

Press Release

Earth Power!

Gabriela Albergaria, Paula Baeza Pailamilla, Alessandro Brighetti, Hanien Conradie, Jorge Mañes Rubio, NILS-UDO, Gabriela Noujaim, Luca Padroni, Steve Sabella, Chris Soal
Curated by Ursula Hawlitschka

Opening Tuesday, April 26, 2pm-8pm

Exhibition dates: April 26 – June 11, 2022

With special opening hours Wednesday, April 27 – Sunday, May 1 from 10am to 8pm

Montoro12 Gallery is pleased to present *Earth Power!*, an exhibition bringing together ten international contemporary artists exploring nature in the age of the Anthropocene, an age characterized by a major ecological crisis. Most Westerners today still live in a patriarchal order of hierarchical authority with a dualistic worldview, alienated from nature. The title of the exhibition alludes to a transformation that happens when we start to recognize the power of “Mother Earth,” the source from which all life springs. Indigenous peoples all over the world respect nature, believing that all forms of life (stones, plants, animals, humans...) are connected. When we start to honor the values of indigenous peoples, we will be able to dismantle the (still) dominant hierarchy of “man” as masters over nature. We will reconnect to the Earth, to nature and to the spirit world.

The artists in this exhibition employ a great variety of techniques to convey the significance of nature. **NILS-UDO** (1937, Germany), has been active in the field of environmental art since the 1960's. He creates works immersed in and collaborating with nature, which he documents in stunning photographs. In his colorful, semi-abstract paintings he invokes the beauty and healing powers of plants, trees and untouched landscapes. **Luca Padroni** (1973, Italy) started his “Jungle series” while contemplating the origins of painting during the pandemic: this new and “exotic” body of works evokes our longing for the wild and a connection to unspoiled nature. **Gabriela Albergaria** (1965, Portugal) has used photography, drawing, installation and sculpture to develop a line of works that takes the relation of man and nature (both wild and man-made) as a starting point. Both Albergaria and **Paula Baeza Pailamilla** (1988, Chile) expose colonialism's impact on nature. Pailamilla is of Mapuche origin and works with performance and video. **Gabriela Noujaim** (1983, Brazil) has acquired much knowledge from her frequent meetings with indigenous women near Rio de Janeiro and incorporates their wisdom in her videos and prints; the maps of indigenous reservations alert us to the important role of forest preservation in Brazil. **Alessandro Brighetti** (1978, Italy) has developed a fascinating new series of sculptures entitled *Curanderas*: totem-like shamanic sticks representing the four elements, inspiring us to overcome the dualistic world view and to reconnect with nature. **Jorge Mañes Rubio** (1984, Spain) creates powerful spirit vessels from (often unfired) clay and ceramics. They seem to speak to us about an intimate wisdom of regeneration and transformation, linking all forms of life together. Created in a land threatened by abandonment and desertification, these objects acknowledge this remarkable ecosystem and the larger-than-human dimension that defines it. **Hanien Conradie's** (1972, South Africa) creative practice centers around special places she has intimate relationships with, such as Table Mountain National Park, the Tankwa Karoo and various sacred sites in South Eastern Botswana. Her practices include meditative pieces in natural pigments from these sites, landscape paintings in soot ink and artist's films recording in-situ performances, all in relation to these special places. **Chris Soal** (1994, South Africa) alludes to the destruction of nature and its regenerative powers in his innovative wall sculptures made of toothpicks, bottle caps and cement. **Steve Sabella's** (1975, Palestine) work incorporates nature in his digital collages as a metaphor for states of mind such as liberation and freedom.

Nature has always played a great part in the history of art but today artists face an ecological crisis that can be challenging to work with. The artists exhibited in *Earth Power!* succeed in raising awareness of the ecological crisis, pointing to ways of healing our divide from nature.

Montoro12 Gallery and Artist Residence

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