

Sky Eternal Cat Wilson

Sky Eternal is an immersive video installation, which mirrors moving cloudscales to create a kind of moving Rorschach inkblot. Accompanied by an ambient soundscape, composed by Jamie Saxe, this mesmerising work mediates on the ways in which the universal and timeless sky unites us all, a metaphor for innovation, positivity, hope and heaven.

Constant Becoming

Within moments of encountering Cat's beautiful, immersive work I understood *Sky Eternal* exists in the realm of reverie. Attention ...stillness ... openness ... all feel essential. The artist offers the experience of simply sitting and beholding and what comes, comes, in this invitation to contemplate the sheltering sky, without which we don't exist. The right words to write about the work felt as elusive as the work itself. Two words I did write in my notes were *constant becoming*. When we later discussed her work, Cat used the same words.

After this first viewing, I reflect on the significance of sky and clouds in numerous disciplines and aspects of our lives ... Mythology, Poetry, Science, Music, Art, Divination, Theology, Philosophy, Psychology, Astronomy, Astrology, wonder, terror, hope, depression, inspiration, dreams, worship ... all of that and more. All of this too overwhelming to encompass.

'How simple it is to discover one's soul at the end of reverie! Reverie puts us in the state of a soul being born.' [1]

A second viewing allows me to just sit and look. I'm now more attuned to the subtle, rorschach effect in the fractal images. The mirroring and compressed time-lapse mesmerises. There's crafting at work, rather than manipulation. A sound-scape of deep meditative tones propels wisps of cloud from the left side of the frame. A tremor of heartbeat and pulse and deep space haunts this composition. The tufts of cloud morph momentarily into ... what? An arrowhead? A pagoda? A syringe-like implement? A deep oceanic organism? Mouths, jaws, antenna, skeletal frames ... all animated ... all anthropomorphic ... propulsive and *penetrating*, seeding the mother cloud as her vapour endlessly subsumes into the source. An errant wisp propels itself onward and it's almost as if mother cloud and errant wisp form lips and kiss, delicately, before they consume each other.

About | Cat Wilson

Cat Wilson is an Australian born artist, currently based on the NSW South Coast. Cat has an Advanced Diploma in Dramatic Art from the VCA and worked as a theatre director for over 10 years before moving into video and photo media in 2009.

Cat's work explores the human relationship to the natural world and how our search for larger truths, through science and religion, are shaped by it.

A fascination with repetition is also central to her practice and while living in Morocco from 2014 - 2017 she trained traditional in Islamic geometric design.

Cat has had Exhibitions at Craft Victoria, Dandenong City Council, Northcote Town Hall, and in Morocco.

Visit www.gallery.photoaccess.org.au to learn more about *Sky Eternal*.

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There's delight and wonder in this play. What child with the gift of sight does not see fantastic creatures in a cloudscape? Imagination is as potent as reality in your early years and the sky must be the first wordless book you learn to read. A glance reveals if the day has begun, how it will be and how much longer it will last. Clouds and sky creatures inspire you to imagine drifting on a thermal. When a child is held high in someone's arms, the impulse is always to reach up to touch the sky.

'... dreaming reveries and thinking thoughts are certainly two disciplines which are hard to reconcile ...' [1]

There is no real need for words or active thinking to receive this work. But words and thoughts insist on drifting and fading like the wisps traversing the screen.

'A word is a bud attempting to become a twig.' [1]

Cirrus, Cirrostratus & Cirrocumulus.

Altostratus & Altopcumulus.

Nimbostratus, Stratocumulus & Stratus.

Cumulus & Cumulonimbus.

A composition for violin, viola, cello, flute, clarinet, bassoon, double base.

Fractus ... a cloud of ragged, shredded or torn appearance.

Mammatus ... bag like clouds that hang like a cow's udder.

Vertebratus ... vertebrae, ribs or the skeleton of fish. [2]

All of these names sound birthed from long observation and deep attention.

'The mind makes systems ... to understand the universe.' [1]

Thirty-six words describe 'clouds' in the languages of North-East Arnhem Land; several more describe the sky. The impulse to describe is as universal as the need to understand.

Dhāpan - *when clouds appear on the horizon, there is distant thunder, and plants develop new roots.*

Clouds, all of a piece with the life of plants in this world perceived as infinitely and intimately interconnected.

Mirrmirnga - words spoken by the spirit cloud. [3]

A soul being born.

The North West Monsoon makes its first appearance in northern Australia in October or November, heralded by towering cumulus, surging like surf through the atmosphere. The plumes are so vast and dense the only way forward is to fly through them. Just the pilot and you and the mailbag. You're quickly encased in vapour. Visibility nil. Turbulence unpredictable. Alarming. The plane exits a plume. The mud-green river below side-winds through an ancient landscape. River and swamps and waterholes cradle the reflection of clouds and the outgoing tide carries the reflections to the sea.

The plane enters another plume and another and another. Equal measures of fear and wonder seize you. You must embrace the possibility you might not make it this time, rightly feeling what an insignificant speck of humanity you are. It's only when the pilot drops altitude for the landing your adrenaline subsides.

The airport reeks of aviation gas. You feel the spray of it on your arms as another plane takes off. Despite my gratitude for the wonders of science and modern technology, flying through that phenomenon feels like a violation. The earth's finely calibrated atmosphere is such a fragile thing. The sky has endured our pollution for centuries now. The profound sadness to have left such a dirty footprint is undeniable.

Arthur Stace, a semi-vagrant man with a criminal history and limited literacy knew the most essential of words. For decades he wrote *Eternity* in chalk and beautiful copperplate script across Sydney's pavements. When I lived in that frantic city I did need reminding, although I could not express at all what eternity meant to me. I could find no words for this immensity.

Irony sits quietly in this work, created with technology and displayed in a gallery, when outside, the direct experience is constantly available to us. If we are prone to ignore the world, the artist gently reminds us of this profound reality, without which we can't exist.

Marian Devitt

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Marian Devitt's career experience and qualifications are in Education, Arts Management, Community Arts and Writing. A resident of NSW's Far South Coast, she now contributes as a committee member to Arts, Environment and community organisations and projects. Her current writing projects include an historical novel trilogy, occasional writing workshops and freelance articles.

References

1. *The Poetics of Reverie: Childhood, Language and the Cosmos*, Gaston Bachelard, 1960. Beacon Press, Boston.
2. *The Wonders of the Weather*, Bob Crowder, 2000, Bureau of Meteorology.
3. *Yolngu Matha Dictionary*, Charles Darwin University, yolngudictionary.cde.edu.au