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Unseen

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WE ARE MADE OF TIME AND SPACE, ONCE WE CONTROL OUR MINDS
WE SHALL MASTER TIME-SPACE AGAIN

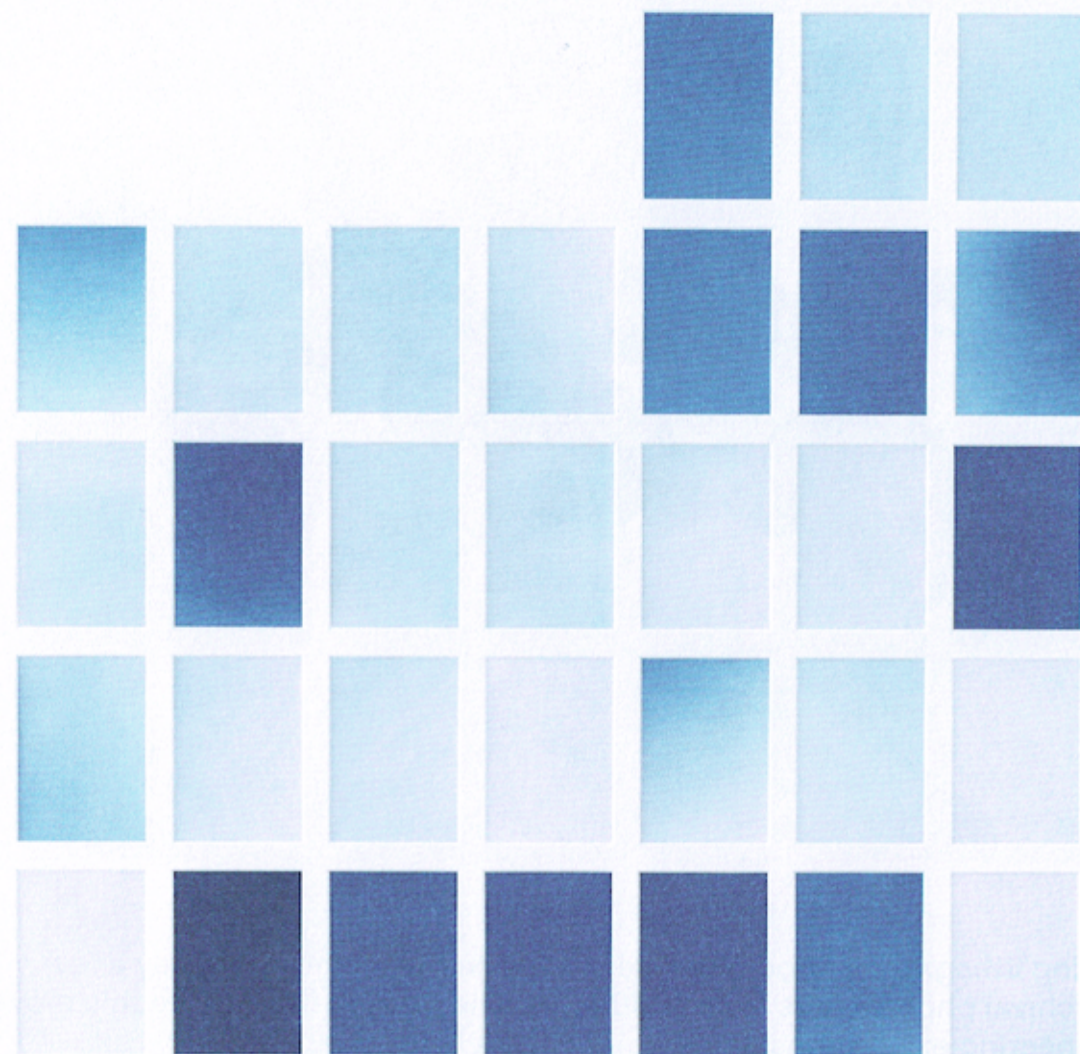


First, using lithographic processes, he prints archival photographs from 1930s mountaineering expeditions directly onto canvases cut from glacier blankets. These geotextile coverings – bearing the wear-and-tear of their original use – are laid over glaciers throughout Switzerland to cool and protect the ice, slowing down the rapid melting process.

