

Keteleer Gallery is very pleased to present *Still Life*, the third solo exhibition of Spanish artist Javier Pérez (b. 1968, Bilbao) at the gallery. In this new exhibition, Pérez explores the profound concept of life after death. With his distinctive, refined bronze sculptures and impressive series of naturalistic drawings, he invites us to reflect on the subtle boundaries between life and death.

The title *Still Life*—with an emphasis on the English meaning—refers to the idea of "enduring life." For Pérez, this means that there is always hope for a renewed existence. The bronze sculpture *INSPIRACIÓN EXPIRACIÓN (Un allento)* depicts branches and roots, on which tiny skeletons writhe upwards in a rhythmic movement from large to small—a symbolic metaphor for the subtle shift between life and death. This transformation, which in its decline is always followed by a renewed blossoming, reflects the endless cycle of change and rebirth.

Pérez also draws inspiration from the philosophical concept of the rhizome: a root mass with no beginning or end, which does not follow a fixed direction and exists only in the moment of change. This idea is woven throughout the entire exhibition, placing the viewer in a space of continuous transformation—much like the rhizome, which is always in a state of "becoming."

A striking element in the *MALAS HIERBAS* watercolour series, as well as in the bronze wall sculptures *STILL LIFE (Weeds)*, is the depiction of the root ends in gold, a conscious choice by the artist. The gold symbolizes "enduring life", and what we often consider weeds is here praised and presented as something precious, almost like a jewel.

With *GENOMETRÍAS I (VERANO)*, we enter a landscape that, after a fierce storm, has remained untouched and now serves as a habitat for new life. This triptych is part of a series of four, with each triptych representing a different season. Here we see summer. The artist discovered this vibrant scene during a walk in the forest. The fallen trees form a geometric pattern, or something that resembles it. The intense green of the moss reminds us of the latent presence of life. "It's as if nature is trying to tell us something, something that needs to be deciphered," says the artist. It is up to us, the viewer, to unravel this message.

This exhibition also features two special series of six watercolour paintings each. Although the series differ from each other by their own identity – the interplay of light and dark comes to life in each series in a unique way – together they form a complementary and logical whole, creating a dynamic balance between the two.

The first (darker) series *REPRESENTACION Y PULSIÓN (DESVELO DE LA RAZÓN)*, speaks about the universe and the way disturbances manifest; something is on the verge of exploding or coming to light. Pérez shows us that reason and emotion are inseparable. He emphasizes how the collaboration between controlled thinking and intuition can lead to effective behaviour, while the lack of this causes chaos. From left to right, the landscape gradually becomes visible, with more and more space being made for the intuitive and emotional, while the rational (read: geometry) recedes further into the background.

In contrast to the darker series, the lighter work *REPRESENTACIÓN Y PULSION (UN INSTANTE DE LUCIDEZ)* depicts a landscape lost through an overabundance of light; the image is literally flooded with brightness. The subtitle of the work refers to a moment of clarity, a state of lucidity, in which reality—or reason?—suddenly seems fully illuminated and revealed.

A work that must not be missing in this context is *VIDA LATENTE*, a sculpture that serves as the beating heart of the exhibition. Fragile in form, the piece shows branches and roots wrapping in bronze. On closer inspection, we notice "golden" hearts that form a powerful metaphor for the pulsating life. The contrast between the strength this piece radiates and the more delicate wall sculptures is palpable, as if *VIDA LATENTE* is the lifeblood of the "Still Lives." It is not surprising, then, that the artist has chosen to include this previously shown piece in the exhibition.

*Still Life* is more than an exhibition; it is a way of looking at reality. It's about connections, about the delicate networks of meaning and movement that drive life. With this exhibition, Javier Pérez offers us a unique experience in which still lifes no longer stand still but come to life in a poetic and philosophical reflection on the transience of life and its unceasing revival.

Kathy de Nève, 2025.

*Javier Pérez' works have been exhibited in several galleries and museums, amongst which: Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museo Guggenheim Bilbao; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Palacio de Cristal, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; Chapelle du Centre de La Vieille Charité, Marseille; Kunsthalle Wien; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; ARTIUM, Centro – Museo Vasco de Arte Contemporáneo, Vitoria; Carré d'Art – Musée d'art contemporain, Nîmes; Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain de Strasbourg; Musée des Beaux – Arts de Rouen.*

The exhibition will be on view March 15 – May 3, 2025.