

JOHANNES VOGT

Alejandro Ospina, “Cryptomnesia”
February 22 — March 24, 2018

Johannes Vogt Gallery is pleased to present the gallery’s second exhibition by Colombian artist Alejandro Ospina, “Cryptomnesia.” The exhibition features six large-scale paintings created over the past two years. Continuations of his “Supergirl” series, which examines the impact of rapidly proliferating visual media on our relationship to images, the works also evidence a subtle shift in Ospina’s practice. The artist pares down his compositions and employs the fictional drawings of Polish-American architect Daniel Libeskind for the first time. One work from a previous series, *Locker Room*, links the development of the new series with the last.

The title, “Cryptomnesia,” refers to the psychological phenomenon of misattributing a memory as an original thought. Otherwise known as unconscious plagiarism, the occurrence suggests the gap between experience and recall and the difficulties of truly understanding our own influences. Indeed, Ospina incorporates both personal histories and art historical references into his work.

In the past, Ospina has turned to images of real architecture, from favelas to bombed-out buildings, to set a base for the transparencies. For the new series, he begins with fragments from architect Daniel Libeskind’s Deconstructivist “Micromégas” drawings (which take their name from Voltaire’s eponymous science fiction tale). These chaotic, fictional sketches of impossible building plans allude to both future possibilities and past events. Ospina views his own work as a synthesis of historical images and his own memories that, when thrust together, depict an abstract, futuristic whole. In his paintings, colorful abstracted forms rush across the canvas atop faded grids, bombarding the viewer with virtual fragments to mentally piece back together.

A former electrical engineering student, Ospina manifests a particular interest in screens and contemporary technology. Through his paintings, he offers singular, analogue alternatives to the steady streams of digital images that pervade our lives. The artist feeds source material from his personal interests, news, and social media

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websites through Photoshop filters, fracturing the pictures beyond recognition. He transfers the new images to transparencies, projecting them onto a canvas, one at a time, as he gradually builds layers. Ospina consequently often finds himself painting in the dark, allowing surprise and chance to seep into the compositions.

Ospina also embeds art historical marks and ideas onto his canvases. Using digital tools, he lifts brushstrokes from images of artwork by such canonical figures as Arshile Gorky and Joan Miró and uses these marks to become part of the concatenation.

During his studies at the Slade School of Fine Arts, Ospina developed a strong interest in philosopher Jacques Derrida's ideas about deconstruction. Three works that deconstructed their medium—John Cage's *4'33*, James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*, and Kazimir Malevich's *Black Square*—deeply impact his practice.

ALEJANDRO OSPINA was born in Cali, Colombia in 1970; he lives and works in London, UK. He studied at the Slade School of Fine Art, London, the New York Studio School and Duke University in the United States. He has exhibited internationally including exhibitions at IMT Gallery, London; Royal Academy, London; Creekside Open, London; APT Gallery, London; Departure Foundation, London; Bloomberg Space, London; Paradise Row, London; Frameless Gallery, London; PSH xx21, Bogotá; Biblioteca Luis Ángel Arango, Bogotá, the Centro Cultural Salamanca; Centro Cultural Colombo-Americano. He was included in the exhibition *Pangaea II: New Art from Africa and Latin America* at the Saatchi Gallery, London.