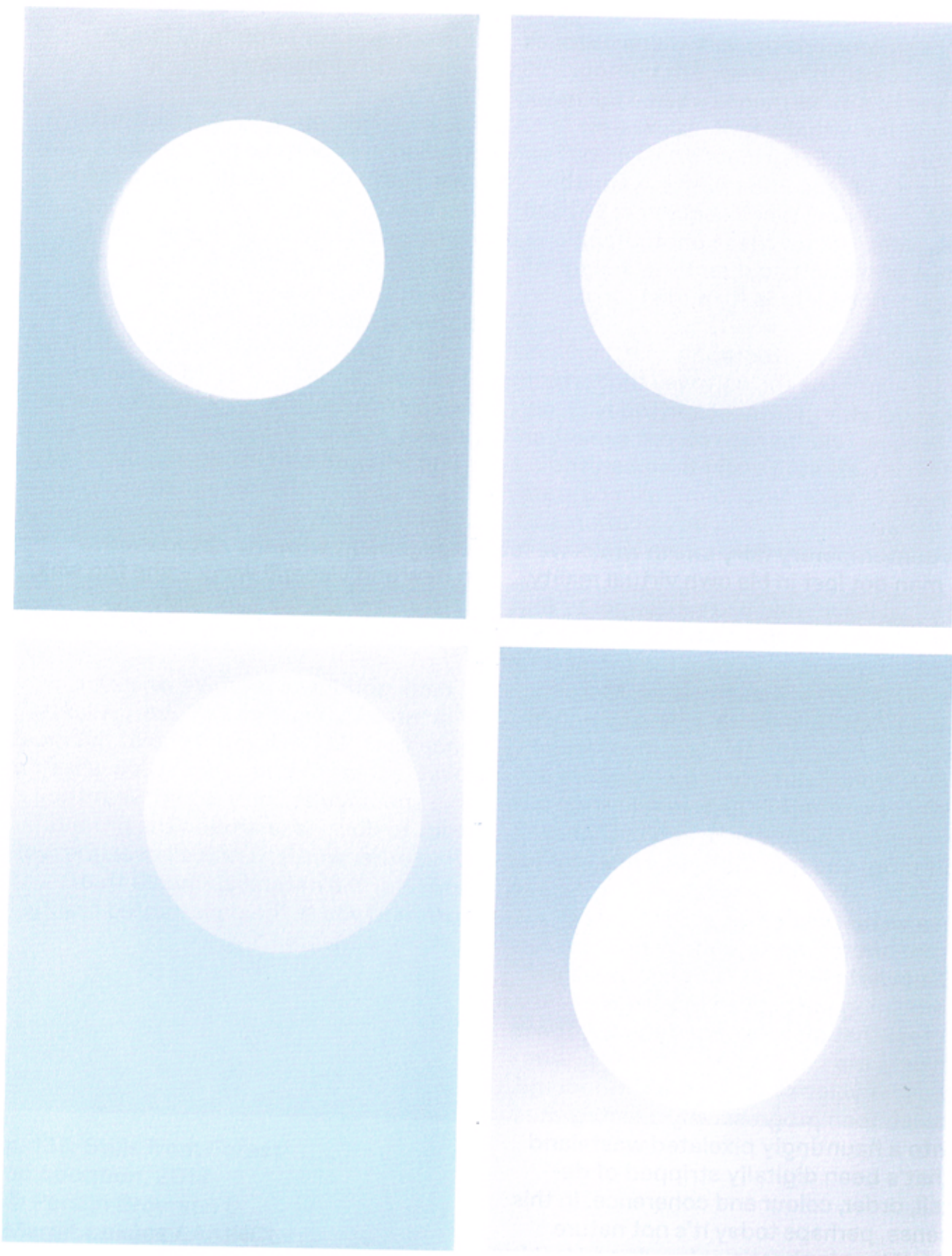
Secondly, Mandry makes 'ice photographs' in the darkroom by replacing the photographic negative with melting ice from the Aletsch Glacier, before printing the resulting image onto glass plates. In the artist's own words, 'Working on a project which chronicles the disappearing glaciers, I wanted to use a direct medium which preserved the subject... It's basically a condensed version of the whole process of glaciers disappearing,

