

Short biographies

Claudia Fischer lives and works in Lisbon and Jena.

She studied Linguistics and English and Russian literature at Friedrich Schiller University in Jena and at the Institute Pushkin in Moscow, Photography in Kent College of Art and Design, Rochester and Bournemouth College of Art and Design, Photo and art media in Hochschule Für Grafik und Buchkunst Academy of Visual Arts in Leipzig and Master of Fine Arts at the Bauhaus University, Weimar and Oxford Brookes University.

A selection of her solo exhibitions were: in 2021: IHA UMA (rua de timor, lisboa), Passevite, Lisbon; in 2018, Spatien, Galeria Belo-Galsterer, Lisbon; in 2015, Ausloten, Galeria Belo-Galsterer, Lisbon; in 2014, Anderswo, Jenaer Kunstverein; Verankern; in 2012, St. Augustine's Monastery, Gotha; Kostbare Fracht; in 2011, Loris Gallery Berlin, Bodenlos; in 2010: Expedition, Galerie Stadt Speicher Jena, DE; in 2009: Heimische Arten, Galerie LorisBerlin, DE; in 2007: Personal Belongings, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon.

And as well, we present a selection of her latest participations in group exhibitions: in between others, (Un)Common Proximity (2023), Galeria Belo-Galsterer, Lisbon, PT; These Walls can Talk. 10 Anos Galeria Belo-Galsterer, (2022) Galeria Belo-Galsterer, Lisboa, PT; Alles eine Frage des Formats (2021), Kunstforum Hannah Höch, Gotha, DE; Paperworks III. Landscape without Landscape (2016), Galeria Belo-Galsterer, Lisbon; Bodo Graef Art Award (2015) Romantikerhaus Jena, DE; Power & Art (2014), Thuringian Parliament, Sinn(Lichkeit) Der Dinge (2013), Monastery Zehdenick; NATURA. Paisagem e Natureza (2013), Nogueira da Silva Museum, Braga, PT; In Transit (2012), Month of Photography, East Station Berlin, DE; The Best of all Possible Worlds (2011), Carpe Diem Art and research, Lisbon, PT; Ulysses. Fascination-Voyages Without Frontiers (2008), Luis Serpa Projects Gallery, Lisbon, PT; Territories of Transition (2007), Luis Serpa Projects Gallery, Lisbon, PT; Lisbonne / Lisboa (2004), Grande Halle de la Vilette, Paris, FR.

Her work is represented in diverse important public collections: BESArt Collection / Novo Banco, Lisboa, PT; Col. of Thuringian Ministry of Science, Research and Art / Art - Collection of the Friedrich Schiller University, Jena, DE; Jenacom Foundation, Jena, DE; Museu Temporário, PT; Museu Nacional da Ciência e Técnica, Coimbra, PT, and, as well, her photographs and works can be found in private art collections, mostly in Germany and Portugal.

Ana Velez (1982, Portugal). She lives and works in Lisbon and Madrid.

Ana Velez has a degree in Fine Arts from Accademia Albertina de Belle Arti in Turin and from the Faculty of Fine Arts in Lisbon. She also holds an MFA in Painting from the same university.

She uses drawing as a directional tool, questioning its multiple material possibilities, which led her to develop her practice in public space. Through her work, she approaches identity-based themes built on three ideas: place, memory, and body, highlighting the place as a container of memory and identity.

She was a recipient of the Fundo de Fomento Cultural Ministério da Cultura [2020], Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian Support for Internationalization [2013], and Collezione Peggy Guggenheim Scholarship [Venice, Italy 2007], amongst others.

Her work is present in numerous private and institutional collections in Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Switzerland, Russia, and Mexico.

Claudia Fischer *signals from sinking islands*



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Ana Velez *Erasure: The Cosmic Layers of Time*

GALERIA
BELO-
GALSTERER

26.09. - 21.12.2024

Coordinates. A very personal atlas¹

Claudia Fischer: *signals from sinking islands*

We are delighted to present *signals from sinking islands*², Claudia Fischer's third solo exhibition at the Belo-Galsterer Gallery.

As soon as you enter, you're greeted by the gaze of a young woman wearing diving goggles on her head - which immediately places her in a seaside resort.

This is one of 18 previously unseen photographs in Fischer's solo exhibition that deal with a singular theme: the sea. In the photographs on display here, we find images from various series that have never been shown before, in which there is a connection with the oceans in a multiple register, through a subjective imaginary on the subject, using a kind of singular mnemosynical³ atlas, whose coordinates are very personal and allow us to find points of connection with our own physical and mental being.

There's an image of the vandalised Nord Stream gas pipeline; marine animals that are presented to us at angles that are alien to what we have in mind as their identifying image, the colour blue, marine props in abstract or unknown places, family portraits or historical events, and much more. In addition to the photographs that create a kind of personalised Warburgian puzzle, in this exhibition the artist is showing images at the same time, whose logic of being and existing together is the leitmotif of the main leitmotif.

