

Jose Dávila

The act of being together

Mar 8 — May 11, 2025 | Desert X, Coachella Valley, CA, US

Material density, gravity, and time are central to most of Jose Dávila's practice. Known for sculptures that explore different balances created by opposing forces, Dávila has created a work for Desert X 2025 that spans both space and time. The marble blocks used in this piece are unaltered extractions from a quarry a few hundred miles across the U.S.–Mexico border.

Drawing on Robert Smithson's concept of site/nonsite dialectics, Dávila connects the two locations by highlighting the presence and absence of the rough-hewn forms. By taking the material from one place and adding it in another, he establishes a relationship between the void of its origin and the striking presence it creates in a foreign landscape. This notion of site and nonsite also plays with the idea of visibility itself.

To reach their new home in the Coachella Valley, the stone blocks had to cross the border. In this migration, they also traversed a metaphorical border between the seen and the unseen. Appearing as if from nowhere, Dávila's casually stacked marble blocks appear splintered across both time as well as space. Moved by the invisible forces of unknown histories, they evoke the archeological relics of ancient civilizations and the potential future of life beyond our own.

Wandering through the site invites speculation about our place within the vast frameworks that shape space and time. Like ruins in reverse, Dávila's marble formations suggest a suspended state of becoming, representing the end of something old and the beginning of something new. Standing amidst them prompts reflection on our transient position within an infinite expanse.