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PARALLAX series: PORTAL, 2024 (Detail) Graphite and collage on Stonehenge paper 22 x 30 inches

## *The Ecology of Modern Romance and Other Deaths* Apnavi Makanji

In *Modern Romance and Other Deaths*, Apnavi Makanji presents an evocative exploration of queer ecology, inviting viewers into a contemplative space where nature, the human body, and politics intersect. Through two distinct series—*Appropriation, Disinformation - Nature and the Body Politic* and *Parallax*—they challenge the colonial histories embedded in maps, questioning how these cartographies of conquest have shaped our relationship with the environment. Makanji's absence of the human figure speaks volumes, subtly emphasizing the omnipresent violence we inflict on the earth. A deep love for nature underpins their work, yet it's a love tainted by grief, an acknowledgment of the rampant extraction and disregard for the world around us. The exhibition invites reflection on the grief of loss, the weight of human impact, and the hope for a more mindful, interconnected future.

### MORE IN ART.



Apnavi Makanji, Image Credit: Diego Sanchez

How would you define 'queer ecology,' and how do you think it plays a role in the way we understand the relationship between nature and politics?

Queer ecology by definition is a more inclusive way of reflecting on our environment. I feel that it's a more radical manner of thinking than the current discourse that revolves around sustainability, which still implies feeding the ever greedy Capitalist economies from big tech to agriculture and the consumption of fossil fuels. Queer ecology in its simplest form is treating all living species whether botanical or animal with respect and empathy, and recognizing that they are crucial to the fragile equilibrium of the planet. This discourse requires breaking down the patriarchal and heteronormative hegemonies which hold so much power over how we interact with each other and nature. I believe that the current patriarchal hegemony can be broken down by a queer ecological approach - by collective acts of kindness towards the earth and every single other species. And in ways that have a wider impact, such as re-imagining and working our way towards a much less extractive future.



PARALLAX series: PORTAL, 2024 Graphite and collage on Stonehenge paper, 22 x 30 inches

The exhibition is titled *Modern Romance and Other Deaths*. How does this title relate to the themes you explore in the show, particularly the intersections of life, death, and the human relationship with nature?

*Modern Romance and Other Deaths* is a conversation between the two main series that compose the show - *Appropriation, Disinformation - Nature and the Body Politic* and *Parallax*. The first series questions how Colonial and Neocolonial powers used maps to establish dominion over other lands, enslaving people and ecosystems - what I call 'Cartographies of Conquest'. The second series, *Parallax* is an invitation for the viewer to contemplate how through constant intervention our species has violently changed this planet, that once was so lush. Essentially, we have single handedly reduced the number of existing species whether animal or botanical. We create perfect circumstances for certain species to proliferate more than others and when they do, we deem them invasive. *Parallax* is a layered reflection on the fearmongering right wing vocabulary - words such as 'invasive' and 'native' - that is used by contemporary botany to describe the proliferation of certain species. This discourse of othering invariably ends up in a culling of the said species. In my work, the human species is always present through its absence and manifests mostly through the consequences of its actions. *Modern Romance and other Deaths* is borne of grief and love and invites the viewer to immerse themselves in this tender equilibrium.



APPROPRIATION DISINFORMATION - NATURE AND THE BODY, POLITIC - Series: POLAR JELIFICATION, 2024 (left) | Series: HUMBOLDT, 2024 (right)

Emilia Terracciano's essay mentions the haunting presence of 'monsters' that live inside and amongst us. How do you interpret this statement in relation to your work, and what does it mean to you in the context of your art?

The 'monsters' that Emilia speaks of in her absolutely brilliant essay - in my mind - are representative of a certain mindlessness, cupidity and in many cases downright cruelty that our species in particular harbors in terms of this planet. The conspicuous absence of the human figure in my work is to underline its omnipresence as a figure of oppression. The violence our species inflicts on the planet is so deep and vast that it is almost inconceivable that we are capable of such immense acts of hatred towards a home we profess love for. We don't love this planet. We simply extract and plunder to supplement our vacuous and deeply consumeristic lifestyles. And then we trash it some more with our landfills. Does this not make us monsters or at the very least, the most invasive species?



PARALLAX series: UMBILICUS, 2024 (Detail) Graphite on Stonehenge paper 118 x 50.5 inches

This is your fourth solo exhibition with Tarq, how do you think you have evolved as an artist?

This is indeed my fourth solo with Tarq and I also feel like this is my best work yet. The gallery has always given me complete artistic freedom and huge support of my creative choices. On another note, there's nothing like the redemptive

complete artistic freedom and been supportive of my creative choices. On another note, there's nothing like radical change or loss, in one's personal life to really challenge the mind and although I started drawing in 2011, I never really knew how to draw realistic images. This is something that I have taught myself over the last couple of years. And after this show, I feel that my work is slowly finding an anchor in the practice of drawing and realism, and I'm very excited about the possibilities that this offers.

How has your personal experience living in Geneva and your interactions with the Rhône River informed your artistic practice and conceptual framework? What does water mean to you?

Geneva is my safe place, it is my home. The slow pace of the town really allows me to tune out and focus entirely on my practice. Lake Geneva and the Rhône are where I spend the rest of my time outside of my studio. The smaller fish series in the show are a direct consequence of a beautiful encounter I had with a catfish, last year in the Rhône. Though the eye contact lasted only for a second, I felt a wave of humility wash over me and I felt nothing but reverence for this magnificent fish. These two bodies of water are fundamental to me. It's a visceral connection I have with the lake, I can't explain it without sounding quite insane but if you ask my partner Sarah, she'll say that there's a radical difference in the pre-swim and post-swim me.

[x STORE](#)

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EMAN FISH series: BROWN TROUT, 2023 Graphite on Hahnemühle paper, 8.3 x 11.7 inches

Words Paridhi Badgotri

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Image courtesy Apnavi Makanji and TARQ



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A CREATIVE PLAYGROUND

