



SHAN TURNER-CARROLL

SÚDA VÚDA AGGA BA

Melbourne Art Fair 2024 | Booth K2

Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre | 22 - 25 February, 2024

COMA



Movements for bodies suspended: the visitors of Shan Turner-Carroll's SÚDA VÚDA AGGA BA.

Mark Rohtmaa-Jackson

Your perfect lover turns to you and whispers, 'I don't know where your body parts are; where they begin and end. Your body is unbounded. Your eyes are fire. Your skin is the snow settled around stone.'

Reaching for the mountains by Shan Turner-Carroll, from his series *SÚDA VÚDA AGGA BA*, is a colour photograph of, in the centre of the frame, a figure sitting atop a metal umpire's chair. The figure is not smiling, but stares at us at ease, as if resting. They wear Nike sports shoes; shoes that suggest this is a pause in motion. The sleeves of their coat are excessively long, extending down to the floor then intertwined as if discarded, wound together but perhaps unwinding. The arms end in high-visibility orange working gloves, the same colour as the sports shoes. The matching colours of these extremities, the shoes and gloves, suggest these are part of a set, and although this would be a set from different forms of activity – work and leisure, both are designed for movement and action. In this photograph, the action here is paused, perhaps for us. Behind and beneath the figure are clear signs that this is taking place in a sports hall out of hours. A place of speed and motion, competition and play; here paused. It must be tiring to carry the weight of such long arms as you go about your day. Such an adaptation must have an urgent function. Or perhaps the normal rules don't apply here, in this other place.

Seyðisfjörður is a small town on a fjord encircled by mountains giving way to a crack of sea. There is a single road connecting the town to the rest of Iceland, and it can feel like a place set apart from the world. This is where the photographs in *SÚDA VÚDA AGGA BA* were taken. None of the people in the photographs are from this town, they are all visitors here. But what does it mean to be a visitor? The Latin origins emphasise vision, a going-to-see. But a visitor is also a body kept in motion; unsettled. Someone on their way from somewhere and on their way somewhere else, like the snow in Seyðisfjörður that shifts and drips and pours down towards the sea. And we can read these images as visitors, moving in to be captured in this moment before moving off again into a world elsewhere. And there is another significance to these images as images from this place. They are clearly made with a material literacy, and, in an isolated town in which materials can be scarce, the materials in these photographs are all *resources*. Like those who wear them, they are in the condition of being between: materials on their way to or from use. Clothes, tools and people between acts; captured between moments of preparing and doing.

Shan and I talk about extraterrestrials, a fascination we share. Visitors to Earth from the sky. *SÚDA VÚDA AGGA BA* is a nonsensical phrase, but not meaningless. It comes out of his desire to communicate with beings that are elsewhere. Extraterrestrials are, for the most part, indifferent to body categorisations. The concerns of extraterrestrials is often with non-places of the skin to implant their wild technologies: the small of a neck, a patch or nook, a back or side of something, an area that it might take a moment for its owner to locate or find a name for, or an area located only by its

proximity to something more divided: 'Here, just below my ear.' They exist between modern and premodern forms of knowledge. They aren't concerned with how we use body parts, and their characteristics, as the basis for recognition, social value or potential behaviours. They breach boundaries and classifications. They are indifferent to ears or rocks, or a lung or glass, or the length of an arm or leg. They are indifferent to how we assign bodies and their parts social distinctions, territories of power or cultural clarity. They are ungovernably other and they know how the body goes astray. Like extraterrestrials, the figures in these photographs are strange, and perhaps this is because they are seeking to reach into strangeness. They are aware of their leaky skin, such an awareness as an extraterrestrial might have known.

The figures of these works are paused in the here and now, but in motion in the expanded view. They grow taller to reach further. They seek alternative channels: paranormal, ultranatural, other worlds folded into each other, perhaps to read the static of the waterfalls as interference from the edge of the universe. Shan has described the works in this series as 'poems or prayers', and prayers are particularly revealing here. Prayers serve a purpose; although paranormal, they are gestures in motion; they are put to work. Fusing themselves with the resources to hand, the figures of these photographs extend their extremities to find new ways of speaking. Their legs or arms are long enough to reach into the sky and communicate in other forms. They communicate with the unseeable; the *not yet*. And there are always responses in Seyðisfjörður: messages from the mountains; or from an other world; or from the dead; or from the Huldufólk, Iceland's hidden people. The wind can

be loud here. The ice cracks as you walk. Some nights there is fire in the sky.

