



Federico Herrero, *Encounter*, 2023
Oil and acrylic on canvas
71 5/8 x 78 in. (182 x 198 cm)

52 WALKER ST | MAY 12 – JUN 17, 2023

Federico Herrero

James Cohan is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by Federico Herrero, on view from May 12 through June 17, 2023, at the gallery's 52 Walker Street location. This is Herrero's fourth solo exhibition with James Cohan. The gallery will host an opening reception with the artist on Friday, May 19 from 6-8 PM.

This exhibition is accompanied by an essay written by independent curator and writer Alejandro Ortiz.

Federico Herrero: Mutating the topographic memory

By Alejandro Ortiz

In his most recent exhibition, Federico Herrero once again suggests open questions about what landscape could mean, but also formulates an evolving proposal of what already exists. His eye and hand combine to dilate an immense reflective field where ecology and nostalgia coexist. Herrero employs the paintbrush to propose a collection of pictorial memories that reflect the tension and link between voracious urban growth and nature's resistance.

For this exhibition, the artist incorporates, across nine paintings, an emotional landscape formed by tones that, in relation to the architecture of the gallery, propose questions about the limits of color and its form. In his works, whether on canvas or the concrete of the city, Herrero proposes choreographies of color within a narrative framework linked to the idea of "tropicality." Although this label has worked to situate the artist during the last two decades, Herrero sees it as a trigger for new considerations and questioning.

Unfinished buildings where flora claims a place, earthquakes, a silent garden, ferry trips, swimming pools, his studio, floods, and Costa Rican cities transforming delineate the affective encounter where Herrero foots his memory. "*All the territories that I have known and experienced feed my work,*" says the artist.

Topography is the ability to analyze as well as graphically describe Earth's surface—both its natural and man-made elements. In this exhibition, Herrero creates a painted record facilitated by restless brushes dancing across monumental canvases, a new and intimate notion of the topographic exercise. Here, the artist situates a keen, constant observation and sense of belonging to the world within his prismatic way of painting and feeling. This notion is indisputably involved in time and history construction, specifically Herrero's personal memory, one that is always mutating. The painter notes, "*It's a way of seeing the landscape as an extension of our perception, a kind of mirror of existence.*"

In the face of capitalized time, Herrero's slowing down and reflecting upon the transformation of nature becomes a radical choice that can unfold new possibilities. In a world filled with pixels and screens, Herrero creates with his hands a subjective space where landscape is not precisely but rather expressively rendered. His images unfold and uncover the layers of nature to contemplate and understand our shared surfaces.

About the Artist

Federico Herrero (b. 1978, San Jose, Costa Rica) has exhibited widely internationally, with solo exhibitions and public installations in São Paulo, Brazil; San Francisco, CA; Dusseldorf, Germany; Kanazawa, Japan; Tokyo, Japan; Mexico City, Mexico; Freiburg, Germany; and London, UK. Recent major institutional projects include *Tactiles*, Kunsthalle Lissabon, Lisbon, Portugal (2022); *Barreras Blandas*, Museo Nacional de Costa Rica, San Jose, Costa Rica (2020); *Tempo aberto*, Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Niterói, São Paulo (2019); *Open Envelope*, Witte de With, Rotterdam, the Netherlands (2018); and *Alphabet*, a site-specific installation for the atrium of the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (2018). Herrero's work is featured in the 2021 Thailand Biennale. He was the recipient of the Young Artist's Prize at the 49th Venice Biennale (2001) and his work is in the permanent collection of numerous institutions including the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa, Japan; Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan; Tate Modern, London, UK; MUDAM, Luxembourg; MUSAC, Castilla y León, Spain; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA; The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY; and São Paulo Museum of Art, São Paulo, Brazil. Herrero is also the founder of Despacio, a contemporary art space in his native San Jose, which is an important force in the continued development of Central America's artistic voice. He lives and works in San Jose, Costa Rica.

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