

Sound Plots: *Aporia (Notes to a Medium)*

Curatorial Introduction: Melanie O'Brian

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Aporia (Notes to a Medium) is an exhibition that is a response to the conditions of our particular moment, in which we're seeing a rise of binarization, a distrust of images, a distrust of government. And in a way, the space of contemporary art and the space of art in general has always been a space in which the trust in images and the trust in material truth has been troubled. So it seemed to be an appropriate time to be thinking about how art and images function within this context of uncertainty and polarization.

The title *Aporia* comes from the Greek word, *aporos*, which thinks about the impassible or the paradox, and the subtitle *Notes to a Medium* is thinking about the medium as yes, material, but also the idea of material as a channeler that brings ideas from the past into the present, or from the future to the present. There is a play of words to think about how we are in this space and trying to project a kind of future that is very uncertain, and sitting with this kind of concept of uncertainty or doubt, this paradox of not being able to know, or not being able to find a solution to our current situation, is something that I think everybody at this time can identify with to a certain extent. In many popular culture readings – we've been reading a lot in the newspapers and other places – about having to hold this uncertainty in a way that is quite new to our contemporary times, and that the more we can hold the uncertainty and not try to solve it, the better, stronger thinkers we'll be together. So I think it's also about being able to talk about difficult things together, maintain those conversations, and not necessarily have a right or a wrong answer.

The artists in the exhibition do not necessarily take up contemporary politics, the works are from this moment going back a couple of decades, the earliest is from 2003. All of the works in the show test ideas of memory, of our idea of wanting to make sense of something, our idea of future projection, wishful thinking, ideas of optimism and utopia through rose-coloured glasses, ideas of future projection both through science but also through other clairvoyant and alternative knowledge-production ideas, as well as ways of thinking about how we position ourselves between the cycle of this life and the next life. There's a lot of play between historical thinking and future projection, so in the text for the exhibition, I evoke the Roman Janus-faced god, and here we are in January, so January comes from Janus-thinking, looking into the past and into the future at the same time. Janus-faced is also thinking about a kind of duplicity or duality, something that cannot be held by one singular view. So the hope for the exhibition is that we are brought into a kind of perceptual thinking by spending time with each of these works that lead from one to another, many of them are quite experiential, and that in doing so, we have time to sit with our own ideas of truth, truth to material, ideas of doubt, and how images and texts are manipulable to ideas of power.