

SHELTERING SKY

In this world
we walk on the roof of hell,
gazing at flowers.

– Issa

EARTH

What is the difference between earth and world? If for centuries human beings were convinced it was their thought that separated the two, the current lack of distinction of ‘natural’ earth due to the ‘civilised’ world is more of a physical action – a *mind=set*. The earth’s surface is a joint project, a shared site of construction and demolition, of slow violence and calculated accidents. But was that landslide caused by me or by you? We took blame away from the earth, and introduced it back as a world in competition for it.

AIR

The title of the exhibition is taken from a Paul Bowles novel from 1949 of the same name. “How fragile we are under the sheltering sky. Behind the sheltering sky is a vast dark universe, and we’re just so small.” A figure locked in a floating cage breathes in, but all they get is smoke. Blinded, they cannot see where security exists without danger remaining by their side. What shelters and what exposes are indistinguishable. They cannot see where earth’s layered atmosphere meets the cosmos. The sky remains an abyss, upturned.

Fire is “an essential element for ongoing, as well as an agent of double-death, the killing of ongoingness.” (Donna Haraway) It glows carefully under human duress, or demonstrates our lack of control, as if these were the only options in an algorithm – two polarised hypothetical realities, both existing at the same time. We are beholden to the flammability of our survival: We warm our hands whilst fanning and redirecting the blaze.

FIRE

Water has many states. It has many options. Depending on the temperature of the atmosphere, it changes to frozen, liquid, or vapour form. It doesn’t create its own conditions – it partakes in them. A lonely figure, part flower–part human, is rooted in ice. It’s not clear how it got there, it’s pretty out of place. But being part human doesn’t make it any more exceptional. It is just as cold as a flower. We are never *just, only*, human. Fragility partakes. Fragility has options.

WATER