



Firmamento (bare dome), 2019
Acrylic, oil and ink on canvas, 86x130cm

Galerie Dix9 is pleased to present

SOMEWHERE UNDER A VAST SOLID DOME

Dehora Hirsch

curated by Lara Pan

From May 18 to June 15, 2019

Opening Friday, May 17 / 5pm – 9pm

GALERIE DIX9 Hélène Lacharmoise

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FIRMAMENTO

Brazilian artist born in Sao Paulo and living in Milan, Debora Hirsch nourishes her research with scientific knowledge acquired during her engineering studies. She develops a metaphysical approach to art where different realities are intertwined.

Drawing from archives, antique books, social network and data found on the Internet, her works bring forth stunning combinations of scattered universes revealing hidden realities, such as the influence of media and technology in our modern societies.

For her first personal exhibition at Galerie Dix9, Debora Hirsch presents a body of new works from a project called Firmamento, consisting of paintings, videos and «mirror objects». This project is focused on the relationship between the colonization of Brazil and digital colonialism, displaying similar procedures -distraction, schemes and even lies-, instruments of manipulation, homogenization, surveillance and control.

The term «Firmamento» refers to the biblical meaning: the «structure» that overhangs the sky, which the artist conceives as a large and solid dome. In this project, still in development, Debora Hirsch seeks to create an idyllic and balanced coexistence between seemingly unrelated worlds, both in time and space, in order to unveil hidden realities, subtle connections and even similarities. Her research focuses on the possible relations between the colonial period in America -particularly in Brazil- and the digital colonialism that reigns in the contemporary world. The result is images that are both harmonious and complex, born of an erudite and poetic construction from scattered and decontextualized elements: fragments of landscapes, architectural details, traces of traditional decorative motifs that unconsciously recall the microscopic life, scientific representations, decoded elements of digital language, algorithms, and elements borrowed from American colonial imagery.

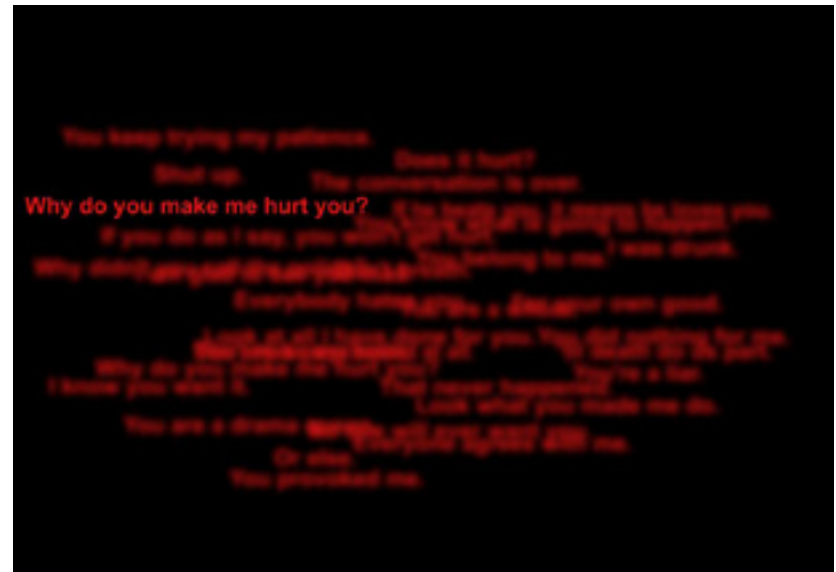
Each painting, beyond its aesthetic harmony, is to be analyzed, even decoded: the presence of a river recalls the way used by the Portuguese to penetrate the country in search of gold. The gold, represented elsewhere by its color, explains the abundant immigration of Portuguese to Brazil and also the 'import' of numerous African slaves.

This penetration is paralleled in the video *Firmamento* by the progressive invasion of algorithms on the image of the Navy Palace in Lisbon. The algorithms come from a real caption, almost a ready made, which the artist has combined to penetrate the image of a tropical forest in Brazil, and then an arid zone in Europe.

