



MAH RANA: CLOUDY

3 February – 26th March 2017

PV: 2 February, 7-9 pm

Gallery S O is very pleased to announce a solo exhibition of new work by jewellery artist Mah Rana. The brooches on display are a visual and material exploration on the theme of clouds, and the transient nature of our moods and perceptions.

The show will also include a film concerned with the personal connections to the jewellery we wear, edited by Andreea Bogdan. The film is part of a *Meanings and Attachments* commission by the Crafts Council for the *Acts of Making Festival* in 2015. *Meanings and Attachments* (2002- ongoing) is a worldwide series of public-participation events that so far involved 11 countries and over 2000 people, an archive of 'jewellery' stories through text, portrait photography and film.

Biography:

MAH RANA is an artist and curator who lives and works in London. Human relationships, memory recall and loss, narratives and material and experiential processes are central to her practice. Rana is a Fellow of the *Royal Society of Arts* and the programme director and curator for *Tandemize*, an international experiential learning and teaching programme of events funded through the British Council.

Solo exhibitions include Blå Stället Cultural Centre, Sweden (2014); National Craft Gallery of Ireland, Kilkenny (2014) and Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (2006). Her work has been shown in numerous group exhibitions, including *Acts of Making - Craft as Performance*, a Crafts Council touring exhibition which toured to Bilston Crafts Gallery and Shipley Art Gallery (2015); *Tallinn Applied Arts Triennial* at the The Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design (2012); *Unexpected Pleasures: the art and design of contemporary jewellery*, Design Museum, London and National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (2012); *Tell Tales*, Textile Museum, Barcelona (2007); *Hnoss 10* at Röhss Museum, Gothenburg (2007); *Jerwood Applied Arts Prize for Jewellery*, Jerwood Space, London (2007).



Clouds disappeared from London on a Friday in November 2016 but nobody noticed.

The news came out on Monday, with rather justified sensationalism. On Wednesday, Valentina and Mah met at the Gallery to discuss some contingencies related to Mah's upcoming exhibition, like the press release. The fact that the show itself was concerned with clouds made it very challenging to avoid the subject. Felix, the gallery director, was late because of a flight delay. He is always on time and this delay was ominous to say the least. The vanishing of clouds plunged London's life into eerie suspense. It wasn't Brexit and Trump kind of distressing, it was the kind of distressing that ruins dinner parties.

Both women were baffled that nobody gave the alarm during the weekend, or indeed seemed to notice the fact. Not even the cloud experts, apparently a respected section of the scientific community that deemed it sensible to be referred to as nephologists. "That's because in the urban environment clouds are a spectacle, a luxury... like, if you live in Stoke Newington sometimes you really have to look up at the sky to see them" – said Mah. Valentina agreed, as she was living in Stoke Newington and didn't notice the clouds' disappearance at all. It was also very true that she wasn't aware of most things above eye level, including road signs and the sky, with its tangles of damp and droplets.

"It's very different now that I'm living in South London" – continued Mah – "I have to walk on top of a hill on my way home and the sky is all around me, you can't avoid noticing clouds. I'm really glad we can still see them where I live." In fact, the disappearance of the clouds only affected zone 1-3, which caused record traffic and exasperation to the poor residents of Richmond. People were spotted seeking solace by going to see the clouds in the park. To be fair, the same old, monotonous, silent sky, rarely irate or fearsome, was witnessing London from above as usual, unaffected. Beneath, experts were certain that a London without clouds couldn't possibly be the same: rents were destined to go down.

There was this unsettling picture on the cover of the *Evening Standard*, with dozens of people lying in Richmond park, gazing at the clouds, and it made Valentina think of a school trip to Dublin where her classmates were amazed at the clouds' speed. She remembered their shadows slithering on the asphalt and grass. Formations are nothing but a distinguishable piece of the atmosphere, sometimes pinker and sometimes dirtier. It takes a blow of wind to brush off the silver lining and we can only see them from far away. She wasn't sure if Irish clouds were really faster than Italian ones but she read on *Wikipedia* that even clouds on Mars resembled terrestrial types.

"London is so indistinctly grey that you can't even see a damn cloud!" thundered Felix while opening the door, and then kissed Mah's and Valentina's cheeks three times, Swiss-fashion. Oh dear, he was right. The sky was just intensely opaque and consistently cloudy and this whole story was a dry joke.

Text by Valentina Bin for the exhibition "Mah Rana: Cloudy" at Gallery S O.