

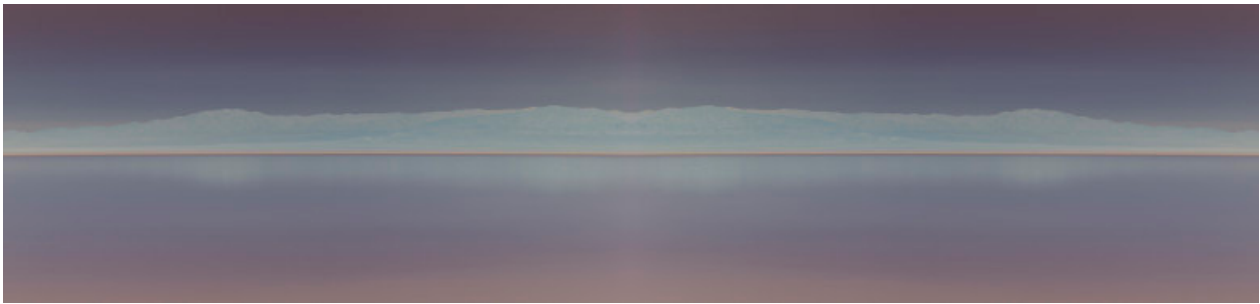
HUNGER

Art & Culture

POINTS OF CONTACT

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The horizon is an intriguing phenomenon; that unreachable point where land meets sky. Inspired by the horizon and landscape of the American Southwest, Adeline de Monseignat and Marie Kaus present *Points of Contact* at The Cob Gallery. The works displayed are a direct result of their residency, which took place in Utah, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas.

De Monseignat presents a series of mirrored photographs, which consist of a glowing horizon. The photographs are incredibly beautiful, showcasing the wondrous light and landscape of that region. Alongside this she has also continued her exploration of tactility with a carved marble sculpture.

Marie Kaus displays the documentation and trace that remains behind after a performance, including one where she jumps from a height onto a crash mat in the gallery. The result includes a sound piece that booms through the gallery at various intervals. Another work by Kaus was created at a cliff edge during the residency, in which the artist is seen to elevate above the cliff top, due to the artist performing a handstand.

The horizon has another meaning in a dual show like this. It represents the meeting of two minds. This show and the work is the result, it is the horizon. I spoke to the two artists to find out about the process of making work together.

What has showing together been like? I know you feel it's been a very worthwhile collaborative undertaking, but what has the process been like?

Marie Kaus: I think we were very lucky because it was a very trustworthy process, and for me this is very important. We had a starting point, coming back from the residency. From then we were constantly discussing it but there was a lot of trust between us, this meant that we did not have to meet every week and talk it over again and again. We were amazed when we saw the body of work together.

Adeline De Monseignat: It really came together very organically.

M.K: Yes, and without having to work hard at making it be something.

A.DM: There are so many crossovers in our interests anyway. There was a reason why we wanted to do this. It was a case of giving each other space and time to make the work, and this meant that we trusted each other and knew that it would come together. As Marie explained earlier, when she was working on her fall piece, she was here in London and working in the gallery. Meanwhile, I was in Italy, working on my marble piece, and there was a really nice organic mirroring. We were both physically involved in the process and the making at almost the same time. We were both physically challenged by those two pieces. Marie, because her fall piece was so difficult on the body, she had to see an osteopath for a long time afterwards. For me, working with marble meant that I would wake up and have sore wrists and arms. It's that idea of pushing the boundaries that really comes back to the idea of the horizon, going beyond that thing that seems so unreachable. It was a very revealing process, it the most positive of ways.

M.K: Adeline, you mentioned when you were in Italy that your mentor, who taught you to sculpt, said that when you hit the stone it hits you back. I think that's how I felt when I hit the mat. We are both really committed to our practice, so we both felt we could give each other space. It would never been a failure, even if something doesn't turn out right it would still be meaningful, because we are so involved.

A.DM: A lot of the time you see finished pieces of work that feel very safe. I think the notion of failure is a very interesting one. We're human beings, not superhuman, some things do fail. I remember the day. I was in Italy, it was a Sunday, and I knew she was going to jump. It was like we were twins, connected in some way. I felt so nervous. She had asked a stuntman how to fall.

M.K: I had some advice, but I also dive at the pool. So I have some understanding of the weight of my body, through a void and then having to hit a surface. Obviously when diving its water and here it was quite different. It was interesting to take that falling process into a gallery space. Like the landscape photographs here, including the horizons, the photo I took of the space is a landscape photograph. It is of my landscape, the landscape of the gallery, the space that I interact with. It's nice to have these two forms of landscape photographs, because, as an artist, you go on residencies in the wide open space, then you show your practice in an urban space.

A.DM: A concrete jungle.

M.K: Yes, but it is still a landscape.

What made the horizon there so interesting? I've never been, but I imagine the light must be amazing.

A.DM: It was. Jet lag made me awake all night, so I was out of my tent with my little camera. I was amazed by the horizon. Every minute the sky kept changing colour. It was insane. I think I was there for four hours. You feel overwhelmed by it. What's amazing is that the horizon is meant to be the sky meeting the earth. That meeting point doesn't exist, it's something that is in our minds. It's almost going back to the point we made about failure, because it doesn't touch, it fails. The line that you see is either white or dark depending on the time of day. The horizon is an unreachable point. You try to capture it.

