

foreign & domestic

Armando Nin ***A Day's Work***

January 25 – March 10, 2024

opening Wednesday January 24, 6-8pm

24 Rutgers Street, New York, NY 10002

We are delighted to announce Armando Nin's upcoming solo exhibition *A Day's Work* opening at Foreign & Domestic on Wednesday January 24, and running through March 10, 2024.

A Day's Work presents Armando Nin's new series of paintings created by depositing soot from a lit candle onto canvas. The exhibition title references the *giornata*, a concept from the Italian Renaissance practice of *buon fresco* mural painting, which precisely designates the area of a mural that the artist is capable of completing in a single day. A *giornata* translates a portion of time into a specific space within a composition. A large painting can thus be decomposed into a number of interlocking *giornate*, demarcated by natural contours in the picture plane, from which the labor costs of the mural can be calculated: a sum of days' wages. Soot painting also references a vernacular form of mark-making common in housing project stairwells, vacant buildings and city jails, typically hurried and sometimes coded, that fulfills the first function of art, to declare the artist's presence in the world.

Working with soot from the flame of a candle introduces new restrictions and possibilities into the act of painting. Nin works horizontally, lying on his back with the canvas suspended above him, methodically raising his hand to the canvas in a regular, machinic tempo determined by the physics of the flame itself, a delicate medium that flickers with each breath, draft or flick of the wrist. The rings of soot can build up density in a field of staccato dots, or follow lines and contours like a trail of greasy thumbprints. Yet each mark encodes a constant and discrete quantity of time. In a few brief but decisive seconds, the soot traces the result of many interwoven forces, giving immediate shape to indiscernible and infinitesimal disturbances in the air, the hand and the heart, the studio and the street. A second too long and the flame burns through the canvas; there are no second chances.

This inexorable rhythm, inherent to the process, frees Nin to act as an antenna. Any erasure or correction leaves a conspicuous trace, public evidence of error. Like tattoos and scars, soot paintings display the complete history of their making on a flat surface. As such, soot painting demands an exceptional level of honesty and vulnerability from the artist, where the first draft is also the final draft. Inwardly, Nin relives hundreds of imaginary encounters, past relations, absent friends and lovers, inchoate emotions, witticisms and future hopes. Finally, the *giornata* is spent, depositing a record of innumerable transitory instants, like piles of debris in a glacial moraine, conjuring stars, planets, minerals, hieroglyphs, bacteria, jigsaws, fields, hair and fingerprints. Nin's work is at once a visual chronometry that literally depicts the time of its own making, a stenography of hermetic symbols, and a delicate polygraph that records fleeting moods.

Nin's soot paintings evoke Marcel Duchamp's concept of *infrathin*, or *inframince*, a slippery allegorical adjective of minute differences, transition, possibility and becoming, best explained through examples: the disparity between two casts from the same mold, the interval between a gunshot and the appearance of a hole, the temperature of a warm seat just vacated, or when tobacco smoke also smells of the mouth which exhales it. One of Duchamp's note on *infrathin* (1930) reads:

“shadow bearers:

anonymous company of shadow bearers
represented by all sources of light (sun,
moon, stars, candles, fire –)

incidentally: different aspects of
reciprocity – the association of fire-light
(black light, smokeless fire = certain
sources of light)

shadow carriers work in the *infrathin*.”

Infrathin is the tenuous interval between pulses of sooty smoke from a bright flame; microscopic difference between each ring of soot; the same painting seen in the morning or the afternoon. The light-absorbing soot which spares some slivers to reflect off aromatic hydrocarbons rings at the nanometer scale, producing the liquid iridescence of Nin’s surfaces. The micropoetry of *infrathin* titles like “Changing my # in a second”, “It Doesn’t Say My Name” or “Sleeping On A Mirror”. The draft in the studio, or first and final drafts. *Infrathin* operates in the sense that in a world of dense entanglements, social, economic, ecological, chemical, meteorological, hormonal, a minute gesture can make all the difference.

A *giornata* measures a work by counting the days. Successive *giornate* tally up the days needed to create a body of work, an exhibition, an oeuvre. Each day the same, but unique in its place in the sequence of days. A ring of soot in a line of rings. The body contorts, the arm reaches, wax drips, eyes strain, flames flicker. Counting the days to complete a painting, counting the days until a show, counting the days detained, counting the days sober, counting the days of a life, counting the days together, the days without, counting the days since, the days until. Nin’s soot paintings take time, make time, spend time, do time. They open a space of presence in the here and now, and of gratitude for another day.

