

# Spatial misalignments 2018

Silver gelatin photographs; unique

Courtesy: the artist and Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney

*Spatial misalignments* explores assumptions around how a place is depicted and perceived. The work includes 60 paper negatives made using a camera-less process of contact-printing relief maps from three different editions of an out-of-date atlas. What eventuates is a visual collapse of states, territories and geographical names that blurs the distinction between the landmasses, their coordinates and the political entities that govern them.

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# Crepuscular rays (mechanical reproduction) #6 2019

Xeroxes; unique

Courtesy: the artist and Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney

*Crepuscular rays* was made by employing a camera-less contact printing process. It translates images from a book depicting Japan's submerged rock formation, the Yonaguni Monument. As Pluta describes: 'The photocopied contact negative creates voids like rays of light penetrating through the surface of the water and directing themselves to the depths of the ocean. *Crepuscular rays* was generated by a photocopier – by distancing the object on the glass, thereby appearing black where the image recedes and generating a strip of light where the book came into closer contact with the glass of the photocopying machine.'

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## Iterative composition 1979 (pages 17–18 Australia) 2020

Pigment print on eco-solvent cotton rag paper

Courtesy: the artist and Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney

Izabela Pluta's photographs explore assumptions around how a place is depicted and perceived. What eventuates is a visual collapse of states, territories and geographical names that blurs the distinction between the landmasses, their coordinates and the political entities that govern them. *Iterative composition 1979* is part of a series that has been made by employing a camera-less process of contact printing full-page relief maps from an out-of-date atlas. Pluta uses the topographical maps to create new images by pulling apart the atlases at the spine and placing the page under the enlarger in the darkroom. When the incandescent light passed through the paper's surface, it fuses both sides of the map, erasing the original borders and place names to form a new version of what the world could be.

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## 26 variations from Blue spectrum and descent 2020

Cyanotypes on watercolour paper; unique

Courtesy: the artist and Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney

Cyanotype is a photographic printing process that uses sunlight and iron salt solutions to fix the silhouette of an object placed onto photosensitive paper. These were first employed to reproduce notes, diagrams and botanical studies and are recognisable for their Prussian blue colour and tonal variation.

*26 variations from Blue spectrum and descent* brings together 26 unique cyanotypes made in response to Pluta's installation *Apparent Distance* 2019 depicting the ancient Yonaguni rock formation in Japan. The work uses fragments and sections from the installation, as it was being dismantled, to signal photography's elasticity, the precarity of the underwater site, and the folding back and forth of archival imagery in Pluta's studio practice.

## Variable depth, shallow water 2020

Silver gelatin photographs, pigment prints on aluminium, dye-sublimation prints, polyester waddling straps, two-way acrylic, aluminium, polyester resin

## Apparatus 2020

Vinyl, neon, polyester resin

Courtesy: the artist and Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney

Visiting the sea stack Dwejra on the island of Gozo that collapsed in 2017, Pluta was captivated by this spectacular expression of geological time. Also known as The Azure Window, the limestone debris of Dwejra – initially 28-metres tall – now lies roughly 12 metres below sea level.

*Variable depth, shallow water* brings together disparate elements comprising handmade contact negatives of unhinged atlases, faux-artefacts from the ocean's depths cast in resin, and neon components that implode on themselves. The work was influenced by corrupted drone footage lost and retrieved from the sea during the work's production. The drone crashed into the cliff from where the sea arch initially fell away two years earlier. Pluta's camera sunk amidst the debris of the rocks and was retrieved by local divers and returned to the artist in Australia on the memory card several weeks later.

Inspired by Dwejra, the concept of deep time, the instantaneous moment of change, and informed by Pluta's passage as a migrant to Australia, *Variable depth, shallow water* investigates the uncertainty of location.

# Camouflage #1 2021

Pigment print on eco-solvent cotton rag paper

Courtesy: the artist and Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney

*Camouflage #1* depicts the entrance to a subterranean passage between the Maltese cities of Valletta and Floriana. These corridors and chambers, referred to as the 'Valetta Ditch', were initially excavated in 1565 during construction of the city's fortification line. The tunnels were left empty until World War II when sections were hollowed out with explosives and used as shelters. More recently, the Maltese government has sealed them due to antisocial behaviour and waste being dumped inside. The limestone surfaces, rising more than 12 metres, bear traces of successive extractive histories and degradation resulting from weathering.

Glaciers, dunes and prairies with a dust storm approaching 2021

A cumulonimbus cloud, incised meanders and a fjord 2021

Mangrove swamp, equatorial forest and a pyramidal peak 2021

Badlands, crater lake and a canyon 2021

Terrace cultivation and a stalagmite 2021

Xerophytes and a waterfall 2021

Silver gelatin photographs (contact negatives)

Courtesy: the artist and Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney

In this series of photographs, Pluta uses single pages from an early edition of *The Penguin Dictionary of Geography* to create a unique set of pictorial forms. These encyclopedic texts sought to compile terms and descriptions of common geographical words (such as anticyclone, mackerel sky, tropical rainforest) and less familiar ones (badlands, frog-earth, reflective beach, white smoker). Pluta allows illustrations found on both sides of a page to fuse into a double image by passing light through the paper and capturing the resulting picture.

As Pluta observes: “This process of making contact negatives produces undulations in the image where the original lifts away from the photographic emulsion, blurring areas of the new picture. Where the paper is touching the emulsion, it maintains sharpness. I don’t use glass in this process, so there is an element of chance with certain variables, including humidity or how that original page has aged – whether it curls up or not – creating these collapses of distinction in the counter-image that’s formed”.

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Counterspace #1 (The Pacific: visualisation of depths/relief of the southern parts) 2021

Counterspace #2 (The Pacific: twilight/sunset schedules) 2021

Silver gelatin photographs (contact negatives); unique

Courtesy: the artist and Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney

Following World War II, the Soviet Union established drifting stations and a research program to collect data critical to mapping the largely uncharted ocean floor.

In the 'Counterspace' series, Pluta uses maps of the Pacific Ocean discovered in a 1974 marine atlas produced by the USSR War Department [Ministerstvo oborony Sovetskogo Soyuza]. The two photographs included feature graphs of the seabed and nautical schedules, marking the passing of time across the earth's surface. Two pages from the atlas overlap in each diptych, allowing the data to merge and create disorienting geographical entities and details.

As Pluta describes, "These ripples, or areas in the image that lack focus, could be read as deceptive spaces, provoking a sense of dislocation or disorientation from place and a questioning of what is recorded, and how the map shapes it in the first place."

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## An over air pursuit of likeness (formation 4) 2021

## An over air pursuit of likeness (formation 3) 2021

Pigment Print on Eco Solvent Cotton Rag Paper

Courtesy: the artist and Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney

*An over air pursuit of likeness* references a photograph the artist's father took from an aeroplane window in 1987 when her family emigrated from Poland to Australia. It reminded Pluta of a similar picture she had taken in 2019 when she last travelled overseas. Using a copy of *Cloud study: a pictorial guide* 1960, Pluta tried to seek out pages that closely described the type of clouds recorded in her father's photograph. The resulting works are collaged cyanotypes made from contact negatives that captures both sides of certain pages of the pictorial cloud guide and harness sunlight as an exposing device to highlight the climatic conditions inherent in the source imagery. Pluta then rips, scans, and enlarges the cyanotype to create two merged images where a vertical tear implies a sense of spatial and temporal rupture.

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