

SCARLETT HOOFT GRAAFLAND

DISCOVERY

29 March - 29 April 2017

Private View Tuesday 28 March 6-8pm

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"What pushes me to explore remote places is my nostalgia for regions that are still completely natural. Places that are untouched, where humans have hardly intervened. I'm fascinated by how people manage to endure and survive in spite of circumstances that are often rough and rigorous." - Scarlett Hooft Graafland.

Scarlett Hooft Graafland's surreal, dream-like photographs provide the lasting record of her carefully choreographed, site-specific sculptural interventions and performances in some of the most isolated corners of the earth. The exhibition *Discovery* draws together more than a decade of exploration, from the salt desert of Bolivia to the desolate Canadian Arctic, the island of Madagascar and the remote shores of Vanuatu, where her interactions reflect an exchange between the boundless realm of nature and the relative confines of culture. This is her first solo exhibition with Flowers Gallery.



Still life with Camel, 2016, C-type print,
120 x 150 cm, 47 1/4 x 59 1/8 in

Hooft Graafland's images emphasize the 'natural strangeness' of the landscape with uncanny juxtapositions of everyday objects and materials. Local customs and stories are interwoven throughout her work, re-interpreting and re-imagining mythologies related to the landscape. Rich, earthy pools of spices gather within blinding white salt flats in *Carpet*; balloon-clad figures stand against striking azure skies in *Burka Balloons* and *Salt Steps*; and bare, surrealistically detached legs wrap playfully around a giant, spiked desert cactus in *Discovery*.

Hooft Graafland's sculptural arrangements exist only briefly, or for the duration of the photograph, anchoring each image to the time and place of its execution and dispersing back into the environment without trace. Marked by an economy of means, (each photograph is produced with only a handful of local materials) her images, with their otherworldly beauty and gentle humour, nonetheless evoke broad global topics touching on cultural and environmental issues. In *Turtle*, a nude female figure crouches beneath the shield of a turtle on the island of Madagascar, its protective arc mirroring the rhythmic undulations of the volcanic backdrop and accentuating the fragile nature of survival on the planet. In the pastoral desert scene of *Still Life with Camel* photographed in the United Arab Emirates, two men and a camel swathed in candy-coloured pink cloth are surrounded by tyre tracks and scattered debris. The same pink cloth binds a solitary figure seeking refuge within a Swedish forest in *Touching Base*, directing attention towards contemporary global issues of displacement.

Philosopher Maarten Doorman has described her working process as an attempt to seek "maximum authenticity" in a world where "everything is forever being photographed". He says: "Hooft Graafland, with her analogue camera and anthropological patience, reclaims landscapes and fleeting civilizations from an indifferent visual culture."¹ Central to this process is a sense of exchange and collaboration; Hooft Graafland often works with local assistants, inviting mutual trust and cooperation with unknown people who share local knowledge, participate in the process of production, or perform for the camera.

One of the most recent projects to be included in this exhibition involved a journey to the South Pacific Ocean nation of Vanuatu and the South American city of Lima, following a path set by 18th Century British explorer Captain James Cook and his progeny. In *Resolution*, the narrative shifts fluidly between past and present as a descendent of the chief of the tribe that welcomed Captain Cook onto Malekula Island centuries ago holds a yellow replica of Cook's ship the HMS Resolution.

ABOUT SCARLETT HOOFT GRAAFLAND

Scarlett Hooft Graafland received a BFA at the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague, the Netherlands, and an MFA in sculpture at Parsons School of Design, New York. Solo exhibitions have included *Shores Like You*, Huis Marseille Museum for Photography, Amsterdam, Holland, 2016; *Look! Cook! Look!*, Landskrona Museum, Sweden, 2015; *Unlikely Landscape*, Museum for Photography Seoul, South Korea, 2014; *Almas De Sal*, Museo Nacional de Arte, La Paz, Bolivia, 2012; *Reykjavik Roofs*, SIM Gallery, Reykjavik, Iceland, 2004; and *Part Time Human*, Anadiel Gallery, Center for Contemporary Art, Jerusalem, 2000. Her work is included in several international museum collections.

NOTESTO EDITORS

Opening Hours: Monday - Saturday 10am - 6pm or by appointment

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For further information and more images, please contact Hannah Hughes 020 7920 7777 / hannah@flowersgallery.com

1. Maarten Doorman, Diving Into Reality, Shores Like You, 2016, nai010 publishers, Rotterdam.



Resolution, Malekula, 2015, C-type print,
120 x150 cm, 47 1/4 x 59 1/8 in



Carpet, 2010, C-type print,
120 x150 cm, 47 1/4 x 59 1/8 in



Burka Balloons, 2014, C-type print,
120 x150 cm, 47 1/4 x 59 1/8 in



Discovery, 2006, C-type print,
150 x120 cm, 59 1/8 x 47 1/4 in