

MAUREEN PALEY
MORENA DI LUNA



press release

ESTHER PEARL WATSON

An Apparent Brightness

MORENA DI LUNA

3 Adelaide Crescent
Hove BN3 2JD

21 May – 28 August 2022

preview day: Saturday 21 May 2022 12 – 7 pm

Maureen Paley is pleased to present *An Apparent Brightness* by Esther Pearl Watson at Morena di Luna, Hove. This will be her second exhibition at the gallery and her first to be featured at the Hove space.

“In this new body of work, I have concentrated on assorted drawings, paintings and ceramics anchored in an immersive mixed media installation. This work uses folk vernacular and abstraction to make a fragile gesture towards a perhaps hopeful new reality.

The focal point of the exhibition is a bright and colourful immersive walk-in screen structure that is also the source of the show's title, *An Apparent Brightness*.

Many of the paintings in the show include serene moments as children run through fields of dandelions. Metallic objects as well as flattened angels reminiscent of illuminated manuscripts hover in the atmosphere. We find meteors piercing the Earth's atmosphere, they become shooting stars, burning, and breaking toward their new form. Everyone depicted seems oblivious to what is happening above them.

The wall of bookcases within the exhibition space contains over twenty melon-sized meteorites made from earthenware (terra cotta and obsidian) like scientific artefacts. They look like otherworldly chunks that fell through a colour splattered atmosphere of glitter, dust and silver leaf. Many have pink or golden tassels resembling some type of invasive species or perhaps ocean life on coral rock. Some of the stones with tufts seem to literally illustrate the Greek etymology for comets as being 'long-haired'. The largest of the sculptures sits like a testament to an otherworldly experience and is titled after Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), the mediaeval visionary who contributed many early writings about the cosmos, drawings, paintings, manuscripts, and music that have inspired me.

It reminds me of how my father emails me descriptions of his own visions of angels. To him they are like a muse that inspires his drawings of flying saucers. I have to believe that what he experiences is real to him, even though I cannot share his experience. The idea of an object existing in one body in space, but on earth in another, is a reoccurring investigation in the various works. This double reality speaks to the post-pandemic world I find myself living in.

In a time where misinformation lives alongside scientific facts, where some are vaccinated and others mistrust vaccines, and safety guidelines constantly shift, everyone constructs their own fragmented rules to navigate. The news is so full of crisis and at some point, panic fatigue sets in. Living in Los Angeles, I find for myself one constant: I cling to gratitude for the small things I have learned during the pandemic and hope that we can overcome our worst nature to build something brighter for the future.”

Esther Pearl Watson

Esther Pearl Watson (b. 1973, Frankfurt, Germany) lives and works in Los Angeles, USA. Recent solo exhibitions include *The Magical Mystery Tour Returns*, Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, Los Angeles, California, USA (2022); *Safer at Home: Pandemic Paintings*, The Richmond Center for Visual Arts, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan, USA (2021); *Dream Believer*, University of Wisconsin, Parkside, Wisconsin, USA (2019); *Mothership*, Maureen Paley, London (2019). Additionally, her work has been included in group exhibitions such as *Rural Elements*, Contemporary Art Museum of Plainview, Plainview, Texas, USA (2019); *The Moon: Eternal Pearl*, Concord Center for the Visual Arts, Concord, Massachusetts, USA (2019); *Atrium*, Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, USA (2015) and *Sky*, Bedford Gallery, Leshner Center for the Arts, Walnut Creek, California USA (2014).

image: Esther Pearl Watson, *The Fleet is Supportive*, 2022, paint on panel, 20.3 x 25.4 cm

For further information please contact Lauren Williamson at lauren@maureenpaley.com

MORENA DI LUNA 3 Adelaide Crescent, Hove BN3 2JD. Saturdays and Sundays 12pm – 6pm