



**Ex Nihilo**

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Genesis 1:1

As if out of nothing, after two years of cogitating the possibility of making an exhibition that would speak deeply of our longing for a reconnection of body and spirit, Ex Nihilo comes together embracing difference and individuality. Even though the titled, Ex Nihilo, was chosen two years ago, Pieve di San Cresci, a special place-space emerged out of nothing presenting us with the very same question, which we have thrown in the deepest void vacuum of ideas, and desires that reside nowhere but within us. Building blocks began falling into place until it physically appeared in the most magical way, building our confidences and throwing us back into the unknown. This exhibition was conceived to be a communion and an exchange among those artists, with themselves and with the space that it inhabits. The display of the art objects was designed in harmony with what is, to create what it can be. Creation, therefore, becomes a movement from inside out outside in, in the particularity of everyone’s heart.

- Marcela Gottardo, exhibiting artist, curator, and exhibition designer

Ex Nihilo installation is dedicated to putting form to an ongoing dialogue with 5 international, women artists.

In our attempts to make sense of the strength and fragility of human life, we began to speak about how things come together, take form, and from what often appears as out of nowhere from nothing.

Latin for 'of nothing,' Ex Nihilo installation focuses on existence, conditions of the body, and the 'Barely There' nature found in artwork of women.

Ex Nihilo looks at the emergent qualities of a given situation and the space from which the exchange, like 5 elements of nature, 4 plus void, the appearance of nowhere comes from a combined dynamic.

What artist Rachel Wolfe calls: "la beaux monde creatif," is the 'Barely There' thing that emerges from an ongoing conversation of trust, collaboration, and witness as it forms the basis for making, it's also an often over looked, because of its immaterial qualities. While immaterial, the 'thing' made from emergence is for sure not "no-thing."

When artist Sweet Samson invented the term: "Nesslessness," 'ness' the essence of something denoting quality and state, '-less' "without," the state of being without state, the essence of empty, what does this feel like? Something so empty, it becomes full, full of possibility.

The question Points of Connection, Ex Nihilo continues to ask: How to make present the sense of mercurial absence, from which life force flows?

In continuing the work of Ex Nihilo, we 5 artists working together realize and expand themes of work to include ways women-as-seers historically have been made 'Barely There.' We take this quality into our forms, and let it inform, in a positive way together.

When we see each other, presence takes shape as an offering, a gift, and the 'Barely There' echo of possibility transformed into the something emergent from Ex Nihilo.

- Jamie Grace Davis, exhibiting artist in residency at La Macina di San Cresci



**Delia Peres-Salinas Tijerina**

*Shroud, 2017*

Hand patched silk, mirror, and wig  
79 x 56 and 79 x 56 cm

Mimicking the church floor considers the importance of primitivism. The conquering of countries development of their own hegemony, we now call identity. I believe humans are more ritualized than before. Black satin emphasizes mourning we are born with and how a self is in juxtaposition with pedagogy. A mirror beside the satin checkered tile rug symbolizes freedom of the underworld as our ancestors believed, the wig signifying a once lively eternity.



**Jamie Grace Davis**

*The Bones Sculptures, 2017*

Unfired clay and wood sticks

295 x 138 cm

Form and Formless, an abstraction from the core of our bodies, there, but unseen. We all share: "bones." These are imagined bodiless bones made of clay, turning to dust.



**Jamie Grace Davis**

*The Garden, 2017*

Installation design, co-curation by Marcella Gottardo.

"The Garden" is an exploration in what artist Andre Feliciano calls "Floressiance." By themselves these paintings are small moments of 'nothing.' Together, the whole experience becomes something to take in, all at once, a feast for the senses. The room is heavy in orange fragrance.



**Jamie Grace Davis**

*Soudad, 2015-ongoing*

Acrylic painting on bed sheet

Queen

“Soudad” An Arabic word, about 'journey' loosely translated: "to see from the highest place of your dreams." I have been taking this painting with me to every location of Points of Connection. It has all the indexical marks from all the other paintings I have made along the way. It's a registration. The shapes form themselves through layers of time, trust, and highly calculated risk. It's the thing that's always underneath all the other paintings, the thing most unseen. It has become the provisional, situational foundation.

"If I take this thing and reposition it, over and over and do things to and put it in different circumstances, when and how will that thing take on that 'Barely There' quality? Things that are the most discarded have this. Things that travel a lot have this. What goes into making something that has a magnetic presence no matter how simple it appears?"

I'm interested in how an aura is actually formed. What is the mechanism?

Walter Benjamin wrote: "We know that the earliest art works originated in the service of a ritual—first the magical, then the religious kind. It is significant that the existence of the work of art with reference to its aura is never entirely separated from its ritual function."

Ritual is a form of repetition, a way of participation, to build a relationship with, to belong. Ritual is transforming discomfort into comfort, discord into balance and harmony, senselessness into meaning. When I think about this as relates to dance, I think about it in terms of gesture and posture. Gesture, an action repeated over and over and posture, a fixed shape. Posture emerges from the gesture itself, sometimes as a stop, a pause, a wobble, of its own volition. This can be applied to mark making in a painting.

All the pours, casts, imprints and registrations: are from gesture. The fixed appearance of movement, posture.

Between the two things of gesture and posture is something else -something 'Barely There.'



**Marcela Gottardo**

*The Language of the Sun, 2016*

Ceramics, plaster, and galvanized iron

430 cm x 320 cm

Soon after moving to Italy, after living twelve years in the United States, I felt an immigrant, a migrant, again. The burden of language, its limits, beauty, grace, and the continual sense of being misunderstood -even when standing in my own country, Brazil, granddaughter of Italian immigrants. The weight of the stars hit me, crush me, torn me upside-down, inside-out, fired me, freeze me as an un-programmed thermostat. Under yellow orange green brown oak trees, I walk, surrounded by ancient histories and mountains; I ponder the heart of lost civilizations buried beneath my feet. Homeland less, walking this land crushing leaves and bones, smelling blood and crying out, looking up and looking down, my littleness, meaningless existence.

While the morning dew reveals the spider trap among sweet purple flowers, the undisturbed mud beneath the water pond hides death and decadence. An accelerated unsettle heart craves more, beats thunders welcoming what cannot be possible known within words.



**Rachel Wolfe**

*Memoria Technica, 2015*

Series of 5 monolithic photographs

90,64 x 180 cm



**Rachel Wolfe**

*Teknovisuell Experience, detail of detail #5, 2015-2016*

*Photograph on vinyl*

34 x 134 cm

Memoria Technica is a series of 5 monolithic film exposures realized as seasons, axiomatically marking the vertical landscape in relationship with the human body in magnetic resonance imaging. The monolithic image as marker in the sense and perception of passage through time.

Works in Ex Nihilo: Summer, a caustic season; Spring, a vernal pour; Autumn, a hieratic vessel. Absent from Ex Nihilo: Winter, an imaginary obelisk; and Origin, an aorist horizon, are absent. The absences create, as Jamie Grace Davis calls, Points of Connection.

Teknovisuell Experience is a series of 7 images. Dimensions vary relative to Architecture. Images of water emphasize ethereal qualities of digital imaging technology and engage viewers in a physical relationship with the image/vision and body/space.



**Sweet Samson**

*Not almost nothing, 2016*

Acrylic and carbon fiber on canvas

43 x 43 cm each



**Sweet Samson**

*Ester, 2017*

Aqua resin, acrylic and carbon fiber

7 x 8 cm

In the Art nothing is for sure until an attempt is accomplished.

Although, nothing is for sure thereafter as well.

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