



MICHELA NEGRINI
[dip] contemporary art

**PAOLO CANEVARI
PETER WUTHRICH
MATERIAL LANDSCAPES**
Galleria Michela Negrini, Lugano

Exhibition: 29.08- 03.11. 2024

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Michela Negrini is delighted to present
Material Landscapes

Material Landscapes brings together two distinct artistic practices that converge on a shared visual and conceptual territory. Through radically different materials and processes, Paolo Canevari and Peter Wüthrich explore landscape not as representation, but as a site of transformation, memory, and perception.



The exhibition

Material Landscapes presents a dialogue between the Monuments of the Memory – Landscapes series by Paolo Canevari and the Literary Landscapes series by Peter Wüthrich—two artists whose approaches are deeply different, yet unexpectedly aligned through the notion of landscape as an expanded field of meaning.

In Monuments of the Memory – Landscapes, Paolo Canevari develops works on paper using burned engine oil, a material drawn directly from industrial waste and pollution. Applied to blank pages, old books, recovered prints, and sheets, the oil spreads by osmosis, forming dark, stratified horizons, hilly terrains, and suggestive cosmic visions. These landscapes evoke black holes, dark matter, and unstable geographies, where the stain becomes both image and concept. Canevari's use of pollution is not merely environmental, but symbolic: a reflection on the contamination of nature, information, and thought, and on the way excess and saturation slowly permeate everyday life.

Canevari's work is rooted in a continuous dialogue with artistic tradition and human history. Through the use of raw, charged materials combined with poetic and political tension, his practice establishes a dialectic between opposing forces—heaviness and lightness, solidity and fragility, permanence and ephemerality—where material presence carries profound conceptual weight.

In contrast, Peter Wüthrich constructs his landscapes through acts of subtraction and transformation. Using found, multi-colored book covers, often dissociated from their original function, Wüthrich treats the book as both object and metaphor. In the Literary Landscapes series, books are no longer vehicles for reading but become pictorial terrains, where painted horizons and chromatic rhythms emerge from the material body of literature. Text recedes, leaving space for contemplation, memory, and imagination.

Wüthrich's landscapes do not illustrate stories; they evoke the silent geography formed by reading itself. Balancing visibility and disappearance, presence and absence, his works transform literature into a place that can be entered not through words, but through vision.

Together, Canevari and Wüthrich reveal landscape as a mutable and unstable construct—one shaped by material, history, and perception. Despite their divergent practices, both artists propose landscapes as spaces where memory accumulates, meaning shifts, and the visible world is continuously reconfigured.



Paolo Canevari

Born in an elevator and raised in a family where his grandfather was a painter mosaicist and his uncle a sculptor, Canevari is one of the most internationally renowned artists of his generation.

His work stems from thoughts and reflections on the transient nature of art and on the significance of artistic sculptures in modern society.

While wondering on the value and origin of the most intimate aspects of memory, the artist develops his own personal language where symbols, pop culture, historical knowledge and politics are intertwined in a new interpretation of daily life.

In Canevari's artworks, monuments and symbols of our society are forever bound in this radical opposition of forces. The recovery of iconic architectural forms inspired by classical art history is a prerogative of the Italian artist, and express the richness of the past while at the same time embodying its cultural and artistic burden which presents a mnemonic horizon without boundaries. Paolo Canevari describes it as "the intimidating and obscure presence of the greatness of classical art." Canevari uses different media and materials, from sculptures to installations, from drawings to video.

He has participated in numerous museum exhibitions, public commissions and publications throughout Europe, the Americas and Asia. In 2007 he participated at the 52nd Biennial in Venice curated by Robert Storr. His work is collected by major museums throughout the World: Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci, Prato; Museum of Modern art MoMA, New York; Foundation Louis Vuitton pour la Creation, Paris; Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami; Macro, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rome; MART Museo d'Arte Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto; Bangkok Art Biennale Foundation, Bangkok; Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg; Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica Calcografia Nazionale, Rome; GNAM Galleria Nazionale di Arte Moderna, Rome; MAXXI, Rome; Perna Foundation, Capri; Olnick Spanu Art Program Garrison, New York.



