

PARIS

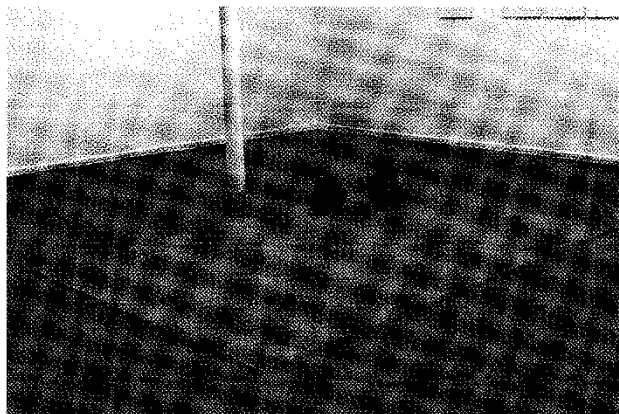
## Julia Rometti and Victor Costales

GALERIE JOUSSE ENTREPRISE

Julia Rometti and Victor Costales's exhibition "*El Perspectivista*" was born of a sociological and philosophical exploration of what the Brazilian anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro calls "Amerindian Perspectivism," a naturalist worldview wherein animals, plants, spirits, and humans are understood to apprehend the same reality from different points of view. The resulting body of work includes black-and-white photographs, projected slide comparisons, zine-like photocopied pamphlets, volcanic rocks, and concrete tiles. Emphasizing the quasi-scientific nature of their practice, Rometti and Costales (who have collaborated since 2007) opt for neutral and systematic displays. Whether laid out on a thin white table or nestled inside archival boxes on an illuminated library table designed by Pierre Jeanneret, their works have the aura of mysterious, but significant, archaeological discoveries.

But this is not to suggest that Rometti and Costales's works are clinical to the point of being devoid of aesthetic interest. On the contrary, they pointedly blend representational imagery and abstraction and reject a homogeneous conception of space in favor of a multifaceted, perspectivist view. *Cosmovisión V, VI, and VII* (all works cited, 2013)—the title is a Spanish adaptation of the German word *Weltanschauung*, or "worldview"—are works made from photographic blowups of negatives the artists accessed at the National Military Geographic Institute of Ecuador. In these bird's-eye views of the Amazon jungle, the miniaturized, densely packed treetops could collectively be mistaken for the surface of a craggy rock. Our understanding of perspective and texture is further complicated by the fact that the artists have cut up the photographs into small diamond shapes and painstakingly pieced them together to create three hybrid landscapes. The scaly diamond cutouts bring a new haptic quality to the topographic imagery. Adding another level of spatial confusion, the arrangement of diamonds creates an optical illusion: Cubes appear to protrude and recede from the collages' flat surfaces. This type of decorative pattern, which dates as far back as ancient Roman mosaics, reappears throughout the exhibition. Referencing this historical context, *roca | azul | jacinto | marino | errante* (rock | blue | hyacinth | navy | errant), is a rectangular flooring made of smooth cement tiles decorated with a bright-blue, illusionistic cube motif. Sitting on top of the tiles, two bowling ball size volcanic rocks are the antithesis of their flat geometric backdrop. One cannot help but think of Mount Vesuvius subsuming Pompeii's civilization with volcanic ash.

The coexistence of landscape and geometry is most obviously observed in a suite of seven photographs, whose very long title ends



Julia Rometti and Victor Costales, *roca | azul | jacinto | marino | errante* (rock | blue | hyacinth | navy | errant), 2013, concrete tiles, dye, volcanic rocks, 12% x 78% x 118 1/8".

*incomplete infinity*—images taken in Peru's Palpa Valley, near the ancient geoglyphs known as the Nazca Lines. These large-scale drawings, which range from depictions of simple shapes to sophisticated animal illustrations, can be seen only from the sky; tourists pay to mount a primitive observation tower in the middle of the desert. In photos taken during their ascent, Rometti and Costales show the arid terrain fragmented by the bars of the climbing structure. Solid black lines in the foreground divide each composition into a series of triangles and various trapezoids. These are landscape photographs, but the famous scenery is unintelligible—the geoglyphs appear only as blurry white marks in the distance. By contrast, the focused scaffolding creates bold abstract compositions. As with the reversible cube motif, two realities are perceivable, but not at the same time.

—Mara Hoberman

## BERLIN

### Marlie Mul

CROY NIELSEN

The nature of a site is in the details: the way that this concrete floor maps a shape from white wall to white wall, or the way that the broad walls give way to narrower ones and another mounted with a bookshelf, or the way that the large, ground-floor window looks out onto a particular vista. Banalities like this year's extralong, snowy winter in Berlin also count among the specifics of a site and might even have come to mind at Marlie Mul's exhibition "Boneless Banquet for One," where the mixture of gravel and slush tracked around by pedestrians on the city's streets and sidewalks seemed reflected in the low-lying sculptures speckling the gallery floor.

Numbering six in all, the works that were shown consist of sand, stones, and resin, as well as a few stray plastic bags. Mul cast this mixture into irregular oblong shapes about the size of a manhole cover. Each lay flat on the floor. The sand and stones—some larger, some smaller—scattered haphazardly across the works' surfaces seemed whipped around by nature's whims. Here and there, the resin had collected into dark brown pools, some of which looked like the result of bicycle tires cutting curves across the breadth of the mottled surface. Each of the sculptures is titled *Puddle*, and bears a subtitle, such as *Green Tracks* or *Brown Passageway*; all are dated 2013.

To me, these gravel-strewn puddles echoed those in the streets out side; however, Mul told me she envisions them as reminiscent of suburban setting. Either way, though, their ability to recall a real stretch of road follows their depiction of no place in particular—and the bright white gallery's ability to emphasize this sense of placelessness. Likewise, Mul's puddles don't boil down to concrete symbolism but allow their presence (the artist's presentation of these specific materials and their ability to evoke associations in this form) to constitute most of the significance. In a way, the same could be said for her recent series of wall-mounted sculptures *Air Vent/Butt Stop*, 2012: The rectangular metal sheets, perforated with slits plugged with cigarette butts and assorted trash, suggested the fixtures of indeterminate use found on city streets and in subway stations that are sometimes repurposed by laudably resourceful individuals as trash receptacles.

Mul's *Puddles* are thus another example of her ability to pinpoint familiar sites of tedium and distill from them an uncanny reflection of the things we do and see but rarely discuss. Reliant as the works are on an aesthetic of poor materials and simple forms—though brilliantly managed, making for curious and compelling constructions—these subjects aren't glorified by Mul's attention or her translation of them into artworks. The artist's insistence on thinking small and working