

helen mirra  
*amaro in ebraico*  
*(hebrew for bitter)*

**PRESS RELEASE**

**via a. stradella 1-4**  
**september 22 - november 12, 2022**

There were some empty white walls in the palace, and upon one of them the emperor Minghuang ordered Wu Daozi to paint a landscape. Daozi mixed some ink and spread the entire bowl of ink on the wall. She covered the wall with a piece of cloth, and uncovered it again, as if making a print. Mountain, water, forest, animals, everything was included in the dark painting.

Daozi slowly gestured at the painting and said, *there are small rock caves in the mountain...they are very beautiful hermitages.* Daozi walked into? onto? the mountain. She turned around and motioned for the emperor to follow. Then disappeared. The emperor remained standing in the palace, and there was no ink left on the bright walls.

abridged excerpt from *Liexian quanzhuan* (Wang Yunpeng, 1600 CE)

There have been ciphers, calligraphy, and images of rivers and mountains; these reversed, hand-lettered, at-scale paintings are none of those things.

The signifier (the painting) refers to the place on the other side of the sign.

These particular rivers and mountains are in the Sierras in Northern California.

## BIOGRAPHY

Helen Mirra was born in 1970 in Rochester, New York. She lives and works in Muir Beach, California.

Mirra's practice has consistently been formally minimal, using simple materials while engaged with maximal ideas about perception and participation as a person on this particular planet. In a practice synthesized with the activity of walking and an ethic of non-harm, she has produced works in a range of forms. Mirra's open attitude has evolved alongside her appreciation for ancestors and peers across disciplines who have been committed to directness, gentleness and critical inquiry.

Helen Mirra select solo and two-persons exhibitions include: *Du vent au vent*, Rochechouart (2022); *Nueve años caminando en las laderas*, Museo de Arte Zapopan (2020); *No Horizon*, BAMPFA, Berkeley, California (2019); *Gehen, weben / Camminare, tessere*, Kunst Meran / Merano Arte, Meran (2017); *Hourly Directional*, with Ernst Karel, MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge (2014); *Gehend (Field Recordings 1-3)*, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, and Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn (2011).

Her work has been included in group exhibitions and institutions such as: Museu de Arte Contemporânea de São Paulo (2018); Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston (2018); MCA Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Chicago (2017); Mudam Luxembourg, Luxembourg (2013); Nasjonalmuseet Oslo (2012); Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia (2011); Kunsthaus Graz, Austria (2011); KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2008); Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas (2004); Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley (2003); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2001). Mirra took part in the 50th Biennale di Venezia (2003) and in the 30th Biennial of São Paulo (2012). In 2020 she was the recipient of a Guggenheim fellowship.