

Exhibition File

**Cristina Lucas - *IMAGO MUNDI***  
16 November - 21 December 2008



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We have the pleasure to present the solo show *Imago Mundi* by Cristina Lucas (1973), an emerging Spanish artist whose work has never been shown in Belgium. Lucas's work focuses on cultural and political value systems and on the way they are translated into contemporary art. Within this analysis, a feminist approach plays an important role.

*Imago Mundi* is an exhibition in which Lucas tries to reflect on the capacity of mankind to understand and interpret the world that surrounds it. The spatial representation is conceived on the three possible scale levels: the immense, the earth globe and the molecular. Each of these scales can be made visible due to the technological developments man has achieved, one of the main characteristics of which has been the conquest of the world as an image. Heidegger's statement that '*the essence of Modernity is characterized by the fact that the world can be converted into an image*' is a point of reference for the concept of the show.

The exhibition is entirely made up of new works, including an installation, two video works and a new series of paintings, and takes up both of the gallery's exhibition halls. In the new series of paintings on display in the gallery upstairs, Cristina Lucas constructs a global geography based on the vulgar words used in each country of the world for 'money', for the sexual parts and for the term 'friend'. In doing so, she shows one of many possible aspects of a 'real' global system instead of the kind of globalisation inspired - or even imposed - by purely economical interests. The simple observation that forms the basis of these paintings, leads to a number of problematic questions. The series is part of an ongoing process in which Lucas proposes an alternative atlas of the world. A former phase in this process, for example, was her video and painting series *Pantone*, shown at the latest Istanbul Biennial.

A new videowork, on display in the hall downstairs, confronts the viewer with a female performer painting 'big bang' on the screen with her vagina, offering him or her the kind of view Courbet already gave us in his oilpainting *L'origine du monde*... The video suggests a kind of feminist cosmology in a bold yet humouristic way, which seems to be typical for Cristina Lucas's oeuvre.

Another video, also part of the presentation downstairs, is an abstract wandering through all the pixels of the 'photograph of all photographs', the first Nasa telescope image of the universe. The video has a duration of six days - the time needed for all the pixels to pass the screen - and the brightly coloured, magnified squares passing in front of our eyes provoke a philosophical mood, quite different from the experience caused by the first video...The installation completing the show is a scale model of our solar system, rescaled to the gallery's spaces and surrounding grounds.

The concept of this show fits perfectly into Lucas's general strategy, described by Katya García Anton (now director of Centre d'Art Contemporain in Geneva) in her text on Cristina Lucas in the catalogue for *The Real Royal Trip*, an exhibition of young Spanish art curated by Harald Szeemann in 2004: "*The analysis of both vanquished and victorious political thought systems, lies at the heart of the artistic practice of Cristina Lucas. Lucas' exploration of what could be described as the semiotics of ideology operates through the female body, and is profiled against the backdrop of a habitually male-gendered history. The interrelation between the 'aesthetics of information' she engages with, and the link she establishes with gender and political critique, belong to a line of discourse developed by artists such as Martha Rosler in the 1970s.*"

Cristina Lucas's originality also lies in the fact that she dares to return to fundamental - ideological - questions on the social impact of art, without avoiding a critique of the discourse on feminism, globalization and oppressive political systems. Cuauhtémoc Medina, a critic, curator and historian who lives and works in Mexico City, comments on Lucas's approach in his essay *Failed Messianism*: "*Lucas's satirical style is not simple. It owes something to the approach of the old court jester in which humour is only critically effective when ones plays the role of the madcap clown (...). But at the same time, Cristina Lucas interprets cultural and political stereotypes as tedious arguments that dissolve in the barren intent, without any thought process whatsoever, to renew the confederation of innocence, beauty and truth.*"

