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Through a Glass Greenly: Teresita Fernandez on Her Reflective Landscapes and Seascapes

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26 November 2010

An artist who works in the landscape tradition, Teresita Fernandez is known for her museum installations, especially "Blind Blue Landscape" at the **Benesse Art Site** in Naoshima, Japan, and "Stacked Waters" at Texas's **Blanton Museum of Art**. Her monumental installations often question the ways that nature is represented through industrial processes, using various materials, from stone to acrylic.

While Fernandez is well known in the United States — she was the recipient of a **MacArthur Foundation** "genius" grant in 2005 — she is now having her first solo show in France, at the **Almine Rech Gallery**. Featuring her "Nocturnal" series, which consists of several graphite seascapes, the show also includes intriguing sculptural works made of small glass cubes and leaves of precision-cut stainless steel. Fernandez shared her thoughts with **ARTINFO France** on her first Paris show, the ideas behind her water scenes, and how viewers can see themselves in her art.

How do you feel about having your first Paris show?

I am delighted to be working with Almine Rech Gallery and to have the context of Paris as a setting. So much of my earlier work dealt with 17th century French formal gardens, with the idea of a mediated and deliberately manipulated, romanticized landscape, and with a phenomenological approach to place, so having my work here fits makes perfect sense.

Since you hail from Miami, do these works also refer to a Florida setting?

No, not really. I am from Miami but I have lived in New York for 15 years. New York is also surrounded by water. But really the water in my work is an abstracted reference, an idea more than a specific place. I am interested in how an image can prompt the viewer to be projected, invested in a situation without ever naming anything specific. The work is less about the image itself and more about the viewer's willingness to be immersed in a view that may be made up of just a few horizontal lines.

Is there a difference for you between working in a gallery or outdoors?

The problems are completely different. To make work about landscape within the real landscape poses conceptual issues that never come up in a gallery or museum space. I am interested in what happens between the two, and I think somehow my work occupies this very shallow space between interior and exterior landscapes.

What were you trying to achieve with the images of the shards of mirror in "Double Dissolve?"

In "Double Dissolve", each small, mirrored glass cube becomes like a miniature landscape painting. If you stand away from the piece, what you see is a reflection of the long, landscape panorama graphite piece behind you. The closer you get to the glass cubes, the more detail you see of the landscape behind you. I'm fascinated by this idea of turning your back to something in order to see it-which is an entirely different kind of seeing.

The shadow of your sculpture "Mirrors" appears as a green light on the gallery wall. Is this a kind of secondary representation of nature in shadow?

The green in this piece emanates from the piece itself-it is really just green paint bouncing off of a white wall-there is no artificial "light source" and as in all my works, it is very low-tech. It reminds us that color is really light. The piece reflects you in the act of looking. Your own reflection is abstracted and becomes merged with the foliage pattern. The landscape here is anthropomorphized, so that while you are looking at the piece, the piece is also looking back at you.