

Through Dusk

November 6, 2025 – January 10, 2026

Ortuzar is pleased to present “**Through Dusk**,” a group exhibition featuring works by **Lee Bontecou, Claire Falkenstein, Yayoi Kusama, Agnes Martin, Yoko Ono, and Mira Schendel**. Created between the late 1950s and the early 1970s, the works reflect a shared pursuit among these artists: to give form to the invisible, at a moment defined by the atomic age, the Space Race, and a popular imaginary enamored with the early exploration of outer space. Rather than depict the cosmos, each artist turned to abstraction, spatial configuration, language, and light as means of modeling unseen systems, from the subatomic to the spiritual. They capture both the anxieties of a world reckoning with nuclear possibility and the optimism of a generation newly attuned to the infinite.

The exhibition opens with Yoko Ono’s Plexiglas and text work *Painting to Let the Evening Light Go Through* (1961). Transforming the traditionally flat and opaque picture plane into a threshold for light and time, the painting-as-poem dissolves the boundary between artwork, architecture, and sky. Nearby, *Glass Keys to Open the Skies* (1967), proposes a conceptual bridge to transcendence—keys that might unlock both the heavens and the mind.

Mira Schendel’s *Objecto Gráfico [Graphic Object]* (1967-1968) similarly suspends language within transparent sheets of rice paper, where letters and symbols hover between form and thought. Born in Zurich in 1919, Schendel studied philosophy in Milan before fleeing fascist persecution during World War II. Moving between Bulgaria, Austria and Sarajevo, before settling in São Paulo in 1953, Schendel’s forms suggest alphabets both real and imagined. Exploring the opacity of language, her Letraset type, abstract marks, and handwritten linguistic fragments become—as she called them—“cosmic word dust.”

Lee Bontecou’s monumental wall relief *Untitled* (1962), on loan from the Bell Gallery at Brown University, is constructed from welded steel and canvas salvaged from conveyor belts. Its central void frames a pair of clenched metal jaws, as radiating planes of fabric—pierced by grated openings—conjure the image of a volcano, a black hole, or a fantastical machine from science fiction. Alongside a graphite drawing that reveals her complex spatial logic and a rare free-hanging sculptural orb from 1963, the work reflects Bontecou’s fascination with outer space and its inherent unknowability. The launch of the Soviet satellite Sputnik had a profound impact on her; she later recalled, “I had a joy and excitement about outer space—nothing was known about the black holes—just huge, intangible, dangerous entities, and I felt great excitement when little Sputnik flew.”

Claire Falkenstein’s open structures of copper, brass, and wire—including *Sun XIV* (1958)—translate theories of space-time and energy into sculptural form. Suspended networks of interlacing metal arcs trace pathways through air, suggesting constellations, atoms, or biological networks. Her work encourages perceptual shifts: viewed from different angles, these lattices alternately appear weightless and dense, microcosmic and cosmic. Her interest in the imperceptibility of scale—the idea that structures of matter mirror one another from the molecular to the celestial—links her practice to contemporary scientific models of the period. Related paintings and works on paper extend these investigations in two dimensions, exploring the interplay of line, color, and organic systems.

Yayoi Kusama’s early *Infinity Net* paintings similarly accumulate into rippling fields of swirling arcs set over red and green grounds, evoking endless motion and depth. Through repetition, Kusama sought to “lend specificity to the infinity of space.” In a series of early works on paper, Agnes Martin distills sensation into near-imperceptible shifts of tone and rhythm. Rather than depict a flower, in *The Great Rose of Evening* (1962), Martin sought to convey the mental and emotional experience of encountering one, translating perception into pure abstraction.

Together, these six artists trace separate but related inquiries into the immaterial—bridging scientific discovery and spiritual reflection, anxiety and wonder. In an era once defined by nuclear uncertainty and the promise of space exploration—and again today, amid renewed anxieties and fascination with the cosmos—“Through Dusk” reflects on the fragile and often porous thresholds between inner vision and infinite space.