

SAPAR CONTEMPORARY



Jorge Otero-Pailos, *Distributed Monuments 74 and 75*, Diptych, 2020, from *The U.S. Old Mint* and *Lyndhurst Mansion*. Dust transferred onto a latex cast and stretched on canvas. 48 x 34 inches (121,9 x 86.4 cm) © Jorge Otero-Pailos. Photo credit: The artist and Sapar Contemporary

JORGE OTERO-PAILOS

Distributed Monuments

June 18-July 20, 2021
9 N Moore Street, New York

I like to think of my work as unintentional art because it is really time that has made this art. It is really the atmosphere that has made this art. I did not go around trying to make it look a certain way, I just tried to pull it off the wall. -- Jorge Otero-Pailos

Sapar Contemporary is pleased to present *Distributed Monuments*, an exhibition of new works by Jorge Otero-Pailos extracted from two distinctive sites: The Old U.S. Mint casts present a century and a half of smoke dust that has accumulated on the two industrial chimneys used to mint the gold from the California Gold Rush into coins and bullions -- the pollution from which has remained an otherwise invisible material. The Lyndhurst casts present a century of water damage that turned the swim tank of the Jay Gould Estate, once a playground for the Gilded Age elite, into a crumbling ruin. Otero-Pailos made these casts in 2020 while completing *Watershed Moment*, his largest site-specific multi-media installation to date in the U.S., set to open this summer at the Lyndhurst Mansion in Tarrytown, NY.

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Otero-Pailos draws from his formal training in architecture and preservation to create artworks that address themes of memory, history and transition, inviting the viewer to consider monuments as powerful agents for cultural connection, questioning and understanding. He employs the material residues of our modernity - including airborne atmospheric dust, waterways, traces of sweat and body sounds, maps, even embassy security fences, to render their invisible meanings visible. Notably, he has used experimental preservation cleaning techniques designed to restore landmarked buildings, as well as reenactment methodologies, as part of his creative process.

A prominent work by the artist was the site-specific Artangel project *The Ethics of Dust: Westminster Hall* in 2016: Applying absorbent latex to the length of one 50-meter long wall, the artist was able to pull away what became a shimmering sheet of history – evocative of time, events, fates and victories whose invisible imprints were given form in the remnants attached to the sheet.

In this exhibition, the themes of memory and transition are manifested in a different way. By transferring the remnants of two distinctive buildings onto traditional canvases, Otero-Pailos effectively extracts the dust from its original location and acknowledges its uncertain places of destination. Purposefully given an arbitrary number, each *Distributed Monument* is placed on equal footing. Yet the dust casts come from structures that sit, geographically and figuratively, on opposite sides of the American experience: The Old U.S. Mint, in San Francisco, a center of wealth production during the California Gold Rush, and Lyndhurst Mansion in New York, a landmarked example of the Gilded Age's extravagant consumption.

Taken together the casts reveal not only the embedded material realities of the site, but also the connected histories of labor, migration, resource extraction, industrialization, global capitalism and its environmental impact. The installation enables a poignant dialogue with and across time, provoking new understandings about – and a deeper sense of accountability for – our shared existence.

Jorge Otero-Pailos (1971, Spain) is a New York-based artist and preservationist best known for making monumental casts of historically charged buildings. His site-specific series, *The Ethics of Dust*, is an ongoing, decade-long investigation resulting from cleaning dust and the residue of pollution from monuments such as the Doge's Palace in Venice; Westminster Hall in the Houses of Parliament, London; the U.S. Old Mint in San Francisco; and Trajan's Column at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London. His latest projects include preserving airborne dust in the atmosphere (*Far Above*, Cornell University, Ithaca), saving the perimeter security fence of the ex U.S. Embassy in Oslo by turning it into sculptures (*American Fence*, Oslo, Norway) and immersing visitors' bodies in a soundscape composed with New York State's main water bodies at Lyndhurst Estate's historical swim tank (*Watershed Moment*, Tarrytown, NY). Collections include Yale Center for British Art, New Haven; SFMoMA, San Francisco; The Museum of London; The Ulster Museum, Belfast, Northern Ireland; The Whitworth, Manchester; The Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, Swansea; Kelvingrove/The People's Palace, Glasgow; Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna; Museion: Contemporary Art Museum of Bolzano, Italy. Exhibitions include: *Watershed Moment*, Lyndhurst Mansion (2020/2021); *Far Above*, Cornell University's School of Architecture (2019); *Répétiteur*, New York City Center, New York (2018/2019); Chicago Architecture Biennial (2017/2018); *The Ethics of Dust: Westminster Hall*, Artangel, London (2016); *Space-Time*, Keller Gallery, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (2014); *Making Worlds*, Venice Art Biennial, Italy (2009); *An Olfactory Reconstruction of Philip Johnson's Glass House*, New Canaan, CT (2008). Otero-Pailos is the recipient of the 2021-22 American Academy in Rome Residency in the visual arts. He is also Director and Professor of Historic Preservation at the Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture in New York. He studied architecture at Cornell University and earned a doctorate in architecture at M.I.T.

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PRESS

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Opening reception on June 18 until 8pm.
Tue - Sat 10-6 pm
Groups under 10 are welcome