

Galería Elba Benítez

Press release

The Galería Elba Benítez is pleased to announce that it will launch the new season with the exhibition *Painting and Geopolitics*, a group show of three contemporary artists — Nohemí Pérez, Marwan Rechmaoui and Dierk Schmidt — all of whom use the medium of painting to reflect on and respond to the conflictive geopolitical issues of our time. The exhibition will open September 9.

The artists in *Painting and Geopolitics* come from very different regions of the world — Pérez is from Colombia, Rechmaoui is from Lebanon, and Schmidt is from Germany — and their respective approaches are likewise distinct in the degree to which they combine direct observation, personal experience and thoughtful critical analysis. All, however, have developed artistic practices that are deeply rooted in the particular circumstances of the time, place and social and cultural contexts they inhabit as individuals and as citizens. And all have created paint-based artistic languages that are neither strident nor didactic nor journalistic, but rather the expression of accomplished artists who remain fully committed to the enduring relevance of the medium of painting as a means of bearing witness, even in today's changed and changing world.

Nohemí Pérez (Tibú, 1962) focuses on the multiple conflicts that have ravaged the Catatumbo region in northern South America from the era of the Spanish Conquest into the present day. While Pérez's practice is based in representational forms of drawing and painting, it also encompasses objects, documents and installations that draw on personal, collective and environmental memory.

Marwan Rechmaoui (Beirut, 1964) uses the conflicts and complexities of his native city as a point of departure for an artistic practice that is politically engaged and socially conscious and yet deeply rooted in his own lived experience of his environment. Rechmaoui's work moves freely between the paintings typical of his early work and his more recent spatially-responsive objects and installations.

Dierk Schmidt (Unna, 1965) employs painting as a means of voicing historically-oriented institutional critique, while at the same time reflecting on the potential of politically-engaged art in general to respond to the ongoing conflicts and inequities of today's post-colonial world. While always anchored in the medium of painting, Schmidt's practice extends to multiple formats, including manipulated objects, research-based imagery, and site-specific installations.

Painting and Geopolitics will be part of the Apertura Madrid Gallery Weekend 2021 program, from September 9 to 12.



In collaboration with Instituto de Visión (Bogota), Sfeir-Semler Gallery (Hamburg/Beirut), KOW (Berlin)

Images: (1) N. Pérez, *Pozo Azul*, 2021; (2) M. Rechmaoui, *Satellites (Mogadishu)*, 2019; (3) D. Schmidt, serie *Broken Windows* 6.3, installation view, 2016

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