



Here and Elsewhere

Institut d'art contemporain (IAC) (Villeurbanne, France)
3 March – 30 April 2022





Here and Elsewhere was a project that aimed to make a connection with the natural environment by providing an insight into the way our landscapes are shaped. Some of my artwork deriving from the project was presented at het Glazen Huis in Amsterdam as part of the eponymously titled exhibition open to the public between 4 July and 12 September 2021. Inside the 'glass house', I created a site-specific floor installation connecting us to the geological time of the land. The exhibition was accompanied by the programme of free events—a number of workshops for children and young adults, and a public talk with a scientist. The exhibition was realised in collaboration with the city-based ceramics workshop keramiek werkplaats Koloriet. Prior to my solo presentation in the Amstelpark, two series of drawings (8 pencil on paper, and 8 crayon on paper) were also included in a group exhibition *Le Plan libre—1st chapter* at Galerie Jocelyn Wolff in Paris (12 September – 31 October 2020).

By way of background, the conceptual framework for *Here and Elsewhere* originated in the intriguing discovery that some of the Earth's landscapes are being studied by scientists in order to better understand the geological history of Mars. In areas which have developed under similar conditions, scientists have been able to use these examples to start to piece together the watery history of Mars.

In 2004, NASA's Mars Exploration Rover—Opportunity was at the start of its 14-year operation on the surface of Mars at the Meridiani Planum, where spacecraft had previously identified a vast amount of hematite.

An iron mineral which forms in the presence of water, hematite and an allied mineral goethite is also prevalent in Utah where it exists in the form of spherical iron concretions (also commonly known as Moqui marbles). A concretion is a hard, compact mass of matter formed by the precipitation of mineral cement within the spaces between particles and is found in sedimentary rock. These brownish-black balls composed of iron oxide and sandstone formed underground when iron minerals precipitated from seeping groundwater. They occur in many places in southern Utah either embedded in or gathered loosely on the ground near outcrops of Jurassic Navajo Sandstone, that was originally deposited around 180 to 190 million years ago as a huge sand dune field, covering parts of Utah, Arizona, Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho, Nevada, and New Mexico. NASA's 2004 mission identified that the hematite detected on Mars was also in the form of spherical iron concretions (nicknamed 'blueberries'), which dotted the surface of the Meridiani Planum. The ball-shaped iron rocks on Mars were generally much smaller than those found in Utah, however the correlation between these landscapes opened up new avenues for understanding how these features developed on Mars.

My research for this project took me to the border of Utah and Arizona, where the exposure of Jurassic Navajo Sandstone formations makes up some stunning red, white, and yellow sites across Escalante National Monument, and the neighbouring Vermillion Cliffs, Zion National Park and Snow Canyon State Park. In order to explore the specific otherworldly feature of the iron concretions, I collaborated



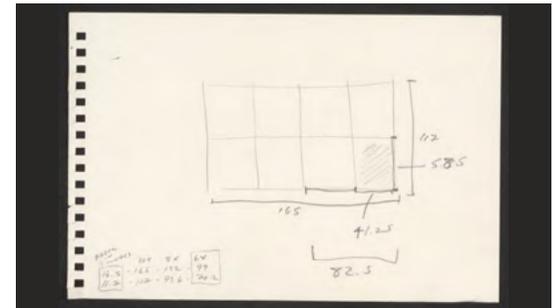
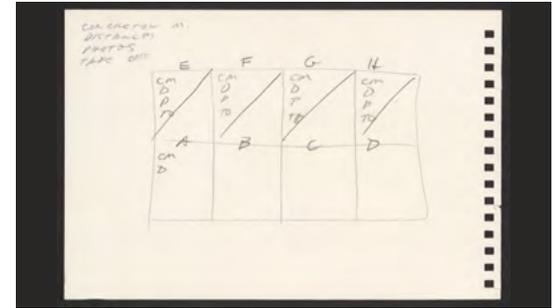
with Professor Marjorie Chan in the Department of Geology & Geophysics at the University of Utah who is leading research in the area. I made two trips to Utah over two years; the first one in 2018 was a reconnaissance trip, and the second in 2019 a working field trip during which I gathered a large amount of information on the concretions. I spent my time there making drawings of the concretions both to explore their properties as individual objects and in their collective formations across the vast landscape. I worked with my fieldwork assistant Cory Michaela Dinter to assess and chart some defined areas where the arrangements were particularly interesting, and I used this documentation as the basis for a new sculptural installation that replicates the forms in clay.

The work presented at het Glazen Huis was a 1:1 ceramic replica of a landscape of spectacular Utah concretions that are considered an important analog for Mars, measured and painstakingly mapped out by me during a site visit to the Escalante Canyons. The installation was an abstract, yet accurate reconstruction of a selected configuration of concretions, following their exact arrangements and gaps between them on the ground in Utah. Remaking part of this unique landscape, *Here and Elsewhere* transported the experience of its many dimensions to an urban park in Amsterdam—presented in a glass pavilion, the work interacted with the outside.

