



Tan Mu: Signal

5 September – 15 November 2025
Curated by Nick Koenigsknecht

For more information



Tan Mu's ongoing Signal series is a sustained artistic investigation into the invisible architectures of global communication. The series transforms submarine fiber-optic networks into symbolic "digital constellations"—bridging abstraction and representation, emotion and system. The artist reimagines these hidden infrastructures not merely as technical constructs but as vessels of collective memory and human connection. By fusing planetary systems with individual and cultural histories, Signal creates poetic diagrams of connection and rupture, mapping time, scale, and collective presence.

As part of a longterm collaboration between Tan Mu and BEK Forum on Signal, the exhibition features five paintings from the series, which depict the undersea telecommunication cables that connect and compose our global, techno-human society. This body of work, grounded in Tan Mu's oil painting technique and diving experience, creates original, milestone imagery that reflects our evolving relationship with both technology and one another.

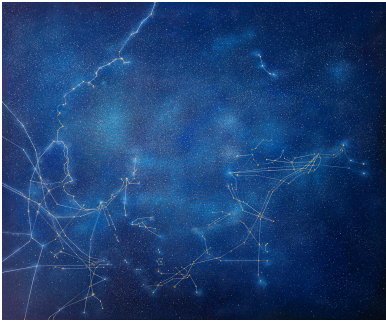
Having entered top international collections since its debut at Art Basel Miami Beach 2024, the Signal series has its first comprehensive presentation at BEK, accompanied by music and scholarly programs.

Tan Mu (b. 1991, Shandong, China; lives and works in the United States) is a contemporary artist whose practice investigates the invisible structures that shape modern life—ranging from submarine communication systems and data flows to cosmic observation and memory systems. Her work constructs a visual language that bridges structure and emotion across both macro and micro scales, emphasizing the themes of connection and continuity that underscore our shared human experience.

Combining traditional oil painting with tools of expanded vision— including microscopes, satellite imagery, and scientific visualization— Tan Mu navigates the liminal space between technological history and personal experience. She views technology as both an extension of the body and an externalization of memory, creating compositions that interweave embryos, neurons, logic circuits, quantum computers, solar farms, data nodes, and celestial bodies. Through this layered imagery, she builds visual bridges between the visible and the invisible, the tactile and the abstract, the systemic and the affective.

Tan Mu holds a BFA in Expanded Media from Alfred University, New York (2015), and graduated from the High School of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing (2011). Her work has been exhibited internationally, with solo exhibitions at Peres Projects (Berlin and Milan, 2022). She has participated in group shows at Arario Gallery, Shanghai (2025); Penske Projects, New York; Winter Street Gallery, Martha's Vineyard (2024); YveYANG, New York (2023). Her work has been featured and reviewed internationally, engaging themes of technology, memory, and visual abstraction on Numéro, Artnet News, Mousse, among others. Her paintings are part of private and institutional collections internationally, including the A.R.M. Holding Art Collection, Dubai; Carmen Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, Barcelona; The Institute for Electronic Arts, Alfred, New York, among others.

BEK Forum is a Vienna-based production platform for art and scholarship, with a focus on project-based collaboration with artists and imaginative forms of exhibition and performance. Founded in early 2025 by Li Yizhuo, BEK reflects her interests in and commitment to the full cycle of producing, documenting, and studying experimental forms of visual art, performance, and music.



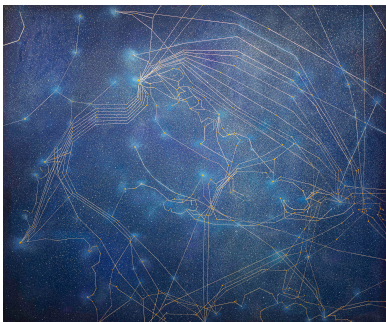
Signal: Submarine Networks 04 (Norway)

2025
Oil and acrylic on linen
152.5 × 183 cm (60 × 72 in)



Signal: Submarine Networks 05 (UK)

2025
Oil and acrylic on linen
152.5 × 183 cm (60 × 72 in)



Signal: Submarine Networks 06 (Caribbean Sea)

2025
Oil and acrylic on linen
152.5 × 183 cm (60 × 72 in)



Signal: Submarine Networks 07 (Australia)

2025
Oil and acrylic on linen
152.5 × 183 cm (60 × 72 in)



Signal: Submarine Networks 08 (Italy)

2025
Oil and acrylic on linen
152.5 × 183 cm (60 × 72 in)

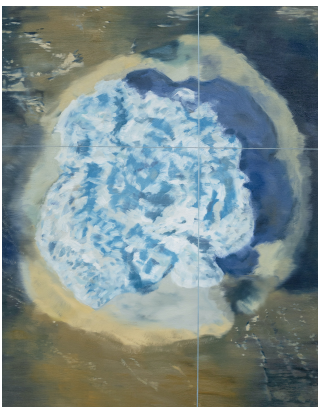
Beyond the Signal

Alongside the five paintings from the Signal series, this group of additional works invites viewers into a wider atmosphere of thought and connotation. Together, they offer a broader context for understanding Tan Mu's practice, which moves through themes of connection, transmission, perception, and presence.

Many of these works focus on moments when technology and human consciousness meet. In *Share*, a newborn rests in her father's arms, recalling the first digital photo ever shared via a mobile device. The painting quietly evokes the threshold of a new era, when the digital transmission of intimacy began to reshape how we relate. *Eruption* captures the moment a volcanic blast in Tonga severed communication lines, offering both a literal and symbolic image of rupture. In *To Mars to Explore*, a Mars rover appears to turn its camera back on itself, suggesting a pivotal moment of machine self-awareness, and raising questions about the edges of consciousness and the future of perception.

Other paintings shift the scale of inquiry toward the cosmic and the elemental. *Torus* evokes the self-sustaining energy system found throughout nature, from black holes to magnetic fields. The painting's luminous center pulls us into a cycle of continuous movement, a loop of return. *Observable Infinity* imagines the universe gazing back at us, inviting a quiet reflection on our place within vast and hidden structures while in *Moldavite* and *Antimony*, Tan Mu turns her attention to the afterlives of cosmic events, rendering celestial minerals as carriers of memory and transformation. These works feel almost devotional, honoring the invisible connections between matter, time, and meaning.

Peek revisits the first photograph of Earth taken from space, a grainy glimpse that marked the beginning of a new kind of planetary awareness. *Mapping*, made from found circuit boards, resembles a star chart or satellite view, hinting at the poetic potential of signal, pattern, and logic embedded in our technological tools.



Eruption

2022
Oil on linen
76 × 61 cm (30 × 24 in)



To Mars to Explore

2022
Oil on linen
91 × 102 cm (36 × 40 in)



Torus

2021
Oil on linen
61 × 46 cm (24 × 18 in)



Gaze: Observable Infinity 02

2025
Oil on linen
36 × 61 cm (14 × 24 in)



Moldavite

2020
Oil on linen
36 × 28 cm (14 × 11 in)



Horizons 03

2024
Oil on linen
46 × 61 cm (18 × 24 in)



Mapping

2021
Circuit board mounted on wood panel
63.5 × 49.5 cm (25 × 19.5 in)