

A YEAR WITHOUT THE SOUTHERN SUN

FEBRUARY 21ST – APRIL 04TH, 2020

OPENING: FEBRUARY 21ST, 6 – 10 PM



Left: © Agnes Denes, Top: © Aurélien Mole

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS: Agnes Denes, Gordon Matta-Clark, Kevin Blinderman, Mathieu Kleyebe Abonnenc, Nadia Kaabi-Linke, Neda Saeedi, Rafael Domenech, Trevor Paglen, Yalda Afsah

Curated by Justin Polera

“**A Year Without the Southern Sun**” gathers 9 artists to investigate the relationship between decolonization and climate change. At the core of the exhibition is the ambivalence that surrounds the Anthropocene – the confrontation of nature and human-made creations, which can be both violent and beautiful.

The title is based on the climate catastrophe in 1816, when an eruption in the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) caused a volcanic winter across the globe. Volcanic dust and fallout caused atmospheric opacity that blocked out the sun. Although the crisis was an agricultural disaster in Western Europe, it still led to the creation of several masterpieces in art and literature including the sunsets in J. M. W. Turner paintings and writings of Mary Shelley, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Lord Byron. However, art history has largely neglected artworks made in the Global South during this year.

“**A Year Without the Southern Sun**” brings together a multitude of post-war and contemporary art works that reflect the diversity of artists from around the world. The works are subtle and enigmatic propositions, never simply addressing the past or present but often shedding light on possible futures. Many of the artists, such as Nadia Kaabi-Linke, Mathieu Kleyebe Abonnenc, Neda Saeedi and Rafael Domenech, look at their family histories and relationship to colonization and neo-colonization. Others, such as Trevor Paglen and Kevin Blinderman, seek to use the very technologies of the state to unveil the current military-industrial complex and security systems that surround us.

An emblematic work in relation to social crises is **Gordon Matta-Clark**’s film *Day’s End* (1974). It follows the artist as he cuts an elliptical hole in the river-facing wall of Manhattan’s derelict Pier 52. In part a performance, his actions are also a form of recycling and space intervention.

Meanwhile, **Agnes Denes** presents photographic documents in her seminal 1982 work *Wheatfield: A Confrontation*. Denes planted and harvested a wheat field in a landfill in Lower Manhattan’s Battery Park by hand. The wheat field was consciously grown at the foot of the World Trade Center – an early eco-feminist commentary that poignantly connects immigration, world hunger and waste with economic mismanagement and international trade.

“**A Year Without the Southern Sun**” presents artistic reflections on the exploitation of natural resources and the impending global consequences it causes. Through both reconstruction and destruction, the works in this exhibition mold the material of social reality into new forms.

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Sunday & Monday: closed