

Trisha Baga: *Grainy Pixels*

Société is excited to present an exhibition focused entirely on Trisha Baga's widely celebrated seed paintings. The American artist began this ongoing series in 2015 and has since exhibited these works in international institutions like Pirelli HangarBicocca and Kunsthalle Wien.

Trisha Baga is a gleaner. An avid accumulator of images and things, it's somehow fitting that the artist eventually found their way to seeds. Grains, seeds, granules: these tiny things shape and measure our world. The grain was the earliest unit of mass, in the United Kingdom the "stone" is still used to measure weight, and the carat, a familiar unit to measure the size of precious gems, is actually derived from a carob seed. Grains and seeds are not only measures of smallness, but the roots of modern civilization—spawning systems for storage, trade, and cultivation. In Baga's Seed Paintings, the artist swaps pixels for grains to depict anonymous figures roaming vast arid landscapes, transforming the stuff of agriculture into pointillist images of blank tourists scattered like so many seeds on the wind.

The forms of Baga's Seed Paintings are deeply entangled with their medium. On one hand, Baga claims that if these seeds were planted, they would potentially reproduce the same image on a different scale. Likewise, just as a seed is a building block of organic life, they can also be read as a pixel: the building block of a digital image. As Baga notes, "Video is the lens through which I see the world [...] the seed is a metaphor for the pixel. It goes along with this imaginary scenario that I had. In a post-electric world, how do we reproduce images?" Works like *Idle Babel* and *Sex* include photoshop editing panels and, as curators Lucia Aspesi and Fiammetta Griccioli note, "these textured panels offer a materic version of the pixelated images of the videos—suggesting a re-composition of the images fragmented by technology—showing how the artist expands the possibilities of painting by envisioning it through the lens of the digital." The inspiration for this series came from the visuals of Baga's multi-media installation *Virahanka Trail* (2017), which includes footage of tourists walking through sand dunes on a Japanese beach. However, when reproduced in seed, the images become less specific, more archetypal. If the loose cluster of nonchalant figures in *fibe* give off the desultory vibe of middle-aged tourists who have briefly disembarked a tour bus at a lookout point, the depiction of a lone individual in *wun* takes on a more existential quality. A dark interruption of the otherwise expansive swathe of beige seed, the figure points towards the adage that we are but a mere speck in the vastness of the universe.

Trisha Baga (b. 1985, Venice, FL) is a New York City-based, Filipino-American artist. They create immersive multimedia installations, ceramics, and paintings. Baga's installation *Mollusca* and the *Pelvic Floor* is currently on view at the Museum Ludwig in Cologne. Their work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan; Fridericianum, Kassel; TPW, Toronto; CCC, Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard College, Cambridge; and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. They have also participated in group exhibitions at Asian Film Archive, Singapore; CAC Cincinnati; Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco; Kunst- thalle Wien, Vienna; LACMA, Los Angeles; PS1, New York; Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva; Euro- pean Biennial of Contemporary Art, Zurich; and Julia Stoschek Collection at ZKM, Karlsruhe.