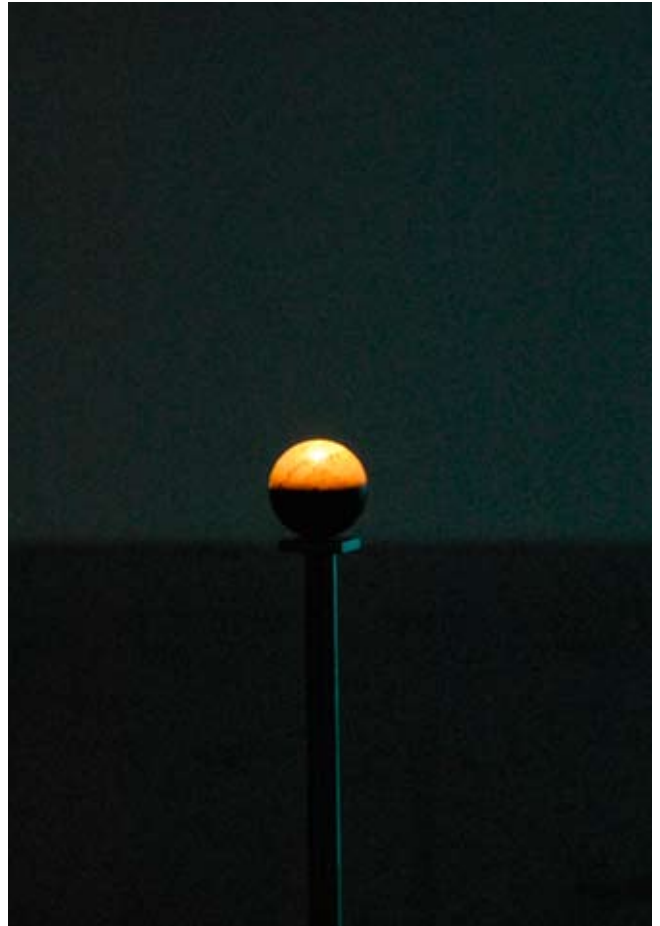
Indeed, Lucas's reaction on debated themes is never without irony. Most of her works can nevertheless be read as sharp statements. She says about her approach: "*I am interested in the problem of ethics within contemporary aesthetics. For that reason my work jumps freely between different subjects. I try to create an undefined map of the lacunas of existing structures in power, education and art. In my personal confrontation with big themes I cannot avoid that I am a woman. This results in a substantial swift in my view on the cosmology, which is traditionally dominated by the masculine point of view. My interest is to incitate the viewer to choose an ethical position in confrontation with the piece of art, to start thinking on a different way on common truths. In order to enhance this strategy the media I use are suppressive. I select situations and scenarios where the factors are working as they are supposed to, but in an inappropriate way.*"

