

ARTFORUM

Christian García Bello

GALERÍA FORMATO CÓMODO

Calle Lope de Vega 5

September 14–November 17



Christian García Bello, *Pretérito (Preterite)*, 2017, oil, graphite, and wax on paper, 5 1/2 x 7".

If Christian García Bello's second show at this gallery seems to stage no major overhauls of his first, progress nonetheless lies within the reaffirmation of his perseverance. In this light, the exhibition represents a remarkable step forward in his still-young career. Titled, somewhat awkwardly, "*Ahora no es pretérito todavía*" (Now it is still not the past), the show reflects on how our relationship with time informs our perception of space. His drawings and sculptures share a precise blend of representation and abstraction, mathematical rhetoric and transcendent nebulousness, as he draws from rigorous classical humanism and from hazier Romantic movements in equal measure.

On entering the gallery, one easily detects the relevance of rhythm in his exquisite installation. It stems from a careful study of human proportions in the context of the gallery's singular architecture. Drawing out our gaze, a vertical wooden form expands toward the wall, punctuated by both drawings and sculptures that share a distinctive ingredient: On all of them, thin layers of wax subtly accumulate to produce dense surfaces with an enthralling aura. They represent architectural motifs as well as shadows and hollow spaces, relentlessly swinging between the tangible and the ethereal. The three wooden sculptures on view are found objects that evolve into abstractions evoking a melancholic sense of longing, while unambiguously reflecting shapes and symbols drawn from traditional art of Galicia. Apathetic toward fuzzy trends and unnegotiably committed to austere formalism, García Bello understands his work as a body of complex textures providing a humble and serene take on the infinite.

— Javier Hontoria