

Press Release
19 mars 2022

IVÁN NAVARRO
CONSTELLATIONS OF FATE
27 avril – 18 juin 2022



Defect Drops, 2022, Sculpture, LED, paint, wood, mirror, one-way mirror and electric energy, 66 × 66 × 13 cm

Iván Navarro is returning to Belgium with *Constellations of Fate*, a series of light sculptures and a previously unseen immersive installation. With this new exhibition, Iván Navarro dives deeper into his exploration of the dichotomy humans/machines. For the first time, his practice interweaves light, his preferred medium, with painting, a technique he has rarely dipped into until now.

Born in 1972 in Chile, a few months before the coup d'état, Iván Navarro grew up under the Pinochet dictatorship before emigrating to New York in 1997. Fascinated by the codes of American minimalism and design, he began to build electric sculptures deeply impacted by the experience of his youth and political critique. Over the years, he has developed an original and critical body of work combining language, optical illusion and experiments with light.

When visitors enter the gallery space, they are immediately whisked away on a journey to the stars with a succession of constellations, nebulas and eclipses. Navarro has adopted an almost cathartic process, manually engraving then painting the inside of mirrors without their silvering with thousands of brightly coloured flashes which transform the LED light into celestial phenomena. This quest for transcendence has been at the heart of his artistic investigations since the start of the pandemic. In March 2020, forced into total isolation like the rest of the world, he turned to painting. After so many years playing with mirrors and neon lights and their perfectly delineated shapes, he took up the paint brush to experiment with all the possibilities it offers. He contrasts the manufactured object with the arbitrary nature of the act, the uniqueness of the stroke, the fragility of the being.

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The astral voyage offered by the exhibition concludes with a new installation. Hand-painted constellations are scattered across the walls of the narrow room plunged into darkness. A glitter ball sculpted in the shape of planet earth spins slowly. "When we observe the stars, we get to brush against the deepest secrets of the universe," the artist explains. Both sublime and faintly unsettling, these imaginary maps question our anthropocentrism, asking where the origin of our civilisations lies, where we think the place of human beings should be in a constantly expanding universe.

Iván Navarro lives and works in New York. He represented Chile at the 53th Venice Biennale in 2009. His work has been shown worldwide over the last few years: *Bifocal*, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Buenos Aires (2019), *This Land is Your Land*, The Momentary at Crystal Bridges Museum, USA (2019), *This Land is Your Land*, solo, Busan Museum, Korea; *Age of Terror*, Imperial War Museum, London (2018); *Light and Space*, Guggenheim Bilbao, Spain (2017); *Art Basel Parcours*; Yinchuan Biennale, China (2016); *Under the Same Sun*, South London Gallery (2016 and Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 2014); *Storylines*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2015); *Light Show*, Hayward Gallery, London; Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah (2013 - 2016). His work is featured in a great many international collections, including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York), The Hirshorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (Washington, DC) and Fonds National d'Art Contemporain (Paris). He has been represented by Galerie Templon since 2005. His work, *The Ladder*, has provided a permanent installation in San Francisco since spring 2020. In 2021, a retrospective of his work was held at the Centquatre and a new installation was unveiled in the Miami Design District during the annual Art Basel Miami Beach event.