Other elements relating to power and repression (such as boots worn by settlers, or fragments of abusive phrases) are incorporated into the most recent works. Decontextualized, the shoes are associated with pedestals often used to magnify the colonial presence, but they are not above, they float somewhere under the pedestals. There are also fragments of colonial imagery about the indigenous populations, depicting barbecues of human beings!

The mirror objects offer a new dimension to digital colonialism: the image offered to the viewer interacts with his very image, an image reflected by the mirror. The mirror presented in the exhibition is composed of subliminal sentences that appear surreptitiously unveiled. And they challenge us.

In «Firmamento», Debora Hirsch reveals the dark side of our modern societies.



Iconography of Silence, 2019, video, Ipad, 38,2x31,5 cm

SOMEWHERE UNDER A VAST SOLID DOME

This new solo exhibition of the Brazilian artist Debora Hirsch in Paris will present two new projects - a series of works titled *Firmamento* and the film installation *Iconography of Silence*. These multi-part works utilize a variety of mediums and techniques, including film, photography, painting, sound, and digital algorithms

New technologies have the ability to reshape our worldview and everyday interactions. In the current knowledge economy, a small number of companies dominate the internet, and by default determine the ways we interact and access information online globally. Critics of this dynamic have called it "digital colonialism." *Firmamento* and *Iconography of Silence* approach this topic through the lens of surveillance, and the ways in which "neutral" technologies can be political or exert violence on communities and individual users.

In *Firmamento*, Hirsch draws from her archive of images from the European colonialist period in Brazil—buildings, paintings, drawings, engravings, objects, vases, tapestries—and combines them with visualizations from the algorithms that manage and control our data online. In Hirsch's words, she uses these visualizations "as a surveillant and ubiquitous presence vis a vis the Colonial structures." In this poetic way, she links the idea of Digital Colonialism to the long history of colonial oppression and violence, drawing attention to the subtle architectures that shape our understanding of culture and history.

Aside from her research engaging digital colonialism, I would like to mention the importance of language as a coded system in Debora's work. The roots of the word *Firmamento* has its own significance—in biblical cosmology, the firmament is the all-encompassing structure above the atmosphere of Earth, conceived as a vast solid dome—representative of a belief system imposed on colonized peoples by European explorers from Portugal and a broader restructuring of their concept of reality. Similarly, in *Iconography of Silence*, the words are chosen for the abuse they inflict on their subjects, though on a more intimate, one-to-one level.

Iconography of Silence addresses intimate violence between partners, projecting abusive phrases and chilling scenes captured on security cameras onto a mirror. The viewer, reflected in the mirror, is placed into a digital landscape and implicated in the scene. They must wrestle with their past experiences and personal relationship to the content; *Iconography of Silence* is a powerful work about any form of abuse.

Firmamento and *Iconography of Silence* inform each other. While one is soft and poetic the other one is brutal and disturbing, almost violating emotions of a viewer. They explore the way that structures of power can be subtle, insidious, and invisible, as well as brutal. Debora Hirsch's visual language deliberately invites us to rethink our actions and existence, inviting us to not live under glass bell or a solid dome

Text by Lara Pan*



Firmamento, 2019, video and animation, 6'

*Lara Pan is an independent curator born in Belgrade and based in New York. She has worked internationally with artists such as Carolee Schneemann, Wim Delvoye, Braco Dimitrijevic, Trevor Paglen, Samson Young, and Hans Breder. Lara Pan was Program and Development Director at WhiteBox New York from 2016-19. She is a contributing editor of Musée Magazine and writes for various publications (ARTPULSE, RES). Most recently, she curated a solo exhibition of Carolee Schneemann, "From Then and Beyond," at Kunsthalle Winterthur, Switzerland. In 2019, Lara Pan will serve as a strategic consultant for the Dubrovnik Pavillion at the Venice Biennale, where she will present a public program with participating artists Izvor Pende, Marijana Pende, and Slaven Tolj.

