

Mere Skyn

Curated by Cory John Scozzari

With artists: Hannah Black, Pin Hui Chen, John Divola, Miguel Fernandez de Castro and Lydia Ourahmane, Pedro Herrero Ferrán, Hydrarchy, Siera Hyte, Jokkoo, Nancy Lupo, Mario Merz, Moro, Berry Patten, Victor Ruiz Colomer, Rosemarie Trockel, Mona Varichon, Jala Wahid and Dominique White.

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‘A snowstorm in a glass globe dropped by a child. The red water in the globe splashes over the white sheets on his bed.’

– Derek Jarman, Chroma

this guy i met once told me why he hates the sea

he was an italian guy and when he was a teenager his dad used to drag him out on his boat. a real sea head, his dad, a real addict and he pushed it all the time. and the son was this lanky sombre intellectual reluctant youth

Anyway

Mere Skyn is an exhibition that responds to Samara Scott’s installation *The Doldrums*, curated by Cory John Scozzari with works by Hannah Black, Pin Hui Chen, John Divola, Miguel Fernandez de Castro and Lydia Ourahmane, Pedro Herrero Ferrán, Hydrarchy, Siera Hyte, Jokkoo, Nancy Lupo, Mario Merz, Moro, Berry Patten, Victor Ruiz Colomer, Rosemarie Trockel, Mona Varichon, Jala Wahid and Dominique White.

they were out and this storm came out of nowhere. a grey wall like a dune or a cliff coming towards. boat was going crazy in these vertical swells of the waves. they were totally blind and crawling on all fours and tied themselves to the boat and the boat was literally going vertical, gravity just disappeared.

The works on display, individually and as a group, extend, complicate and contradict the artist’s proposition by highlighting both the vibrant power and disrepair of marine and terrestrial ecosystems, questioning globalisation and exposing the materiality of global trade or recounting histories of colonisation.

The selection and the dynamism of the installation is born from an incredibly charged social and political moment, one of continuous environmental degradation, global pandemic, militarized borders, relentless racism, police brutality, and drastic social inequality. While Scott's work may not explicitly reference this turmoil, it does make visible the swirling maelstrom of shipwrecked waste and decaying consumer goods we find ourselves floating in. To have an environmental debate within our contemporary moment is to speak of the global production, labor, distribution and consumption that is the incessant swirl and churn, splashing crash of global capitalism.

his dad tied him to the boat but he said he had to go on all fours and was still being slapped and flung and beaten by the boat underneath.

Paul Nash's 1941 painting *Der Totes Meer* (German for The Dead Sea) was a point of reference for Scott for her installation. The painting was made during the first half of the Second World War and renders a wrecked aircraft dump in England with fighter planes, stacked haphazardly upon one another.

Nash speaks of the work: "... the breakers rearing up and crashing on the plain. ... nothing moves, it is not water or even ice, it is something static and dead."¹

While it is impossible to uncouple the painting from its historical context, there are parallels to be drawn with the installation below. Formally they both recall the moment of breakdown, and depict the buildup and detritus, the material exhaustion left behind. Conceptually, to freeze so eloquently a moment that had witnessed destruction but was not yet privy to what was to come, at once a moment of mourning and foreboding.

anyway

suddenly

they came into this totally quiet spectral eye this hole this opening with the grey cliffs totally encircled them and in this pause they were there for 5 mins in this snowy silence and he says the only thing he remembers as this dripping twelve year old sallow boy drenched and crawling on the deck in this lusty venomous total derelict quiet was this white white flat thick milky wobbly foam cappuccino bubble bath padded silence like heavy licking lapping at the boat. This white foaminess.

¹ "Art in War: Exploring a Painting", BBC

Mere Skyn was conceived as a continuously changing score, with moments of collision, instances of overlap, and points of stillness. The works on display here are not meant to be descriptive or to explain or provide a clearer understanding of The Doldrums. It breathes, moves and spins, contrasting with the wordless, almost photographic fixity of Scott's landscape in the nave. The plurality of artists and works it presents counters and expands the singular vision and formal continuity of the personal exhibition.

I thought about how when the sea is angry, or agitated, it cries, its cracks open, it touches the air and splits its skin, it cuts itself open, and makes white foam. and the white foam is like its blood. so he was kneeling in this whole landscape this aftermath of churning and this silent squelch of blood²

² A story recalled by artist Samara Scott, that another artist had told her