

## IMAGO IGNOTA

Sula Bermúdez-Silverman  
Sebastián Hidalgo  
Dominique Knowles  
Tornike Robaqidze

## FORTNIGHT INSTITUTE

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The four artists presented in the exhibition expand upon the notion of *imago ignota*, or the unknown image, as history has left plenty of strange matter ripe for probing. Each of their practices is contingent upon untangling skeins in order to offer new forms of knowledge. The primordial soup from which these artists generate energies requires something of a balancing act, thus calling for the diligence and care of these polymaths.

Sula Bermúdez-Silverman analyzes hierarchies both material and immaterial. Her research based practice examines the problematics of power as well as the systems that produce and reinforce it. She molds her substances by way of hotplate and dollhouse and tasks the resulting forms with expressing an aesthetic curiosity and a tacit examination of ranging histories. Her vessels are containers for beauty and horror, fear and promise, the past and the future. Harbingers abound throughout her objects, the spoils of Bermúdez-Silverman's exploration into the annals of history.

Sebastián Hidalgo marries pretext and intuition by seeking starting points and allowing an engaged flow of production to occur. He remains nimble, allowing for the possibility of any chance encounter to alter his course. The institution of painting remains at the core of his practice, providing a bedrock for unrestrained exploration. Regarding content, a symbiosis of materiality and spirituality figures strongly within the work. Hidalgo's conceptual agility lends itself to the discovery of relationships between seemingly unrelated concepts and systems. He dissects logics in order to get to raw matter. Ideologies, phenomena, and iconographies thus become fuel to the vehicle of Hidalgo's own investigation.

Dominique Knowles punctures the mobile. He steps into the augur's shoes with grace, expressing an inherent identification with vestiges of antiquity while capturing a precise moment by painting subjects in motion. Depicting the galloping horse is an effort to memorialize the fleeting instant. His seizure of motion is much akin to a frozen river: the surface may be fixed, but there is still water flowing beneath the ice. He taps into a fluid rhythm and paints sensation, while veiling explicit forms through subdued abstraction and addressing the space in which romantic longing pulsates. Careful consideration of lightness and darkness produces a seductive ambience and an ultimate luminosity rendered in warm brownish tones. There is, however, something particular lurking within the deeper fields of color. Here the works beg the question: What can be delivered or cultivated within shadows? An absence of light is not nothing.

Tornike Robaqidze applies his particular quotidian concern for the experience of life caught between dreaming and reality. He borrows signs and symbols from these states of being in order to capture the familiar and leverage it to his own end. Robaqidze thus slinks around in the shadows, capturing stills from life and filtering them onto the picture plane. He privileges color to color without the foundation of outlines, thus invoking his own penchant for nebulousness. Like the vacillation of saloon doors, his compositions swing back and forth between concrete semiotics and ambiguous interpretations.

- Text by Reilly Davidson