BIOGRAPHY

Debora Hirsch was born in São Paulo, Brazil. She lives between Milan and New York.

EDUCATION

MSc in Industrial Engineering, University of São Paulo, Brazil
MBA from Bocconi University in Milan, Italy

AWARDS

Nominated for the Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation's (CIFO) Grants and Commissions Program 2019-2020.

RESIDENCIES

Artist-in-residence at AnnexB, New York (2019).
Artist-in-residence at RU Residency Unlimited, New York (2018).

EXHIBITIONS

2019

Somewhere under a vast solid Dome, solo show
Galerie Dix9, Paris
Scivias, Galerie Lisi Hämmerle, Bregenz, Austria
The Iconography of Silence, Hutchinson Modern, New York
Eco Shifters, Carriage Trade, New York
Il Crepaccio by Caroline Corbetta, Instagram

2018

Welcome to the Anthropocene!, riss(e), Varese
Panorama Punjab in association with WBX Out of the Box, New York, USA
Fugitive Designs, Residency Unlimited, New York
WunderMoRE, MAXXI National Museum of the 21st Century Arts, Roma, Italy
BelVedere, MARS Milan Artist Run Space, Milan
Panorama Punjab, Qila Mubarak, Patiala, India

2017

Art in Art, MOCAK Museum of Contemporary Art, Krakow, Poland
Firmamento, MARS Artist Run Space, Milan
Dreams & drama. Law as literature, nGbK, Berlin
Drawings from Lightning, Madeinbritaly, London, UK

2016

Fateful Space, WhiteBox, New York
Donotclickthru, Galleria Pack, Milan, Italy
Andata e Ritorno, Palazzo Della Ragione, Verona, Italy
Before Nightfall, Anthology Film Archives, New York
Medicine in Art, MOCAK, Krakow, Poland

2015

Imago Mundi, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy
E Il Topo, Rob Pruitt's Flea Market, Venice, Italy
Gender in Art, MOCAK Krakow, Poland
World Academy, Project for EXPO 2015, Piazza Citta' di Lombardia, Milan, Italy

2014

Crime in Art, MOCAK Krakow, Poland

2012

Limite, MuBE Museu Brasileiro da Escultura e Ecologia, São Paulo, Brazil
Framed, Bernice Steinbaum project room, Miami, USA
Premio Michetti, Fondazione Michetti, Francavilla al Mare, Italy
Rocaglia XXXII, Passato prossimo, San Felice sul Panaro, Italy
MAP project, EX3, Firenze, Italy

2011

Quelli che restano, Spazio Oberdan, Milan
MAP project, MAGA Museum, Gallarate

2010

Framed book and video, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy
Framed, 100 round trips to Hollywood, Spazio Oberdan, Milan
Framed, GAMC Palazzo Forti, Verona

2009

Videoart Yearbook, Care of, Milan
AMACI, Telecom Italia Future Lab, Genova
ConfinInfranti, GAMC Palazzo Forti, Verona

2008

Nuovi pittori della realtà, PAC Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Milan, Italy
XV Quadriennale di Roma, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Roma, Italy
BR 101, Fondazione A. Olivetti, Rome, Italy

2006

FILE II Electronic Language International Festival, Espaço Telemar, Rio de Janeiro and Centro Cultural FIESP, Sao Paulo, Brasil
Vidéos d'artistes dans les collections, Galerie de l'Artothèque, Lyon, France
L'infinito dentro lo sguardo: sentieri interrotti, GAMC Palazzo Forti, Verona, Italy

2005

L'Arte In Testa, MACI Museo Arte Contemporanea Isernia, Isernia
Orizzonti Aperti, GAMC Palazzo Forti, Verona
Anteprima XIV Quadriennale d'Arte, Palazzo della Promotrice delle Belle Arti, Turin
La Creazione Ansiosa, GAMC Palazzo Forti, Verona
CITTÀZIONI: Public art in Milano, Rizzoli, Milan