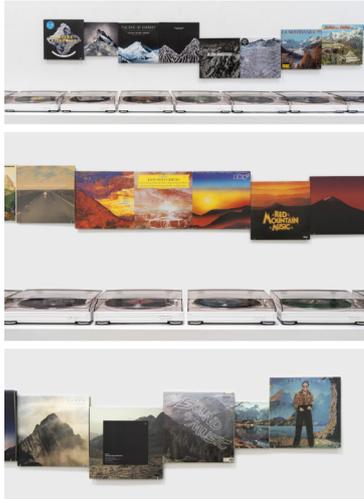


Press Release

Melanie Manchot Alpine Diskomiks

6 May – 25 June 2022



Melanie Manchot, *Alpine Diskomiks*, 2019
50 vinyl records, 50 synchronised
record players, album covers, stereo sound
20 minutes duration
© Melanie Manchot. Courtesy Parafin, London

For further details and images please contact:

Celia Higson, Parafin
+44 (0)20 7495 1969
celia@parafin.co.uk

Parafin is delighted to announce a new exhibition by Melanie Manchot, her second with the gallery. Alongside, the gallery will bring a solo presentation of Manchot's photographic work to Photo London at Somerset House (12–15 May 2022).

Melanie Manchot's diverse and research-driven practice employs photography, video, film and sound. Her long-standing areas of enquiry range from portraiture to participation and performance-to-camera, to raise questions on our individual and collective identities, often in relation to how these are conditioned by socio-economic and locational factors. These concerns have informed her continued commitment to considering mountains as specific psychological, ecological and physical entities to reflect upon our changing place in an increasingly mediated world. Situated at the threshold between the documentary and staged events, Manchot's work frequently involves an engagement with strangers.

At Parafin, Manchot will stage *Alpine Diskomiks* (2019), a major installation first shown in her solo exhibition at the Kunsthau Centre d'art Pasquart, Biel in 2019. The 20-metre-long installation comprises 50 turntables and a frieze of album covers depicting mountain landscapes. The records are set spinning one after the other, according to the length of their content. At first, we hear an atmospheric mix of electronic sounds and drums. This track, with a running time of 19 minutes, defines both the beginning and end of the sound installation. Gradually, the other turntables join in, their music superimposed on the tracks already playing, mixing together genres from classical, 1970s pop and rock, experimental electronica, folk music and punk to death metal. What these records all have in common is the mountain motifs that adorn their covers, which Manchot has arranged to form a continuous mountain skyline. The audio work culminates in a deafening cacophony, an intense and overwhelming soundscape, like an avalanche of sonic events, that has the effect of melding the individual pieces of music together and disorientating the listener. Then, having reached the acoustic peak, the individual soundtracks gradually subside again until only the original music is heard and a sense of orientation gradually returns.

Alpine Diskomiks subverts the motif of the idyllic, romantic mountain landscape, suggesting, through the violent dissonance of the sounds, the tremendous natural forces that have shaped the Alps over millions of years. Through its accumulation and decay the work aims to question the cultural history of mountains, the contentious notion of the sublime and how particular landscapes might be co-opted as containers for human experiences.

In the lower gallery, Manchot will present a film projection, *Snowdance* (2019). Deep in the night, eight huge machines trace patterns and designs

into the snow. Illuminated only by their own lights, they move in conjunction, at times as pairs, then in long lines, drawing circles, figures of eight, loops. Filmed using a drone and set to an original soundtrack by composer Christof Dienz, *Snowdance* creates a dynamic tension between observation and staged event, between scenography and chance. Based on traditional, regional alpine folk dances, the choreography presents the machines as both cumbersome and agile, creating a luminous dance inscribed in the snow. Collaborating with a community of mountain workers, *Snowdance* originated through a series of conversations on the back stage of mountain tourism, on the labour involved in making a mountain function.

Snowdance is part of Manchot's ongoing series of 'Mountainworks', which forms a sustained enquiry into complex relations between landscapes, human agency and technology. The project explores the infrastructure of mountain industries in a particular alpine valley and considers questions of maintenance and responsibility for the environments in our care. Against a growing concern over human exceptionalism Manchot's work aims to contribute to wider discussions around how we can build reciprocal engagements with the environments we inhabit.

Parafin at Photo London

Somerset House, 12–15 May

Parafin will return to Photo London in 2022 presenting a solo booth by Melanie Manchot focussing on her use of photography and her ongoing engagement with forms of portraiture. The presentation will showcase work from across Manchot's career, including many pieces that have never been previously exhibited.

Known primarily as an artist working with moving images, Manchot first came to prominence in the 1990s for a ground-breaking series of naked photographic portraits of her mother. She says:

'Photography is the backbone to everything I do and to how I think visually. I would suggest that most of my moving-image works, whether film or video, are strongly informed by photography – conceptually, aesthetically, in terms of their sense of time and duration. Cameras, whether still or moving, are crucial devices shaping the construction of the work. To me, cameras are not simply machines that generate the images I wish to make; more importantly, they are an organizing principle, an apparatus that becomes part of a set of relations I wish to create.'

Manchot's diverse and research-driven practice employs photography, video, film and sound. Her long-standing areas of enquiry range from portraiture to participation and performance, to questions of individual and collective identities, and to the exploration of the very particular socio-

economic and ecological microclimate of a specific alpine mountain and its community. Situated at the threshold between the documentary and staged events, Manchot's work frequently involves an engagement with strangers.

Melanie Manchot

Melanie Manchot has exhibited internationally since 1997. Recent solo exhibitions include Fondazione Museum Lumen, Brunico (2021), BTV Stadtforum Innsbruck (2019), Kunsthaus Centre d'art Pasquart, Biel (2019), MAC/VAL, Paris (2018), Parafin, London (2018), Art Night, London (2017), Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne (2016), Aspex Gallery, Portsmouth (2016), fig-2 at the ICA, London (2015), Nuit Blanche, Paris (2011) and the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (2010). Manchot is in production for her first feature film, commissioned by Liverpool Biennial for 2023.

Important group exhibitions include 'In The Now: Gender and Nation in Europe', LACMA, Los Angeles (2021), 'Street Life', Photography Triennial, Deichtorhallen, Hamburg (2018), 'Hooked', Science Gallery, London (2018), 'Actions. The image of the world can be different', Kettle's Yard, Cambridge (2018), Marl Media Arts Awards, Museum Marl, Germany (2016), 'Group Therapy', FACT, Liverpool (2015), Welde Art Award, Stadtgalerie Mannheim (2014), 'The Rhythm Is...', Museum Folkwang, Essen (2014), 'Situations', Musee d'Art Contemporaine, Paris (2012), New Forest Pavilion, 52nd Biennale di Venezia (2007) and 'Global Feminisms', Brooklyn Museum, New York (2007).

Melanie Manchot's work is included in important public and private collections including the Kunsthaus Centre d'art Pasquart, Switzerland, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, Government Art Collection, London, Arts Council Collection, London, FMAC, Fonds Municipal d'Art Contemporain, Paris, LACMA, Los Angeles and the Brooklyn Museum, New York.

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
Nancy Holt
Melanie Manchot
Indrě Šerpytytė
Alison Watt

Hamish Fulton
Tania Kovats
Justin Mortimer
Melanie Smith
Uwe Wittwer

Tim Head
Hynek Martinec
Hiraki Sawa
Fred Sorrell