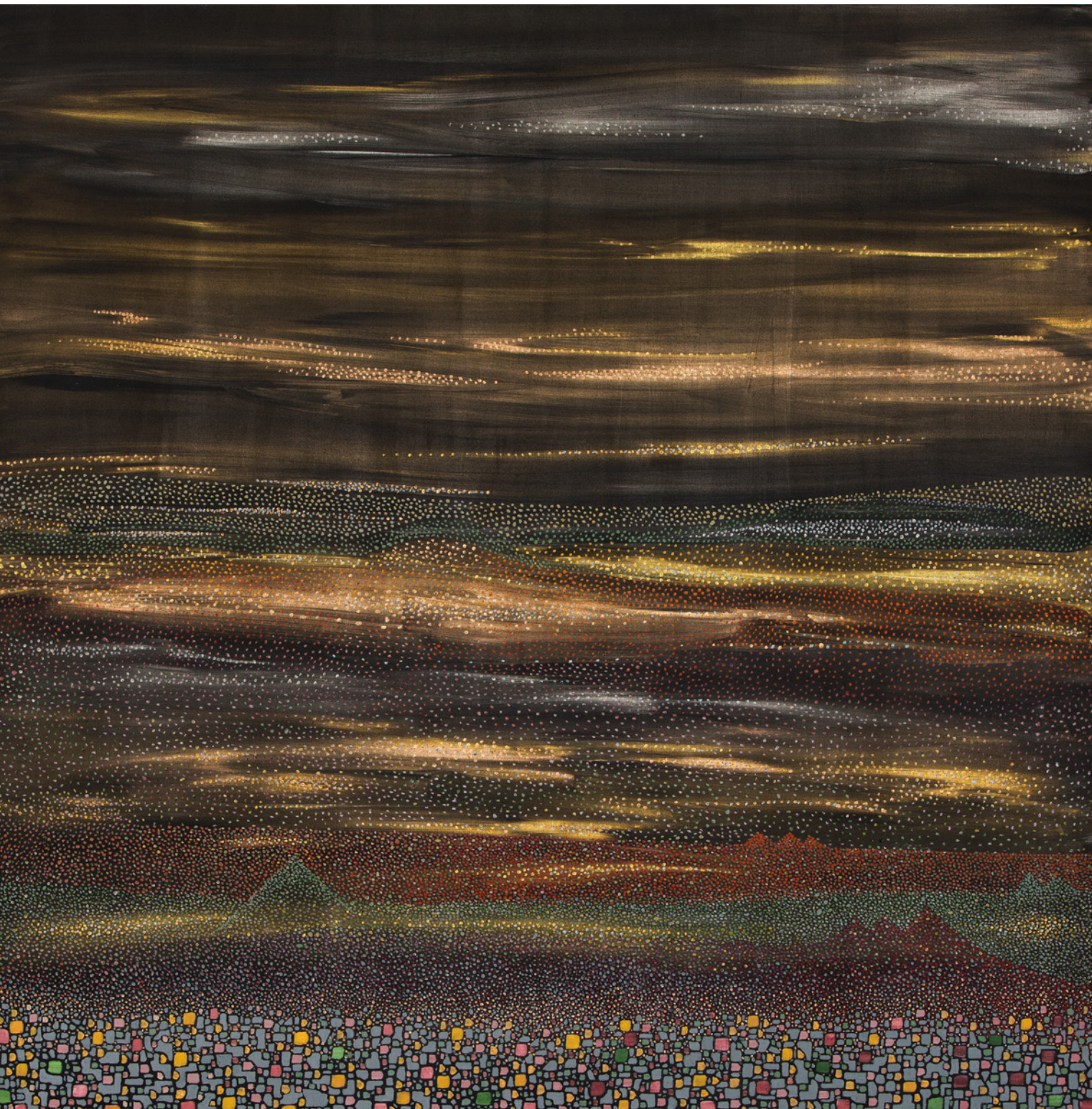


ROBERT BLITZER

Particle Harmonizer, 2017
Acrylic and oil on canvas, 51 x 51 in



COURTESY THE ARTIST

MONICA HILEMAN

Unexplained Phenomenon

N. was a student in his first year of medical studies when *Estudios Psicológicos* published that article by Robles that so provoked the establishment. Now that Freud's writings were widely translated and discussed, Robles, their trailblazer, was being welcomed back with open arms. That evening he would give the year-end address at the institute, a long overdue honor for a man whose daring ideas had exiled him to Santiago for two decades.

N., a native *porteño*, was in town for the event, enjoying a stroll down Avenida Córdoba, contemplating a rumor he had heard that there would soon be an opening on the faculty there at the University of Buenos Aires. He had a comfortable post at the medical school in Rosario, yet each time he came to visit, a wave of nostalgia and a desire to be more at the center of things made him long to move back.

Oh, how the city changed, ever more rapidly. He held onto his hat crossing the avenue—with all the automobiles jockeying to speed past, you took your life in your hands. On his way to his mother's for lunch, his mind was on *morcilla* and fish cakes, when a man coming toward him on the sidewalk seized his attention. The man was very short, his hips low to the ground gave him a choppy gait reminiscent of that sausage-shaped dog N. had seen on his trip to Europe. The juxtaposition of his large head of graying hair on a child-sized body was disconcerting. A black fedora pulled low over intent dark eyes, the grim suggestion of a mouth surrounded by an unruly mustache and beard—the face had the effect of a sudden storm blowing in. Adding to N.'s disequilibrium was a hazy sense of a previous encounter, perhaps in a dream he could not now clearly remember. Someone yelled out the window of a passing automobile, "Señor Robles." N. recognized the Berliet belonging to Francisco Beltrán y Ortega, a board member of the institute. And the man who smiled and waved back, the odd-looking man on the sidewalk coming toward him—this was Robles.

In three heartbeats N. would be toe-to-toe with the man he so admired. All his admiration could not be funneled into a brief remark and in the blink of an eye, they passed each other as strangers.

They were actually acquainted through a correspondence N. had initiated after *Sobre Los Pasajes Oscuros*