

I'M NOT SURE
I *KNOW*

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DIAMOND

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DELUGE CONTEMPORARY ART
636 YATES STREET,
VICTORIA BC, CANADA.

EXACTLY WHAT
CLOUDS ARE.

MEGANELIZABETH DIAMOND

I LOOKED UP AT THE SKY AND SAW
A *LONE CUMULUS CLOUD*
AND FELT *YOU WITH ME.*

FOR JIM, FOR JAN.

I'm not sure I know exactly what clouds are is a collection of built photographic images and objects, utilizing the sky and clouds to understand the transient nature of photography. Meganelizabeth Diamond experiments with historical and contemporary photographic processes, blending them and emphasizing the slippage between them. Cloud formations serve as both subject and metaphor, symbolizing stages of fluidity and grief. To bend the sky, to fold a cloud, to cut through the horizon. Cloud stacks and sky tubes.

Working at the intersection of photography, collage, new media and moving image, Meganelizabeth Diamond's practice employs both analog and digital approaches in alternative modes of image building through explorations of the natural world via emotional connectivity, artificiality and perception.

Thank you and Deborah de Boer and Todd Ecarett at Deluge for the opportunity, support and guidance.

IMAGINE THE
CLOUDS DRIPPING.
DIG A HOLE IN
YOUR GARDEN TO
PUT THEM IN.

1963 SPRING
YOKO ONO,
CLOUD PIECE

I'm writing this on the precipice of spring, sometime between the surfacing of a season's worth of cigarette butts and the blooming of flowers. It's an ugly season, but the anticipation of sprouting plants and a rising feral quality in the air keep spirits high. So I come back to this poem by Yoko Ono, a brief and whimsical imperative that captures the leaky elements of the season, and I realize how much it reminds me of your artwork, which fluidly reconciles celestial horizons with terrestrial matter. I keep encountering auspicious signs like the poem everywhere I look. Yoko is an Aquarius and you are a Libra, both air signs, and I wonder if that's why you and she are so drawn to the sky—I'm not sure I know exactly what air signs are, but it strikes me as a detail which is too serendipitous to overlook.

Clouds are nature's Rorschach test; they reflect our subconscious back to us. It occurs to me that this is distinct from art, where we seek pathos in the image. The title of this show, I'm not sure if I know exactly what clouds are, is echoing in my head, and I find myself recklessly paraphrasing it out of context. By way of this repetition, I consider that maybe I don't want to know what clouds are, because like so many people in this world I am partial to my misconceptions. I think about Yoko's life-long love affair with the sky and wonder how much you can know about something simply by looking at it, but as someone who habitually writes about visual art I have to believe it's a lot.

Like most elements that populate your meticulously constructed images, clouds are enigmatic figures in your work. The eponymous piece in this show features two floating shapes which reflect a cloud-scape. The image is horizontally mirrored, and the lower half of the background reminds me of the surface of a lake reflecting the sky, a natural optical illusion that is no less magical for its simplicity. Like so much of your work it's never clear where nature ends and the digital manipulation begins. If photography has long been a medium dogged by accusations of objectivity then your images reveal a material flexibility capable of bending to the arc of your curiosity.

Your knack for experimentation is evident—each work exhibits a new transformation where common natural elements undergo multiple processes of manipulation. This creative restlessness, I'm told, is classic air sign.

In the early 20th-century, photographer Alfred Stieglitz pointed his camera upwards and created a series called *Equivalents*. Stieglitz, a pioneer in considering photography as an art form, regarded clouds as a pure vehicle for his philosophy of the medium's artfulness, and the series is often cited as the first instance of photography crossing over into abstraction. It occurs to me I've never asked what you look for in the clouds. When I visit your studio you show me a photo of clouds taken by your mom, which you then warp by pulling it through a flatbed

scanner. You refer to this process as one of your attempts to bend the sky, an expression that suggests you possess Stieglitz's pursuit of the essential qualities of photography, as well as Yoko's enchanted and pliable approach to the natural world as raw material.

Earlier this week I text "big Aries energy" to you, referencing Wilhelm Reich (1897-1957) the eccentric psychoanalyst who sought to control the weather, and the subject of Kate Bush's song *Cloudbusting*. Your lithograph *Cloud Chart* features a graphical taxonomy of clouds that emerged in the 19th-century as an attempt to understand the sky. I wonder if psychoanalysis, meteorology, and astrology are born of the same impulse to develop a common code to organize the sublime chaos of the psyche and nature alike.

On my phone I have an astrology app, and when I consult it today it tells me that "the sky is a mirror," which feels mystically apropos of these works. You are a Libra, a star sign that is often represented by a scale. I can't help but clock this as yet another cosmic signal, because when I look at these works, which entangle both sublimity and divinity, I see a harmony between heaven and earth.

-Madeline Bogoch