

BO LEE GALLERY

Damaris Athene: mutable_ground

19 September – 24 October

Drawing on feminist post-human thought, Damaris Athene challenges distinctions between organic and synthetic, digital and physical. Her works inhabit the unstable spaces between these categories: bodily fragments merge with technologies, surfaces slip between two and three dimensions, and materials appear simultaneously seductive and unsettling. The resulting objects feel both intimate and alien.

Something or someone that is mutable is subject to change — becoming fluid, shifting and never quite fixed. The exhibition's title suggests the body, particularly the more-than-human body, as a mutable ground: not something separate or self-contained, but a permeable space where human, animal, fungal, vegetal and environmental merge. Across the three bodies of work presented: *__deepcopy*, - *infiltrate* - and a new series, *mirrorimageimagemirror*, surfaces entice while frustrating attempts to determine exactly what is seen. Athene invites us into an uncertain space where familiar boundaries dissolve and embodied experience offers ways of knowing beyond what language can express.

Emerging from a process of continual reworking, the images in *__deepcopy* appear doubled and offset. Traces of the artist's previous artworks are carried forward into each new image, embedding a history of repetition and transformation that speaks to the regurgitation of images in the digital realm. Married with overlapping fabrics that move between transparency and opacity, the resulting works appear almost holographic, producing a sensation of visual slippage akin to a fault in vision or a digital image that has failed to align correctly.

The photographic series *mirrorimageimagemirror* extends this instability into the landscape. Developed following a residency in Norway, the series began with reflective surfaces dotted with water placed outdoors and photographed within their surroundings. Details of snow, vegetation and sky are transformed into washes of colour, producing images that resemble abstract colour field paintings. While the original environment is seemingly lost to the eye, on closer inspection, the droplets of water, like camera obscuras, capture inverted miniature reflections of the landscapes from which they emerged, containing the natural world within its own abstraction.

This sense of distortion is emphasised by Athene's material choices. Printed onto brushed aluminium Dibond, the appearance of each work alters as the viewer changes position, rendering the image unfixed. In a world filled with digital images infiltrated by AI, Athene plumbs the depths of imagery's verifiability, interrogating the seeming authenticity of photographic recordings and disrupting the idea of a 'true' reading.

Where *mirrorimageimagemirror* draws the surrounding landscape into the work through reflection, - *infiltrate* - reverses this relationship, extending outwards to act upon the space around it. The site-responsive installation sees padded branching structures, punctuated with mucus-like glass forms, travel across the walls and ceiling. Femme-coded colours embrace softness as a source of power, while tones suggestive of rotting fruit invoke Eve, temptation, and the Garden of Eden. Beautiful and repellent, playful and threatening, - *infiltrate* - draws on the monstrous-feminine to create an organism that refuses easy categorisation. The artwork's apparent material tenderness invites proximity, even as its creeping forms suggest something capable of growing beyond our control.

About Damaris Athene

Damaris Athene's transdisciplinary practice focuses on the posthuman and how digital technology affects perceptions of bodily materiality. Through an exploration of feminist posthuman theory, Athene reexamines hierarchies in a post-anthropocentric world, blurring the borders between humans and more-than-humans. She is interested in what embodied experience can communicate when language fails us. Her work inhabits liminal space, slipping between the real/unreal, and swimming through permeable boundaries between bodies, the organic/synthetic, the digital/physical, and 2D/3D space. Work transmutes from painting to sculpture, photography, digital collage, and installations.