bitforms gallery

***Scanners,* Clement Valla**
August 6–October 22, 2022

bitforms gallery SF
1275 Minnesota Street
San Francisco, CA 94017

Artist talk: Saturday, October 1, 4:30 PM
Gallery hours: Tuesday–Saturday: 11 AM–6 PM

Clement Valla collects environmental data through an intricate process of photography and three-dimensional scanning. His highly specific procedures convert natural objects into data systems. Through the artist's work with diverse software he explores issues of mediated and computer vision in respect to the natural world. *Scanners* presents Valla's exploration of the technical aspects of picture-making.

Postcards from Google Earth, a series Valla started in 2010, is based on image captures taken within Google Earth's interface. This collection is itemized by each image's geographic coordinates and emphasizes edge conditions, the result of an automated process that fuses aerial photographs and cartographic data. As the source imagery is collected from a range of vantage points, anomalies in wrapping the 3D projection model appear. *Postcard from Google Earth (34°1'45.70"N, 118°13'32.98"W)* demonstrates how a compounded landscape more closely resembles network iconography than a natural landscape, forging a hybrid geography.

Flat Tire throw #2 and *#7* demonstrate the artist's ongoing practice of photogrammetry. This process synthesizes a 3D model from hundreds of photographs. Using physics simulation software, the artist throws a simulated linen cloth at the tire. Once the linen has come to rest, the tire model is imprinted onto the that which drapes it—much like a full color digital rubbing. Valla applies the procedures of photogrammetry to exhibited works through different mediums, including the video *Textilograph*, *Rock Picture* sculptures, and generative *Point.Cloud Garden*s.

Rock Pictures engage a similar process to the *Flat Tire* series, yet emphasize how digital systems often misinterpret the natural world. *Sandstone, Hades Canyon Utah 02* overlays two materials as one object to combine computer and human vision. First, the texture of the rock is separated from its form. Next, the artist CNC mills the form of the scanned rock. The work comes together once the scanned texture is draped back onto the 3D form. Bare, white areas of the sculpture demonstrate the lapse of understanding between technology and the original object, granting a unique perspective to an automated gaze.

Valla's practice of flattening scanned textures can also be seen in motion. *Textilograph #1* inverts the typical relationship between the picture plane and landscape. Here rocks scanned from Shingle Creek, Utah; Devil's Den Preserve, Connecticut; Bear Mountain, New York; and Hunter Island, New York are projected as images onto a flat surface. In this environment, a simulated canvas is dragged across scans of rocky outcroppings, ledges, and rock faces. The resulting videos abandon perspective—the video becomes a slow 1:1 translation of the surface of the rock onto the surface of the screen through the intermediary of a simulated soft, yielding picture plane.

The *Point Cloud Garden* series, articulated both as prints and software expressions, is rendered through a computational procedure that begins with scanned data points. These points generate data with spatial [XYZ] and color [RGB] information. The resulting data set translates a surface into discrete data points that emphasize ways in which humans experience a garden; as an aggregation of leaves, petals, stalks and stems. The artist's methods of 3D scanning produce a new kind of picture with a digital, spatial pointillism. Through his use of point cloud data, Valla exposes a usually invisible technical data representation to be visible for human

observation. This hybrid vision produces an uncanny picture that creates space to reconsider assumptions about the natural world.

#52 Overgrowth marks a new direction in Valla's practice, a focus that engages elements of nature emerging from overgrown urban spaces. Referenced as a "third landscape" by Gilles Clement, this hybrid space pairs the natural world with human ecology to suggest a new form of nature entangled with computer vision. Each unique artwork highlights the exuberance of nature with varying flowers, grasses and plant life. There are 1000 unique NFTs in the collection and individual works may be purchased online at overgrowth.garden. As Valla continues to engage the myth of the natural world through digital rendering he generates a transcription between real and hyperreal.

Clement Valla
b. 1979, USA
Lives and works in New York, NY

Clement Valla is a New York based artist whose work considers how humans and computers are increasingly entangled in making, seeing and reading pictures.

He has had recent solo exhibitions at PC Galleries in Providence, XPO Gallery in Paris and Transfer Gallery in Brooklyn. His work has also been exhibited at ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany; Draiflessen Collection, Mettingen, Germany; Stedelijk Museum, Breda, Netherlands; Bitforms Gallery, New York; Musée Cognacq-Jay, Paris, France; Haus der Photographie, Hamburg, Germany; Museum of the Moving Image, New York; KIM Contemporary Art Center, Riga, Latvia; Contemporary Art Museum, Raleigh; and The Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis;

His work has been cited in The Guardian, Wall Street Journal, TIME Magazine, El Pais, Huffington Post, Rhizome, Domus, Wired, The Brooklyn Rail, Liberation, and on BBC television. Valla received a BA in Architecture from Columbia University and an MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in Digital+Media. He is currently an associate professor at the Rhode Island School of Design.