

CRISIS

Daniel Jacoby & Marie Zolamian

Pink specks of dust on a garden with no sun

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Finding pink dust particles in a garden with no sun is, in itself, a visual oxymoron, an impossible image given the absence of sunlight. At first glance, this mental vision appears bucolic, warm, evocative and domestic. However, the title also holds two more unsettling and suggestive nuances. On the one hand, the pink dust could evoke a festive or carnivalesque atmosphere, but it could also allude to a chemical, industrial substance or even to extraterrestrial matter. On the other hand, the absence of sunlight transforms the garden into a colorless space, a black-and-white landscape, suggesting either a dystopian site or a nocturnal garden where the pink dust particles would be illuminated by moonlight or artificial spotlights.

This speculative game evoked by the title can also be applied to the works of both artists. When faced with Zolamian's mysterious paintings and drawings, or with Jacoby's abstract sculptures, questions arise that allow us to construct our own narratives in a fictional world that nonetheless mirrors fragments of the reality we inhabit.

Marie Zolamian's series "Le jardin sans soleil" includes a group of paintings from 2025 and a set of drawings produced between 2023 and 2025. Her process in each painting series is meticulous: she first sizes the linen canvases with rabbit-skin glue and mounts them on wooden panels; then the canvases are framed and, once back in the studio, she begins to paint. She uses the wet-on-wet technique, which allows her to work on several canvases simultaneously over long periods of time, where figures emerge and define themselves through successive layers of color, revealing enigmatic images wrapped in a dreamlike aura. These compositions transport us to a mysterious place, an alternative reality that becomes more evident when humanoid figures, landscapes and fictional animals come into view.

The process behind the drawings is different. In this practice, Zolamian prioritizes the freshness of line, the spontaneous composition of figures and the possibility of accidental narratives. For her, drawing often functions as a tool to unlock before intense painting sessions. Specifically, in the 2023 series, the drawings became a transfer of emotions extracted from the archive of the Geil psychiatric hospital, during an artistic residency in which Zolamian focused her research on psychiatric observations of women affected by post-traumatic syndromes after the First World War.

Daniel Jacoby's sculptures from the "Polvos Rosados" series, on the other hand, explore the tensions between the aesthetic and the commercial. This work is part of a broader series, "Sydney", inspired by a wholesale cotton clothing store that always fascinated Jacoby, mainly for the formal qualities and aesthetics of its window displays, which managed to abstract the figures in order to maximize the available visual space, shaping an aesthetic that emerged out of the need for efficiency. "Polvos Rosados" takes as reference a massive 1980s shopping mall in Lima. These types of commercial galleries contain multiple small shops dedicated to selling clothing, shoes, DVDs, and so on, many of which have managed to survive over the past 40 years often thanks to piracy. Again here, Jacoby focuses on the display strategies that often include LED strips, neon, and colored lights to convey an image of modernity.

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Jacoby usually designs and composes his installations digitally, but exceptionally for this series he cut the pieces by hand with a band saw, later covering them with fabrics that simulate parts of the human body. The varied textures and colors of the layered garments contrast with the immaculate finish of MDF, resulting in a three-dimensional drawing of contrasts, which acquires a performative dimension thanks to the integrated LED lights. In this way, Jacoby invites us to reflect on how Western consumer models have permeated markets in Peru and the Global South, generating a desire for modernity that, despite facing limits and contradictions, gives rise to a hybrid aesthetic and the construction of a singular identity.

Both artists, through their works, present paradoxes that resonate with the one proposed by the exhibition's title. Jacoby's sculptures are constructions that embody a way of making and operating, prioritizing excess and aesthetics, belonging to the prosperity of another era. Zolamian's seemingly unreal figures in her paintings, in turn, build a symbolic archive of memories that places us on a timeline between dream and reality. As the artist herself notes, her paintings form a kind of experimental documentary of fictitious ethnology.

Imagination, as a creative force, becomes a powerful tool for both artists, and when channeled through form and color, it provides the guiding thread that opens the way to a speculative vision.

-Gema Melgar