

Galería Albarrán Bourdais

# Angelika Markul

Galería Albarrán Bourdais | Callejón de Jorge Juan 12, 28001 Madrid

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Angelika Markul (1977, Poland) lives and works in Paris. She graduated at the National School of Fine Arts of Paris, with a recognition in the multimedia lab of Christian Boltanski.

She has recently received the Coal 2016 Award, which recognizes the work of artists whose art is environmental compromised. She also received the Sam Art award in 2013.

Among her recent individual exhibitions we can find *Terre de départ*, at the Palais de Tokyo (2014) and *Naturaleza Reimaginada*, currently on display at the Muntref in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Her artistic practice shifts between video, sculpture and installation, contributing with a poetic and plastic vision about dangerous or conflicting situations. Her works, dark and powerful, draw a map of humanity back to the most remote places. She is interested in uncommon and isolated landscapes; being time, memory, mankind and nature the common thread of her work.

“Each project encloses long years of investigation that start with the encounter, more or less casual, of a story encrypted in a landscape. Those that seem natural for any spectator, those that the tourism has spectacularized and neutralized. However, her gaze stops there, in the questions that have no answer about the submerged runes in the Yonaguni sea(...) or in Naica, entering the profundities of that strange gigantic crystal cave. If her travel diary is signed by inquiry, the encounter with specialists, with communities, texts... in summary, with other people’s stories, from the moment in which her camera makes contact with those landscapes, everything else stays back and nature presents, then reinvented by her gaze that the spectator makes his own before the immersion that her video-installations convene: her full-of-meaning images and the intriguing character of the sound -composed by musicians summoned ad hoc- her works install the perplexity about those beautiful natural spaces and with her the conscience of her finitude. The way in which time passes by in each of her videos makes the notion of “time sculpting” developed by Tarkovsky productive to think about the work in the sea. (from the curatorial text of Diana B. Wechsler)

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## Angelika Markul

*Si les heures m'étaient comptées*, 2016

Installation video with music by Simon Ripoll-Hurier.

Film, black and white, sound, 11'47" loop. Naica crystal framed and a crystal-shaped installation.

In April of 2000, during a routine run 300 meters underground in the lead and silver mine in Naica in Mexico, two miners made a surprising discovery. They accidentally dug into an underground cave, and what they saw left them breathless. The cave was filled with selenite crystals, the largest of which were 11 meters long and were 5 times higher than those found in earlier discoveries. It is believed that these giants started to crystallize between 500 000 and 200 000 years ago. Lethal conditions prevail in the cave – the temperature ranges from 45 to 50° C and the humidity reaches 90-100%. A group of scientists from various fields formed the Naica Project to take advantage of all the possibilities to explore the past, which opened with the discovery of the cave.

One of the main aims was to search for primitive life forms. The crystals, as a result of the removal of water from the cave, were exposed to the risk of collapse due to changes in conditions. It is highly likely, however, that the mine will cease the costly pumping of hectoliters of water, restoring the cave's original conditions and closing access to the interior of the cave. Those who visited the Crystal Cave describe their experience as an encounter with something unearthly.

The extraordinary beauty and deadly conditions determine this extraordinary experience and, more specifically, allow for a way to reach the limits of survival in terms both biological and aesthetic. Geologist Juan Manuel García-Ruiz called it the Sistine Chapel of Crystals -heavenly beauty appearing in hellish conditions. What interests Angelika Markul, more than just the beauty, is the fascination it evokes as well as the scientific technology and aesthetic exploitation, which were applied in the extraction.

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*Si les heures m'étaient comptées,*  
2016

