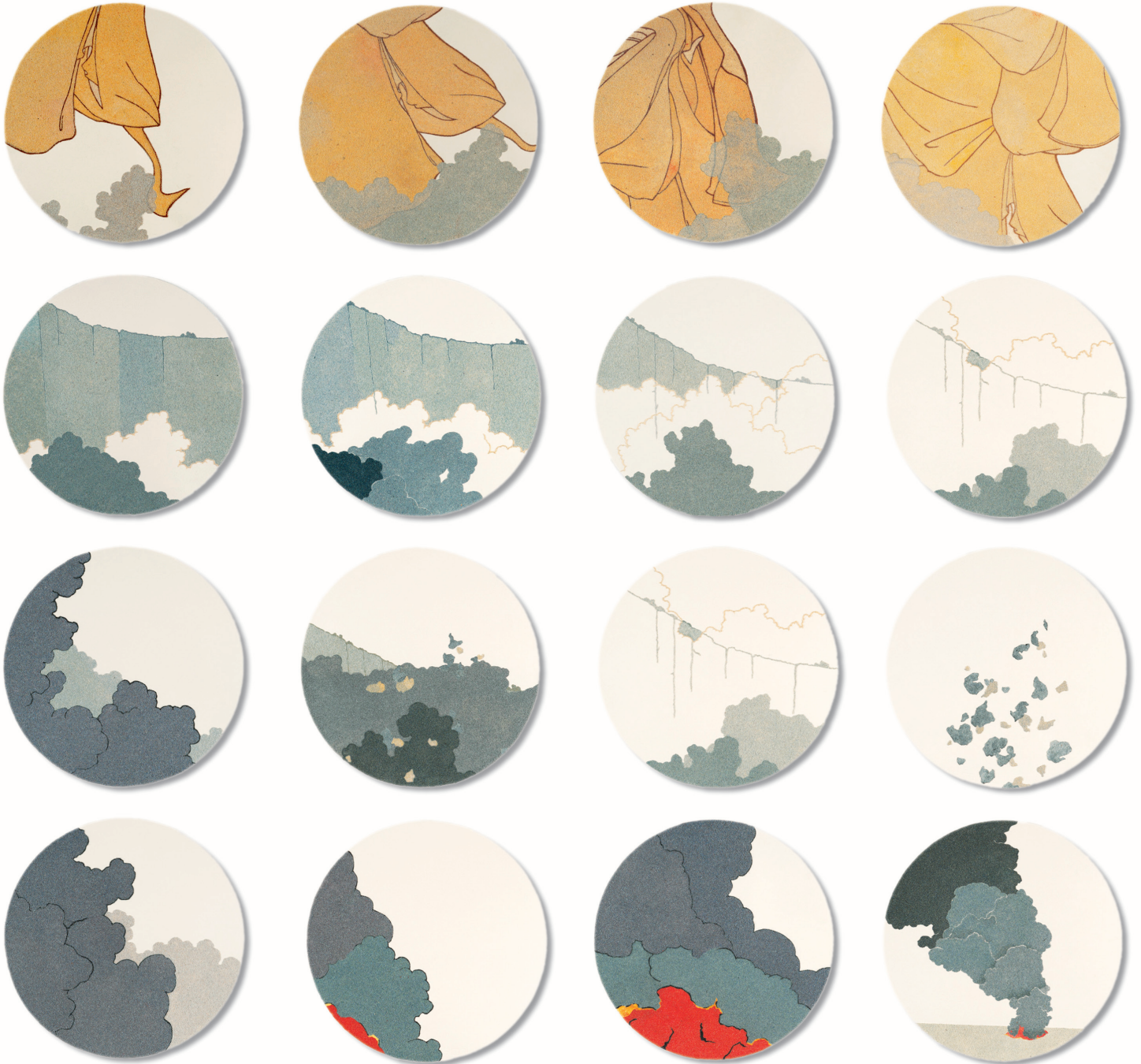


Bonita Alice
Beast In A Dangerous Landscape



6 - 27 October 2012
GALLERY AOP Johannesburg South Africa

Bonita Alice *Treachery, Lies and Lamentation* 2011 Wool dust on paper Diameter each tondo 370mm

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Beast In A Dangerous Landscape

John Berger wrote a story about a lake in which the lake has a voice, a history and a memory of that history.

