

## Jessica Mitrani: I Dreamt the Landscape Was Looking at Me.

La Mama Galleria presents “I Dreamt the Landscape Was Looking at Me,” an exhibition of work by Colombian-born artist Jessica Mitrani. Across a range of media, Mitrani’s signature visual language is immediately recognizable: an oneiric digital collage of original and appropriated imagery, featuring new animation by her frequent collaborator Alex Czetwertynski.

The central work in the exhibition, the three-channel video installation *I Dreamt the Landscape Was Looking at Me*, 2021, premiered at the Bogota Museum of Modern Art - MAMBO. In this trilogy of short videos—*Landscape*, *Nature*, and *Territory*—Mitrani reflects on human alienation from the environment, a long-standing theme in feminist decolonial thought. Coloniality, the dark side of the Western Enlightenment, necessitated the construction of alterities that could be mastered, hence the opposition between civilization and nature, the taming of nature to become landscape, and the transformation of land into territory. Yet, as the title of the installation and exhibition suggests, this objectified terrain has the capacity to return our gaze and scramble our long-established categories.

In footage created during lockdown in Chia, north of Bogotá Mitrani attempts to bridge the unbridgeable, make amends for the unforgivable, and communicate with the cosmos. In *Landscape*, she sits by a river, pulling out tight coils of her hair and pressing their fibers into the the earth. In *Nature*, an attempt to communicate eye-to-eye with a serene iguana becomes an exercise in the dissolution of boundaries. In *Territory*, she sways before a quartet of horses, offering an apology on behalf of humankind. Intercut with these scenes are sequences in which slender palm trees creep across the beach, boulders breathe and expand, and unidentified chemicals diffuse and crystallize. The accompanying soundtrack, composed by Sol León, blends the artist’s voice, animal calls, instrumentation, evocative abstract noises and Emilie Weibel’s vocals, synthesizers and sounds. The Opera Equina’s sound composition is by Emilie Weibel. The installation is completed by a line of soil that borders the floor, this *prima materia* [the alchemical ‘first matter’] piled high to overlap the screens.

Five new large-scale prints on rice paper continue the themes and motifs of the video installation, combining images of plant life, the figure of a watching eye, and patterns drawn from Indigenous iconography and sixteenth-century alchemical texts. An outdoor mural at 66 East Fourth Street serves as an epigraph for the exhibition, with words that serve as a quiet entreaty: “May we walk softly on you.”



**Jessica Mitrani** (b. 1968, Barranquilla) is a New York–based artist. Her work has been exhibited, performed, screened, and broadcast internationally, including at OCD Chinatown, New York; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York; White Columns, New York; Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York; French Institute Alliance Française, New York; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá; Marfa Film Festival, Texas; Museo de Arte Moderno de Medellín; Oberhausen Film Festival, Germany; and ARTE1 television network, Brazil. In 2022, Mitrani will develop a new multimedia project as an invited guest artist at the Lewis Center for the Arts at Princeton University, New Jersey.

