

**CORRESPONDENCE**

LOUISE DESPONT

Galerie ISA is pleased to present *Correspondence*, Louise Despont's third solo exhibition with the gallery.

In *Correspondence*, Louise Despont explores the ways in which the fabric of our material world is intrinsically interwoven with the forms and forces of the invisible world. Botanic, geologic, and animalic forms of sentience and understanding are at the center of these works—in which Despont considers the spaces of communion and the various dialects of correspondence that embody other forms of consciousness. While her earlier drawings were focused on the themes of polarity and vibration—as related to pattern, sound, healing, and homeopathy—her recent works are deeply aligned with the hermetic principle of correspondence—*as above, so below*—which limns the elemental connection between different states of consciousness, or planes of existence, and shows how they affect one another by creating a resonant bond.

Comprising of small collage works on paper alongside large-scale drawings on antique canvas, *Correspondence* envisions an animistic worldview, in which plants, animals, stones, stars, ancestors, and entire landscapes possess a distinct spiritual essence that permeates the visible and invisible world. These correspondences are well documented on the physical plane: phosphorus can be found in a fawn's finest bone; copper is detected in the vocal chord of a sparrow; the residue of a rabbit's skeleton may manifest in the stem of a wild poppy. But how does the intelligence of the invisible—the inner life of plants, animals, and ancestors—inhabit and inform human consciousness?

In *The Sixth Sense*, Despont uses fragments from *The Lady and the Unicorn*, a series of tapestries woven in Flanders around 1500. The first five tapestries represent the five senses—touch, taste, smell, hearing, and sight. The sixth and final tapestry, however, remains a mystery, but is regarded as representing a sixth sense—or, an understanding that falls outside traditional sensory and empirical experience. Indeed, vision and *visions* permeate the works in this exhibition. The ocular takes on oracular significance. Images of open eyes thread the works like a refrain. These eyes are often embedded in plants and suspended in the iconographic form of a vesica piscis or mandorla—the symbolic image created by the convergence of two circles, which was traditionally used to depict sacred moments that transcend time and space. This shape acts as a kind of *hortus conclusus*—enclosed garden—or, *temenos*—protected place—where other forms of consciousness reside.

At the center of *Collective Consciousness*, Despont has placed an image of the Lion Capital of Akosha. Standing as guardians of the four cardinal points, and calling our attention to the cosmic law underlying all forms of consciousness and communication, the four lions embody a keystone from whence sacred knowledge is dispersed and a shared understanding is attained. Within this cloistral space, Despont intuits and envisions the existence of unity in diversity, a harmony between beings in which collective consciousness dwells.

Just as we are able to enter into a resonance with a pattern, here we are invited to enter into a resonance with the lineaments of plant, mineral, and animal alterities. The visible and the invisible are interwoven. Gravity disappears and a kind of weightlessness pervades the atmosphere. There seems to exist an almost silent humming at the nexus where two or more forms of consciousness collide. While intuitively mapping the underlying substrates and architectures of sentience that nourish spaces of communion and dialects of correspondence, the artist reveals the interwoven materialities and immaterialities that benevolently conspire to connect us all by creating vast and branching networks of understanding.

A consummate draftsman, Despont has historically used architectural stencils, graphite, and colored pencils on antique ledger book paper to create works that have been described as “meticulously executed, delicate drawings that hover between sacred geometry, esoteric symbols, and essentialized forms.” Over the past several years, however, the artist has shifted to working in collage—using botanical illustrations, architectural lithographs, and marbled endpapers—and then drawing the collages on antique canvas. In the process, she still engages the techniques learned from using pencil on paper—working methodically and meditatively with progressive layers of rubbed and sanded pigment.

Louise Despont (b. 1983, New York, NY) lives and works in Mallorca, Spain. She received her BA in Art Semiotics at Brown University in 2006. Her work can be found in the public collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; High Museum of Art, Atlanta; Dallas Museum of Art, Texas; RISD Museum, Providence, amongst others.

*-Kirston Lightowler*