



**ELENA DAMIANI**

Tellurian Surfaces and Core Fragments

Engaging with the notion of time and materiality, the Peruvian artist Elena Damiani presents her first solo exhibition in Germany. The title *Tellurian Surfaces and Core Fragments* confronts our understanding of permanent earthly surfaces, readily visualised in phrases such as 'solid as a rock', with fragmentation as a process. Her new and recent stone sculptures and collage works embrace this constant flux by encompassing dynamic, decomposing, and transforming weathered bodies.

Damiani's practice draws on geological records, cosmology as well as material sciences. The word tellurian derives from the Latin *tellūs*, earth, or relating to earth and soil. Commonly assumed as solid in terms of permanence, Damiani's exhibition explores the movement of earth's geological matter as a process, specifically processes of fragmentation occurring within rocks and other crystalline materials. Though this is often only visible throughout translated billions of years of geological time or deep time, the world is continuously disintegrating while whole. Attempting to comprehend the immeasurable duration of elemental geo-materials can unsettle and disorient our understanding of time. By way of assembling and reassembling geological materials and fragments such as travertine, marble, onyx and sand, the artist proposes an imagined narrative tracing the geological record of a whole without well-defined boundaries.

The large sculpture *Testigos (after A. Aalto) (2023)* divides the main gallery space, drawing on architect and designer Alvar Aalto's folding screen made from fine pinewood strips, which poses a stark contrast to the travertine bodies and copper hinges, that connect the columns of Damiani's sculpture. Her flexible wall is comprised of stone fragments, each maintaining its own singularity while integrated to function as one. Both *Testigos (after A. Aalto) (2023)* and *Testigos IV (2022)* take shape in thin columns, reminiscent of core samples, used to trace past conditions and events in nature. Made from travertine, a limestone that shows the gradual geological conformations particularly well ensuing its colour and shape, the rods are cut to the vein from the same boulder and arranged sequentially. These "assemblages", a reference to the writings of Guattari and Deleuze as well as Jane Bennett's more recent *Vibrant Matter*, recomposes the original stratification pattern of the sedimentary stone. Picking up this deeper layer of geological materials, the series of collages *Tellurian Signals N.1-4 (2023)* combines black and white prints of found photographs of landslide scars from the 1959 Montana earthquake with enhanced photographs of geological specimens recording fractures below the Earth's surface.

The second room of the gallery holds *Relieve II* (2023), a performative sculpture of two hand-carved onyx ovoids. The artist solidified the stone traces across the sand by saturating the surface with water, a process which resembles the hardening of sand and other minerals by precipitation, resulting in the formation of an arid soil crust. The work is distinctive in its processual character recording a terrestrial footprint of physical effort in space. Placed alongside the *Relieve II, Untitled M* (2023) pieces two found photographs of different transformation processes of two granite mountains in the Yosemite National Park into one. One of them considered one of the strongest rocks in California, the collaged peak shows a surface of granite slabs resembling layers of an onion.

The exhibition requests a closer examination of earth's materiality as key to gain insight into the current climate change in order to rethink how social and political agency evolves and interacts with earth forces. 'For the Terrestrial is bound to the earth and to land, but it is also a way of worlding, in that it aligns with no borders, transcends all identities.' -Bruno Latour

Elena Damiani was born in 1979 in Lima, where she lives and works. Damiani has participated in multiple international biennales, including the Seoul Mediacity Biennale (2023), Cuenca Biennale (2018, 2016), Gwangju Biennale (2016), the Venice Biennale, Vienna Biennale and IV Poly/Graphic San Juan Triennial (both 2015) and Bienal de la Imagen y Movimiento, Buenos Aires (2014). Solo exhibitions include Americas Society New York (permanent installation, 2022), Museo de Arte de Contemporáneo, Lima (2022), Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk (2017), Museo Amparo, Puebla (2016), Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City (2015). She has participated in group exhibitions at Museum of Modern Art, New York (2023), Museo de Arte Zapopan, Guadalajara (2022), PIVO, São Paulo (2022), The Isabel and Agustín Coppel Collection, Mexico City (2020), DePaul Art Museum, Chicago (2020), Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome (2019), Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, Ohio (2018), Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow (2015), Museum of Contemporary Art, Detroit (2015), Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City (2013), Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires (2007), IVAM Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno (2007), and Kunstmuseum Bonn (2006) among others. She was awarded the Grants & Commissions Program, CIFO Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami (2016) and the commission for the David Rockefeller Atrium, Americas Society, New York (2014).

Her works can be found in public collections including MoMA, New York; Museo de Arte de Lima; Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome; Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary Collection, Madrid; Perez Art Museum, Miami; Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection, New York and Caracas; Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City; Kadist Art Foundation San Francisco and Paris; Fototeca Latinoamericana; and Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami. This is her fourth solo exhibition at Galerie Nordenhake.



Installation view



Testigos (after A. Aalto), 2023, Detail



Testigos (after A. Aalto), 2023, Detail



Testigos (after A. Aalto), 2023  
hand carved travertine, copper, steel  
180 x 243.5 x 6.8 cm  
70 7/8 x 95 7/8 x 2 5/8 in



Crater, 2023, Details







Crater, 2023  
hand-carved Pedre travertine, Santa Ana marble  
80 x 80 x 61 cm  
31 1/2 x 31 1/2 x 24 in



Installation view



Unfoldings I - IV, 2023, Installation view



Unfoldings III, 2023  
hand-carved Rumi travertine, copper, steel  
27 x 66 x 27 cm  
10 5/8 x 26 x 10 5/8 in



Unfoldings III, 2023, Detail









Tellurian signals N.1 - 4, 2023, Installation view



Tellurian signals N.1, 2023

inkjet print on cotton paper

40 x 50 cm

15 3/4 x 19 3/4 in

Edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof (#1/3)



Tellurian signals N.2, 2023

inkjet print on cotton paper

40 x 50 cm

15 3/4 x 19 3/4 in

Edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof (#1/3)



Tellurian signals N.3, 2023  
inkjet print on cotton paper  
40 x 50 cm  
15 3/4 x 19 3/4 in  
Edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof (#1/3)



Tellurian signals N.4, 2023

inkjet print on cotton paper

40 x 50 cm

15 3/4 x 19 3/4 in

Edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof (#1/3)



Testigos IV, 2022, Installation view



Testigos IV, 2022, Detail



Testigos IV, 2022  
hand-carved and polished Crater Fantasia travertine,  
stainless steel  
91 x 133.5 x 5.5 cm  
35 7/8 x 52 1/2 x 2 1/8 in





Installation view



Untitled M, 2023  
laser print on pages from found book  
72 x 95 cm  
28 3/8 x 37 3/8 in



Relieve II, 2023, Detail



Relieve II, 2023, Detail



**Relieve II, 2023**  
hand-carved onyx, sand,  
white cement, plaster, ocher  
35.5 x 220 x 310 cm  
14 x 86 5/8 x 122 in

**EXHIBITION**

Nov 17, 2023–Jan 6, 2024

Opening hours: Tue–Fri 11am–6pm

Sa 12–6pm

**OPENING**

Fr, Nov 17, 6–9pm

Please contact the gallery for press images and further  
information.