Video Installation, music by Simon

Ripoll-Hurier

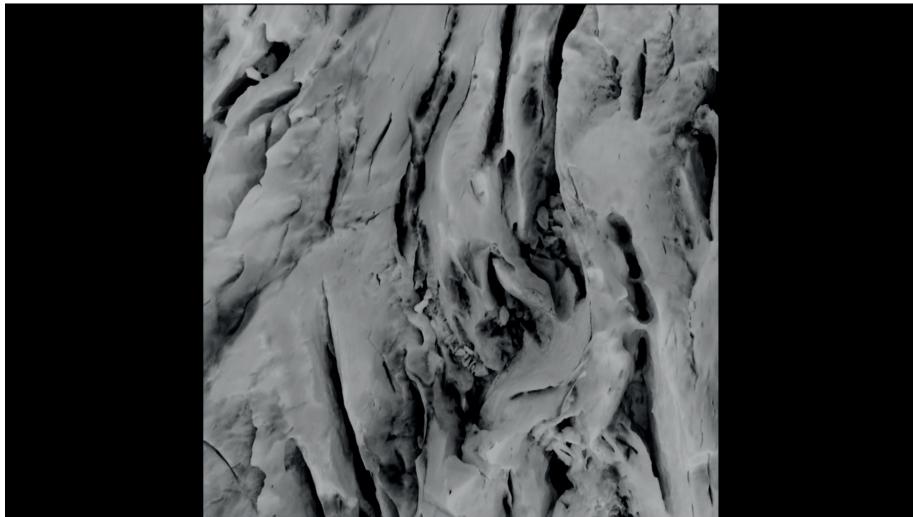
Film, black and white, sound, 11' 47" in loop,

Ed: 2/4 +1 AP

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*La Mémoire des glaciers*, 2017

Installation video with music by Côme Aguiar.

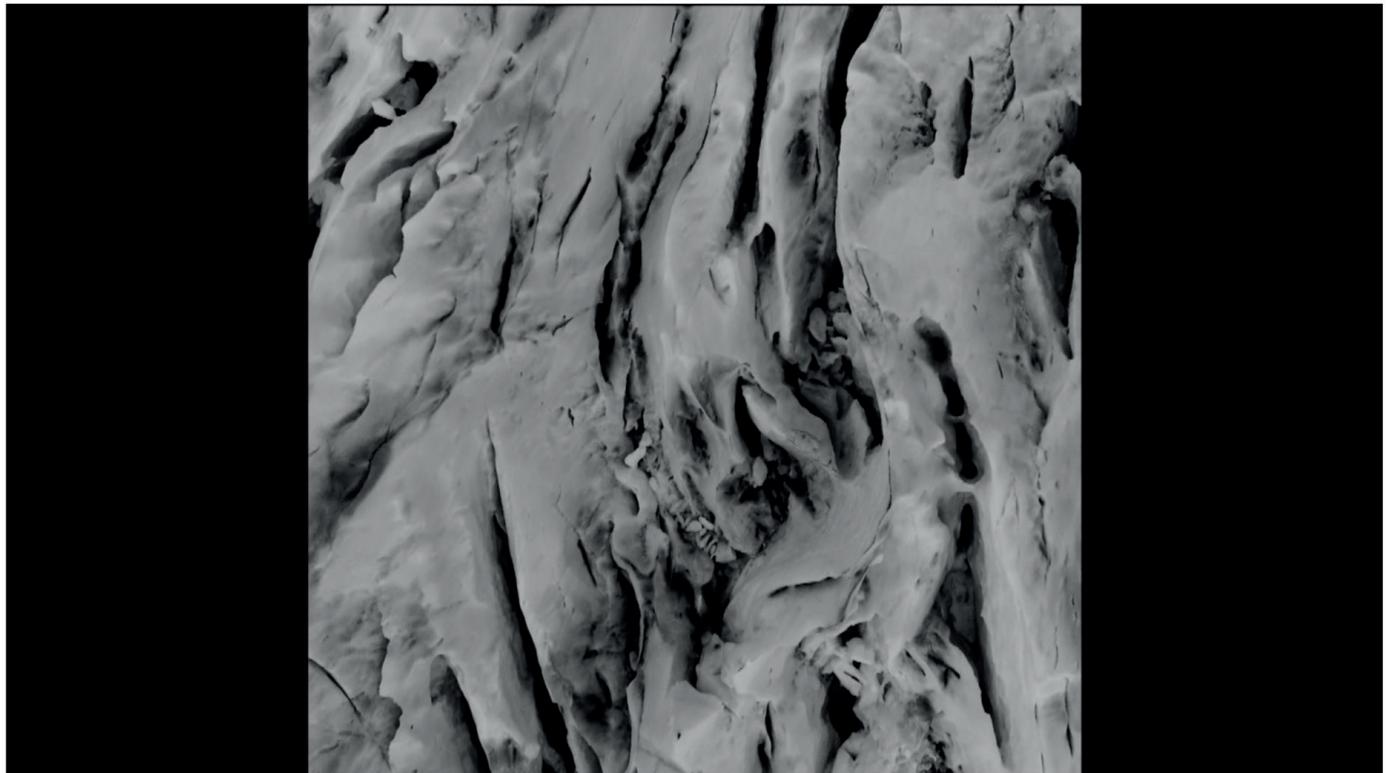
Film, color, sound, 10'51" loop.

