San Felipe Foundation. Panama, Panama.

2010

Prophecy Gallery 23 and 12. Havana, Cuba.

2005

Motives Mariano Rodriguez Gallery. Havana, Cuba.

Tribute Benito Juárez Memorial House. Havana, Cuba.

2004

The magic of things Mariano Rodríguez Gallery. Havana, Cuba.

2003

Sempervivens Casa de la Cultura Plaza de la Revolución, Havana, Cuba. Havana, Cuba.

2001

Photography and Nature Servando Cabrera Moreno Gallery. Havana, Cuba.

Sempervivens Museum of Colonial Art. Havana, Cuba.

Photography and Nature Editorial Pablo de la Torriente. Havana, Cuba.

2000

Day of the Dead Benito Juárez Memorial House. Havana, Cuba.

1999

Approach Green Brigade. Havana, Cuba. *Naturalism* José A. Díaz Peláez Gallery. Havana, Cuba.

1998

Full Moon Green Brigade. Havana, Cuba.

Progressive Carnival Green Brigade. Havana, Cuba.

COLLECTIONS

National Museum of Fine Arts of Havana, Havana, Cuba.

National Council of Plastic Arts collection, Havana, Cuba.

Pérez Art Museum, Miami, USA.

Jorge Pérez Collection, Miami, USA.

Ella Cisneros Collection, Miami, USA.

Gilbert Brownstone Collection, Paris, France.

Robert Funcker New Issenburg Collection, Germany.

Celia Sredni de Birbragher collection (Director of Art Nexus), Colombia.

WORKS



Ariamna Contino
Pond,
from the Natural Filters series,
2023,
Hand-cut paper (Stramore Cold Press cardboard 300 gsm),
189 x 129 cm



Ho

cm

Ariamna Contino
Poppies,
from the Garden of Earthly Delights series,
2023,
Hand-cut paper (Stramore Cold Press cardboard 300 gsm), 125 x 125 cm

LAYERED LIVES



Ariamna Contino Mendoza (b. 1984)

Artist Statement

Living on an island is a fact that marks human existence. This notion of insularity is a concept that determined my perception of reality. The ocean as an element that unites us and at the same time separates us from the rest, it is a surrounding body that takes you everywhere and at the same time is the limit of your horizon. This complex and conflictual relationship is the origin of this series of works that I have called *Deriva* and that responds to the most poetic area of my symbolic production.

This word that alludes directly to a nautical tradition is the trigger of a psychic state produced by the uncertainty generated by the unknown. Playing with the original meaning of the words, we can discover that drifting does not only mean misplacement. To doubt is an attitude of the human being and that everything we assume as certain is only probable.

This series is composed of a group of landscapes made in openwork paper that abstractly represent oceanic masses devoid of elements that refer to a specific place. These layered volumes pass through temporal stages that mark the character of the scene. With this body of work I have tried to evoke the beautiful verses of *La Isla en peso* by Virgilio Piñera, for whom "the damned circumstance of water everywhere" was the condition of his own existence.

Bio

Ariamna Contino, born in Havana, Cuba in 1984, is a prominent figure of the young Cuban contemporary art scene. A visual artist, she gained international recognition with her meticulous hand-cut paper technique, mixed media and installation works.

Ariamna Contino is particularly interested in history and social phenomena which she explores in depth by collecting data on her subjects before translating them into beautiful and carefully crafted artworks, often contrasting with the themes explored. Contemporary topics such as drug trafficking, Cuban private economy and environmental issues among others are investigated by the artist to compose visual narratives.

Ariamna Contino has had several solo exhibitions around the world and participated in numerous collective shows and major international art fairs. In 2019, she represented Cuba at the Venice Biennial with her installation *PENITENCIA*. Institutions including the National Fine Arts Museum in Havana, the Perez Art Museum in Miami and CIFO-Cinsero Fontanals Foundation have acquired some of her artworks for their permanent collection.

Curriculum Vitae

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