With that installation, I let the audiences experience the different dimensions that are involved in the formation of rock concretions. As part of the exhibition, a map with the

location and expanses of the concretions was presented in the back space of het Glazen Huis, referencing the actual site in Utah and my research there.

Many of the processes that carefully hold together the fragile ecosystems that we are part of are beyond our comprehension. For me, one of the main aspects of nature lies in its constant ability to change, and in its creation of new forms and patterns. With my work, I make these processes visible through drawing. In a sense, my drawings, paintings, and sculptures, can be considered forms of embodied knowledge: the ‘image’ produced, together with the process that precedes it, provides ‘knowledge’ of nature or a given situation.



i

1:1 Plot

ceramic

148.59 × 419.1 cm

QG

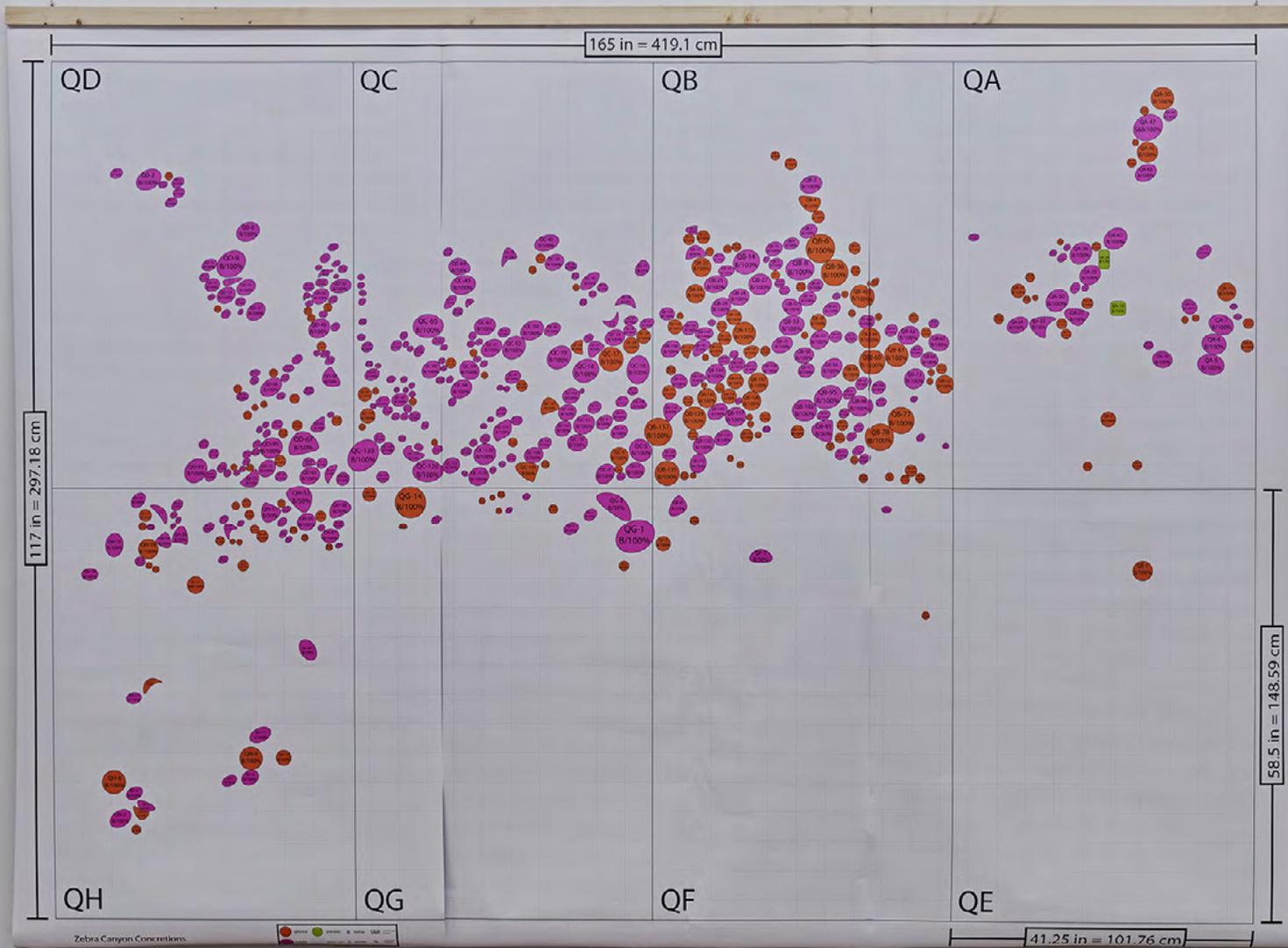
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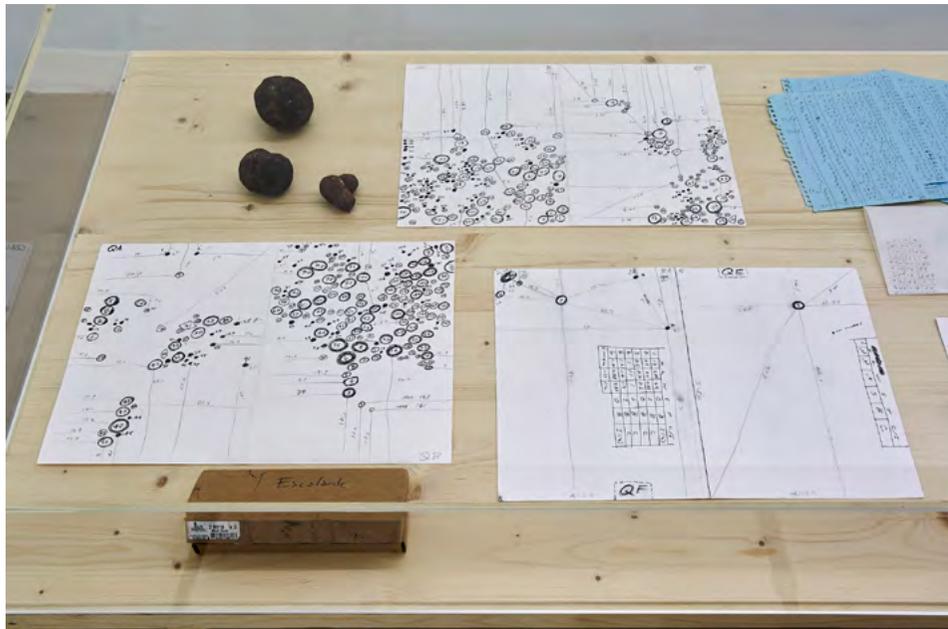