since the ice melts in only a few minutes in the heat of the lab. It's this movement that I try to capture.'

Elsewhere, Marie Clerel also abandons the traditional approach of using photography to reproduce an image of a particular subject, moment or event, choosing instead to imbue the subject, moment and event directly into the photographic materials themselves. In *Midi*, Clerel exposes a piece of light-sensitive paper to the sun every day at noon, which in turn makes a cyanotype of various shades – a deep blue print if it's sunny, pale blue if it's cloudy – which she then groups together in tightly-knit grids of 28, 30 or 31, creating abstract records of the weather for an entire calendar month.



p. 134: December 2017,
from the series *Midi*, 2017 – present
© Marie Clerel / Galerie Binome



p. 135: 17:58 – 08:47, 21 January 2019
(*Super Moon*) #4, from the series
Lunaisons, 2019
© Marie Clerel / Galerie Binome

In her *Lunaisons* project, Clerel exposes several exhausted pieces of photographic paper to a supermoon (when a full moon coincides with the moon's closest approach to Earth in its orbit), and then lines up the resulting prints in an ethereal, delicately toned sequence. Beyond mere depictions, these photographic objects are bathed directly in a night of super-moonlight in its purest form.

But purity – photographic or otherwise – is by no means the only way that artists engage with the landscape today. In an interview prior to their recent exhibition at Foam, artists Persijn Broersen and Margit Lukács described their computer-generated film, *Forest on Location*, as 'a contemporary fairy tale in which we let a man get lost in his own virtual reality... [He] walks around like a stranger to find his way through the forest, but he increasingly suspects that the forest is not real'. As they explain further, 'More than about nature, this film is an example of what our perception of reality is when we surround ourselves by monitors... [We] constructed the forest in such a way that it disappears, and branches off more and more into a virtual reality.'

In a virtual wilderness constructed from photographs made in Poland's Białowieża Forest – among the largest remaining parts of an immense primeval forest that once spanned the European plain – the film begins with the protagonist enveloped by a vibrant woodland, which then progressively disintegrates into a hauntingly pixelated wasteland that's been digitally stripped of detail, order, colour and coherence. In this sense, perhaps today it's not nature itself that is chaotic or 'crude and lacking in arrangement' as Weston concluded, but instead humanity's attempts at replicating, improving upon and experiencing it through sophisticated visual

illusions and contemporary image-generating technology.

The evening before my mother left England, we took the dog out for a long walk. Rambling through several fields, and into the shady darkness of a local vale flanked by rocky cliffs overgrown with tree-roots, moss and ferns, my mother compulsively shot close-up pictures – hundreds of them – on her pocket-sized point-and-shoot. Again, I realised that – like the dog, who scampered erratically throughout the undergrowth, fervently sniffing at each tree trunk and patch of earth; and like many contemporary photographers, who are collectively revitalising the medium's engagement with the natural world in new and visceral ways – she too was consuming the surrounding landscape, but this time through her camera.

'Thank goodness for folks who aren't interested in big views,' Robert Adams once said, 'Maybe that's one of the most lovable things about dogs – you wake up to a spectacular sunrise and what they want to do is nose around the ground.' Or in other words: 'Look all over. Extract and alter the natural elements that surround you in the constructed reality. Eat some Magma.'