

Bustamante achieves this by (in his words) 'freezing the hot drawing and cooling it down', moving from a drawing on paper to ink forms floating behind Plexiglas. These jewel-like paintings may convey an impression of simplicity and playfulness, but the process from beginning to end is more complex. Bustamante first makes a small ink drawing which is the template for an enlarged silk screen, which eventually becomes an industrialized print on Plexiglas; in the final stages, sections may be cut out of the Plexiglas to expose the wall behind it. Like the work downstairs, the images demand a kind of archaeological investigation, drawing the viewer into multiple levels and depths.

Bustamante's journey from photography to sculpture to painting is one that has consistently questioned the nature of ideas about depth of field, focus, the process of composition and the phenomenological experience of seeing. Where the photographs present horizontal layers of ground/landscape/sky, the paintings have vertical layers: from wall to ink to Plexiglas and reflection. Where the young Bustamante grappled with ideas about the earth and death with a profound seriousness, now he looks to the sky and to light with the same intensity. What has remained important to Bustamante throughout his career is the importance of place: 'Place is first and foremost about acknowledging the world. A place is indescribable. It resists any kind of representation. It has not only a physical reality but also a metaphysical reality particular to it.'

This exhibition has been organised in collaboration with the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds. A complementary and overlapping exhibition of the work of Jean-Marc Bustamante will be shown at the Henry Moore Institute in April 2011.

A major new monograph published by The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh and Henry Moore Institute, Leeds accompanies this collaborative exhibition. This publication illustrates Bustamante's artistic practice from the late 1970s through to 2010 and includes a range of critical essays commissioned on the occasion of the exhibition *Dead Calm*, alongside existing texts translated into English for the first time.

This guide is available in large print, on tape and by email.

Please ask at the bookshop for an alternative format guide or contact
P 0131 226 8181 **E** bookshop@fruitmarket.co.uk

Find out more...

- **For full details** of the programme of talks, events and workshops, pick up a bulletin.
- **To book your place** call 0131 226 8181 or email bookshop@fruitmarket.co.uk
- **Join us on Facebook** for news and event updates
- **Subscribe to recordings** of all talks and seminars at www.fruitmarket.co.uk

The Fruitmarket Gallery is a company limited by guarantee, registered in Scotland No. 87888 and registered as a Scottish Charity No. SC 005576.
VAT No. 398 2504 21. Registered Office: 45 Market St, Edinburgh, EH1 1DF

Jean-Marc Bustamante

Exhibition

4 February – 3 April 2011

Jean-Marc Bustamante (b.1952, Toulouse) has exhibited in major institutions all over the world, and presented work in numerous biennials and festivals, including representing France in the Venice Biennale in 2003. Over the past three decades, he has moved from working primarily in photography to sculpture, to installation and architectural projects, and finally to painting. In all his work he takes risks, questioning the characteristics of each medium and testing its limits, its capacity for capturing in visual form an impression of a moment in time, an experience or feeling.

The
Fruitmarket
Gallery

45 Market Street, Edinburgh
www.fruitmarket.co.uk

Mon–Sat 11am–6pm, Sun 12–5pm
Always free



Henry Moore
Institute

The Henry Moore
Foundation



This exhibition, Bustamante's first in Scotland, brings together two groups of work: photographs and sculptures produced early in his career (1978–1997) and sculptures and paintings made between 2008 and 2010. The selection responds to the spaces and structure of the building: at ground level, the work relates to the ground itself, the earth, holes in the earth and the human occupation of nature; upstairs, the work responds to the sky, daylight and changing light levels. More importantly, in his earlier work downstairs, the origins of Bustamante's innovative and experimental practice that continues today can be seen.

Bustamante's work is hugely varied, but certain ideas persist throughout his career. He is concerned with connecting images with objects and places, with offering several perspectives for viewing works, and with stratification – layering materials and cutting holes through them. He is interested in 'in-between' states and situations that are not easily identified, categorized or labelled, an interest that leads to photographs of peripheral urban places (the foundations of an unfinished building; an anonymous, incomplete structure), or colours that sit between blue and green, between orange and brown.

