

AN IMAGE IS A STATE OF MATTER

Ariana Martinez

@wilbornstudios: August 9, 7:07 AM: “Is light a living thing?”

Quiet italics superimposed on a black field float through my disappearing feed. I press my thumb to the screen, willing the text to stay.

@resonancearchive: “Yes.”

I mean to return to the Messenger thread with more robust reasoning, sources, texts; but I never do.

The relationship between observation, representation, and reproduction continues to erode. Every image is a state-change: iterative by default, mediated, compressed, corrupted or — conversely — enhanced and hyperreal. Even moments of direct observation are elaborate synaptic collages. Every method of image capture attempts to stabilize these oscillating inputs, to crystallize this energetic exchange. Images laboriously packaged for transmission still flicker upon arrival. We cannot believe our eyes.

An image is a trap set with light, and each one is faulty. The places where capture fails are conduits for travel beyond the picture plane. Set in the sublime space of light’s transmission—in the time between observation and reproduction—*Sweeping Out the Tomb* is a series of conjurings: a fire lit cave, a crystalline prism, a dark sky reserve, a densely packed mirror array generating heat.

A flash, then smoke. Here, color vibrates through deep membranes and textured skins. Figure and ground atomize and recombine along the axes of tensile grids. A code of ones and zeroes opens a series of hyperlinks. Skilled hands weave a net. Below the surface, life is precious and present, bioluminescent and self-sustaining.

This place rewards immersion. For those who linger in the dark, *Sweeping Out the Tomb* reorganizes the senses. Even in the moments where the work triangulates to a specific place and time, it continues to unfold beyond those set coordinates.

Those who are looking are writing. They chart untraceable paths with a flaneur’s gaze, each saccade a signature. They expand their range of motion: reflect, refract, shift, scatter, leak, absorb. They gain new tools: a cloak, a lens, a shield. They take new names: light-eater, shape-shifter, time-traveler, scribe.