## Short biography

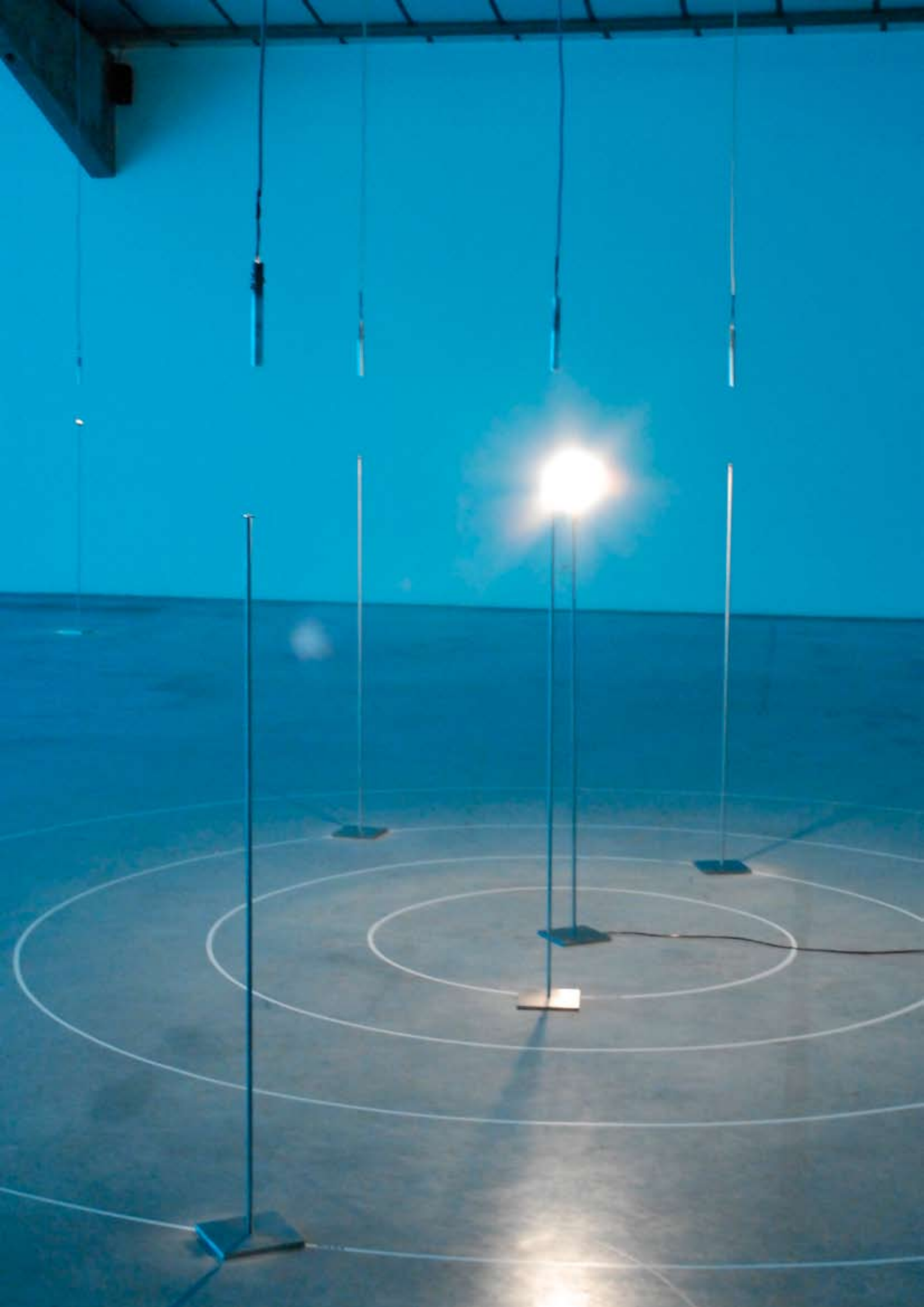
Cristina Lucas was born in Jaén, Spain, in 1973. Her work was selected for the last editions of the biennials of Istanbul and Singapore, and for the biennials in Havana and Sao Paulo. She took part in group shows at ao. Musac (Léon, Spain), De Appel (Amsterdam), Palais de Tokyo (Paris), Mart (Rovereto, Italy), Sala Rekalde (Bilbao), Marco (Vigo, Spain), Kiasma (Helsinki), Centro Montehermoso (Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain) and many others. She is currently preparing her solo show at the Centro de Arte 2 de Mayo (Mostoles, Madrid).