In addition, we gain an unprecedented insight into the artist's work, the multiplicity of her interests, shapes and formats, representative of her expert technique, her dedication to detail - a *pars pro toto*?

Last but not least, the fishing nets in the space, as an installation, create a dialog with Fischer's photographs, which surprisingly transforms a photography exhibition into an installation that invites us to take a 'dive' into her artistic and personal world.

Alda Galsterer
September 2024

The Invisible Veils of Ana Velez's World

Ana Velez: Erasure: The Cosmic Layers of Time

"Some painters transform the sun into a yellow spot, others transform a yellow spot into the sun."
— Pablo Picasso¹

Ana Velez's painting is based in both geometric abstraction reminiscent of Minimalism — where the plastic potential of the material is reduced to a minimum to create simplified or schematic geometric images — and also intuition, one of the foundational elements of the lyrical abstraction movement. Through her actions, the texture, the mark, the trace of the gesture, and the interaction of the medium with the surface of the canvas reveal the richness and diversity of the paint, explored through various dilutions and application techniques. Abstraction can be seen as a process intimately connected to the recognition of forms linked to tangible elements and objects around us. Ana Velez's particular approach to abstraction highlights a continuous yet unfulfilled attempt to recognise images associated with reality. As a result, her images produce an opportunity to appreciate "pure" beauty not in the direct representation of the physical world, but through geometric shapes, patterns, composition, and the structural elements of visual language, all intertwined with abstract concepts of order. In this sense, echoing Arshile Gorky's belief that abstraction enables us to perceive with the mind what eludes our eyes, abstract art allows the artist to transcend the tangible, revealing the infinite within the finite. It somehow symbolises a liberation of the mind and an exploration into the unknown, akin to a spiritual journey. Conversely, in our contemporary society, despite living in a globally connected world, we are swirled in a "global village" of images. Here, seeing is not necessarily believing, as the sheer volume of visual content captured by our devices creates uncertainty about what we are witnessing.

In the solo exhibition, Erasure: The Cosmic Layers of Time, Ana Velez transforms the gallery space with her latest series, Erasure. Six large, yellowish paintings float, suspended vertically at varying distances from the wall, creating an intense experience as visitors engage with their ambiguous colours, geometric shapes, and shifting shadows. Each painting results from an overlay of two, six, or twelve layers. Each layer, obscuring the others, reflects the action taken in its making and reveals the painting process — from the brushstrokes and drips of diluted paint to the specific gestures of the artist. We could associate this thin layer of paint with the technique known as "velatura" (glazing) used by the Renaissance masters. These glazes progressively cover the base colour until it is completely obscured, creating an illusion of texture and depth. In this process, the layers both veil and, metaphorically, reveal. When asked about the intention behind her work, Ana Velez reflected on the period of confinement that led to deep introspection about her evolving identity and roles. Just as each layer on the canvas surface builds upon the previous one, her layers as an individual span her roles as a woman, mother, partner, and friend.

In Velez's work, the colour black plays a crucial part, often serving as the foundational colour in her paintings. In this series, black represents a base or origin, akin to the spirit we are born with. As time passes, this "first purity" transforms, becoming more layered and complex through life's experiences. Velez metaphorically expresses this transformation through thin, translucent layers of yellow that gradually conceal and blend with the deep black beneath — creating subtle greenish tones that evolve into bright, fluorescent yellows. This interplay shifts our perception of the colour, introducing an element of uncertainty or ambiguity to the surface of the painting. Perhaps in Erasure, these concealing layers symbolize the experiences that add depth and complexity to our existence. Just as the yellow layers become integral to the painting, they may also reflect the experiences that shape how we present ourselves to the world. As Ana Velez expressed in conversation with me, "possibly, with the erasure of these layers and the emergence of others, in reality, we are all of them in one, though perhaps never all at the same time." Her reflection touches on the complexity of human identity. We carry countless layers — our roles, memories, actions, and emotions — that shape who we are, but they rarely surface all at once. Instead, they shift and evolve, revealing different aspects of ourselves at different moments of time. Velez's words invite us to consider the fluidity of identity, where every experience adds density, yet our full self remains elusive, only partially visible at any given time. Moreover, she also challenges us to reflect on the uncertainty, risk, and arbitrariness that we face when trying to grasp the entirety of a person through visual perception.

Inês Valle
2024

Footnotes for "The Invisible Veils of Ana Velez's World"

¹ Pablo Picasso converses with the writer, collector, and patron of the arts Maurice Raynal; Maurice Raynal, Picasso: étude biographique et critique (Le goût de notre temps), Skira, Genève, 1959.

¹ The term 'atlas' has been used to describe a collection of maps since the 16th century, after the geographer Gerardus Mercator (1512-1594) published his work in honour of the mythological titan.

² The title of the exhibition is an appropriation of a quote from Virginia Woolf.

³ Aby Warburg's Bilderatlas Mnemosyne (1927-29), see: <https://warburg.sas.ac.uk/archive/bilderatlas-mnemosyne>, accessed on 16 September at 19:51