



A toxin threatens, but it also beckons

By agustine zegers

On View: November 6 - December 18, 2026

Opening Reception: Friday, November 6 from 6-8 PM

The IAO Gallery is pleased to present *A toxin threatens, but it also beckons* by agustine zegers.

For *A toxin threatens, but it also beckons*, Chilean artist agustine zegers questions the aliveness of everyday toxins and our bodily porosity to them through the lens of single-use plastics.

Within the exhibition, by-products of fossil fuels including polymers, lab-synthesized odorants, and polyethylene are fragmented and recontextualized through visual and olfactory means.

“Plastic brings a noxious pleasure into our everyday lives, one that binds us with extractivism through its protective sheen,” zegers says.

These small-scale works expand upon the desire and abjection of the polymers that surround and compose us. Post-consumer plastics are filled with fragrance that resembles the noxious smells of petroleum extraction.

A toxin threatens, but it also beckons borrows its title from theorist Mel Y. Chen’s essay “Toxic Animacies, Inanimate Affections,” which delves into the dynamics of human-generated toxicity and biopolitics—the connection between life and political power to govern individuals and populations.

A version of this text was originally written by curator Denny Mwaura, who produced the first iteration of this exhibition for UIC Gallery 400.

In conjunction with this exhibition, agustine zegers will be hosting an online workshop titled *Olfactory Meditation for End Times* on Wednesday, December 9, 2026 from 12-1pm PST. To register, please visit the IAO’s Eventbrite.

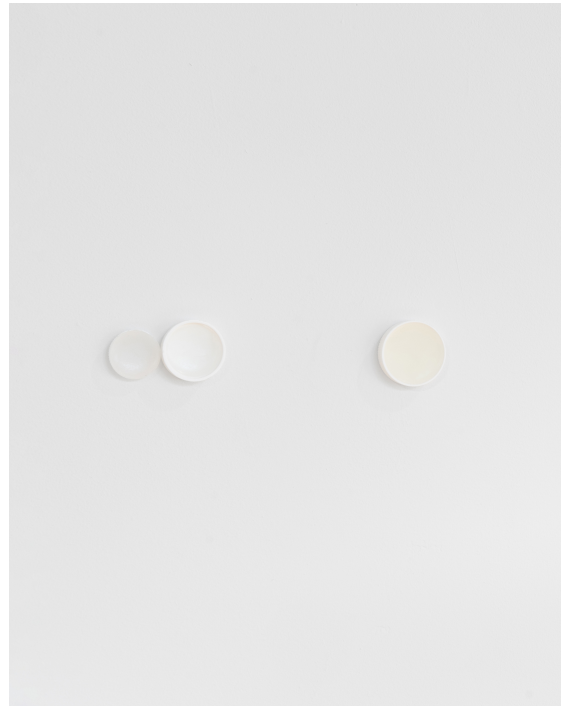


Image credit: Jonas Mikosch Müller-Ahlheim



About augustine zegers

agustine zegers is a Chilean olfactory artist and student of molecular biopolitics. Their work invites gaseous becomings that proliferate communion with planetary toxicity. They have scented and exhibited internationally at venues such as the Venice Biennale, Somerset House, Kunst Haus Wien, Gallery 400, 52 Walker, Prairie, Olfactory Art Keller, and Sharjah Art Foundation. They have lectured at La Escuela, Centre for Sensory Studies, Dia:Chelsea, XE Institute, and Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, among others. agustine directs *Speculative Scent Lab*: a para-academic laboratory for experimental fragrance education and ideation.

Learn more: agustinezegers.com | speculativescent.com

About IAO Gallery

The Institute for Art and Olfaction's gallery is devoted to exhibitions, performances, installations and other expressions that make use of or engage with the medium of scent. The space includes a dedicated 154 square foot room within the IAO, and two window galleries that face the pedestrian street, Chung King Road.

Open Hours

Fridays from 1 to 5pm and by appointment. Contact us at hello@artandolfaction.com

The IAO Gallery is accessible by wheelchair. However, please note that there is a one inch cement lip at the entry to the IAO.