Let us not deny the paranormal. It is a leaky skin. It is movement to an elsewhere. It is an imagining of being able to cross incomprehensible distances; but also of things set in motion right here, alongside us, but hidden; or of voices from whatever comes after the threshold. Regardless of whether or not they exist, these worlds may be speaking back to us. They may be telling us something urgent.

S W O A V U O A A G G A A B A





Shan Turner-Carroll (b. 1987) is an Australian artist of Burmese descent. Deeply fascinated with unearthing tacit knowledge, his practice integrates mediums including photography, sculpture, performance and film. The artist's practice interrogates both human and non-human nature, alternative forms of social exchange and interactions between art, artist and viewer: sending and receiving signals. His work can sing to snakes, serenade and signal with aliens, and barter with islands, rivers, and oceans. Looking towards the multiplicity of connections between body and landscape, site-specificity is key to his practice, not only in making, but rather in how an embodied methodology of making emerges upon each site and location. Turner-Carroll sees art-making as ritualistic and transformative, using play, humor and experimentation as key elements within his current practice.

His work is in the collection of Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Maitland Regional Art Gallery, Maitland, Australia; The Macquarie Bank Collection; The University of Newcastle, Newcastle, Australia; Curve Gallery, Newcastle, Australia.



Shan Turner-Carroll
Waiting for night to jump, 2024
archival digital ink jet print
edition of 6
130 x 86.7 cm (print)
51 1/8 x 34 1/8 inches (print)





Shan Turner-Carroll

Camo, 2024

archival digital ink jet print

edition of 6

110 x 73.5 cm (print)

43 1/4 x 29 inches (print)

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Shan Turner-Carroll
Blueberry, 2024
archival digital ink jet print
edition of 6
110 x 73.5 cm (print)
43 1/4 x 29 inches (print)

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"I have also been interested in the act of growing taller, lengthening one's arms to reach further to extend the fingers to work as an antenna to try and pick up or send signals."

– Shan Turner-Carroll



Shan Turner-Carroll
Playing the light, 2024
archival digital ink jet print
edition of 6
110 x 73.5 cm (print)
43 1/4 x 29 inches (print)

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Shan Turner-Carroll
Growing Tall, 2024
archival digital ink jet print
edition of 6
110 x 73.5 cm (print)
43 1/4 x 29 inches (print)

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Yesterday I was watching you turn your face toward the sky

“Open your hands if you want to be held” says Rumi, reminding me how loneliness can be a choice. When I’m lonely, I write letters to friends. It helps. It may not be a direct form of contact, but it weaves a thread of relation.

In the first chapter of *Devotion* by Hannah Kent, the narrator says “Thea, if love were a thing, it would be the sinew of a hand stretched in anticipation of grasping. See, my hands, they reach for you. My heart is a hand reaching.” I wonder what drives this yearning. What is the seed that is contained in the attempt of contact? What drives these processes and rituals we go through to get ourselves across?

I wonder if it is the impulse toward relation, the desire for intimacy that drives people to try to contact other worldly beings. Gods, spirits, ghosts, ETs. I wonder if we the post-moderns have lost the art of this kind of communication, if we have lost the ability to receive an answer.

Yet even our technology is social. We send electrical signals everywhere. Satellites leave echoes in space. There are the measurements of the earth, CT scans, speakers, and social media. What is inside the gesture of transmission? What spirit lives in the desire to send a message out? And does it matter that it is received, or how it is received? So much communication is miscommunication. But we go on trying. We write, we sing, we make images and objects.

In a way every attempt to communicate is a prayer for love. I am here! Do you see me?

Frances Grimshaw, 2023



Shan Turner-Carroll
Reaching for the mountains, 2024
archival digital ink jet print
edition of 6
110 x 73.5 cm (print)
43 1/4 x 29 inches (print)





Shan Turner-Carroll

Glitský, 2024

archival digital ink jet print

edition of 6

42 x 63 cm (print)

16 1/2 x 24 3/4 inches (print)

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Shan Turner-Carroll

Trees and Telepathy, 2024

archival digital ink jet print

edition of 6

130 x 86.7 cm (print)

51 1/8 x 34 1/8 inches (print)

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“The act of looking up is something that has been enacted since the beginning of time: a wonder and pondering the sky and the stars being the basis for the blueprints for many belief systems and the development of our sky gods.”

