

# science fictions

CRUSH CURATORIAL, New York, NY  
526 West 26th Street, New York, NY, 10001

June 28 - August 6, 2018  
Reception June 28th 6-8pm

Gabriela Vainsencher and Brittany Nelson

Opening reception  
Thursday  
06 28, 6 - 8 pm

Brittany  
Nelson

Conversation  
with artists & curator  
Friday  
06 29, 7 pm

CRUSH CURATORIAL  
526 West 26 Street Suite 709  
New York, NY 10001

# Science Fictions

Curated  
by Nicole Kaack

Gabriela  
Vainsencher

Reading  
by Ariel Goldberg  
Monday  
07 02, 7 pm

06 28 - 08 06  
2018

Hours  
Friday & Saturday, 11 - 5  
& by appointment

[www.crush-curatorial.com](http://www.crush-curatorial.com)  
@crushcuratorial

Approaching the present from opposing tenses, Vainsencher and Nelson cast archeological discovery and space exploration as fictions of a future and past. The composite forms of Nelson's gelatin silver prints and Vainsencher's photo-collages offer terrain for postulation and exploration in the full-bodied invention of a vase's plump form and the desolate horizons of a Martian vista; both artists begin to riff, elaborating on an assumed circumstance, another time hoped for or re-created in present.

Vainsencher's ceramic sculptures refer in outline to the flattened forms of her photo-collages, while also citing the origins of these works in Pre-Minoan artifacts extracted from Mediterranean soil. Finding analogy to this corrosive timescale in falling figures sketched from wet clay, Vainsencher uses material limitations as means of creation, suspending her sculptures at precarious points in the warp of decay and deterioration. Prompting the question of survival, Vainsencher's sculptures play on the possibilities of a past encountered only in acted traces.

By contrast, Nelson's prints look into the hoped-for future, sweeping gallery walls in the furtive movements of a handheld flashlight. The forms themselves, disrupting traditional photo-processing methods, mirror the process-oriented gestures of Vainsencher's swooning clay-bodies, capturing in stillness a form that would otherwise continue to evolve. Unraveling through the pages of a science fiction short story written by Alice B. Sheldon (alias James Tiptree, Jr.), Nelson's photos re-write this narrative through the valences of encounter and identity.

Confronting each other obliquely through the shared space of the exhibition, Vainsencher and Nelson suggest parallels between unrealized possibilities and histories beyond memory, telling the story of the present through the eventuality of past and future time.

# Programs

*Thursday, June 28th from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.*, Opening reception. The opening event will also launch a limited-release poster featuring images by Vainsencher and Nelson, as well as writing by curator Nicole Kaack.

*Friday, June 29th at 7:00 p.m.* Brittany Nelson and Gabriela Vainsencher will discuss fiction, futures, and re-writing the past. The conversation will be moderated by the curator, Nicole Kaack.

*Monday, July 2nd at 7:00 p.m.*, Ariel Goldberg will read an excerpt from their upcoming novel in response to the life and artistic practice of Berenice Abbott and her partner Elizabeth McCausland.

# Artist Bios

## BRITTANY NELSON

(b. 1984) works with 19th century photographic chemistry techniques to address themes of feminist science fiction and queer abstraction. She received her MFA in photography from the Cranbrook Academy of Art, and her Bachelor of Arts from Montana State University. She is the recipient of a 2015 Creative Capital Grant in Visual Arts and a Theo Westenberger Foundation Grant for advancing women in the arts. Select solo exhibitions include PATRON Gallery (Chicago, IL), Morgan Lehman Gallery (New York, NY), David Klein Gallery (Detroit, MI), Sadie Halie Projects (Minneapolis, MN). Group exhibitions include Brooklyn Academy of Music (Brooklyn, NY), The Newcomb Art Museum (New Orleans, LA), The Cranbrook Art Museum (Bloomfield Hills, MI), and the Houston Center for Photography (Houston, TX). Nelson was a 2017 artist in residence at the Headlands Center for the Arts and her work has been featured in publications such as The New Yorker, WIRED, Collector Daily, Aesthetica, and New Art Examiner.

## GABRIELA VAINSENCER

born in Buenos Aires, raised in Tel Aviv, and currently lives in Brooklyn. She received her MFA from Hunter College in 2016. Past solo and two-person exhibitions include Hanina Gallery, Tel Aviv, Israel; Musée d'Art Moderne André Malraux, Le Havre, France; Parker's Box Gallery, Brooklyn, NY; NurtureArt, NY; and La Chambre Blanche, Québec City, Canada. Her work has been included in group exhibitions including Bergamo Modern and Contemporary Art, Italy; Kunstforening, Tromsø, Norway; Pierogi gallery, Brooklyn, NY, The Freies Museum, Berlin and The National Gallery of Saskatchewan, Canada. Residencies include Yaddo, The Atlantic Center for the Arts (USA), Triangle Arts Association (France), and La Chambre Blanche (Canada).

Concurrently with this exhibition, Vainsencher's work can also be seen at Spencer Brownstone Gallery, NY, NY. In 2019 A.I.R. Gallery in Brooklyn, NY will present a solo exhibition of her work.

