

MICHELLE STUART

The Imprints of Time, 1969-2021

February 24 - March 26, 2022

Opening Thursday, February 24, 2022, 10:00am - 7:00pm



Michelle Stuart, *Extinct*, 1992

Galerie Lelong & Co., New York is pleased to announce the opening of *Michelle Stuart: The Imprints of Time, 1969-2021*. Since the 1960s, Michelle Stuart (b. 1933, Los Angeles, CA) has created pioneering works that synthesize Land Art, drawing, photography, painting, and sculpture. As one of the few female land artists of her generation, Stuart's relation to the earth and mark-making also diverges from male contemporaries in capturing "the handwriting of nature." The exhibition will present a survey from the late 1960s to the present, including works on paper, sculpture, and photography that highlight the site-specificity of her practice as well as the indexical nature of her works.

Photography is an impression made by the light surrounding a specific place. Stuart's work, pointing to sites as far reaching as Machu Picchu, Mesa Verde, and the South Pacific, manifests that by physically engaging in mark-making that brings the material aspects of the site into the work. Often combining drawings and organic material into one work, these impressions through Stuart's hand coexist on the same picture plane. In *Islas Encantadas: Seymour Island Cycle* (1981-82), a monumental grid of earth-imbued units coexist in dialogue with photographs of flora and fauna, caught in time.

Four works from Stuart's series *Area-Sayreville, New Jersey* (1976) are comprised of paper rubbed with earth from the quarry and framed with a row of photographs from the site. The artist's incorporation of photography, beginning in the 1960s, is one of the earliest demonstrations of photography in Land Art.

The grid is a recurring formal structure of Stuart's work, synonymous with the cool detachment of Conceptual Art of the 1960s. However, the rationality imposed by the grid is exceeded by the natural elements contained within. Stuart arranges the components in the same way one would work with line, shape, and form, creating a unified composition but with depth that moves the viewers' eyes back and forth, as demonstrated in the early work *El Florido Chart* (1980) and a recent photographic work *Creation Myth* (2020).

Collapsing time, memory and place, Stuart's work addresses the metaphysical while remaining profoundly rooted in its own materiality and the artist's interest in archeology, botany and history. Armed with the curiosity of an Enlightenment explorer, she approaches materials from the earth and nature as a collector and archivist, aiming to contain their energetic potential as well as to underscore their fragility as beacons of the dire environmental crisis we currently face.

About the Artist

Since the 1960s, Michelle Stuart has created a multifaceted body of work that defies easy categorization, shifting between large-scale Earthworks, collage, drawings, photography, and sculpture. Stuart has devoted her decades-long practice to recording and studying traces upon the earth, whether by nature or by human hand, as imprints of identity. Stuart maps the passage of time and space, retrieving histories as much as she makes us aware of their irretrievability. She often utilizes organic materials such as earth, beeswax, and plant matter, rubbing them against paper or transforming them into objects with talismanic aura. Even when working with photography, she continues to perceive it as an imprinting process, frequently researching and re-photographing old prints to recall forgotten moments in history.

Named the Millersville University Department of Art & Design Conrad Nelson fellow for 2021-2022, a solo exhibition titled *Penzance (Cornwall) to Paddington (London)* will be held from January 20 to March 4, 2022 and the artist will give a lecture on February 8. Stuart is currently participating in two group exhibitions *Sound as Sculpture* and *Tender Objects: Emotion and Sensation after Minimalism* at The Warehouse, Dallas, Texas. Upcoming exhibitions include a collection presentation of a new acquisition, *Passages: Mesa Verde (1977-1979)* at the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, D.C., in fall 2022 and inclusion in *What Is Left Unspoken, Love*, at High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia (March 2022) and *Cosmonogies* at Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain de Nice (November 2022). A documentary on the artist, *Michelle Stuart: Voyager*, produced by Karen Shapiro and directed by Karen Bellone is currently in production.

Stuart has exhibited internationally over the past 40 years. Notable solo exhibitions include *Sayreville Strata Quartet*, Dia:Beacon, New York (2017); *Theatre of Memory: Photographic Works*, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York (2016); *Place and Time*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and *Drawn from Nature*, which opened at the University of Nottingham, England and travelled to Parish Art Museum, Watermill, New York (2013) and Santa Barbara Museum of Art (2014). Her work is featured in public collections worldwide including MoMA, New York; Glenstone Museum, Potomac, Maryland; The Art Institute of Chicago; Moderna Museet, Sweden; Museum of Contemporary Art, Australia; SFMOMA, San Francisco, California; Tate Gallery, London; The Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, D.C.; The Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania; The Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The Hammer Museum in Los Angeles; and The Centre Pompidou, Paris, France, among others.

Stuart was born in 1933 in Los Angeles, California, and currently lives and works in New York, New York.

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