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## Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum's photographic maps of the Milky Way

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**Polyhedra**, a solo exhibition of new work by Johannesburg-based artist Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum, merges time-lapse photography of the Milky Way with Sunstrum's own watercolour paintings and the work of Tempest Anderson, an early 20th-century explorer and pioneer in volcanic photography.

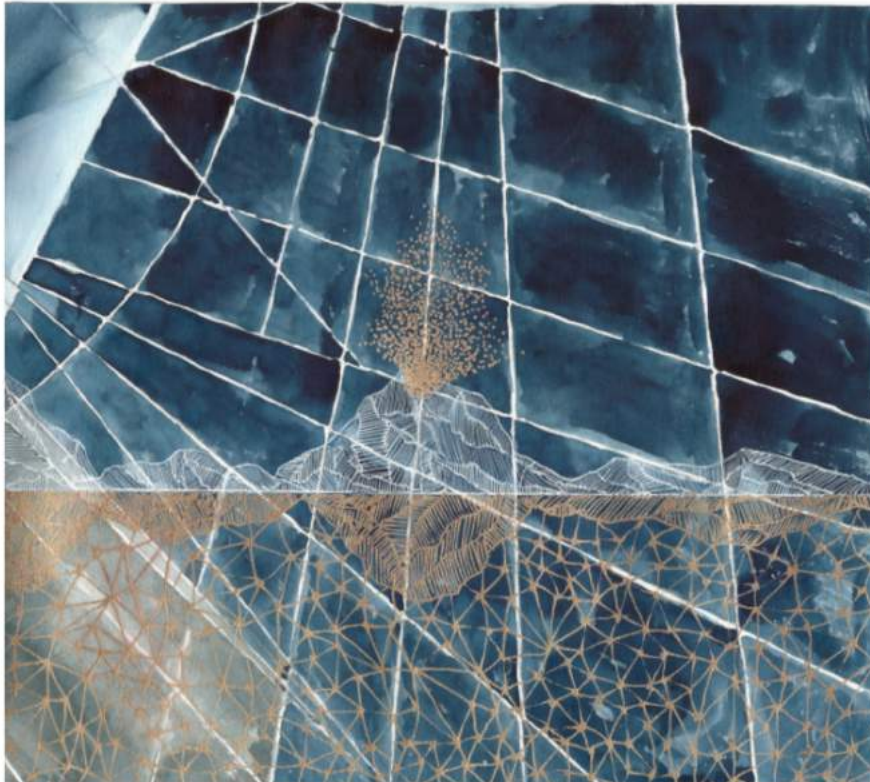
Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum was born in 1980 in Mochudi, Botswana, and currently lives and works in Johannesburg, South Africa. She has lived between Africa, Southeast Asia, Canada and The United States.

Motivated by her experiences in such diverse locales, Sunstrum explores "how one's sense of identity develops within geographic and cultural contexts", she says.

Her drawings, narrative landscapes shift between representational and fantastical depictions of volcanic, subterranean, cosmological, and precipitous landscapes.

The exhibition at London's Tiwani Contemporary will be Sunstrum's first solo exhibition in the UK, following the group exhibition *Mythopoeia* at the same gallery in April 2015.

She has previously exhibited at FRAC Pays de Loire, France in 2013, Brundyn Gallery, Johannesburg in 2014, MoCADA, New York in 2011, and at the 2012 Havana Biennial.



*Polyhedra* merges time-lapse photography of the milky way with Sunstrum's own watercolour paintings and the work of Tempest Anderson, an early 20th-century explorer and pioneer in volcanic photography.

Several of these works are born out of a study of 18th-century European philosophers' preoccupation with ideas of the Sublime. Sunstrum embeds elements of geometry within her works "as a meditation on the scale of the universe and the geometric laws that govern all objects," she says.

The goddess-like female figures in *Panthea*, a series of six monumental drawings, were inspired by the divine geometry inscribed in the "Platonic Solids".

Referencing Nancy Spero's use of figures, Sunstrum blurs the physical gestures between the human figure and geometric forms.



A new site-specific window drawing will layer a landscape drawing and a historical map of the constellations of the Southern Hemisphere, drawn on both sides of the gallery's window facade.

Sunstrum views mapping the stars as one of the earliest attempts to understand the universe, and her work can be considered a literal attempt to project drawing into space.

Sunstrum will install polyhedron shapes on the floor of the gallery, "echoing the geometry elsewhere in the exhibition and pointing to Plato's theory that triangles are the building blocks of the universe."

According to Plato, triangles make up five three-dimensional objects – five polyhedra – that signify the four elements, with the fifth element being heaven. Sunstrum's polyhedra there aims to "represent a direct bridge between the Earth's geometry and the wider cosmos," she says.

*Sunstrum's exhibition runs at Tiwani Contemporary from 1 April – 7 May 2016. [More information here.](#)*