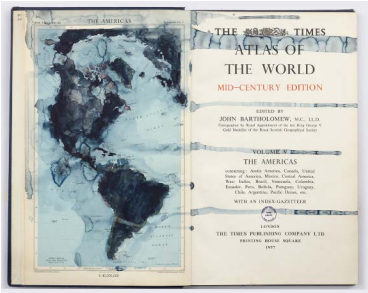


Press Release

Tania Kovats: Oceanic

24 September –
20 November 2021



Tania Kovats, *Sea Stain (Times Atlas of the World, Mid Century Edition, Vol V, The Americas)*, 2018

Watercolour on atlas
50 × 60 cm

© Tania Kovats. Courtesy Parafin, London.
Photo: Peter Mallet

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Parafin is delighted to announce a first solo exhibition with Tania Kovats. Titled 'Oceanic' the show references the artist's ongoing fascination with the sea, water and the environment, but also invokes heightened emotional states and a profound feeling of interconnectedness with nature. The exhibition includes two major sculptural works, *Bleached* (2017), and *Divers* (2018) not previously exhibited in London, alongside new sculptural pieces and works on paper.

Tania Kovats (born Brighton, 1966) makes drawings, sculpture, installations and large-scale time-based projects that explore our experience and understanding of the natural world. While Kovats is perhaps best known for her sculptures and drawings, her work encompasses a range of creative strategies, from map-making to writing, and she is also active as a curator, teacher and author. Kovats' enduring themes are the experience and understanding of landscape, geological processes, patterns of growth and the intersection of landscape, nature and culture and how art can speak to our critical climate crisis. Recently she has focused on water as her central subject; the seas and oceans, river systems, maritime culture, flooding and tides, necessarily touching on socio-political and environmental concerns.

The *Divers* (2018) are a series of figurative sculptures cast in concrete using wetsuits as moulds. These inverted aquatic figures reflect on our liquid selves and the experience of our own physical boundaries in water. Suggestive of Modernist sculpture, the figures appear to be 'diving' into the floor of the gallery, but also evoke marine and plant life forms. *Bleached* (2017) is a haunting sculpture which reflects on the remote but urgent issue of coral bleaching. *Bleached* recycles specially fabricated coral from aquarium, The Deep, in Hull, salvaged from a decommissioned display. In vitrines that mimic a museum display, Kovats' work creates a slice through a bleached coral reef, a starkly beautiful representation of a potentially devastating environmental event.

Drawing is a central part of her practice and Kovats is a prominent advocate for its importance as a creative and reflective medium. She has written two acclaimed books on the subject, *The Drawing Book* (2006) and *Drawing Water* (2014). She says: 'Drawing is the most direct form of visual communication. It crosses boundaries easily and belongs to everyone.' The exhibition includes new drawings inspired by the artist's on-going interest in marine biologist Rachel Carson's seminal 1953 book *The Sea Around Us*, a series of works made directly onto maritime charts and maps bound into her 'Book of Sea', new 'Orgasm Drawings' and two 'Freediver' body prints, as well as a group of Kovats' signature 'Sea Mark' drawings.

Tania Kovats (born Brighton, 1966) studied at Newcastle Polytechnic and the Royal College of Art. Notable recent solo exhibitions include 'Head To Mouth', Berwick Gymnasium (2019), 'Troubled Waters', Phoenix Gallery, Exeter (2019), 'Evaporation', Museum of Science & Industry, Manchester (2016), 'Oceans', Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh (2014). Important recent group exhibitions include 'UnNatural History' (curated by Invisible Dust), Herbert Museum & Art Gallery, Coventry (2021), 'Future Knowledge', Modern Art Oxford (2018), 'Women Power Protest', Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (2018) and 'Vita Vitale', Palazzo Grassi, Venice (2015). In 1991 she was awarded the Barclays Young Artist Award at the Serpentine Gallery, London. In 2015 she was nominated for the Max Mara Art Prize for Women at the Whitechapel Gallery.

Kovats' work is held in numerous public and private collections including the Arts Council Collection, London, British Council, London, National Maritime Museum, London, Government Art Collection, London, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, Jupiter ArtLand, Edinburgh, Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven and the Speed Museum, Kentucky.

Kovats is currently Professor of Drawing and Making at DJCAD, University of Dundee

Parafin

Parafin was launched in September 2014 by Ben Tufnell and Matt Watkins and is located at 18 Woodstock Street, just off New Bond Street. Parafin represents a broad selection of contemporary artists from emerging names to established international figures.

Gallery Artists

Nathan Coley	Hamish Fulton
Tim Head	Nancy Holt
Tania Kovats	Hynek Martinec
Melanie Manchot	Justin Mortimer
Hiraki Sawa	Indrė Šerpytytė
Melanie Smith	Fred Sorrell
Alison Watt	Hugo Wilson
Uwe Wittwer	