

bitforms gallery

Marina Zurkow: *MORE&MORE (the invisible oceans)* February 14 – April 3, 2016

bitforms gallery
131 Allen Street
New York, NY 10002

Reception: Sunday, February 14, 4 – 7 PM
Gallery Hours: Wednesday – Saturday, 11 AM – 6 PM & Sunday 12 – 6 PM

bitforms gallery is pleased to present *MORE&MORE (the invisible oceans)*, Marina Zurkow's second solo exhibition with the gallery.

The ocean makes up 71 percent of our planet's surface. So, how is it that we know more about Mars than the marine environments of Earth? As impenetrable as the deep oceans are to humans, we imperviously live in a black box of international shipping, reducing the ocean to a surface rather than an environmental force. *MORE&MORE* is a socioeconomic, post-natural foray into the infrastructure of global trade: a systemic means to a never-ending end of economic growth. Here, the Harmonized System Commodity Description and Coding System, or Harmonized System (HS), rules the world. With roughly 26,000 items in 99 categories, the HS tariff code is an opaque, granular (yet oblique) language unto itself. Everything is reduced to code; the ocean all but disappears.

Zurkow visualizes the Harmonized System as a series of iconographic tchotchkes, unifying disparate commodities into a phantasmagoric depot. *MORE&MORE: China, India, Japan, Mexico, Turkey, USA (2016)* are six sculptural animations, with custom algorithmic software generating hypnotic patterns of export products. Changing weather, the rising and setting sun, and cycles of the moon illustrate that while time passes, ports are always open and shipping never stops.

A physical firewall of HS code is wallpapered throughout the gallery space. In a kiosk at the gallery's entrance, handmade chocolates and soaps shaped as HS code icons, postcards from major port nations, and swimsuits visualizing trade relations between countries are displayed as retail goods.* Sculptures made of 3D powder, plaster, fungus, and coffee husk are respectively indicative of a given supply chain: while 3D powder is sourced from China, fungus could be grown in one's backyard. According to Zurkow, "If the Earth was Joseph Beuys, fungus would be its felt."

Plying the oceans for international trade is historically rooted. Dutch jurist and philosopher Hugo Grotius declared the oceans international territory in the seventeenth century with his *Mare Liberum (The Freedom of the Seas)* (1609):

The question at issue is... the ocean, that expanse of water which antiquity describes as the immense, the infinite, bounded only by the heavens, parent of all things... the ocean which, although surrounding this earth, the home of the human race, with the ebb and flow of its tides, can be neither seized nor enclosed; nay, which rather possesses the earth than is by it possessed.

Rather than sustaining life, the ocean is ostensibly asphalt connecting a Pangea of capital. "In this circuit, captivation in enjoyment fuels the exploitation, expropriation, and extraction driving the capitalist system: more, more, more; endless circulation, dispossession, destruction, and accumulation; ceaseless, limitless death."¹ Zurkow, along with her collaborators, suggest that in the invisible oceans' absence, we find presence: as human agents, observers, victims—another species, in desperate need of adaptation.

Throughout the opening reception, poet Kalliopi Mathios will emcee the evening, reading from *A Guide to the Harmonized System*. Guests are encouraged to read from the tome, alongside Mathios.

On February 24, the gallery will present *Climate Cocktails: Drinks from the Dead Zone*, a night of open mic reading by Mathios from *A Guide to the Harmonized System* and drinking the discourse.

To coincide with the opening, two books have been published by punctum books: *MORE&MORE (the invisible oceans)*, edited by Chris Piuma, and *A Guide to the Harmonized System*, edited by Marina Zurkow, with contributions by Stacy Alaimo, Heather Davis, Kathleen Forde, Dylan Gauthier, Elena Glasberg, Kalliopi Mathios, Steve Mentz, Astrida Neimanis, Chris Piuma, Elspeth Probyn, Sarah Rothberg, Phil Steinberg, and Rita Wong.

*An edition of 200 postcards are available for sale for \$5 each. Unique editions of the swimsuits are also available for sale. Visitors are welcome to customize suits at the website moreandmore.world. Swimsuits and website designed in collaboration with Surya Mattu and Sarah Rothberg.

¹ Jodi Dean, "The Anamorphic Politics of Climate Change," *e-flux* 69: (January 2016), www.e-flux.com/journal/the-anamorphic-politics-of-climate-change/.

BIOGRAPHY

Marina Zurkow is a media artist focused on near-impossible nature and culture intersections. She uses life science, materials, and technologies—including food, software, clay, animation, mycelium, and petrochemicals—to foster intimate connections between people and non-human agents.

Recent solo exhibitions of her work include Chronus Art Center Shanghai; the Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey; Diverseworks, Houston; and bitforms gallery in New York. Her work has also been featured at FACT, Liverpool; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C.; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Wave Hill, New York; National Museum for Women in the Arts, Washington D.C.; Bennington College, Vermont; Borusan Collection, Istanbul; Pacific Northwest College of Art, Oregon; Marian Spore, New York; 01SJ Biennial, San Jose; Brooklyn Academy of Music; Museum of the Moving Image, New York; Creative Time, New York; The Kitchen, New York; Ars Electronica, Linz, Austria; Transmediale, Berlin; Eyebeam, New York; Sundance Film Festival, Utah; Rotterdam Film Festival, The Netherlands; and the Seoul Media City Biennial, Korea, among others.

Her public art engagements have been supported by Creative Time, New York; LACE, Los Angeles; Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey; The New Museum's Ideas City, New York; Northern Lights, Minneapolis; The Artist's Institute, New York; 01SJ Biennial, San Jose, California; Rice University, Houston; Boston University; University of Minnesota, Minneapolis; and Baruch College, New York.

Zurkow is the recipient of a 2011 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship. She has also been granted awards from the New York Foundation for the Arts, New York State Council for the Arts, the Rockefeller Foundation, and Creative Capital.

MORE&MORE Credits

Collaborators

Sarah Rothberg
Surya Mattu

moreandmore.world website

Neil Cline

Animation code

Sam Brenner

Fabrication

Parallel Development

Code and craft

Stefani Bardin
Xuedi Chen
Ariana Martinez
Hannah Mishin
Justin Peake
Abigail Simon

Book design

Rebecca Lieberman
Chris Piuma

Sales clerk

Rosalie Yu

Many thanks to

Borusan Contemporary
The Observatory of Economic Complexity
The Atlas of Economic Complexity

Founded in 2001, bitforms gallery represents established, mid-career, and emerging artists critically engaged with new technologies. Spanning the rich history of media art through its current developments, the gallery's program offers an incisive perspective on the field of digital, internet, software-based, and new media art forms.

For images and more information on the exhibit, please visit www.bitforms.com and www.o-matic.com.

For publicity requests, please contact Associate Director Kerry Doran, kerry@bitforms.com or call (212) 366-6939.