

KATE WERBLE GALLERY

83 VANDAM STREET NEW YORK, NY 10013

CHRIS DOMENICK

FLAT MOON

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PRESS RELEASE

“The earth will win in the end.” The keynote speaker quoted Naomi Klein and I copied it down in the margin of my notebook, right next to a note that read “When people say the earth is flat, do they think it is really thick? Is there a top and a not-top? What do they imagine is on the other side?”

Sitting on my perch backstage, I looked over my scrawled script for my lecture “On the Poetics of Stopping,” and worked through the delivery of my hypo-fanta; my made-up word for a concoction of hypothesis and fantasy, where a handful of ideas backed by indefatigable evidence is meshed together with a handful of ideas backed by improbable imaginations. There is no gravity on the moon and its surface, when experienced up close, feels like canvas, smells like chalk, and glistens like an opal... like that. When it was almost my turn to take the stage, a woman peeked in to my hideout and told me that my art was provocative because of its lack of preoccupation with proving a point. But, what am I to do when I want an audience to take in the view from where I stand?

Hello. I want to start with a quote from Bernadette Mayer’s Midwinter Day

“I think I know the trees

will never love me and we’re here as accidentally...”

If, when reading those lines, you stopped after ‘the trees’, if you just sort of dangled there for a bit, letting ‘the trees’ be the end of the thought, it would seem that Mayer is articulating the simple assertion that she might know a thing or two about trees. But, if you continue across the white expanse at the end of the line and down one step, you would realize that, in fact, she thinks she knows the trees will never love her. Where you stop changes a thing. But, if you thought ‘the trees’ only affected the words that followed, you would be wrong. As Mayer is also saying that she thinks she knows the trees. These two thoughts, cleaved by the linebreak, are bound together by the progression from one line to the next. Where you stop is not an end. A tree shows us this with its peeling bark, a day shows us this with its setting sun. Stopping establishes a liminal space where fact and fantasy happily intermingle, where you get to imagine what is next while remembering what has preceded. Stopping shapes the space between the back of a frame and the end of the nail, between the partition and the room, between the seer and the seen. Stopping accords us the ability to digress, to embrace the tangential.

Perhaps you stopped listening to me at the first utterance of ‘the trees’ and your attention branched off into a myriad of directions. Maybe your mind meandered off to the Great Basin Bristlecone Pine that, in 1964 at age 5,000, was the oldest known living tree until Donald Rusk Currey accidentally cut it down. Or to the broken down cardboard box in the corner of the room, or to Frankenstein, or to the shadows on the screen, or to global warming. Wherever you stopped, you simply added a new layer of thought. Meaning can exist without hierarchy.

Sitting on the patchy grass in the park behind the auditorium, I noticed the edge of a strange purple shape wedged beneath a grey rock and a pile of red dirt. I dug it up and out and unravelled the layers of purple paper, unearthing a small piece of limestone with the image of a woman etched into it. My attention drifted to the mound of dirt accumulated from all of my digging out and dusting off. I grabbed a handful of the dirt, dropped it into a small envelope I constructed out of overlapping pieces of the purple paper, wrapped it all in my yellow scarf, and placed it in the front pocket of my backpack.

— Lydia Okrent

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Chris Domenick (b. 1982, Philadelphia) received an MFA from Hunter College and has participated in residencies including The Shandaken Project, The Sharpe-Walentas Space Program (NY), Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and Recess Activities (NY), among others. Recent projects include Plumb at Motel (Brooklyn, NY), The Porch The Open at 14a (Hamburg, DE), Your Shell Is In the Unending, (in collaboration with Em Rooney) at The Beeler Gallery in Columbus, OH, Particulate Paper Records of Time in Cabinet Magazine and 5 O D A Y S at MASSMoCA. He has been included in exhibitions at Canada Gallery, The Queens Museum, Skibum MacArthur, The Vanity East, MOMA, Essex Flowers, Situations, Regina Rex, and Room East, among others. He currently co-curates the project space GERTRUDE in Stockbridge, MA with Em Rooney.