

Body of Water, Body of Stone

A Solo by Dimitra Charamandas

26 October - 30 November 2022

Gypsum is pleased to present *Body of Water, Body of Stone*, a solo exhibition by Greek-Swiss artist Dimitra Charamandas. Charamandas' artistic process begins from the physical; through embodied outdoor research during which she walks, sketches, paints and writes. In her vast acrylic and oil on canvas paintings and her smaller mixed-media works, the artist approaches landscapes as a series of bodies: A jagged coastline path that traces the extremities of an island, or a body of water that divides continents and enables or inhibits the flow of real, human bodies.

She interrogates the latent violence embedded in otherwise beautiful topographies, aware of the invisible forces that have molded the earth over millennia, whether through pressure; condensing time into a solid tangible mass, or erosion; gradually allowing what is concealed to come to the surface. The Caldera or volcano crater recurs in her work as a symbol for forces that lay dormant till they reach boiling point, for the fault lines between subjective realities.

Her palette is inspired by the natural pigments of the landscapes through which she walks. The lilac of resilient wildflowers, the yellow sulfur of volcanic detritus, and the terracotta tones of a fertile – or contaminated – soil all make their way onto her canvases, which are executed based on sketches and photographs taken on site.

Through her slow travel and the observation of minute, cyclical changes, Charamandas's practice draws from an ecofeminist worldview that challenges a prevalent value system of speed and productivity. In her sculptural work and her artistic gatherings centered around food and community exchange, she invokes a politics of care, boldly embarking on traditionally "nurturing" endeavors in a context that would see them sidelined or devalued.

An initial body of work was born out of an artist residency in Greece, where the Charamandas spent time in a garden near the now-disbanded Moria refugee camp on the island of Lesbos. In proximity to this ebb and flow of asylum seekers journeying to Europe, the artist embarked on her daily practice of walks as a way to challenge her body and practice out of stasis, against the backdrop of a moment of collective crisis that had left many frozen in fear and frustration.

Through her work, the artist reflects on her own liminal position between cultures, languages and countries, harnessing this tension as a fruitful force that can be channeled towards movement and creation. The exhibition *Body of Water, Body of Stone* presents depictions of an ethereal landscape; part memory, part fantasy, part vision for an alternative relationship between body and territory.

Dimitra Charamandas (b. 1988) is Swiss-Greek artist whose practice encompasses painting, video, text, sculpture, and community gatherings. Recent solo and duo presentations include *Bassa Marea*, Museo Castello San Materno, Ascona (2022); *Fragility*, Haus der Kunst St. Josef, Solothurn (2021); and *An der Kante*, Salon Mondial der Christoph Merian Stiftung, Münchenstein, Basel (2018). Upcoming solos include a presentation at Helvetia Art Foyer, Basel (November 2022), at Ann Mazzotti Gallery, Basel (March, 2023), and at Kunstmuseum Solothurn (September, 2023). Charamandas completed an MA in Fine Arts at the Institute Art Gender Nature, Basel (2022) and had previously studied at the Lucerne School of Art and Design and the Bern Academy of the Arts. Her work is held in institutional and private collections across Switzerland. She lives and works between Basel, Solothurn and Athens.