

Interview with Sunny Kerr, curator, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queens University, Kingston (Canada), extract, 2020 (<https://agnes.queensu.ca/exhibition/drift-art-and-dark-matter/>)

'I discovered what the Greeks knew not: uncertainty'  
Jorge Luis Borges, *Ficciones*, 1944

Sunny Kerr: The exhibition Drift — Art and Dark Matter is the outcome of a residency at the Snolab, a laboratory two miles under the ground in a nickel mine in Sudbury, Ontario, where research about Dark Matter is taking place. You are showing the installation 'Blank Spots' in this context. Could you tell us how this work addresses the relationship between Art and Science? Could you tell us about the genesis of the piece 'Blank Spots'?

Nadia Lichtig: Blank Spots is addressing the questions of exile, territory and identity. In my opinion art and science are distinct fields. While the sciences allow us to search for scientific truths, art allows the retranscription of the truths of experience, and more specifically the truth of lived experience. However, in this quest for truth, artists and scientists alike are driven by the need to transgress their comfort zone, to follow their intuitions, even if they seem uncomfortable or bizarre. Like the astrophysicist, the artist gropes in the dark, looking for traces of light from the past or from the future. And, in this quest for truth, art and science alike are related to magic—but not to a kind of magic referring to pseudoscience and beliefs. Science and art propose "another kind of magic, a 'Realist Magic' that debunks false beliefs of all kinds - whether political, social or environmental, that contests the fascination and power of falsehood down the ages, and finds magic in the [unspectacular] realities of daily life instead »<sup>1</sup>

The invitation to visit the Snolab, situated three kilometers under the ground, in a nickel mine in Sudbury, Ontario, where research about Dark Matter is taking place, made me want to continue the series 'Blank Spots'. The area on which the nickel mine is built is a first nation territory now devastated by the mines that have been drilled there. I was interested to learn more about the history of this territory and the people who live and lived there. I wanted to make frottages at the mine, in continuation to those I made in Berlin, in Bremen and in Poland, at places where people have been displaced and died. While the astrophysicists seek for stardust and 'Dark Matter' by scanning the sky, I wanted to search for dust at these 'Blank Spots', by scanning the earth. 'Blank Spots' is an investigation of inconspicuous particles, rests of dust sticking to clean places, which don't tell their histories. The dust of these places give testimony of the hidden or forgotten actions that have been taken place there. The performance, and here its outcome, the sound piece is adding a hypothesis, reconstructing a whole from a rest. The light is reacting on the sound piece, varying in rhythm and intensity, constantly reframing and reframing the frottages placed on the floor. To me these movements of light are reflecting another element that science and art share, which is doubt.

<sup>1</sup> In the context of art, the term 'Realist Magic' has been suggested by R. Khazam in order to describe a quasi-scientific approach to art. In 'Realist Magic', exhibition draft, unpublished, 2020.