

## EXTENSIONS OF THE SPIRIT

*By Florencio Noceti*

—

*“Sin ser una cosa extensa, el pensamiento tiene su extensión y se extiende a su manera, que consiste en no llegar nunca a estar extendido.”*

Marie Bardet

Minds less brilliant than René Descartes have often mistaken the terms of his celebrated distinction between thought and the extended thing. The fact that the RES COGITANS is never an already extended RES does not mean that it does not extend. But thought—perhaps unlike matter—extends endlessly with no boundaries, delimitations, or destination.

Borges asserts that “the terms of an infinite series admit any number,” and that “If space is infinite, we may be at any point in space. If time is infinite, we may be at any point in time.” Happen what may in the external world of bodies, this is precisely what happens within the realm of thought.

Mariana Sissia understands this clearly, distinctly. Her landscapes are landscape of the COGITO, of the mind engaged in the act of thinking. There is no room in them for references, cardinal points, or geodetic coordinates. They contain no up or down. The fact that, in them, any attempt at cartography or navigation is doomed to fail does not mean that the artist does not turn to those terms as concepts in an image potentially endless as well.

What the image depicts is a possible world never given over to the experience of the senses. Her—slightly dreadful—interest lies in the enormous difficulty that contemplation entails. How to explore a landscape like this? Where to begin? What direction to take? Where to end? Unfathomable as material, for sensibility the landscape of the spirit is also the landscape for the spirit.

Vague and incorporeal despite its undeniable consistency, the mental landscape that Mariana shows extends perhaps to the limits of the perceptible but not beyond the limits of the thinkable. Not yet extended, it extends precisely in order to be thought, indefinitely and endlessly by those who take on this arduous act of contemplation.