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CoA


LANDSCAPES

SPECIAL EDITION

10

**ELKE
BUCHER**

Edge of the world

A dark, moody landscape photograph of a cliff edge over the ocean. The cliff face is dark and textured, with a sharp edge overlooking the sea. The sky is a pale, hazy grey, and the water below is dark and calm. The overall tone is somber and atmospheric.

Naomi Even-Aberle



Naomi Even-Aberle is an interdisciplinary artist based in South Dakota. She likes to work with bodies. she's also a martial artist, so the bodies she works with are often in motion and making space - space for action, resistance, power, and exploring identity. Her practice combines journaling, interviews, performative elements inspired by her martial arts training, and interdisciplinary media processes such as sound, video, and experimental photography.

Her work investigates the evolution of martial arts rituals and the environments in which the practices lives and operates today, and how these traditions can be leveraged to develop new understandings of bodies, gender, and identity.

Bites & Bytes: My Digital Body, 2020

In a virtual landscape the body is treated almost as if it's an astral projection. You are there, but not there, present, but absent. In Bytes & Bites: My Digital Body, I explore the idea of performing in an isolated landscape; one that reflects the desolate, empty nature present within our virtual landscapes. The performance combines a kinesthetic approach to engaging with the land while the photograph disrupts the three-dimensional space by flattening and subverting the physical body. The disruption produces a new body, a new landscape that exists only in the virtual space. A space that often must be decoded and recreated - collaged together to create a new ephemeral understanding of connection.





Where are you from and how does that affect your art?

I believe we are shaped by our environment. I currently live and work in the Black Hills region of South Dakota, USA. The Black Hills landscape has been witness to many decades of conflict. These historical tensions seep into my body, influencing how I connect to the land.

Do you believe that performance takes on the role of activism and why?

I believe that performance has the capacity to activate and inspire activism. Each performance has a voice; some shouting, some whisper, and others call for support. The shape of the voice is dependent on the artist and how they want their work to communicate with the world.

Do you like to develop a relationship with the audience through performance? Or is it a personal expression that just happens to be witnessed?

My work is highly personal, pulling from my lived experiences, and my relationships. For me, performance is a way to explore my feelings and my place within the world through my body. The audience is a witness; at times empathizing with me, and others merely sympathizing.

How important is it for those not involved in the arts to understand what performance art is?

Since my work is driven by my personal experience, I am not as concerned if the audience understands the complexity of performance work. I am more interested in being able to have my work in conversation with other artists.

What inspires your work?

My artistic inquiries are inspired by my martial arts community. Working from a student-centered approach, and developing learning strategies that engage the body, critical mind, personal emotions, and are rooted in community-focused initiatives, I explore how martial arts can interrogate social practices and understandings linked to body, gender, and identity.



What is your favorite medium to work with? Why?

As a martial artist, I love to work with bodies. The bodies I work with are often in motion and making space - space for action, resistance, power, and exploring identity. My artistic practice combines group discussions, journaling, interviews, performative elements inspired by my martial arts training, and interdisciplinary media processes such as sound, video, and experimental photography.

When did you know you wanted to be an artist?

I have always loved creating; drawing, impromptu flower installations, and assembling new folk songs since I was five years old. I always thought to be an artist meant selecting a job that would occasionally allow you to utilize your creative skills. It wasn't until graduate school that I realized being an artist can be choosing your own path and way of creating that centers your experiences instead of others.

What are you focusing on right now?

I'm interested in creating a large-scale installation titled Armored Bodies. Armored Bodies investigates women's changing relationships with their bodies through collaborative encaustic collages and performative video projections.

