

Elizabeth McTernan. Sun Collaborations, 2016

Elizabeth McTernan (b. 1981) USA/DE

Sun Collaborations. Shadows cast by objects high in the sky on the Equinox as the Earth stands up to the Sun (selection of cyanotypes).

Residency 1.3.–29.3.2016

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Artist Elizabeth McTernan was initially drawn to the northern landscape of Finland by her ongoing investigation of “true north,” based on the fact that, at this very moment, magnetic north is erratically wandering from Arctic Canada towards Siberia at human speeds, on average 7 meters per hour and at most 80 km per day, while geographical north is fixed at the center of a cradle of geometric lines, the gridded legacy of human empire and knowledge. Ironically, magnetic north, the very point of supposed stability we count on to tell us where we are, leads us astray from geographical north. That invisible force that guides migrating birds and compasses, even it is

compelled to wander off/

With this idea in mind, she has been using different mapping and anti-mapping methodologies to explore a subjective relationship to landscape and territory, especially in those more tenuous spaces in the northern frontiers of the planet. She requested to come to RaumArs during the time approaching the spring Equinox, as the Earth is “standing up to” the Sun, and before it takes its bow into the light.

During her residency in the month of March, she developed a series of cyanotype works. The images are abstractions that she calls “eclipses,” or “shadows cast by objects high in the sky.” The motifs are meant to be ambiguous in scale – geometric shapes that could be seen as either discrete objects or celestial forms. The cyanotypes themselves range from small (10cm x 10cm) to large (150 cm x 150cm). She sees each one as a cyan pixel, wherein an old photographic printing technique calls up the particulate-matter of the digital realm. Cyan is both the chemically-inherent color of the cyanotype process and the artificial color of the oceans of satellite mapping, a la CMYK. While one print captures the absolute specificity of the angle and intensity of the Sun in one fleeting moment on Earth, it also touches on our larger relationship to surface, both phenomenal and digital.

Elizabeth McTernan is an American artist based in Berlin. Since 2003, she has been pursuing research, over land and sea, in North America, Europe, Russia, Central & Southeast Asia, and India, processing it via actions (“non-vicarious encounters”), drawing, video/audio installation, storytelling, and lithography. She exhibits internationally and has been invited as an artist-in-residence at numerous reputable institutions across Europe and the United States. Also, she once saw someone slip and fall on a banana peel in real life.