

Press Release

María Berrío. Soliloquy of the Wounded Earth

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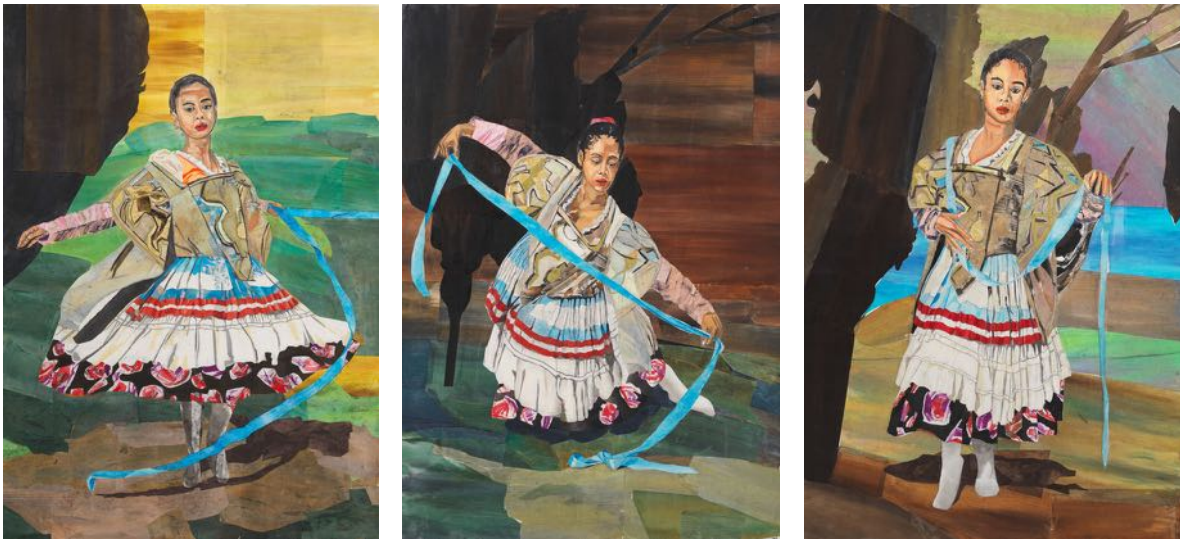
Hauser & Wirth New York, 22nd Street



New York... New York-based Colombian artist María Berrío builds watercolor painting and Japanese paper collage into layered pictorial architectures where myths and folktales merge with contemporary experiences of adversity, resilience, despair and triumph. For 'Soliloquy of the Wounded Earth,' her debut solo presentation with Hauser & Wirth, she will unveil new large-scale works on canvas that portray imaginary environments, characters and strange narratives that nevertheless invoke a sense of déjà vu in the viewer. Textured and dense, her paintings, evoke societies in states of flux and evolution—realms where everyday minutiae signal the inextricability of the present from history, memory and tradition.

With its amalgam of painting and precise yet gestural collage, Berrío's process echoes the structure of oral storytelling. Like folktales that are reshaped each time they are recounted, her compositions grow through accretion; each layer is another narrative element, achieved through the tearing and cutting of handmade paper into fragments. Often life-size in scale, Berrío's subjects meet the viewer eye-to-eye, inviting entry into their luminous, densely textured and uniquely abstracted worlds.

Among the works on view in 'Soliloquy of the Wounded Earth' is a series of three full-length vertical portraits: Berrío's reimagining of the myth of the three Moirai (the Greek Fates), a theme that has captivated artists for centuries. Here, she charges this classical narrative with cultural specificity by recasting the fabled arbiters of destiny as Colombian Cumbia dancers in vividly colored and decorated voluminous skirts. Each Fate swirls or unfurls an iridescent blue ribbon, symbolizing the delicate thread of life that they famously spin, measure and sever.



Berrío further expands upon the ancient tale across the exhibition. While developing this series of paintings, she conceived of a parallel world where humans have seized control of the Moirai's threads, weaving the strands of their lives into banners and flags that they worship as gods. Their adherences lead to disagreements and rivalries which escalate into warfare—conflicts that leave a scorched landscape with the remnants of flags patchworked together to form bandages and shelters. This narrative is merely suggested by Berrío, leaving viewers to bring their own associations to the work.

In her titular composition, 'Soliloquy of the Wounded Earth' (2025), an elegant rider on a mystical horse traverses a backdrop of billboards, evoking a lone traveler in search of meaning amid the anxiety of information overload. In 'The Ground of Being' (2025), a stoic adolescent girl floats serenely among the streaming flags of a bustling procession. An aura of holiness emanates from her: her cerulean dress hints at the cherubic, her levitation at the celestial. Meanwhile, cavalrymen carrying diverse banners crowd the frame of 'Edge of the Salted Plains' (2025), suggesting a battle either imminent or just passed. In all these works, Berrío moves between the miraculous and the mundane, the fervor of belief and the chaos of conflict, placing the certainty of fate in tension with ambiguity, despair and hope—history paintings for a moment yet to pass.

About the Artist

María Berrío's practice draws heavily on both her youth in Colombia and her experiences living and working in New York City. Growing up in Bogotá with two brothers, Berrío spent much of her childhood on a family farm just outside the city, which left an indelible mark on her creative consciousness. These early experiences, rich with nature, music and storytelling, continue to inform her art today. Berrío moved to New York City when she was 18 years old to attend Parsons School of Design. After receiving her MFA from the New York School of Visual Arts in 2007, a close friend from Japan introduced her to the exquisite textures and varieties of artisanal Japanese paper and suggested she try working with collage. She became captivated by the medium, once saying, 'I love the feel, the smell, the different tactile sensations between different types, the colors, and the enormous amount of care that goes into making them...I love all the possibilities [paper] provides and how it continues to surprise me.'

Major solo exhibitions include 'María Berrío: The Children's Crusade,' ICA Boston, Boston MA (2023) and 'María Berrío: Esperando mientras la noche florece (Waiting for the Night to Bloom),' The Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach FL (2021). Selected group exhibitions include Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham NC (2023), travelling to Pérez Art Museum, Miami FL (2024) and Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens, Jacksonville FL (2024 – 2025); The Modern, Fort Worth TX (2022); Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York NY (2021); Nasher Museum of Art, Durham NC (2018); Prospect.4 Triennial, New Orleans LA (2017 – 2018); and El Museo del Barrio, New York NY (2015), among others.

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Caption and courtesy information:

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María Berrio

Collage with Japanese papers and watercolor paint on linen

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Courtesy the artist, Hauser & Wirth and Victoria Miro

Photo: Bruce M. White

Clotho

2025

215.3 x 152.4 cm / 84 3/4 x 60 in

Lachesis

2025

215.3 x 152.4 cm / 84 3/4 x 60 in

Soliloquy of the Wounded Earth

2025

299.7 x 234 cm / 118 x 92 1/8 in

Atropos

2025

215.3 x 152.4 cm / 84 3/4 x 60 in

Edge of the Salted Plains

2025

299.1 x 204.8 cm / 117 3/4 x 80 5/8 in