

PRESS RELEASE

Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster
Zone

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303 GALLERY, NEW YORK

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303 Gallery is pleased to present *Zone*, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster's second solo exhibition with the gallery, comprised of the eponymous sound environment and the film *Meteorium III*.

What is *Zone* the name of? Free, occupied, or flooded? Exterior or interior? Could it be a New York City transplant of La Zone de Paris—that improvised *non aedificandi* strip of 19th century land on the margins of the City of Light, inhabited by anarchists, refugees, sex workers and gleaners once known as *Zoniers*? Or am I going to be transported inside Apollinaire's poem "Zone" (1913), poised before recurring collapse, amid unending entropy?

From period rooms (*euqinimod & costumes*, 303 Gallery, 2014) to city parks (*Ballard Garden*, Antwerp, 2014), via immersive environments, such as *Cosmodrome* (2001), *Chronotopes & Dioramas* (DIA Art Foundation, 2010) and *Alienarium 5* (Serpentine, 2022), and monumental scenarios from *TH.2058* (Tate, 2008) to *PISTARAMA* (Pinacoteca Agnelli, 2023), Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster extends to the potentialities of exhibition the very characteristics of the heterotopia, that Michel Foucault identified in schools, psychiatric institutions, prisons, cemeteries, theatres and brothels, by being "the smallest parcel of the world and then the whole world". Gonzalez-Foerster's works are worlds unto themselves, as open and abstract as that of *expanded literature*, whose stakes are as much temporal as spatial, and which lean, simultaneously and alternately, toward utopia and dystopia in their coexisting tension. The exhibition is an exploration of the potential of space (room, gallery, museum, city, environment), and a critical investigation of modernity, from its starting point in the splendid World's fairs of the 19th century to its anticipation in speculative literature that scenarios the climatic catastrophes of the Anthropocene and its desert or tropical mutations.

This being stated, it's more than likely, the odds are good, that *Zone* at 303 Gallery might be pelagic, extraterritorial, even cosmopolitan in the literal sense. More tropical than temperate, more cosmic than coastal, more open than exclusive or private, more dystopian in its caution than utopian in its totalizing promise, more interzone than neutral, more extimate than intimate, more liminal than stable. Perhaps this soundscape is merely another way of hosting, or naming, the climatic anxieties and wonders of a consciousness exposed to the turmoil of the present. Yet exposure is not despair. The atmospheric is also theatrical, a stage for imagination...To define the *Zone* is not recommended but one passes through it.

Dogs bark at the trains beside a puddle, keeping time with distant drumbeats. At its far end appears the *Meteorium*. First conceived as a painted architectural structure unveiled at the Pinacoteca de São Paulo last fall, now transformed into an experimental film, *Meteorium III* joins the lineage of films using exhibitions as backdrop, such as *Marquise* (2007), *No Return* (2009) and *Otello 1887* (2015). A house of a magical kind, the *Meteorium* is not a shelter from the weather, but an invention for perceiving its variations. An observatory of sensations as much as of clouds. Perhaps a fictional dream of time and place. If the *Zone* is the exposed strip, the *Meteorium* is its folly.

Watch her back silhouette enter the magic house, a sculptural environment of eight painted rooms. Watch her slip, like Maya Deren in her very own film *Meshes in the Afternoon*, into abstract panoramas where architecture begins to feel the feelings—like skin exposed to skin, rain or wind, like a body flushed with sudden heat. Here—and this is the extra layer of inexplicable magic—, the octagonal house turns carousel, a rotation of climates. Eight rooms unfold like the eight winds of antiquity, each staging a distinct meteorological state: rain, snow, lava, cloud, wind, mud, dust, and petals. Colors anchor each room, binding meteorology to chromatics. Red recalls Pompeii's frescoes. White is winter snow in South Korea. Ochre dust echoes cave paintings beneath a sky of particles. Pink and green winds pulse with Mangueira's samba beats. The pale blue of curtains, into which the wind rushes. Purple, too—associated with twilight skies, the atmosphere itself—lingers as the very hue of the meteorological imagination. Monet, after decades of painting the *Water Lilies*, would

have exclaimed: "I've finally discovered the true color of the atmosphere. It's *violet*. Fresh air is purple."

Like Duchamp's *Rotoreliefs*, which spun images into optical movements, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster's octagon spins atmospheres into consciousness. Weather is no longer background; it becomes protagonist like Virginia Woolf's Orlando transformed across centuries by the quicksilver mutability of gender. Our interiors are meteorological fictions. The passage from one wedge-shaped room to another recalls the slow enchantment of a fairground carousel, circular and cyclical, repetitive merry-go-round that never offers quite the same view twice, at once childlike and uncanny.

Yet, before taking the *Meteorium* ride and penetrating the dream house, before finding solace among green parrots intertwined with tropical vines, you must pass again and again through this place, where dogs bark at the trains beside a puddle, keeping time with the drumbeats, like Orpheus in Jean Cocteau's film, you must now cross a passage titled *Zone*.

Tristan Bera

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Image: Film still, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, *Meteorium III*, 2026.