

EXTENSION

Claudia Peill

The **Extension** series marks a new chapter in Claudia Peill's artistic practice, which has been evolving for more than thirty years now, in an ongoing dialogue between photography and painting. Over the years, the artist's gaze has focused on fragments of the everyday world, from the urban landscape to some of contemporary life's more surprising elements, using photography as the starting point from which the image is transformed and transported into a different dimension.

In this new cycle of work, her gaze is turned up towards the sky. Clouds become the subject via which she probes the unfixed, the indefinable and the immeasurable. These are not, however, portraits of a natural phenomenon or explorations of landscape: the sky becomes an open-ended space, devoid of limits, a threshold leading into an indefinite dimension a long way from reality's concreteness.

The works in this series begin as photographs of skies and clouds taken by the artist herself and then digitally altered and transformed with pictorial interventions using resin and pigments. The title **Extension** evokes precisely this process: the photographic image is dilated and modified beyond its original form, to the point where any obvious reference to the facts it records is lost and a new visual space is generated.

Colour also plays a part in this transformation. The tones found in these works are not an attempt to represent the sky as it is in nature, but create artificial, unexpected atmospheres where blurrings, transparencies and reflections continually modify our perception of the image. The luminous, stratified quality of the resin allows the artist to create an ulterior surface halfway between presence and apparition.

The sky, in the **Extension** series, is not so much a subject to be portrayed as a location occupied by the gaze. Shifting and elusive, the clouds become a vehicle via which to approach the concept of the intangible – that which exists before our eyes but cannot be gripped hold of, defined or possessed. So Peill's research here is oriented towards a form of abstraction understood not as a departure from reality but as the possibility of reaching beyond the visible.

One of the fundamental characteristics of the series is Peill's use of the **diptych** – a format that frequently recurs in her practice. The photographic (and more immediately recognisable) portion dialogues with a second, pictorial and quieter surface, ostensibly monochrome but rich in stratifications. This "mute" section is not simply a complement to the image: it is a suspended space that invites viewers to ponder what it is that appears here and what remains hidden.

There is also a powerful horizontal tension running through these works. The lines that extend through the compositions evoke an endless horizon, a dimension that seems to continue on past the outer edges of the work itself and encourages the eye to move out beyond the scale of the present.

Alongside these paintings, the artist is presenting a tapestry made specifically for this exhibition. Entitled **OROROSA**, its origins lie in one of the works in the series, and it effects a surprising transformation: an image born of an element as weightless and impalpable as a cloud is translated into a textile surface – something concrete and physically occupiable. This meeting of image and material generates a dialogue with the Museo Boncompagni and the decorative arts tradition, and it demonstrates how far Claudia Peill's practice has the potential to expand into different languages and different mediums.

Martina Casadio