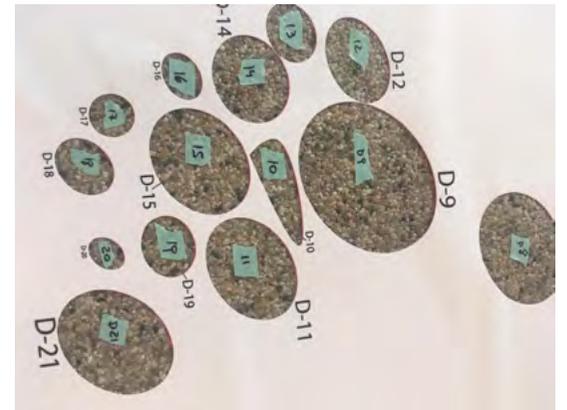
ii
Site Map
inkjet print on paper
148.59 × 419.1 cm



collected data



process



iii
series of 8 drawings
crayon on paper
29 × 42 cm









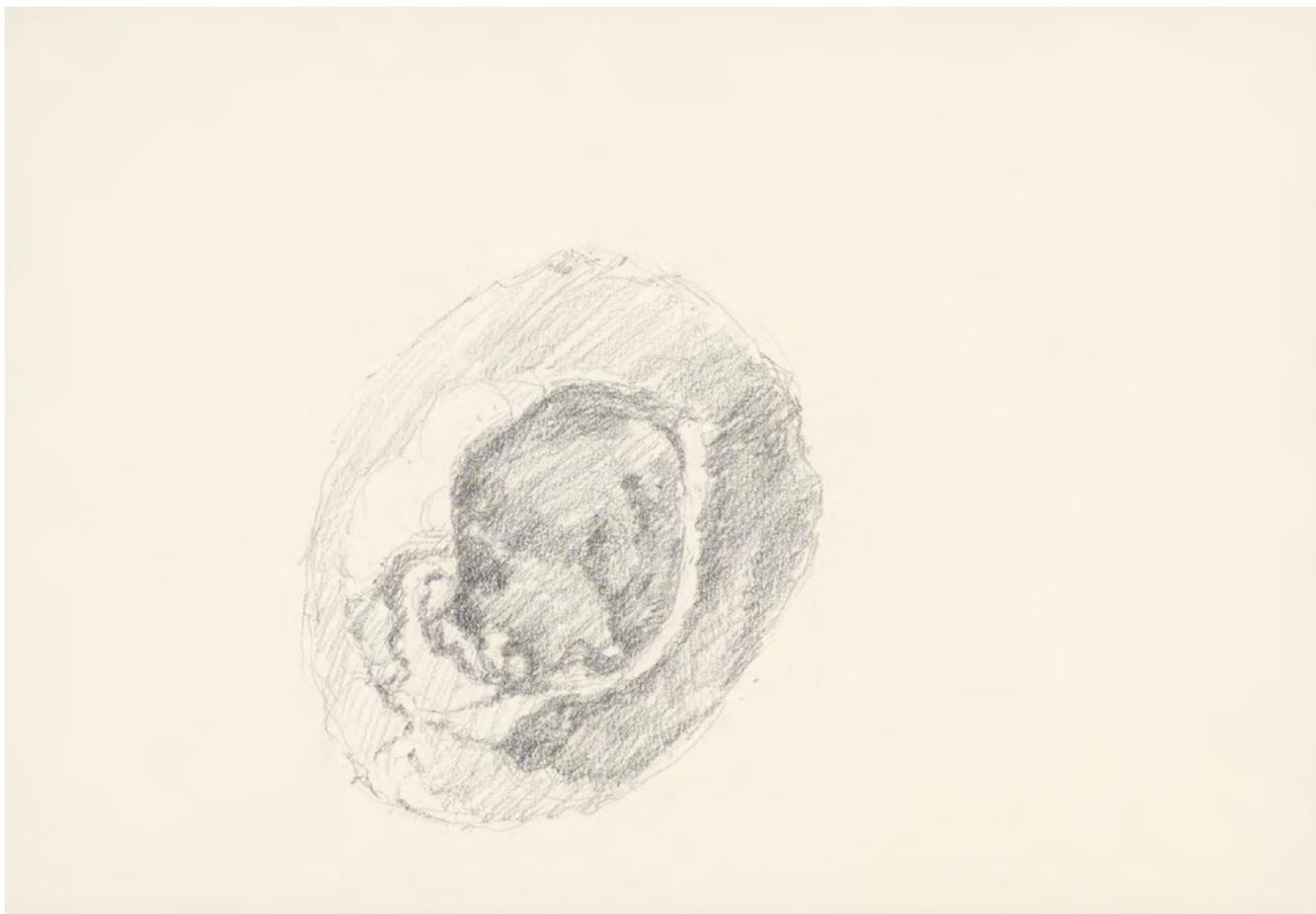




iv
series of 8 drawings
pencil on paper
14×21 cm











Related exhibition

Here and Elsewhere

Zone2Source / The Glass House (Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

4 July – 12 September 2021

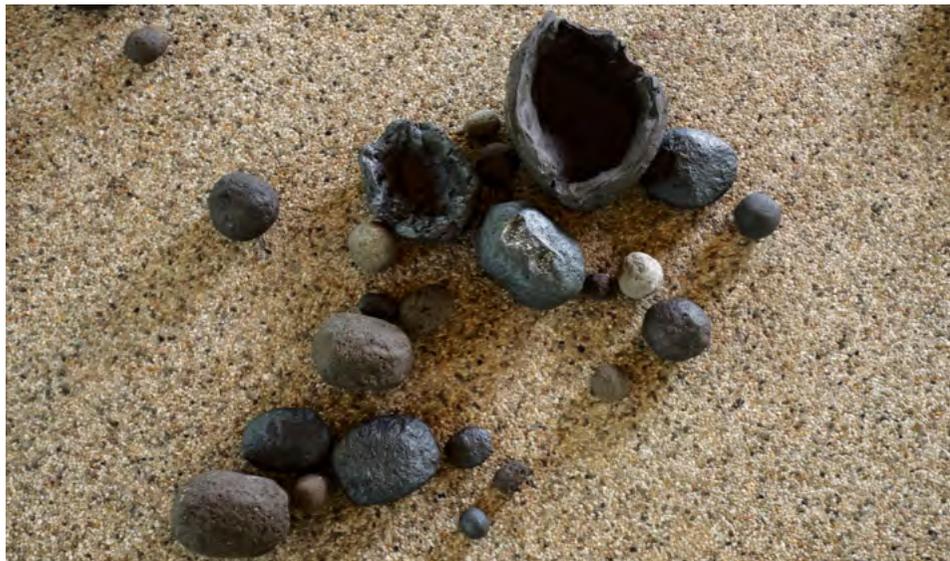


Related exhibition

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Zone2Source / The Glass House (Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

4 July – 12 September 2021



Related exhibition

Here and Elsewhere

Zone2Source / The Glass House (Amsterdam, The Netherlands)
workshop on 12 August 2021



Irene Kopelman
Here and Elsewhere

Project by:
Irene Kopelman

Exhibition venues:
Institut d'art contemporain (IAC)
(Villeurbanne, France)
Zone2Source / The Glass House
(Amsterdam, The Netherlands)
Galerie Jocelyn Wolff (Paris, France)

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Cory Michaela Dinter

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Irene Kopelman

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Rahila Haque

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Chloé Philipp (Jocelyn Wolff Gallery)
Thomas Lannes (IAC)

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Keramiekwerkplaats Koloriet

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Ayumi Higuchi

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