Memory of Glaciers is a myth at the confluence of science and fiction, the first component of a trilogy on the origin and existence of Man until his evolution. The film's starting point is the discovery of the Churyumov–Gerasimenko comet, which might contain an explanation of the origin of life on Earth. The video installation recounts the tragic melting of a glacier in the south of Patagonia, evoking an amputation of a gangrened body. At the heart of these organic rocks – comet and glaciers – birth and death are preserved in equal fashion. Angelika Markul reveals the secrets they hold (real or fictional) through images tinted with mystery.

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Film, color, 10'51", in loop 3D images

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*Zone Yonaguni, 2016*

Video installation with music by Simon Ripoll-Hurier.

Film, color, sound, 19'47" loop, 3D images.

A lost continent or the work of human hands? The thesis that the Yonaguni Monument is the work of human hands stimulates the imagination and claims have arisen stating that this is a fragment of a lost continent, the mythical land of Mu. In 1986-7, underwater off the coast of the Japanese Yonaguni Island, a stone building was discovered with a length of 250 m and a height of 25 m, resembling a stepped pyramid. In later studies, smaller objects were uncovered: a stone ring road, a sculpture resembling a human head or a giant turtle. The complex looked like a small town, wherein the stepped pyramid, called the Monument, could have performed the function of a citadel. At least that is how Professor Masaaki Kimura, a physicist at the University of the Ryukyus, interpreted this find. He also claimed that the complex was formed 10 000 years ago, when these areas were not yet flooded by the sea. Another geologist, Robert Schoch, a professor at the University of Boston, after implementing on site testing, challenged the assertion that the object was products of human hands, seeing them as the work of the forces of nature. The controversy has not yet been resolved in the scientific world.

Inspired by the fantasmatic and mythological potential of the Yonaguni Monument, Angelika Markul creates a sculptural installation and video, but not, however, to produce myths and fantasies. That which fascinates her is force (whether human or non-human), which was able to form – carve – the rock in such a way. It is this force that she wants to seize and utilize, to recognize its riddle. The artist treats the Yonaguni Monument as a gigantic sculpture, regardless of whether it was created by a lost civilization or natural factors.

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*Bambi à Tchernobyl*, 2014

Video installation with music by Franck Krawczyk.

Film, color, sound, 13'26" loop, sculptures (felt, wax, metal).

Chernobyl is a no man's land since the nuclear disaster of 1986. Since then, nature seems to have regained its footing: fauna and flora have developed on the site, slowly invading the ruins of a world abandoned by men and transformed by the artist in a dreamlike world, suspended between reality and fiction that awakens childish fears. The artist drew on the film Bambi (1942) and asked composer Franck Krawczyk to create an original piece whose effect would be as familiar as it would be uncanny.

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*Terre de départ*, 2014

Video installation, black plastik.

Film, color, sound, 2'53" loop.

In *Terre de départ*, the public must tame the total black and soak up its Lynchian atmosphere, carried by a sound mix, that of the air and the magnetic field of the planets. The video represents a starry night, a night cycle mounted in accelerated. With a scientific clarity, it reveals all the vitality of the celestial world through its astrophysical micro-events: chromatic variations, star associations, asteroid trajectories. By giving ecology a literally universal dimension, the videographer is reconnecting with an ancestral tradition from which she is inspired. Here, it mobilizes a belief of the Indians of Chile that our planet is only a place of passage before a departure on the stars. The moment of contemplation then becomes a reflection on the ancient wisdoms, the drifts of the industrial world and the weaknesses of modern knowledge, as an ethereal pilgrimage towards a future to be reinvented.

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## Angelika Markul

*400 Millards de planètes*, 2013

Installation video

Film, color, sound, 4'27" loop. 104 metal plates

In an almost unworldly location,» as the Atacama Desert in the Andes has been described, extreme conditions prevail. It is one of the driest places in the world. In 2003, researchers published a report indicating that the drying reaches a liminal possibility for life. The air is so thin that the people who stay and work in some of its regions are forced to use oxygen masks. The extremely low humidity, high altitude, and an almost total absence of clouds make it an ideal place for the observation of the sky. Additionally favorable is the fact that it is far from human settlements – away from radio and light pollution. All these elements were decisive in locating the European Southern Observatory in three places throughout the desert: in La Silla (the earliest observatory, with telescopes of medium size at a height of 2400 m above sea level), at the top of Paranal (2600 m above sea level), and at Llano de Chajnantor plateau (5000 m above sea level) where, among others, the revolutionary radio telescope.

