

BLUE SKY THINKING

Moving images by Izzy Dempsey, Johanna Karlin, and Maria Marshall

17 September – 11 November 2023

Opening 17 September, 3 – 7 pm

Musical performance by Lil Ulmann and Michael Haudenschild, 4 pm

artloft.berlin, Gerichtstrasse 23, 13347 Berlin — www.artloft.berlin



© Johanna Karlin, still from *The Sheep, the Sculpture, and Me*, 2022



© Maria Marshall, still from *Love Me, Love Yourself*, 2022



© Izzy Dempsey, still with dancer Tanit Graffelman from *The Space Within*, 2023

Photographer Izzy Dempsey is in search of her creative identity, broken by love bonded to a tragic loss. With her imagination sensitized by the need to share the “story,” the turbulent, demanding times nonetheless challenge her, impeding her path. The passion one feels for the desired person creates an extraordinary energy in life. A meadow scene imparts a sense of lightness and a magical fragrance carried by a caressing summer breeze. Here, the neutral, intimate representation of nature creates a safe space for grounding and new beginnings.

Every photograph interrupts the continuity of time, rendering a frozen moment of light. Wind has been giving formation to nature from the beginning. It creates tension within trees and plants through movement, transforming these phenomenal organisms from deep inside. In *The Space Within* Dempsey trusts enough to invite us into her universe, leading us through increasingly deeper layers of perception that explore intangible questions.

How we perceive the animal world has a long way to go in terms of respect and admiration. The conceptual, minimalist artist Johanna Karlin presents frames as if in between still and moving images, with motion frozen at points seemingly, to allow one time to perceive it. The nuances of such representation highlight an animal’s equal belonging in this world. In *The Sheep, the Sculpture, and Me*, every detail of a farmhouse scene, including a wooden installation built by the artist, melt together to draw attention to a central point, which is not a person, but an animal, bringing the viewer into a realm of equilibrium, thoughtfulness, and connection.

“The long, observational shot follows and records the animal’s movements in an unintentional and random adaptation to the subject, said writer and cinematographer Staffan Lindqvist. The sheep, through its actions, controls both the filmmaker and the viewer and, in a reversal of roles, becomes a subject in relation to the sculpture that it examines while moving around. The lack of clips, close-ups, and human language becomes a commentary on the ability of the film montage to direct consciousness in a certain direction, controlled by the messenger. In a broader sense, this unpretentious and open film also asks questions about objectification and distance from that which lacks human language.

In *The Gaze* we are met by the animals’ calm stare; we see the animals as individuals, with integrity and dignity. They pose quietly in front of the camera, and a connection is made with

the viewer, a wordless dialogue established where human and animal interact. Perhaps the film is a reminder of a time when humans and animals were closer than now, when they connected and understood, felt, and were touched by each other. *The Gaze* can also be seen as a reminder of the enigma of the living, the existence of an external and an internal world, of animals as well as humans.”

The moving images by Maria Marshall boldly address questions that we all ask ourselves. In the language of a conceptual artist, she has presented a woman cradling a newborn in her arms while standing in the middle of a battlefield surrounded by explosions. With the tool of a painter, a brush, she obliterates the image of a tank. Could there be a stronger message?

In *Blue Sky Thinking*, the artist uses skywriting to pose a fundamentally universal question: Where is the mentor to inspire our higher, inner being? From Marshall’s perspective, that mentor is found within ourselves.

“In *Pure as the Driven Snow*, filmed on a potentially fragile frozen lake in St. Moritz, Switzerland, the artist’s alter ego erases three letters — *g*, *o*, and *D* — leaving virgin snow in a spectacular untouched, landscape.”

Love Me, Love Yourself is a contemplation on an extremely meaningful, empathic expression. The four words of reflective cadence and rhythmic repetition form a question for which there is never affirmation.

A scream for understanding, being trapped in insecurity, a woman’s perspective, which in her own words more explicit than in Marshall’s oeuvre, which in her own words try to help us realize “that you are everything and nothing at the same time.”

Tanya Berlinski

Blue Sky Thinking – Moving images by Izzy Dempsey, Johanna Karlin, and Maria Marshall is part of a series of exhibitions at Gerichtstrasse 23, a building that has become a dynamic multicultural organism, considered by visitors from many corners of the world as an edifice with an open, free-spirited Berlin character. G23 is a space offering layers of continuously developing creative activities exploring new initiatives across various disciplines.

Exhibition curation: Tanya Berlinski
Poster design: studiopyda.com

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