

Luis Roldán: Umbra

Opening Reception: Thursday February 16, 6-9 pm

Exhibition runs through March 25, 2017

Gallery Hours: Tuesday to Saturday 11-6 pm

Henrique Faria Fine Art is pleased to present *Umbra*, Luis Roldán's fourth solo exhibition with the gallery. Building upon the themes he introduced in his previous exhibition, *Eidola*, Roldán returns to painting and sculpture to explore ideation and apparition. The title of the exhibition, *Umbra*, refers to the fully shaded inner region of a shadow cast by an object, though its antiquated, original use was in reference to ghosts or spirits. In focusing on the shadow, on the murky darkness, Roldán also extends his focus to the opposing force, that of light, and challenges the viewer to navigate the spaces between.

The centerpiece of the exhibition is what, at first glance, would appear to be a large model house made of wood. Upon closer inspection the viewer realizes that the house contains no doors, that passages don't seem to lead anywhere, that the only free movement within the structure occurs through its thirty-seven windows. These windows are painted white to obscure the passage of light and create shadows of varying sizes around them. Mónica Espinel writes in the exhibition text that as viewers' lines of sight are challenged, their attention then must go elsewhere, to the details of the painted windows, to the quality of the shadows, to the grains of wood that comprise the house's ribbed structure, to the presence of the work as a whole. In her approach to the interrelation between light and shadow, transparency and shroud, Espinel quotes Victor Stoichita, "the whole dialectic of Western representation has taught us that frontality – and the mirror – constitutes the symbolic form of the relationship between the self and the same, whereas the profile – and the shadow – constitutes the symbolic form of the relationship between the self and the other."

In placing attention on presence, whether it's that of the viewer or the work itself, Espinel connects the work of Roldán to the oeuvre of Donald Judd and demonstrates the importance of actually viewing, perceiving and reacting to the works, of recognizing this distance between oneself and the work and trying to understand it. As the walls of the hanging structure are punctuated with painted windows, so are the walls of the gallery. In this way Roldán is able to apply the experience of interacting with the miniature scale of the house to the human scale, to life size. In these larger panes lining the gallery walls, subtle details emerge from the blankets of paint: the base of red ochre and subsequent layers of red, yellow, blue and green give substance and breadth to the final coats of white paint. As Espinel notes, these paintings are installed with custom built hinges that grant such a sense of depth that the works have the impression of floating off the wall. The simplicity of the works belies their technical complexity: the longer one looks at each panel of aluminum, the deeper one is able to look and the more that is likely to appear.

The poet William Blake wrote that if the limits imposed on objects by the acts of sight and perception were lessened, then we might be able to see these objects as boundless and in turn feel our own constrictions lifted from us. In citing this quote, Espinel encourages viewers to take up this challenge, of instead of looking for barriers and restraints, to see beyond them, towards the infinite.

Luis Roldán (Cali, Colombia, 1955) studied Art History at the École du Louvre (Paris), engraving at S.W. Hayter (Paris) and Architecture at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana (Bogotá, Colombia). He has exhibited extensively at institutions internationally. A selection of solo shows include: *Periplo. Una retrospectiva 1986-2016*, Banco de la República, Bogotá (2016); *Expiación*, Fundación Gilberto Alzate Avendaño, Bogotá (2014); *Presión y flujo*, Galería Casas Reigner, Bogotá (2014); *Mechanical Ventilation. Interactions with Willys de Castro and Other Voices*, Henrique Faria, New York (2013 and 2011); *Transparencias*, Museum of Modern Art, Medellín (2011); *Continua*, Sicardi Gallery, Houston (2007); *Acerca de las estructuras*, Museum of Contemporary Art and Design, San José, Costa Rica (2006) and *Permutantes*, Sala Mendoza, Caracas (2005). Selected group shows include: 44th Salon of National Artists, Pereira (2016); the First Biennial of Cartagena (2014); the Tenth Monterrey Biennial (2012); the 53rd Venice Biennale, Latin America Pavilion (2009); and *Dibujos*, Museum of Modern Art, Buenos Aires (2004). He has won numerous awards such as the Luis Caballero Award (Bogotá, 2001) and the National Award in Visual Arts (Colombia, 1996). His work is included in important collections such as Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, Museo del Barrio and Deutsche Bank Collection, New York; FEMSA Collection, Monterrey; Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami and the Museums of Modern Art in Buenos Aires, Bogotá and Medellín. He lives and works both in New York City and Bogotá.

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