IMMANENT REALITIES

PEGGY FOX
JANET WITTENBERG
SARAH TANGUY, CURATOR

Reception 29 October 2019
5:30 - 7:30 pm
Gallery Talk 6:15pm

The American Center for Physics
One Physics Ellipse
College Park, MD 20740

29 October 2019 – 17 April 2020
For viewing information, call 301.209.3000

You could not step twice into the same rivers; for other waters are ever flowing on to you.—Heraclitus
In Immanent Mysteries, artists Peggy Fox and Janet Wittenberg probe ephemeral phenomena and underlying forces of the physical world around us in search of connections and unifying threads. Through an array of mixed media paintings, prints and glass sculptures, they forge dynamic visual bridges between the invisible and the visible as well as the known and the unknown. With perpetual change as a guiding paradigm, the works make manifest the power of now, a hidden reservoir of untold potential and imminent fragility.

Peggy Fox holds an abiding interest in the intersection of art, philosophy and science. Over the years, she has pursued the disciplines of both photographic and mixed media works to develop a personal inventory of images while exploring natural, literal, perceived, and imagined worlds. Recently she rediscovered abstraction as her preferred means to express the realization that the visible represents only a small part of the universe; the rest being in large part dark matter whose existence has eluded human understanding. Her series, Tendencies to Exist, focuses on quantum mechanics, the ever-shifting realm of subatomic particles.

After a career as a metal smith, and later in systems analysis, Janet Wittenberg returned to an art practice shortly after taking her first glass fusing class. She was immediately smitten with the medium’s versatility, its qualities of light and color becoming an endless source of experimentation and learning. Early on, the artist developed a fascination with earth sciences while camping with her family on breathtaking natural sites. The glittering immensity of the night sky, the multi-hued strata of the land below representing millennia of history continue to fuel her current, with earth sciences while camping with her family on breathtaking natural sites. The glittering immensity of the night sky, the multi-hued strata of the land below representing millennia of history continue to fuel her current, art practice.

For the high contrast, black and white photographs in the series, Fox scatters clear, glass beads along panels of brushed aluminum, photographing the compositions from different vantage points to exploit the metal’s reflective ability in relation to the ambient light and shadows of her studio. The effect is pure magic as forms emerge from a dark, velvety energy field. The Dual Nature of Light, for example, evokes the elusive flight of particles through space with shafts of light raining on a meander of tiny floating spheres and an expansive, sloping horizon. In her mixed media works, including 3 Sorts of Quarks, she collages sections of photographs, printed on mylar, with painterly passages to create a constructivist space without consistent planar divisions. The disorienting sense of metamorphosis and juxtaposition is even more pronounced in her hand-painted color photographs, which combine images of geographical locations and figures taken at different times of her life.

For both artists, changing light conditions lend an animating force to their works. Layering adds depth and texture imparts tactility. Tensions between transparency and opacity, soft and hard, flow and stasis, as well as chance and control abound. Rewarding viewers with prolonged observation, this engaged study in turn yields a profound sense of mystery and respect for our surroundings, and instills humility toward the vast beyond.