

NOON Projects

Angel Pierced

Anja Salonen + Ben Borden

February 15 – March 25, 2023

Opening: Saturday, 18 Feb 6–9pm

NOON Projects is honoured to present *Angel Pierced*, a two-person exhibition by Ben Borden and Anja Salonen.

In the ‘Carrier Bag Theory’ of human evolution, anthropologist Elizabeth Fisher suggests that the earliest human invention was not a blade, or a pointed spear as popular narratives goes, but rather a bag, a sling or a net. It could be said that to carry and rearrange was the first game we learned to play.

Throughout “Angel Pierced,” Ben Borden and Anja Salonen take on this impulse to torque, hold and regenerate a landscape. Part incantation, part incubation, the exhibition and its allusions blur a seemingly sci-fi boundary between the immaterial and material worlds.

A bioplastic membrane of algae gel and honey, sprayed with an infusion of chemicals that react to create Prussian blue, the first synthetically fabricated pigment, adorns the gallery's outfacing window. Reminiscent of a petri dish, Borden sets up the parameters for an event, ever-evolving, wherein time and its corresponding residues transform in real-time. Like an *acheiropoieta*— an apparition made without the human hand, elements pool into auric and mercurial fields. An environment of synthetic interception and ecological weeping coalesces.

Ocean bodies, human bodies and spirit bodies emerge. Salonen's use of saturation and depictions of ecological horror and haven cross pollinate the chemical and the organic. A glass stemmed phantasm pulls itself up through a bloody center in *Red Tide*. A different kind of earthly extraction, wet and gooey, alludes to the erotics of energetic anatomy. Analogic color, a seamless spectrum, e.g., the gradation of the rainbow and digital color, individuated color in discrete non-merging units, e.g., a color chart, are employed as a means for inhabiting two perspectives at once. The shiny surface of wave crests gives depth to its flatness as much as it emphasizes it. A technical tension analogous to its symbolism.

Loops, spills and perforations flow throughout the exhibition in various schemas and guises. In Borden's *frustrated kenosis*, a hanging flower heat lamp keeps wax in melted form. The moment of material state-change is trapped in perpetuity. Heat-death and chronic contamination are evoked by way of lightfastness: the process in which natural and artificial light encountering a painted surface can mutate a pigment's chemical bond.

Multi-perspectival renderings of moments from *The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa* within re-engineered compressed wood armatures elicit a likeness to window grates, amulets and prayer cards. In collaboration, Borden and Salonen's frames are hyperbolic, barbed and scooped. The work crosses a

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threshold into the post-sacred-geometric, offering a logic of the nebulous over the fractal. This triptych, *Chimera (Ecstasy of St Teresa)* pins genetically altered plant life against the classical marble sculpture's cold constitution. An angel holds a spear over St. Teresa, in a euphoric trance. Representation of religious rapture and psychedelic apexes course heavily throughout, like biomarkers for a supernatural genealogy.

Borden's *heatlight(event mvk)* is backlit by candles. *Window(event mvk)* cuts into the gallery wall at a "Epiphany door chalking." These works index a material line as well as reference a geological lineage of pigment history. That is, the exploration of harvesting gemstones i.e., Lapis Lazuli is extended, mirroring the happenstance in which artificial paint was derived to *window(event mvk)*'s developing nature. An inference to when iron-cyanide contaminant was accidentally mixed into a red pigment resulting in a deeply radiant, yet deeply chemical blue.

"Angel Pierced," gestures at this mystery of ecological unity and deviation — the colliding and bundling of biomass in its ethereal and grounded shapes. Within the orbit of Noon Projects' walls, a special kind of recomposing, holding and carrying is underway, one that pricks like a spear. Here, we are encouraged to clutch and connect these timelines and temperaments, building new relational and integrated imaginaries.

—Shay Myerson

"Angel Pierced" Check List