The exhibition opens with a selection of the work for which Bustamante first became known, the *Tableaux*. By calling them *tableaux* or 'pictures', at that time a term of reference reserved for paintings rather than photographs, Bustamante sought to raise the status of photography to the same level as painting; large format colour photographs were extraordinarily radical for their time. He photographed sites rather than activity or people, featuring unmonumental, in-between places on the outskirts of a city: an empty pit (*T.11.78*, 1978), anonymous modern ruins (*T.25.79*, 1979), still and unoccupied. They are all openings, cavities into the earth, burial sites, tomb-like.

The work encourages a slowed-down viewing experience; Bustamante calls them 'slow snapshots'. In the left hand gallery, the dense, closed nature of works such as the *Cyprès* series (1991), large photographic objects themselves, encourage concentrated looking, a desperate search for an escape through the holes in the hedges to reach the blue sky behind it. Nearby, *Stationnaire II* (1991) also plays with the tension between surface and depth through hidden images and objects. The work consists of twelve boxes containing twelve photographs of the same image. In some exhibitions, only one box is open, and the others are stacked close by. Here, however, all the boxes are closed and placed in a single stack. The image the boxes contain is a smaller version of the photograph of a dense, wall-like row of cypress trees, but compelling because it is an unconventional photograph for a box as it offers no single isolated subject, but rather an image that becomes almost abstract, hovering between depth and surface. It is at once a view into a hole in the ground, and a view into the tiny blue section of sky. But in this exhibition, we have to believe the boxes contain images; the stack of boxes makes formal references to minimalism, but more importantly refers to the idea of the archive, of preserving images and experiences, memorializing them, in their casket-like containers.

Bustamante's sculptures come out of photography. His interest in the dynamic between image and object and place has remained a consistent concern. In *Intérieur I* (1988), for example, the image *is* the object: a table-top diptych, two identical wooden surfaces scored with a grid on a low steel plinth which we encounter from above. *Double Miroir* (1991) is also a diptych, operating as two big castellated openings which frame and expose the wall. Next door, *Untitled* (1993) consists of two steel forms, lightly painted, and through the paint layers we can see some of the original surface.

Holes in the ground also appear in works such as *Bac à sable I* (1990) and *Bac à Sable II* (1990), works that reference minimalist sculpture not only formally, but also conceptually. The work may cite Robert Smithson's *Sand-Box Monument* (1967), part of Bustamante's artistic lineage, but it also explores tensions between surface and depth, and contrasts the sharp edges of the solid, voluminous box and its soft, miniscule contents – order and disorder. *Bac à sable II* colours and abstracts the sand pit, which almost resembles a sealed mass grave. Both works simultaneously attract the viewer with their potential depth and dispel them.

Lumière 6.91 (1991) also consists of different layers of visibility. The image on Plexiglas is visually permeable, linking the wall exposed behind it with the viewer, reflecting the space and the viewer's body. One of a series of works, the *Lumières* are made from black-and-white photographs taken from old architectural books, enlarged and silk-screened onto Plexiglas. The sources are found images appropriated and transformed, but Bustamante would argue that his drawings, the sources for his paintings, also do the same work: they present an immediate, capturing of an image. The image on Plexiglas is like a film on a screen.

Upstairs, Bustamante's most recent work consists of highly innovative explorations of the limits of painting and sculpture; experiments in colour, form and surface; transparency and depth. Like the work downstairs, visual openings are everywhere and take many forms – as part of a material's properties, such as the transparent Plexiglas or steel grid in *Manège III* (2008), or as a physical hole cut into the surface of the material as in *Landscape Table* (2008) and *Untitled* (2010). Changing light and shadows heighten the complexity of the encounter with the work, multiplying surfaces and levels of depth. Varying light levels also destabilize the appearance of already unusual hues that are not easily identifiable, but rather again 'in-between': greeny-blue, brownly-orange-red.

Painting first entered Bustamante's practice with sculptures such as *Double Miroir*, with its anti-rust paint, and the painted steel work, in the lower gallery *Untitled*. His *Lumières* also share an affinity with his paintings. He began working with ink on Plexiglas in a quest for retaining transparency, and a slick and even surface, producing works that operate like the *Cyprès* photographs, luring the viewer into a dense array of elements to look through them. He describes each of the smaller paintings upstairs as a haiku, capturing an impression or mood, an aspect of his relationship with the world.