

Clémence de La Tour du Pin, Manuel Schneider, Bri Williams

*Stardust*

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Imagine a universe where every twinkle in the night sky has a story to tell. Stardust carries the whispers of the cosmos, holding the history of long-gone stars. These particles, scattered across the vast expanse of space, are the seeds of new worlds or residues of the old ones. They travel through space, mixing with interstellar clouds, and over countless ages, they clump together to form the bedrock of new stars, planets, and, ultimately, life itself.

Stardust was once only an annoyance for astronomers, as it obscured objects they wished to observe. In our solar system, interplanetary dust causes the zodiacal light, a triangular and diffuse glow of light surging from the horizon in our night sky. With more recent observation tools, the dust became an object of study in itself, narrowing the distance between the sky and the Earth. The complex and varying composition of the cosmic dust could be weighted, quantified, and analyzed by space explorers and geologists. Like a thin rain, several tons of stellar dust are attracted yearly by Earth's gravity, sprinkling the vast but shrinking immaculate white surfaces of the Arctic and Antarctica or accumulating in thick and muddy sediments at the bottom of the oceans.

Re-adapting ancient trompe-l'oeil craft techniques of the Van der Kelen-Logelain school, Clémence de La Tour du Pin delves into themes of tradition, metamorphosis, and the ethereal, crafting intricate, highly processed objects that weave narratives of the reimagination and transformation. Umbrella parts, textile pieces, photographs, and even artistic techniques are stripped of their original purposes and given new shapes, functions, and a new life through reinterpretation and reassemblage. By artificially replaying the natural cycle of destruction and recreation on objects, Clémence de La Tour du Pin mimics the very fabric of matter. Finished, these objects become sedimented layers of historical knowledge that preserve and transcend their origins.

Manuel Schneider's artworks are complex entanglements of found materials: scrap wood, metal, rope, and wire. Disparate pieces are brought together with care and meticulousness, tied together with knots and bandages, to reach a point of balance and singularity. These purposely unidentified, yet familiar objects remind the instruments of the astronomers, the UFO fanatics, or the shamans, such as lenses and antennas, drums and portals. They evoke times when scientific and spiritual knowledge were participating in the same cosmology, a time when the observation of nature and the stars was the other pendant of the study of one's own soul and spirit.

Duality is omnipresent in Bri Williams's work, reflecting on the nature of existence and the inherent conflicts within the human experience. By repurposing everyday objects like cutting boards and transforming organic materials like flowers, Williams bridges the gap between the tangible and the intangible, creating art that speaks to the soul's deeper struggles and triumphs. The contrast between the delicate flowers and the harsh dunce cap creates a dialogue about vulnerability, resilience, and the transformation of natural beauty into a preserved, almost artificial state. But perhaps this foolish attempt to subtract matter, even temporarily, from its natural evolution may only accelerate its disintegration into crumbles and dust.