Vainsencher is the founder of the Morning Drawing Residency, writes about art for Hyperallergic, Title Magazine and Tohu magazine. She also teaches art at Williams College, in Williamstown, MA and at the Macaulay Honors College at Hunter College, NY.

# Installation Images









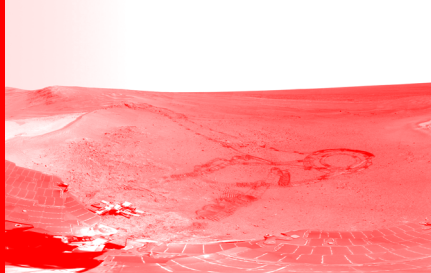






# Exhibition Poster





# Science Fictions

Brittany Nelson

The present slips between the parenthesis of past and future, a Janus-faced singularity that is current in the sense of being liquid, unfixed. In memory, time is reconstructed as it was internalized, not as fact but as gaze; the future can only be hinted at as the consequence of a past narrative, a fiction of causal relationships. Brittany Nelson and Gabriela Vainsencher respond to these splitting perspectives, drawing attention to the ways in which both are already cut by invention and fantasy.

Brittany Nelson  
Gabriela Vainsencher  
06 28 – 08 06 2018

1  
James Tiptree, Jr.  
[Alice B. Sheldon],  
"As I Awoke  
And Found Me Here  
On The Cold Hill's Side"  
in Ten Thousand  
Light Years From Home  
(Ace Books, 1973).

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2  
David Wojnarowicz,  
Untitled  
(One Day This Kid...),  
1990.

Hours  
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Though destined for the expanse of outer space, the outward forms of space shuttles are dictated by the aerothermal conditions of passage through Earth's atmosphere. In the gloam of gelatin silver, Brittany Nelson invokes the visual techniques that have become a code for future relics, the glinting aesthetic of wave-like bodies built for a frictionless space. As a contemporary revision of traditional photo processes, Nelson abstracts and abuses the science of this form to create objects that resist the stasis of capture.

A series of six gelatin silver prints, "And I Awoke And Found Me Here On The Cold Hill's Side" reproduces Alice B. Sheldon's 1972 science fiction story of the same name. Publishing under the pseudonym James Tiptree, Jr., Sheldon donned an alternate identity as a mask of validation, writing stories of female emancipation and sexual liberation through the authority of a masculine voice. "And I Awoke and Found Me Here on the Cold Hillside" is narrated by a man who has disowned home and career to follow his erotic fascination with the sundry and sultry forms of alien life. Speaking from a space station called Big Junction, this nameless character offers his story in a dialogue laden with shame and a self-inflicted sense of perversion. "To seethem. To speak to them. Once in a while to touch one. Once in a great while to find one low enough, perverted enough to want to touch me..."<sup>1</sup> Delivered in an acidic froth, the narrative rings with the echo of later litanies of the 80s and 90s; as David Wojnarowicz wrote in 1990, "He will be subject to loss of home, civil rights, jobs, and all conceivable freedoms. All this will begin to happen...when he discovers he desires to place his naked body on the naked body of another boy."<sup>2</sup> In spite of acknowledged social condemnation, Sheldon's character does not and cannot express personal regret for an appetite beyond his control.

Evoking the furtive realization of unvoiced, stigmatized desires, Nelson's prints catch the conspiratorial tone of pages read under the cover of blankets by the blossoming sweep of flashlight. Revealing themselves as rays in the velvety gradations of liquid current, the suggestions of a doppler effect cascade across the glossed surface. Centered on oversized sheets, each of the story's six pages are incandescently inverted, the paper's pulp turned transparent such that interlocking letters erode the marks of facing lines. The path of a hand-held light becomes a dark trail as the photo paper leeches light, the pointed meandering of the solitary eye's longing for company.

Nelson's silvered scapes become a means of clarifying the relation between these fantastic planets and the present in which they are meaningful, reflecting back from the future in which they take place to the experience of a woman who needs to hear that she is not the only one who wants something yet unspoken.

Through re-presentations of future and past, Vainsencher and Nelson propose that historians and science fiction authors are merely different kinds of storyteller, weaving and constructing armatures for truth from scattered suggestions and possibilities, divining the buried stars of the past and the relics that are to come. Even when entirely factual, history is necessarily invented as a sequence of incorporations and exclusions. The past is as much a science fiction as the future, a fantasy written in archeological terminology and fragmented remains.

Gabriela Vainsencher

# Science Fictions



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“Back dirt” is the archeological term for the material that is discarded as historically insignificant, the negative space that does not contribute to the re-assembly of a visual and functional language. Gabriela Vainsencher has applied this term to a series of her photographic works which layer and collage arrangements of papers found in the waste bin of her communal studio space. Torn from a French archeology book of pre-Minoan wares, the pages were incised to excerpt a collection of the clay bodies. The resultant apertures capture outlines of the original forms or, when seen from the back, weave as windows through the contours of other objects. In stacked warrens of paper cuts and shadow, new vessels and fragments emerge. What is the difference between the act of unearthing splintered wares and encountering its cut, collaged re-presentation?