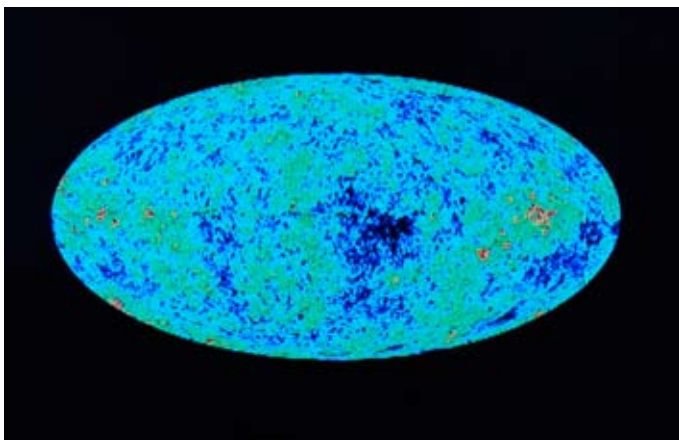
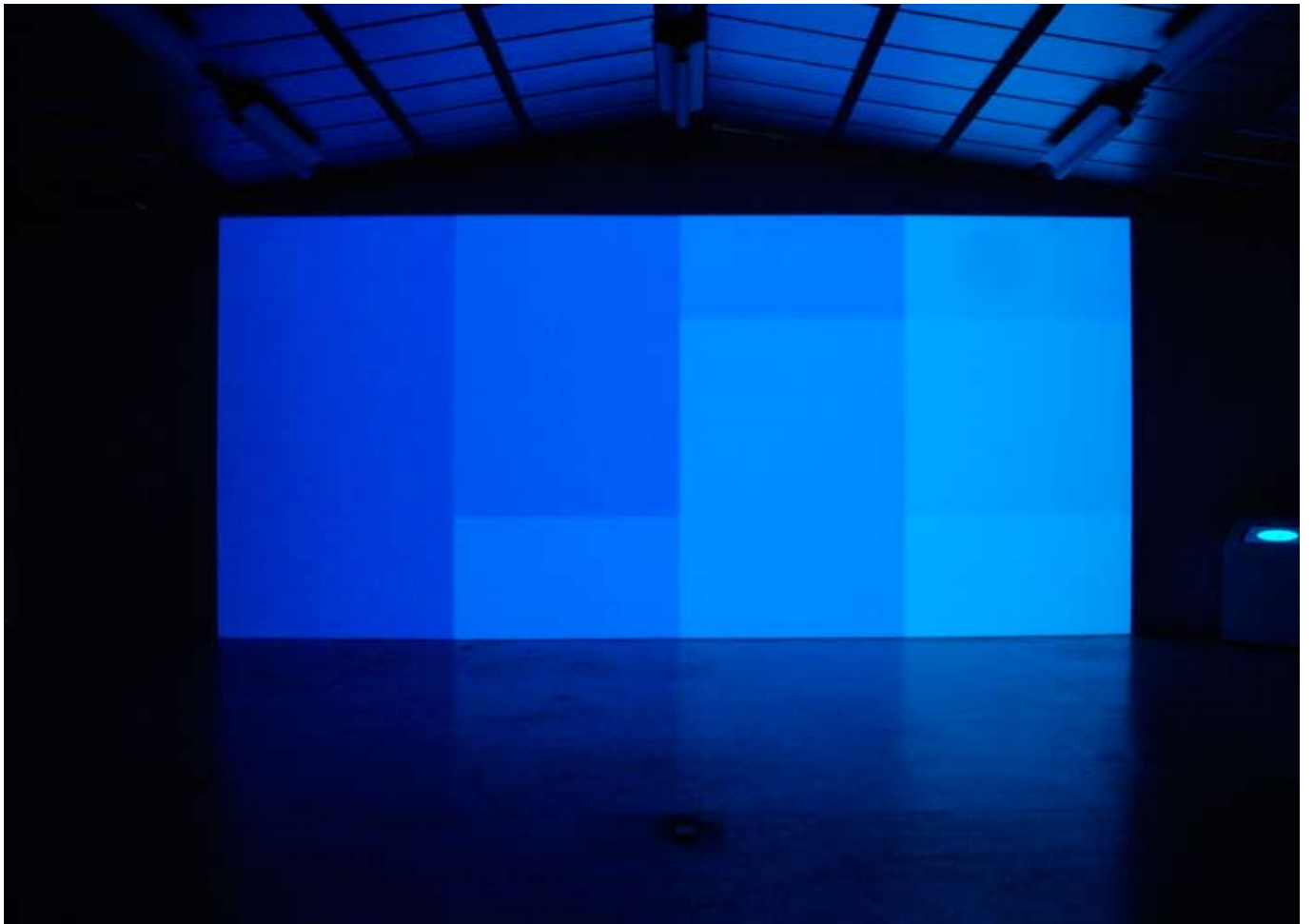
## IMAGO MUNDI - list of works

Solar System by Commission, 2008, installation (light bulb, stainless steel, tape, metal and stone), variable dimensions  
Trip through the Universe, 2008, video-installation (2 HD-videos in colour, projection / flatscreen), 6 days approx., ed 5 + I A.P.  
Big Bang, 2008, video-installation (1 HD-video, projected, colour / sound), duration 4' 13, ed 5 + II A.P.  
Male / Female (Africa), 2008, acryl on canvas, 2 x (100 x 100,3 cm)  
Male / Female (America), 2008, acryl on canvas, 2 x (160 x 100 cm)  
Male / Female (Oceania), 2008, acryl on canvas, 2 x (60 x 100 cm)  
Pocket Money, 2008, acryl on canvas, 140 x 250,5 cm  
Male / Female (Asia), 2008, acryl on canvas, 2 x (114 x 146 cm)  
Male / Female (Europe), 2008, acryl on canvas, 2 x (92 x 92 cm)