M.K: It's really interesting when you find yourself in the SouthWest of America. I do understand why so much land art has been made there. It is such a special space.

A.DM: You feel tiny there, like the quarry where I got my marble. When you visit a quarry you feel so small. We are little ants on the surface of this planet. Going on that trip really made me aware of how small we are.

At this point the video work that we have been sitting by starts to change, as two feet appear in the frame. We watch as those feet slowly rise up and disappear at the top of the screen... So what's happening here, you're performing a handstand?

M.K: Yes, the landscape that you can see there (she points to a large black and white photograph behind the TV, on the wall), is what was behind the video camera and in the foreground is the canyon. We were camping there for about five days. I was taking a never-ending amount of photographs, trying to capture the feeling of being there. It's almost impossible. I think I spent about three days, sitting down on the cliff and photographing. I just put the camera down and decided to do a handstand.

It's quite alarming, the way your feet just disappear!

A.DM: It gives you that sense of vertigo that you feel when you are at the edge. The feeling transmits to the viewer well, which is a very tricky task.

M.K: It's interesting because this is the landscape when you are there, this is a moving image, but barely anything happens. When the body appears in the frame, you have some idea of scale, and it pushes itself away from the earth you have a feeling of serenity.

A.DM: You just have the presence of absence. You see that there were feet there, but the suddenly there are not. You just see the little amount of disturbed earth, left by the action.

You've both mentioned the physicality of the work, and that is evident within the show, but you both also deal with other senses. Adeline, I know from your work in the past, that you explore tactility. Would you consider an exploration of the senses to be a big part of your practice?

A.DM: Its how you feel, so it's the number one thing that needs to be transmitted. It's so inaccurate when we refer to ourselves as visual artists, I don't know why we're not called sensorial artists. The term is very limiting. Touch is so much a part of how you sculpt. The sculptor that taught me said "stop looking, close your eyes and touch", and really when you touch you feel the flaws much better. It was an amazing revelation. I've always worked on the idea tactility and touching with your eyes,

but for the first time someone taught me it, but in a new way. Touching is a very interesting way of seeing things. I think it important for the viewer; again wrong word, to experience pieces in many more ways that just visually. Marie's work is sensorial because you need to listen to it and be in the space. The same with the whole show, being in the space, with the prints, with the marble, the scale of it all relates to the body.

M.K: Every time we speak about the show something new emerges, a new connection. I guess it's a good sign!

You both use photography and the camera. How are your different relationships to the medium and to the camera itself?

A.DM: For me the camera is a transitional object; it is that third entity between nature and myself that enables me to understand...

[CRASH! The sound of Marie's recording of her crashing on the mat echoes through the gallery]

to understand, or an attempt to understand nature. It's not something I usually use. Normally I have it more for documentation, rather than the creation of a work. For this special setting of the American Southwest, it was my transition object.

M.K: I used to make sculpture, but now photography has definitely become one of the main aspects of my practice. It's a love/hate relationship for me, because it is key and the photographs are tools for making context of the work. The portraying aspect of photography I find amazing, but I also find it very frustrating, the fact that it will never give you that feeling you had in the place. This is when it becomes more of a hate relationship, which actually brings a whole new dimension to the work. It is then up to me to find out how I give depth to the image again. What can I bring to that image to make it close to what I had at the time? So here [she points to her video installation] you have the moving image coming out of the still landscape.

[Crash! Another loud bang as the sound of Marie falling on the mat plays again]

What's next for you both?

A.DM: I have a group show next week in Paris. A gallery invited women in creative industries to choose their favourite contemporary artist. So ten women choose ten artists, Joseph Kosuth is in the list of artists, which is great. The big project that I have been working on for the past year and a half, and still working on today and hopefully for the rest of my life(!) is 'Whispers'. It's based on the notion of Chinese Whispers. I have always liked to go back to the origin and question the notion of the origin. In this case I am questioning the notion of the original. I choose one painting and I went to an artist and I ask them to replicate it in one month. Then I take their 'whisper' and I take it to another artist, so on and so on. Its been twelve months with twelve artists and the work has really taken on a life of its own. Its amazing. I have a meeting with this project one a month, meeting two artists at a time, picking up and dropping off. I'm the middle woman every time, but my mission is not to say too much, because I will spoil it. The whisper is about language and these artists communicate with each other in their own language. I shouldn't disturb this language. I'm carrying on with it, I think I'm at number seventeen now, but the first twelve are being shown at Ronchini Gallery. Marie is going to be part of the next round.

M.K: I'm actually quite looking forward to having time off. I do not constantly produce. I'm going to go abroad, which gives me some distance from what has happened, but also whatever I bring back may inform my work.

Do you know where you'll be going yet?

M.K: India. I've never been and I have a friend there who's doing a photographic residency in the Himalayas. So I think it's a good opportunity to go to India.

Will you two work together again?

Both: Yeah! Hope so!

A.DM: I think it will probably be in five years. We met five years ago, if we have a meeting in five years; I think it would be a really nice conversation to see how our practices have evolved. I wouldn't be surprised to see more crossovers.

M.K: We should make it a date

A.DM: We should. Meet you in five years... but still coffee tomorrow!