

Jimena Velarde-Alvarez *La sombra del tiempo*

Margot Samel is pleased to present, *La sombra del tiempo*, a solo exhibition by Jimena Velarde-Alvarez (b. 2001, Lima, Peru). This is the artist's first exhibition with the gallery and in New York.

The body meets Velarde-Alvarez's paintings at a familiar scale. Doorways open at their real and lived ratios, and direct us toward interior mazes that feel vaguely familiar. Grates, windows, stairways, and corridors appear in an atmospheric earth-toned palette. Shadows linger within these thresholds, treading between subject and architecture, self and environment. Time is not only their subject but their material: paintings emerge slowly through a sustained practice of accumulation and return, each layer of oil gradually dissolving the creator into their constructions.

A window holds a shadowed bust as it peers up and around the frame. As an important, recurring motif for the artist, shadows emerge throughout the act of painting, respondent to the structures laid across the canvas before them. Hovering between presence and absence, these shadows are traced into being as though the painting held them before Velarde-Alvarez recognized their presence. For the artist, the appearance of the shadow becomes both a collaboration with the work and an encounter with the self, revealing relationships that only become visible through duration.

The shadow also appears metaphorically in the artist's use of text. Echoing her processes in painting, in *Autopsia I, II & III*, Velarde-Alvarez layers page after page of her own writings onto board, creating a sedimentation of language. Only a shadow of the words remains, and explicit meaning becomes indiscernible. Writing also permeates the verso of selected canvases, where poems become shadows of the images they accompany. These elements are vestiges of content always in development. Just out of clarity's grasp, they remain free-shrouded in evanescence—always in becoming.

In a new series of shadow box sculptures, the artist invites the viewer into vignettes in literal shadow. By peering into a box through a small keyhole, the viewer's body must align itself, in a solitary act of observation, with the work as it encounters an illuminated, silhouetted scene. Here, one is fully engaged in the act of looking, opening the self to a mode of quiet receptivity. Turning fully to our means of perception, the artist invites us into the space of becoming—to slow and meet the world in quiet wonder.

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In Velarde-Alvarez's winding corridors and half-lit doorways, glassy windows and weathered grates, pages of script and lit boxes, the shadow—both empty and full—suggests a dissolution of the ego; the self emerging instead as a vestige of accumulated presence. To remain with the shadow is to inhabit this vestige: to allow time to reveal the contours of experience. In its place, the self peers through metaphysical architecture, where sustained attention becomes a condition for perception. Within this quiet, the need for direct pathways, or expedient methods of conveyance, dissipates. The self is left a remnant. It lingers among other margins, dances with the incomplete and the ancient, and revels in attending to what it has yet to know.

—Emily Small

Jimena Velarde-Alvarez (b. 2001, Lima, Peru) is a Brooklyn-based artist. She holds a BFA (Hons) in Painting from the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI (2024). Velarde-Alvarez has recently exhibited at Margot Samel, New York, NY (2026), 154 E. Broadway, New York, NY (2026); White Columns, New York, NY (2025); Woods-Gerry, Providence, RI (2024); Memorial Hall Gallery, Providence, RI (2024, 2022); and Gelman Gallery (2023, 2021).

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