*this page and opposite page: Solar System by Commission, 2008*

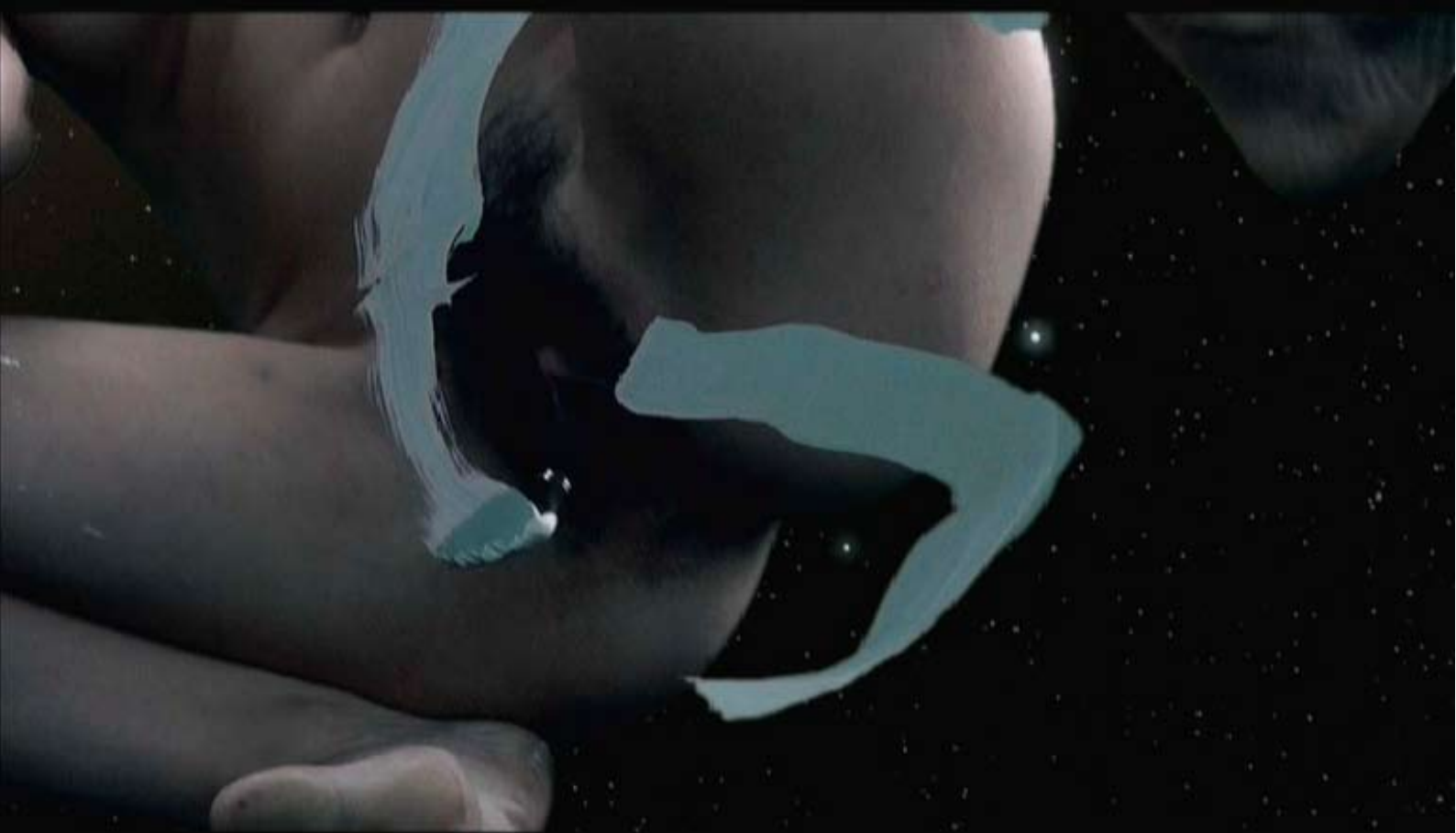




above: *Trip through the Universe*, 2008

opposite page: *Solar System by Commission*, 2008 and *Big Bang*, 2008











above: Male / Female (Europe), 2008, detail  
 under: Male / Female (America), 2008, detail



exhibition view (hall upstairs)





*Solar System by Commission, 2008, details (exhibition views: office and outside)*

Cristina Lucas - Imago Mundi | DEWEER gallery | 16 November - 21 December 2008

Opening hours Wednesday - Friday / Sunday 14:00-18:00, and by appointment

Road description On E17 (Antwerpen - Kortrijk) take exit 4 (N36), direction Ronse - after 7 kms, past the Gulf gasstation, take first right, direction Avelgem - after 1,5 kms: gallery on the left side

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