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Terravision

March 22 – June 21, 2024

von Bartha, Copenhagen

Emilia Bergmark, Cecilia Germain, Liz Larner,
Liu Shiyuan, Laure Prouvost, Barbara Stauffacher
Solomon

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The group exhibition, *Terravision*, presents six artistic positions and borrows its title from the first networked, virtual representation of the earth. Based on satellite images, aerial shots, altitude- and architectural data, *Terravision* was programmed by a small Berlin startup in 1994 and is hailed as the genesis of the now widely used Google Earth program. Through this new and seamless navigation of a large spatial data environment, *Terravision* presented us with a wholly new landscape to explore from a vertical viewpoint and offered the possibility to zoom out of the dystopian daily grind, allowing us to freely survey our environments anew, and build a deeper and more personal understanding with mother nature.

The six artists in this exhibition, curated by Mamie Beth Cary, delve into the above research about our planet and offer their own interpretation of the bird's-eye view, their own mapping, and "earthly" visions. This collective inquiry into the environment of our shared habitat engages the entirety of the Copenhagen gallery.

Commencing on the outside wall of the gallery with an eye-catching enamel sign "ASS" *Supersign*, 2021, **Barbara Stauffacher Solomon** puts our perspective and vision to the test. What do you see: a heart on its head, or rather what the title suggests? Continuing in the entrance hall, a site-specific wall painting, *Terravision*, 2024 wraps around every corner of the room, from floor to ceiling, evoking the green rectangles that steadily participate in the drawings, designs, and concepts of Stauffacher Solomon. Enveloping the entrance hall like climbing vines, the green geometric lines mimic the exterior architecture of the local area of the gallery building, where square, high-rising towers rapidly surge upwards from the building sites. Offering cartography on another, more abstract level is *California: Golden, Green Backed & in Mourning*, 1990, as the US state and home of the artist would be seen from outer space. As with most of her works on paper, they oscillate between graphic design and typography, mapping and sketching.

On the opposite wall, another homestead mapping, much larger in scale and appearing as a detailed pictorial survey, *Norrland's Flora in Color*, 2023, further investigates the influence humans can exert on their natural environment. **Emilia Bergmark's** triptych tapestry unfolds its narrative of how a specific flower meadow in Northern Sweden has changed over the artist's lifetime. For Bergmark – featured as the protagonist in trainers, picking flowers – the scene is a microcosm of our world's wider biodiversity crisis, driven by human-led activities such as mono-cultural farming and crop growing. Bergmark considers this tendency in more detail in her two-panel screen *Fields*, 2019, another textile-based work, displaying the abstracted brightly colored landscape of the Danish island of Møn with man-made fields, stretching out beneath the sky.

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Across from Bergmark's meadow in the main gallery space, *Asteroid 2002AJ129* and *Asteroid Osiris*, both 2021, by **Liz Larner**, stand firm on their ground. These celestial bodies are made of the earth's clay, they are literally the earth, and yet they represent the extraterrestrial, the outer space, and offer a glimpse from another reality, a fictional sky-scape, a fitting part of the post-human Anthropocene in which they have been created. The conditions of the relatively new geological age in which Larner believes we currently exist, namely the period in which human activity has held the ultimate dominant influence on climate and the environment, lend to the contradiction of this recent series of works. Asteroids are part of her further examinations of place and person, exemplifying the artist's ongoing investigations into objects, bodies, and space within a distinctly earthly context.

Botany and its possibilities for healing are heeded in **Cecilia Germain's** low-lying sculpture, *Periwinkle Path*, 2021–2024, weaving across the exhibition space. Germain considers plants her allies and, more than symbols, carriers of knowledge, stories, and tradition. Here, Germain references the practices of her ancestors, who used to plant these evergreens to indicate burial sites, offering a window to an otherwise lost people, because enslaved Africans in the American South were not permitted to mark their graves. The winding shape of the installation mirrors an ocean wave, reminiscent of the power and violence of history making the Atlantic Ocean a mass grave. Three abstract blue watercolors accompany the installation. Created by the artist as a kind of therapy, to find a place where her grieving soul can rest, she ultimately finds liberation in a visual world through honoring her ancestors.

Acknowledging the omnipresence of the digital, the place of origin for the Terravision software, **Liu Shiyuan's** practice investigates the symbolic nature of borderlines through the often comical and misunderstood relationship between man-made technology and the phenomena of physical reality. Hand-drawn, minuscule patterns repeat in what seems like an endless stream of information, resembling what one imagines the inside of a data farm looks like. In *Punished You and Me (No.17)*, 2023, drawings of nearly transparent human hands blur the steady pattern of multicolored squares. Similarly, the digitally rendered large-scale work, *The Shade of Dirty of Materials*, 2024, challenges an uncomplicated viewing. The work is made up of a myriad of contradictory images, all layered upon each other, with a colony of seals committing mass suicide as the base. Thus footage of dead and dying seals, people navigating national borders by foot, shiny, beautiful pearls and diamonds, and children playing on a beach appear indistinctly as different shades of humanity, presenting a challenge to the audience to find their own answers based on individual sentiments.

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The protagonist in **Laure Prouvost's** film, *Every Sunday, Grand Ma*, 2022, has a desire to be airborne, to be closer to the birds, and is given wings. The limitless power of Prouvost's humorous and idiosyncratic imagination grants "Grandma" true freedom and liberation from the ground, where she has always been hidden behind a man. The man who, in her dreams, "would not lose his new teeth everywhere."

She invites us to embrace escapism, to grow our own wings and, like the birds, float freely above the clouds, shattering the boundaries that limit us and thereby looking to new perspectives on the female body, ecology, mother nature, and migration of people. Where are the women? Where are the mothers? In the sky, she holds the privileged gaze of our world from above, floating within the earth's Troposphere.

Emilia Bergmark born 1986, lives and works in Copenhagen and Malmö, SE

Cecilia Germain born 1974, lives and works in Uppsala, SE

Liz Lerner born 1960, lives and works in Los Angeles, USA

Liu Shiyuan born 1985, lives and works in Beijing and Copenhagen, DK

Laure Prouvost born 1978, lives and works in London, Brussels, and Antwerp, BE

Barbara Stauffacher Solomon born 1928, lives and works in San Francisco, USA

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