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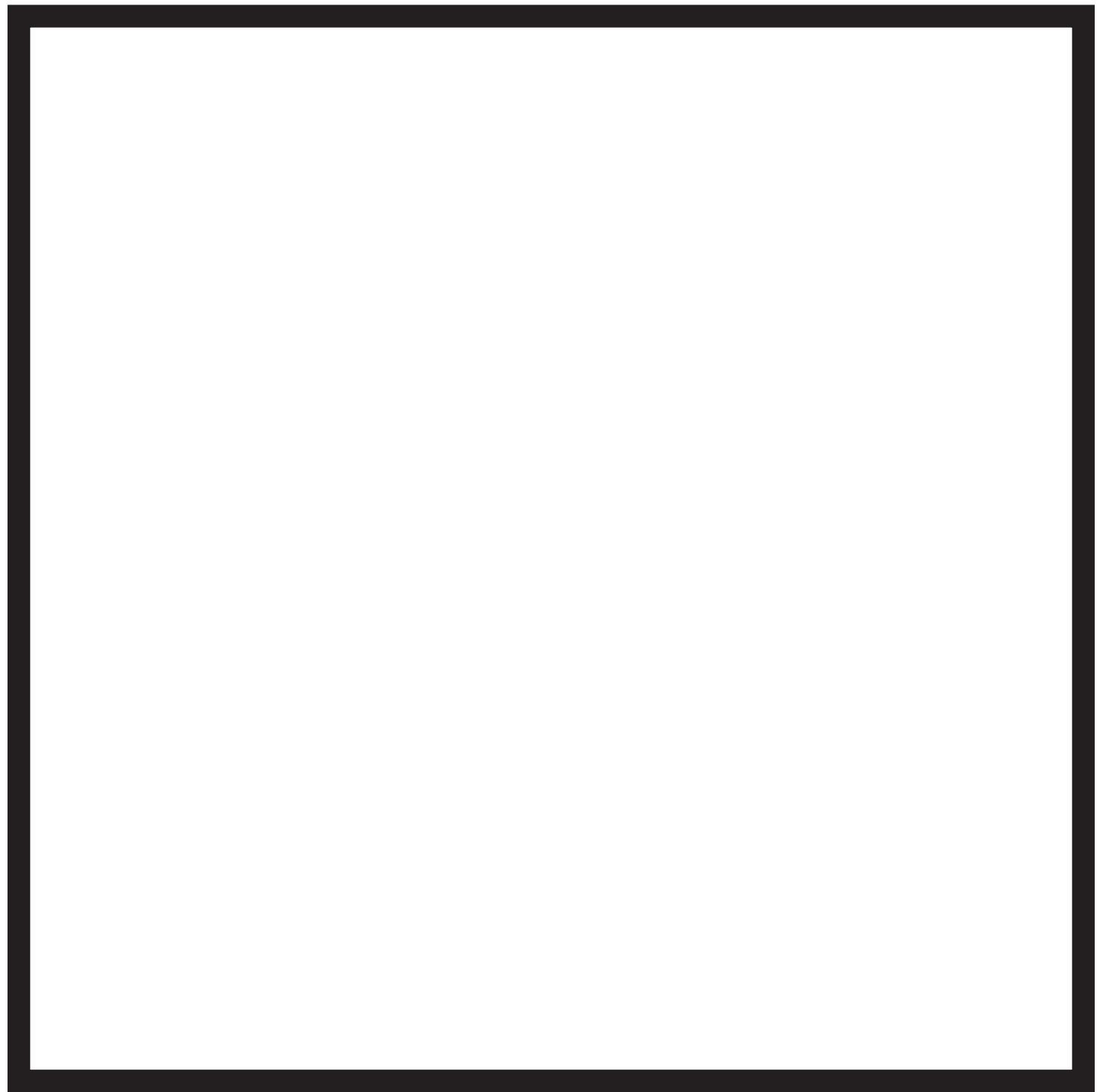
Video installation

Film, colour, sound, 4'27" loop. 104 metal plates.

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