

Julie Beaufills  
*Démo*  
April 29 - June 3, 2023

**BALICE  
HERTLING**

Balice Hertling is pleased to present *Démo*, a solo exhibition of new works by Julie Beaufills.

Towards the end of Ruben Ostlünd's *Triangle of Sadness* (2022), having already lost hope of rescue after being stranded on a desert island, the film's protagonists realize that the location they thought was deserted is actually home to a luxury resort. The discovery of the metallic doors of an elevator built in the side of a rock face relocates the imaginary of the supposedly wild island into the category of the scenographic—or of simulation. The works presented in *Démo* provoke a similar reaction, somewhere between the joyous stupor of recognising something altogether familiar and the malaise of finding it where it shouldn't be—a vague sense of displacement.

The works seem abstract at first glance, but Beaufills allows for the appearance of forms within her works. The incongruity of the painting's planes and fragmented perspectives precludes the possibility of acknowledging a subject neatly, something that might exist outside the world of the paintings. The gaze is held in a state of nebulous doubt, at times semiotically short-circuited; the concise and enigmatic titles add to this effect. In *Le Parc*, while a relief in the foreground suggests the convex shape of a skate ramp, the pale blue shape superimposed overtop reveals another dimension. An organic silhouette—a branch perhaps—appears to fall from a tear in the sky/ceiling of *L'éclipse rouge*. Various temporalities collapse upon one another, streams of narrative overlap and converge in such a way that one begins to suspect there being a bug in the system.

These ambiguous compositions are the result of a poetic practice elaborated through an approach to rendering colour and space, a process of formal reduction that originates in Beaufills' drawing practice. The artist's archive on paper becomes a dictionary of forms, an abécédaire from which she might begin to map a cartography increasingly emancipated from the real.

While the fine, powdered strata of natural pigments—of red, of ochre, of yellow washed with blue—evoke perhaps the wide, silent landscape of a desert panorama, the works rather recall the treatment of such spaces within visual culture. All referents within the real are replaced by a filtered version of themselves suggests Jean Baudrillard in his work on the viral nature of signs and their eventual substitution to a 'physical' reality. Each of Beaufills' works could be a still from a road movie through an empty planet.

In Wim Wenders' *Until the End of the World* (1991), in some sense the ultimate road movie, it is from a laboratory hidden in the middle of the Australian outback that the Dr. Farber attempts to develop a machine connected directly to the brain to upload images and collect memories and dreams. Julie Beaufills' works follow a similar operational method insofar as they imagine a porousness between interior and exterior worlds, between the immensity of the horizon and the multiplicity of images stocked in the networks of the mind.

The series of paintings on wood make reference to the symbolist imagery in the illustrations of Pamela Colman Smith (1878-1951) for the Rider-Waite tarot deck, which provide the foundations of a lexical field that develops throughout the exhibition. The introspective, elusive nature of the small formats activates multiple registers of meaning depending on individual experiences and perspectives—as in the drawing of cards, an infinite number of combinations and interpretations become possible to the reader.

*Julie Beaufills (b. 1987, Paris) lives and works in Paris. Recent solo exhibitions include Diegesis, Matthew Brown Gallery, Los Angeles, USA; La Plage, Balice Hertling, Paris, France; True Myths, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, Brazil; Le Meilleur des Mondes, La Kunsthalle, Mulhouse, France; In Tongues, Overduin & Co., Los Angeles, USA. Recent group exhibitions include Inner Dims, Sifang Art Museum, Shanghai, China; Exposition 120 (maybe), Balice Hertling, Paris, France; En transit, All Stars x Signal L, Lausanne, Switzerland; Palai, Palazzo Tamborino Cezzi, Lecce, Italy; The negative version of the official version of things, Balice Hertling, Paris, France.*