

OUR ENTROPIC UNIVERSE

Mark and Hannah Hayes-Westall have been working in, and writing about, contemporary art for 20 years. Each month, they introduce an artist who should appear on your agenda

THIS MONTH: FLAVIE AUDI



Created Through Nature 3, 2016, cibachrome print, 152.4 x 127 cm

What's so interesting? Balance is a word that has been gaining in popularity for some time now. A quick check of trending search terms on Google reveals that its popularity has almost doubled in the past five years, and while this is doubtless a reaction to the increased pressure of our post-crunch world, it speaks also to a greater human desire.

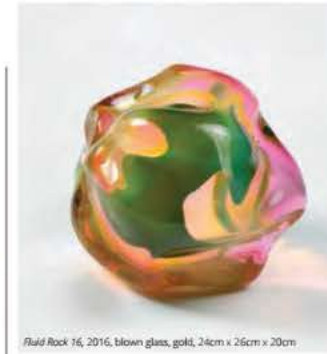
Renowned cognitive psychologist Jean Piaget famously said that "equilibrium is

the profoundest tendency of all human activity" and yet with the universe itself in a state of constant change as it expands, the sense of nearing equilibrium is at best ephemeral, at worst self-deluding. The scientific measure of nearness to equilibrium is entropy, and it is the entropy of humankind as it contemplates the changing universe and attempts to make sense of it through digital processes, that the young French-Lebanese artist Flavie

Piaget famously said that "equilibrium is the profoundest tendency of all human activity"



Fluid Rock 9, 2016, blown glass, gold, silver, 18cm x 21cm x 19cm



Fluid Rock 16, 2016, blown glass, gold, 24cm x 26cm x 20cm



Fluid Rock 19, 2016, blown glass, gold, silver, 26cm x 5cm x 21cm

Audi seems to almost literally crystallise in her work.

Exploring the interface between real and virtual worlds in an imagined planetary landscape, Audi brings together sculpture, installation, photography and video work to create an intellectual space that invites the contemplation of change and examination of the emotional responses to it. The artist describes her works as "forms and gestures capturing a fleeting, living energy, ... hovering between digital screen and celestial body" and her works seem to be an attempt to both address and restore the lost sense of wonder and awe that previously marked man's interaction with the cosmos.

Audi's *Fluid Rocks* pieces are otherworldly glass sculptures that show fundamental matter captured, through the glassmaking act, in a state of flux between one state and another, and seem to invite a human response to galactic transformations, bridging the gap between what is real and what is virtual with an aesthetic beauty. Puncturing the technological significance that glass has taken on through its use in digital devices

and screens, Audi's glass sculptures glitter and glow with a kind of extra-terrestrial allure, created by adding pigments and precious metals and applying chemicals to spark random reactions.

Other sculptural works draw on that most changeable and essential of materials, water. In the *Slice of Water* series, flat pools of glass in jewel-like tones challenge concepts of creation, transformation and movement, discursion on a substance that Audi calls "the wellspring of existence, water, the origin and source of everything". A multidisciplinary

artist, Audi's photographic work continues to explore the changes wrought by nature unintended by human hand, and the responses of the audience towards them. A series of 'cameraless' photographs show arcs of light and colour set within a depthless black space. The 'camera' in this case is a number of clear glass geometrical shapes through which light is directed onto photosensitive material, the decaying nature of the light resulting in a range of colours that, despite its analogue creation, appears digital in origin, challenging our understanding of the changes and our ability to direct them.

FIND THE WORK

Flavie Audi 'Cell-estial'
17 November 2016 – 9 January 2017
Tristan Hoare Gallery
6 Fitzroy Square, London
W1T 5HJ
tristanhoare.co.uk



Fluid Rock 18, 2016, blown glass, gold, silver, 19cm x 16cm x 17cm



Fluid Rock 20, 2016, blown glass, gold, silver, 16cm x 17cm x 15cm

Audi's glass sculptures glitter and glow with a kind of extra-terrestrial allure

Audi's video works show forms from her developing iconography set within what the artist refers to as 'cultured geology', or created landscapes; a futuristic virtual realm in which change is the constant. In *Landscapes of Mass Replication*, shapes that echo Audi's glass pieces appear to morph and change in a structured, yet organic way that speaks to the artist's interest in the way that synthetic replicas of natural material such as like diamond, are created and their impact on the natural world. Once again, the human emotions around change are played with, as the piece devolves from glorious, eye-catching, organic-seeming forms to a deliberately artificial CGI environment with cloned forms in dull colours performing repetitive motions.

An interest in topographies and in the materials that provide a sense of stability (or otherwise) is perhaps unsurprising when considered in the light of Audi's early training as an architect at London's prestigious RIBA. Her subsequent MA in ceramics and glass at the Royal College of Art in London provided her with a set of extraordinary craft skills that she deploys in her artistic practice, freeing her to experiment with the forms of her ideas.

At just 29 years old, Audi has already enjoyed the attention of some of the art world's most significant players, with work shown alongside pieces by Ai Wei Wei at a New York show curated by the respected art consultancy of de Pury de Pury, and in group shows including *Young Bright Things* at the David Gill Gallery in London. In November this year her first solo show opens at London's Tristan Hoare gallery and promises experiences of mystery with spatial and visual encounters that invite further meditation. **©**