

## the moon's new fury

*the moon's new fury*, curated by Johanna Bear, explores the transformative potential of the unseen, the occult, and the supernatural. Academics, artists and creatives have long embraced the subversive possibilities of mystical forces, and recent global tumult has prompted people to search for meaning outside of dominant knowledge-systems and power structures.

In this exhibition artists traverse ideas ranging from astrology, dreams and queer spectrality, to digital hauntings and planetary change. Together they conjure systems that help us better understand and connect with the worlds we occupy – whether environmental, digital, or subconscious.

**Anna May Kirk's** *Night Air* works use glass and scent to trace ideas of 'corrupt' air experienced in relation to climate change. From the early 14th to mid-19th century, it was believed that pungent 'night' airs caused a period of cooling, known as the Little Ice Age. Extreme weather events, foul smells, and the spread of contagious diseases were considered the Earth's attempt to purge human sins coaxed by the feminine magic of witches. During this time individuals wore sweet-smelling pomander balls as protection. Kirk's work uses olfactory ingredients from these amulets, including musk, ambergris, lavender and cinnamon, to give sensory form to atmospheric shifts. In *Night Air (breath)* (2022) glass rocks encase 'breaths' of fragrance. They pile upon a mirrored plinth that corresponds with the metallic surface of *Night Air (rock)* (2022), which diffuses the same cleansing scent.

*Aflame, A Singing Sun* (2019) is a ritualised performance by **Naomi Blacklock** reimaged here as an installation with video documentation. We see Blacklock seated on a bed of charcoal, using her body to percussively strike a gong and activate foot pedals that emit sonic frequencies. A flaming golden halo behind her, repeated on the KINGS wall, references a Prabhavali. This Hindu motif symbolises cycles of creation and often frames depictions of deities. Blacklock also brings together different histories of 'witches' – variously considered subjects of persecution or symbols for liberation by different institutions, cultural minorities and LGBTQIA+ communities. Bridging conversations of the witch that speak to her own cultural heritage, Blacklock channels this figure as 'an emancipatory symbol for alterity'.

In **Sundari Carmody's** *Milky Way* (2018) rows of handpicked seeds from the Papaver Somniferum plant, or 'sleep-bringing poppy', have been sewn and suspended within a white organza sheet. Carmody references the work of Vera Rubin, an astronomer who provided compelling evidence for the existence of dark matter. This composition mimics an inverted version of Rubin's photographs of the Andromeda Galaxy, in which white suns were illuminated on a black background. *Milky Way* connects these planetary movements that dictate periods of darkness or

light with the circadian rhythms of plants and people. For instance, human sleep cycles mean we only infrequently experience the intense aromas and vivid petals of poppies and other night blooming plants. Such temporal markers conceal or illuminate the world around us and thus shape how we experience it.

Across the gallery wall is an excerpt from **Manisha Anjali's** text *Twin Horses* (2022). It tells the story of two horses who came out of the ocean. The artist describes these beings as dream symbols she wanted to 'follow into the new world' during this current period of intense change. Through her Community Dream Practice, Anjali has identified horses, especially horses emerging from water, as a recurrent motif in many people's dreams. For the artist personally, these figures represented the wild horses she saw on Anangu Country in Central Australia several years ago. By examining ancient imagery such as this, Anjali unearths the realm of dreams and the subconscious, which, 'like magic', can both mirror and shape our lived experiences.

**Orson Heidrich's** *Multispec* (2021) gives form to ephemeral 'Internet artefacts' as both a physical sculpture and augmented reality (AR) experience. By chance Heidrich encountered fleeting Google image thumbnails that misinterpret data from online PDFs and abstracting text documents into monochromatic images of light and shadow. Each file disappears from the server after one or two days and serves an unknown purpose. Here Heidrich manipulates one digital anomaly into an AR apparition – a ghost of the Internet. The decomposing original image is rebuilt and reinterpreted into a three-dimensional datamap that excavates the mysterious and complex fabric of the Internet.

**Anna Pogossova's** *Technoplasm* (2020/2022) combines sci-fi film and sculpture. Within an oozing resin frame is her filmic response to *Multispec* by Orson Heidrich. An early 3D prototype of Heidrich's work appears here as lunar, interplanetary terrain and occupies a space between the alien and the familiar. Interested in using 'the keyboard as a Ouija board', Pogossova and Heidrich consider technology's potential to conjure magic and messages from worlds beyond. Unknown digital forces leak from the screen into the gallery and take form as an extraterrestrial sculpture that, although static, seems poised to stalk the space.

Self-portraits and the moon fragment and multiply in **Meng-Yu Yan's** monochrome photographic works. The artist uses mirrors, reflections and digital manipulations to craft surreal images evoking hauntings and spectral beings. *Halo* and *Moon Phase* (both 2020) focus on 'Queer Spectrality', a term Yan uses to describe their interest in experiences shared by both ghosts and queer people. Their works unveil parallel experiences of marginalisation, absence and erasure, and a shared ability to challenge established notions of existence and being. *Orb Sighting (Moon in Leo)* (2020) also oscillates between the physical and the supernatural with its series of celestial orbs that speak to Yan's interest in divination and astrology.