

March 12 — June 12, 2021

Wild Blue Yonder

“Rising gradually like a small pearl in a thick sea of black mystery. It takes more than a moment to fully realize this is Earth... home.” – Edgar Mitchell (NASA Astronaut / Apollo 14).

Newchild is pleased to present 'Wild Blue Yonder', a group show featuring works by Madeleine Bialke, Ella McVeigh, Antonia Rodrian, Kristian Touborg and Taylor Anton White which will be paired with a selection of historic photographs from NASA's golden age (1940s-1970s) and meteorites. The exhibition brings together a group of artists who, each in their own way, create a body of work that attempts to overcome the challenges of being an artist in an a-temporal cultural climate whilst being faced with asynchronous communication forms. In their efforts to do so, the artists in Wild Blue Yonder are creating images for the future's present, their art works consider what to tell the future about how the world is now.

Wild Blue Yonder explores notions of the past, the present and the future through a window of otherworldly and dreamlike realities. In a time when complex and fluid algorithms have replaced the clear linearity of books it is increasingly difficult to understand the master narrative of our time. Thanks to modern technology, information is ubiquitous yet completely dematerialised and fragmented. William Gibson first identified this phenomenon in 2003 and coined it with the term atemporality: a strange state of the world in which all eras seem to exist at once. Gibson used it to describe a contemporary cultural product that paradoxically does not represent, either through style, medium, or content, the time from whence it comes. Atemporality is by no means a novel or original idea (it has been argued that the concept was already broached by Walter Benjamins in his 1935 essay 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' as photographic reproductions had made art works from all times available to audiences) yet this exhibition attempts to tackle something that is undeniably unique about our present time.

The exhibited artists challenge the atemporal cultural landscape by creating art works that depict a compelling anthropological journey transcending the here and now. The exhibition investigates the idea of a longing for the unexplored, a yearning for future pasts whilst also considering what the relics of times to come might look like. It explores, through the eyes of the artist, a collection of unfamiliar and enigmatic places. For some of the exhibited works, the exploration is quite literally an inquiry into outer space, the 'Wild Blue Yonder' itself, for others it is a more symbolic and personal journey to a place which may not exist in reality. The artists in the exhibition present an oeuvre that is both transportive and reflective, they offer the viewer a portal into a world which resists being hypnotised by the overflow of digital imagery.

The art works in the exhibition are paired with 2 sculptural iron meteorites of 4,5 billion years old, a 19th-century lunar photograph by the Henry brothers and a collection of NASA photographs. The NASA photographs are all impressions of the earth taken by astronauts on the Apollo 17 mission. Just as the exhibition investigates the dichotomy between the unexplored (whether it is the unknown in the universe, or within each one of us) and the familiar, an astronaut might experience the same conflicting feeling. As Alan Bean says: 'Most of us want to see what the moon looks like up close, we want to explore the unknown, yet, for most of us, the most memorable sight was not that of the moon, but of our beautiful blue and white home.'



The seemingly obtuse ways of collaging used by TAYLOR ANTON WHITE (b. 1978 United States) are the fruit of an improvisational approach rife with spontaneous gestures. His mixed-media compositions consist of what the artist describes as "contradictory elements that should be discordant but somehow come together to exist in a state of tenuous balance." His works are drawn from discrepancies and conceptual restraints expressed at many levels: between the work and its title, between the different materials used, between intention and perception. His highly-layered, textural, and often three-dimensional paintings unapologetically embody the numerous decisions an artist continuously makes. White's art defies categorisation, his works move between abstraction, text, found objects, and clearly defined imagery all within a single work. In his practice, he utilises a vast spectrum of media ranging from spiral bindings, spray paint, and charcoal to even incorporating drawings by his own children, thus calling into question entrenched notions of artistic ownership.

Danish artist KRISTIAN TOUBORG (b.1987 Denmark) has epitomized a new kind of subjectivity in painting, pairing intimacy and playfulness with art historical references and new technologies. His works are anchored in the dreamy and seductive authenticity that only material processed by the human hand can hold. Expanding on meditations on modern image ecology, Touborg has constructed a range of two- and three- dimensional works, which defy categorisation of a specific medium, by applying a mixture of painterly gestures led by spontaneous brushstrokes of vivid oil paint. In demonstrating a profound interest in new media and technology, Touborg creates imagined archaeological items from a near-future society. In his practice, he takes a firm stand for the analogue in a world which is overly saturated with digital imagery.

ANTONIA RODRIAN (b. 1989 Germany) looks at objects and events which occur in her life with an inquisitive mind, wondering how these banalities could find their natural way onto a canvas. Her oeuvre concerns itself with identity, it is an observation of archaeology, language and reactions to social structures and political events. Such events or artefacts are seen as traces of human gestures where the performed actions remain unknown or are yet to be discovered. Rather than directly illustrating these actions, Antonia uses her interest in formalism and the history of painting to overcome the barriers or expectations imposed by representation. In her own words: "Painting as material and positioning of colour turn out to be as important as the displayed content - they are engaged or even interlocked with each other." The repeated process of questioning representation defines her exceptional style.

ELLA MCVEIGH (b. 1992 United Kingdom) has created a strong body of experimental work which lingers between the figurative and the abstract. Her intricate works feel like ancient reliefs of foliage and shapes steeped with an uncanny sensation. Her practice comes from a desire to depict chaos and order as a unified state and is based on a combination of visual ideas and drawings. Through a daily routine of drawing, she builds on disparate concepts and notions until they feel complete. Taking inspiration from widespread sources in her immediate environment and bolstered by books on natural history and topography, she has created an idiosyncratic oeuvre which is always in motion.

MADELEINE BIALKE (b. 1991 United States) creates highly personal landscape paintings which stem from a desire to simplify nature. This desire originated as a result of environmental connotations (extinction, domestication global ecological devastation) but was also born out of hope. The hope that simplification of a complex subject matter such as the natural world might encourage empathy and could become a gateway to further understanding. Her post-apocalyptic depictions of forests and landscapes are enveloped in romantic ideas of their sublimity. Growing up in Northern Minnesota, Bialke became fascinated with the power of nature and humanity's smallness. A recurring element in her work is the solace which nature can bring, and its ability to encourage sincerity in oneself. Only alone in the presence of nature is one able to cast off any societal shackles and the need to perform for others.