

José Cosme's Inquiry H₂O Surprises at the Cascais Water Biennial with an “Autopsy” of Water

Selected by Demetrio Paparoni, the work begins with a block of ice and extends its investigation into photography, in dialogue with artificial intelligence, classical imagery and digital processes.



La obra, seleccionada por Demetrio Paparoni, parte de un bloque de hielo y extiende la investigación

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Spanish artist and researcher José Cosme presents Inquiry H₂O at the first Water Biennial – The Traces of Water, in Cascais, as part of the selection curated by Demetrio Paparoni.

The work proposes an unusual approach to water: rather than representing it, Cosme subjects it to a kind of material autopsy. A block of ice becomes body, matter and process. It melts, disappears, transforms other materials and leaves a trace. Water ceases to be landscape or symbol and becomes something that can be observed in the very act of transformation.

That physical action forms the core of Inquiry H₂O, but the work does not end there. From this process, José Cosme develops a photographic investigation that brings classical photography, the digital construction of the image and dialogue with artificial intelligence into relation with one another.

Photography does not function as mere documentation of the installation. It becomes another field of inquiry, where the recorded image, the constructed image and the image interpreted through digital tools confront one another.

Cosme thus addresses a particularly current question: what does it mean to produce an image today, when physical experience, traditional photography, digital manipulation and new generative systems coexist?

In Inquiry H₂O, artificial intelligence does not appear as a visual effect or as a substitute for the artistic process. It forms part of a broader dialogue on perception, memory, representation and authorship.

This investigation continues a career developed over more than four decades, with a presence in contexts such as the 12th Havana Biennial, the 3rd End of the World Biennial, the Museum of Contemporary Art of Bogotá, IVAM and La Neomudéjar in Madrid.

Throughout this trajectory, José Cosme has maintained a practice independent of immediate market trends, grounded in research processes that precede the final form of each work.

His work occupies a territory where matter, philosophy, technology and visual experience converge around the same question: whether art can also be a form of knowledge.

Inquiry H₂O brings that question to one of the most elemental and, at the same time, most difficult elements to fix in place: water.

In Cascais, a block of ice disappears. But it is precisely in that disappearance that the work begins.



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