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Yarell Castellanos, Artist Statement

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Yarell Castellanos

Artist Statement

My work explores the beautiful aspects of the grotesque elements in nature. It brings these extremes together but does not focus on what lies between them, in some kind of resolved compromise. Instead, my work engages nature's complexities, simultaneously evoking its capacity for destruction and creation. It evokes a sense of dread in the destructive forces of nature while at the same time appearing to be seductive. Attraction and repulsion come together in my desire to bring the unsightly, and other disquieting curiosities into plain sight. From the macro to the micro, my work represents different layers of magnification, where opposites converge. I look back to Romanticism without suggesting a nostalgic return to that past. I am more focused on the future, and create paintings with science fiction characteristics and otherworldly elements. My work is more concerned to compel viewers to wonder about potential possibilities than to know anything with certainty or finality. My goal is to make conflicted and contradictory pieces in which abstraction and representation interact. I find that contradictions and extreme behaviors in nature to be stimulating.

I depict beautiful but dark places that deal with the fearful aspects of nature. I create these various fictitious and otherworldly landscapes based on nature's bizarre phenomena. I imagine these places to have destructive qualities on both a biological and larger scale. My images range from the gruesome to the mesmerizing and enchanting. Striking yet peculiar colors and formations allude to things in nature that are toxic. I am fascinated with organic specimens and processes that are both appealing and repellant. These include planets caught in geological transformations, cavernous spaces growing stalagmite and stalactite formations, volcanic eruptions, mold-infested flora, fungi, and crystallized and spore structures - in all, nature mutates, often with volatile force.

My paintings are a culmination of experimentations using paint and different application methods. I set up a process dealing with the behavior and motion of paint when it becomes saturated with water. It is about physics. This process unfolds into a system of unpredictable organic forms. As I pour viscous or diluted paint onto the surface, colors bleed and collapse into one another. By building crude layers of dripped paint, stains, washes, dirt and dust, I am left with smooth to gritty surfaces. The removal of the hand is integral as I make use of fluid motion. I abandon complete control because I see nature as an uncontrollable force, beyond our merely human powers of rationality, consciousness, and will.