A Day’s Work, Armando Nin’s first solo exhibition, opens Wednesday January 24, 6-8pm, at 24 Rutgers Street.

About Armando Nin

Armando Nin (b. 1986, New York) lives and works in New York City. For two decades, Nin has deployed transgressive and fugitive strategies in a free-roaming artistic practice, from appropriating unobtainable social artefacts, to catching strangers off guard through the lens of his camera. The city itself is Nin's material, medium, and frame for an art fueled by the tension between public and private objects, signs and spaces.

In the spring of 2022, Nin was invited to complete a studio residency at 24 Rutgers Street, before the space was developed into Foreign & Domestic gallery, and continues to maintain a regular studio practice in Lower Manhattan. Beyond the soot paintings, Nin is experiments prolifically with materials and mark-making: etching, scratching, stapling, oxidizing, staining in and on glass, foam, metal, paper and other substrates.

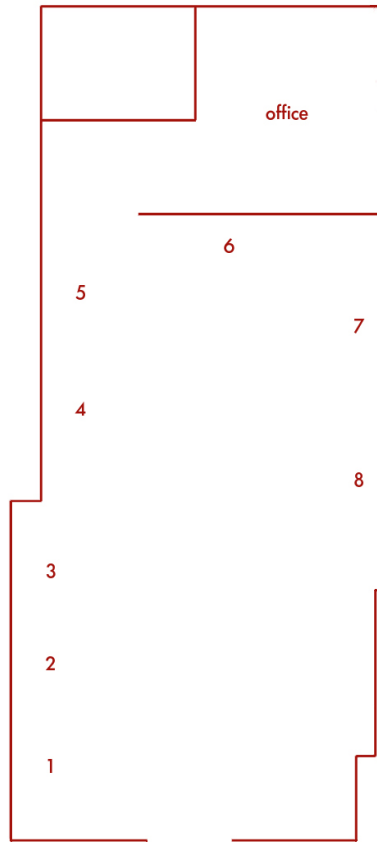
Nin studied Fine Art at Pratt Institute between 2004 and 2006, without graduating. Between 2019-22 Nin enrolled in classes on art criticism at the Art Students League of New York. Selected group exhibitions include *Anonymous Gallery* (2023); *The Unity of Being*, Brazda & Snow (2023); *Graffiti*, Public Access (2022, curated by Ned Vena); *SIGNS*, Foreign & Domestic (2022, curated by Peter BD and Alexander Meurice).

A Day's Work is Armando Nin's first solo exhibition.

About Foreign & Domestic

Foreign & Domestic is a gallery located on the Lower East Side, opened by Alexander Meurice in July 2022. The gallery opened with the group exhibition *SIGNS*, co-curated with poet and performance artist Peter BD. The gallery has staged exhibitions by Ittah Yoda, Nicholas William Johnson, Egle Jauncems and Greg Carideo. The recent group exhibition *After Lives* included the work of the late Bob Smith and Lee Brozgol, prolific but obscure artists working in Lower Manhattan in the 1970s and 1980s. Foreign & Domestic takes its name from a group exhibition titled 'European, Foreign & Domestic' curated by Alexander Meurice at the Averard Hotel, an ostentatiously derelict west London townhouse turned exhibition space, which he ran from 2016 to 2018.

Image credits: courtesy Armando Nin and Foreign & Domestic, New York.



1. Armando Nin, *Fantasy On My Phone*, 2023, soot on gesso on canvas, 62 x 46 in
2. Armando Nin, *Pretty & Smart*, 2023, soot on gesso on canvas, 62 x 46 in
3. Armando Nin, *Where Is Your Ambulance?*, 2023, soot gesso on canvas, 62 x 46 in
4. Armando Nin, *Changing My # In A Second*, 2024, soot on canvas, 64 x 52 in
5. Armando Nin, *Until I Faint*, 2024, soot on canvas, 64 x 52 in
6. Armando Nin, *Sleeping On A Mirror*, 2024, soot and wax on canvas, 72 x 72 in
7. Armando Nin, *Diamonds Look Like Water*, 2023, soot on gesso on canvas, 64 x 52 in
8. Armando Nin, *Smiling In All My Pictures*, 2023, soot on gesso on canvas, 64 x 52 in