

Sasha Ferré

Daughter of Earth and Water

Apr 23 — Jun 7, 2025 | Brussels

Almine Rech Brussels is pleased to present 'Daughter of Earth and Water', Sasha Ferré's third solo exhibition with the gallery, on view from April 23 to June 7, 2025.

Passing Through

How to paint something that, once present and visible, will no longer obstruct my eyes or my body? How to paint so that my eyes and my body will encounter, before and around them, nothing but a crossable space: a medium, like a palpable ether, where seeing becomes endless, and the body limitless?

Sasha Ferré establishes space, meaning that she opens it. She is armed only with her approach to the canvas, this way of painting that resembles a dancer's movement: her quick hand curls around itself, leading the body to follow. Thus she advances, constructing and erasing at the same time, making a path through the openness. An oil stick becomes an extension of her hand and is warmed in her grasp, becoming fluid through contact with her skin. Her art is about fluidity, vital energy that is transmitted from the body to the instrument and from the instrument to the canvas—unless it's the opposite, or even a constant back-and-forth: an exchange. When she paints, Sasha Ferré passes through, and something passes through her. The fluid flows in her as much as from her. This painting is life through actions, circulating and being transformed. Dance has taught her that a body that paints is a painted body, opened by painting as limitless action.

Words fail to name what is there. How can I, in a single moment, express this feeling of being inside a nameless space—a kind of womb-like cave, downy and protective—but also of flying? Sky or cave, inside or outside? I fly, but I also crawl, making my way by feel. Unless I am swimming, because as I move I bring along this space that surrounds me, carries me, and passes through me. Where language stumbles, painting clears a path. Because it aspires to be limitless. Because, above all—and this is its essentially *pictorial* quality—it demolishes the principle of non-contradiction to which our language remains subjected. We cannot say one thing and its opposite at the same time. True, but we can paint it. That is the power of Sasha Ferré's work, its non-rational power: its physical presence. Something is there that we don't know, that we don't understand and cannot name, whose presence before us, around us, and in us takes hold of us by passing through us.

Sasha Ferré's painting is *this* and *that* at the same time. To advance and extend into openness, she abolishes everything that separates, everything that makes a boundary, everything that creates a difference between this and that. One quality spreads everywhere: porousness, which is the condition of the crossing.

In Aristotelian thought, place is defined as an extension contained within a limit. This would be an excellent definition of a painting, and it is exactly what the artist challenges in her art. For Sasha Ferré paints against this logic of place, constructing brushstroke by brushstroke a space that is open and continuous. This is indeed an act of constructing, by repeating and accumulating brushstrokes that give body, texture, and depth to this world as it appears. But it is also an act of opening more than anything else, because this gesture, which digs and excavates the *limitless* depth of the painting, abolishes everything—boundary, opaqueness, or obstacle—that prevents the spread of the flow and resists the crossing. Openness is the condition of living things. Painting is necessary so that openness will circulate, like blood in the veins of an eternally dancing body. “I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores; / I change, but I cannot die,” Shelley wrote in a poem that the artist quotes as a comment on her work.

Along with painting, sculpture has appeared. Along with or, rather, *in* painting, from which it seems to proceed so naturally: a new metamorphosis along the same continuum. Wax, an organic material, has made this possible: giving *tangible* form to what the hand creates when it curls around itself and leads the body to follow. Today, the sculpture appears to us in bronze. In “natural” bronze, the artist explains, “with a patina inspired by lichen.” Lichen is what is called a *symbiotic plant*: born of the union of algae and fungus. It is this and that, equally. It spreads everywhere, no obstacle ever blocking its fecundity. It is hybrid, passing through and being passed through; it creates space by opening it; it is alive.

— Pierre Wat, art historian and critic.