

Amélie Bouvier (FR, 1982)

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Amélie Bouvier lives and works in Brussels, Belgium. Her practice builds from historical research in the field of astronomy to question issues related to cultural memory and collective heritage. Astronomers in particular, and scientists in general, don't only explain the world, they also represent it through the construction of diagrams, illustrations, photographs or equations. For Bouvier, scientific imagery is an extension of knowledge that reveals ideological and ethical frameworks, which risk cloaking aspects of the reality they aim to represent. She is particularly interested in the sky and stars as a landscape that expose current socio-political contradictions and knowledge gaps. While her work is based on historical facts, data and visuals, she consistently mixes this with speculative imagery, adapting tools and techniques to present alternative potentialities.

Her work has been exhibited in solo shows at Harlan Levey Projects (Brussels, Belgium), Greylight Projects (Brussels, Belgium), Museo Patio Herreriano (Valladolid, Spain), Javier Silva Gallery (Valladolid, Spain)... She has had several group exhibitions including those at Galeria da Boavista (Lisbon, Portugal), PLUS-ONE gallery (Antwerp, Belgium), Car Drde (Bologna, Italy), the Verbeke Foundation (Kemzeke, Belgium). Her work has been included in the 16th Cerveira International Art Biennial and in the 6th Biennale of Art and Culture of São Tomé e Príncipe. She was selected for the ISELP prize "Hors d'Oeuvre" in Brussels and was named the best emerging artist at Just Mad in Madrid, as well as a finalist for the CIC'Art Prize. In addition to her personal work, Bouvier is an active member in the project "Uncertainty Scenarios", hosted by Enough Room for Space, Drogenbos, Belgium. Her work is represented by Harlan Levey Projects, Brussels, Belgium.

ABOUT THE WORK

'Reach Outside Eyes' (2017)

68,0 x 39,0 x 14,5 cm

Ink and silkscreen on canvas, wood, glass

The English chemist and crystallographer Rosalind Franklin is best known for her work on the X-ray diffraction image "Photo 51". Using paracrystalline gel composed of DNA fiber, it identified critical evidence in identifying the structure of DNA. The DNA itself was extracted by Raymond Gosling, a graduate student working under the supervision of Franklin in May 1952 at King's College in London. However, regardless of the fact that this discovery was a cornerstone in genetic research, Franklin was cut out of any further scientific dialogue after the capture of this image, drawing strong criticism in the years to come.

Amélie Bouvier's work "Reach Outside Eyes" consists of a silkscreen print of "Photo 51", which is then covered by an oil-based ink drawing. Subsequently, it becomes difficult to distinguish the two separate elements. In order to bring Franklin's work to the forefront once again, Bouvier has made the silkscreen print of "Photo 51" UV resistant. As the work is meant to be exposed to the sunlight, the ink drawing will slowly disappear over time, and the original X-Ray image will become comparatively stronger and stronger. Inspired by the fantastic work and life of R. Franklin, this work highlights the inherent sexism even in the fields of knowledge and scientific discoveries. These sexist injustices, in which women are not given credit for their work or are excluded from academic discourse, have slowed down our scientific, astronomical, and technological advances. These injustices led Bouvier to look at the journey of women in the world of science, leading to works such as "Pickering's Harem"; a series of 45 drawings based on the fascinating story of astronomer Edward Pickering and his team of female astrophysicists.