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Peter Wütrich
Monuments of the Memory,
Landscapes
burned motor oil on paper
120 x 120 cm

Peter Wüthrich

Peter Wüthrich (b. 1962 in Berne) lives and works in Interlaken. Since the early '90s, his work has been focusing on the medium of the book, which he takes as a subject and constitutive unit of all his creations. Within repetitive compositions of linen books, each book becomes a single block of color, like a digital pixel, whose printed cover is indicative of imagination and adventure—world literature, art, religion, history, fiction, science, philosophy, mythology—topics and titles among seemingly countless references. Whether using whole, closed linen-covered books or cutting shapes (such as angels and butterflies) out of the covers, Wüthrich employs the book as an object and metaphor, ultimately in reference to humanity. By doing so he liberates the book as artistic reflection of the subject of life, which in our projections very often remains an emblem of a frozen subject. In Wüthrich's works, books are far beyond mere physical objects. They are characterized by their ambiguity and - without questioning their status as books - they become real beings. For Wüthrich, a medium that has generally been seen as standing in contrast to the work of a visual artist, become the core of the investigation, his object of desire. In his works, varying from wall pieces to installations, to photographs and films, Wüthrich uses and transforms books into other forms of reality. Not only he exploits their aesthetic value, but also the abstract (for its color and monochromatic surface), the sculptural (for its physical, sometimes ephemeral, presence) and the Pop (as object of consumption). Within his work, Wüthrich supplements and often replaces the auratic boot of the book in a playful manner, often using a variety of literary references and borrowings. Wüthrich's book studies advance its subject to its own borders with a relaxed accuracy and meticulous ease, show it entangled in constantly new constellations and stories and his world presents us with endless possibilities in which books become illustrations of themselves, allowing for imagining a transformed reality. Books are taken out again in the real world, crossing boundaries between art and life, narrating and creating new stories, with a pictorial and scultorial language.

An ongoing photographic project is "The Angels of the World".

Inaugurated in 2000 in Los Angeles, it is a series of photographs taken in various cities around the world that portray everyday people with books open on their shoulders, as if they were angels' wings.

Peter Wüthrich has been showing his work in solo exhibitions held in institutions all over the world, such as: Foundation Paulo Coelho et Christina Oiticica, Ginevra (2019), La Chartreuse de la Lance, Concise (2017), Kunsthalle, Mannheim (2012), University Museum of Contemporary Art, Massachusetts (2007), Fondation pour l'art contemporain Salomon, Annecy (2006), OK Center for Contemporary Art, Linz (2005), Kunsthalle, Winterthur (2003), CGAC Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea, Santiago de Compostela (2001), Rupertinum, Museum der Moderne, Salzburg and Kunsthalle und Kunstverein, Bremerhaven (2000), Kunstverein, Freiburg and Neue Galerie, Dachau (1999), Kunstverein, Friedrichshafen (1998), Skulpturenmuseum Glaskasten, Marl and Institut für moderne Kunst, Nuremberg (1997), Suermondt-Ludwig Museum, Aachen (1996).



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Among the most important group shows in institutions: MUSAC, León (2018), Städtisches Museum, Jena (2016), Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (2013), MAC, Musée d'Art Contemporain, Marseille (2012), Künstlerforum, Bonn (2011), Portland Museum, Portland (2009), Centre d'art contemporain, Vassivière (2008), Neues Museum, Nuremberg (2007), FRAC Alsace, Sélestat (2006), CGAC Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea, Santiago de Compostela (2004), MART, Rovereto (2002), Westfälisches Landesmuseum, Münster (1998), MoMA PS1, New York (1997), Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (1995), Kunstmuseum, Thun (1992).



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Peter Wütrich
Literary Landscape
Painting on book, framed
52 x 52 cm

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(appointment only)