It begins ...

"I am an alpine lake. I measure 750 metres by fifty metres. I am about seventy metres deep. One of my neighbours to the west is an alpage called Annely. I am called Falin. I reflect with my eyes shut. When I do this indiscriminately, you, you see dark green, nothing else."

Asked about the 'borderline' between the self and the other in the writing process, Berger suggests it is a process of osmosis.

"That which has become part of one's own experience and life is already other people ... the self is already collective."

In the end, he says, he realised the story of the lake is the story of Narcissus "seen from the other point of view." "For a while I thought I was writing about a lake which was out there, I was writing actually about something that was already inside me, although I was not writing about myself."

John Berger; 'The Act of Approaching', an interview with Nikos Papastergiadis in *Dialogues In The Diasporas*, 1998



"... a mute but audible lament through sensuous sighing and even the rustling of plants ..."

Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, 1997

Derrida proposed that contrary to the idea that nature mourns its muteness, it is nature's melancholy that renders it mute.



"... contemporary criteria for what counts as moral, sane, and rational make the assertion of intrinsic human inequality and defense of social discrimination universally impossible, let alone illegal. The same is not true for those interested in countering speciesism, whose norms are still a work in progress." "Care and concern invariably turn into finite quantities, with never enough to go around beyond narrow human interest."

Kalpana Rahita Seshadri, *HumAnimal - Race, Law, Language*, 2012



The crisis-of-the-earth of our age is nothing if not a reflection of humanity's chaos. Our actions say "we cannot tolerate change" while ensuring that change will be total and uncontrollable. In our relationships with the non-human animals who inhabit the landscape with us, we've never advanced very far in terms of reconciliation but have refined and perfected their oppression as if seeking proof of what we regard as our superior position.

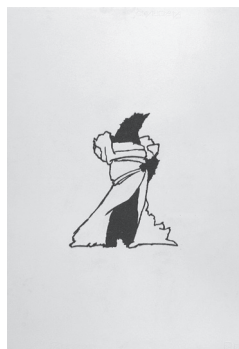
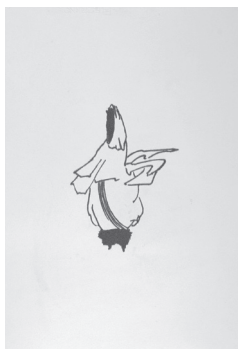
Beast is the spectre of this most ambivalent of relationships. Beast is my image of internal noise played out as external disturbance. It plays out the dramas that follow when private crises that lie unattended inside leak out and are exposed in shared turmoil. The landscape around Beast both suffers and causes the effects of its crisis.

Projecting the internal onto the external landscape is something individuals do. I suspect though there's a parallel that occurs on a grand scale with peoples and nations. It is a theme common, for instance, in Japanese Art and belief, that destructive events in nature are linked to the unresolved emotional dynamics of individuals and peoples. Hokusai's Wave, we know, is not just water:

Bonita Alice, 2012

www.bonitaalice.blogspot.com

Bonita Alice was born in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1962. She completed a BA Fine Art Degree at the University of the Witwatersrand and received a MFA from the Michaelis School of Fine Arts at the University of Cape Town, South Africa in 1990. She relocated to London in 2007. Her recent interests include the study of animal-human relations and related ideas in the context of environmental discourse as well as in relation to her own Art practice.



Bonita Alice *Beast Well-Clothed I - IV* 2012 Wool dust on paper 550X440mm each

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