Vainsencher’s series of ceramics derive directly from these photographic works. Riffing on the womanly shapes of the composite photographs, Vainsencher imagines the possibility of other clay bodies in smooth-edged sketches of rounded forms. Sprouting pairs of pillowy breasts as though at random on sides and arms, handles angled in the attitude of hands on hips, Vainsencher’s illustrations are alternate fertility icons teetering on phallic tips. Considering these hasty renditions of plausible shapes as prototypes or, perhaps, as sketches of relics that could have been, Vainsencher challenges the possibility of faithful representation between drawing and object. Responding to the compression of traced outlines, these sketches are pulled into dimension as planar, tile-like forms, defined by exaggerated cuts edged in hard, slender shadows.

Vainsencher cuts her drawn forms in wet clay and sets them vertically: in illogical suspension, the moist mass stands imbalanced on a pointed edge; it slumps, it falls. Purposefully creating futile objects which may or may not endure the conditions of their media and make, Vainsencher mimes in miniature the life of more ancient wares as means of querying the material conditions of memory. Though her own drawn and molded ceramics are based loosely in the reality of archeological discovery, Vainsencher’s process elucidates the almost coincidental nature of historical narrative which necessarily privileges those ideas that remain within recollection, the objects that survive.

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# Works Exhibited



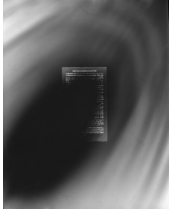
**SCIENCE FICTIONS**  
**Brittany Nelson and Gabriela Vainsencher**  
**Curated by Nicole Kaack**  
**June 28 - August 6, 2018**



Brittany Nelson  
*Opportunity (3,696 Sols after expected lifespan)*, 2018  
Gelatin silver print  
29 x 47 in (73.7 x 119.4 cm) Framed  
IN0334



Brittany Nelson  
*And I Awoke And Found Me Here On The Cold Hill's Side #1*, 2018  
Gelatin silver print, unique  
22 x 18 in (55.9 x 45.7 cm) Framed  
IN0335



Brittany Nelson  
*And I Awoke And Found Me Here On The Cold Hill's Side #2*, 2018  
Gelatin silver print, unique  
22 x 18 in (55.9 x 45.7 cm) Framed  
IN0336



Brittany Nelson  
*And I Awoke And Found Me Here On The Cold Hill's Side #3*, 2018  
Gelatin silver print, unique  
22 x 18 in (55.9 x 45.7 cm) Framed  
IN0337



Brittany Nelson  
*And I Awoke And Found Me Here On The Cold Hill's Side #4*, 2018  
Gelatin silver print, unique  
22 x 18 in (55.9 x 45.7 cm) Framed  
IN0338



Brittany Nelson  
*And I Awoke And Found Me Here On The Cold Hill's Side #5*, 2018  
Gelatin silver print, unique  
22 x 18 in (55.9 x 45.7 cm) Framed  
IN0339



Brittany Nelson  
*And I Awoke And Found Me Here On The Cold Hill's Side #6*, 2018  
Gelatin silver print, unique  
22 x 18 in (55.9 x 45.7 cm) Framed  
IN0340



Gabriela Vainsencher  
*Missing Person*, 2017  
Ed. 1/5 (2 AP)  
Archival inkjet print  
25 x 16.5 in (63.5 x 41.9 cm)  
IN0342



Gabriela Vainsencher  
*Tidal*, 2018  
Ed. 1/3 (2 AP)  
Archival inkjet print  
50 x 37 in (127 x 94 cm)  
IN0343



Gabriela Vainsencher  
*Page 239*, 2018  
Ed. 1/5 (2 AP)  
Archival inkjet print  
25 x 18.5 in (63.5 x 47 cm)  
IN0344



Gabriela Vainsencher  
*Amphora, Ears, Slit Neck*, 2018  
Porcelain and underglaze  
12 x 8 x 4 in (30.5 x 20.3 x 10.2 cm)  
IN0345



Gabriela Vainsencher  
*Rhyton, Hand on Hip, Soft Horns*, 2018  
Paper porcelain and underglaze  
15 x 10 x 8 in (38.1 x 25.4 x 20.3 cm)  
IN0346



Gabriela Vainsencher  
*Lips, Amphora, Knotted Neck*, 2018  
Paper porcelain and underglaze  
8 x 8 x 6 in (20.3 x 20.3 x 15.2 cm)  
IN0347



Gabriela Vainsencher  
*Vestigial Tail, Amphora, Neck, Neck, Neck*, 2018  
Paper porcelain and underglaze  
11 x 6 x 4 in (27.9 x 15.2 x 10.2 cm)  
IN0350



Gabriela Vainsencher  
*Lips, Wave, Amphora, Tits, Muscles, Elbows, Neck*, 2018  
Porcelain and underglaze  
20 x 13 x 6 in (50.8 x 33 x 15.2 cm)  
IN0351



Gabriela Vainsencher  
*Amphora, Backbone, Ears, Neck*, 2018  
Porcelain and underglaze  
14 x 9 x 6 in (35.6 x 22.9 x 15.2 cm)  
IN0354