– Shan Turner-Carroll



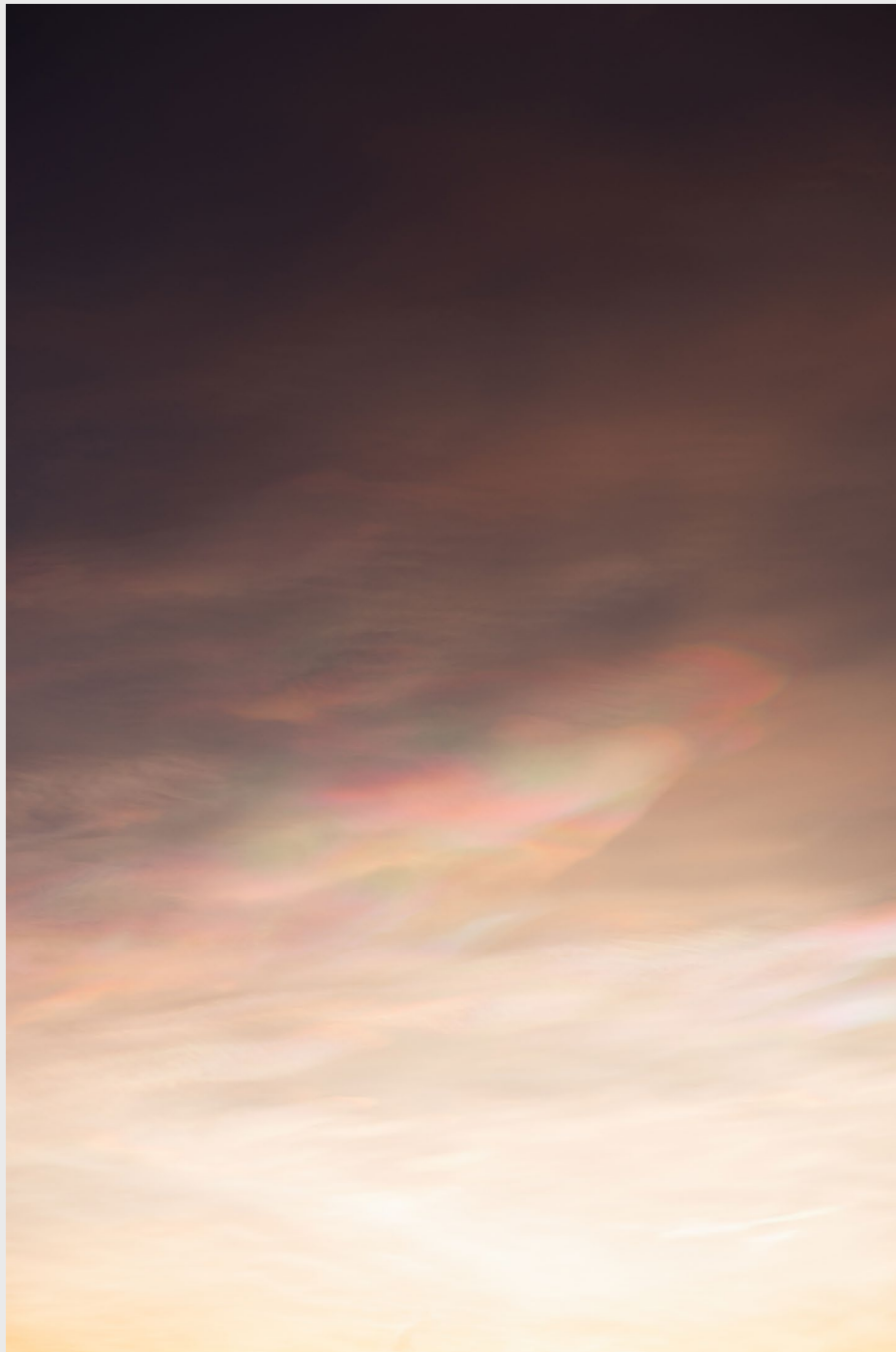
Shan Turner-Carroll
Power bottom, 2024
archival digital ink jet print
edition of 6
110 x 73.5 cm (print)
43 1/4 x 29 inches (print)



BERGUR-HUGINN ehf.
Vestmannaeyjar
2

bh

Scapiglios



Shan Turner-Carroll
Mother of pearl, 2024
archival digital ink jet print
edition of 6
68 x 45.5 cm (print)
26 3/4 x 17 7/8 inches (print)

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Studio image, Shan Turner-Carroll working at LungA School, Iceland, 2023.

Artwork ©Shan Turner-Carroll 2024

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