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Air — Experience — Aesthetics

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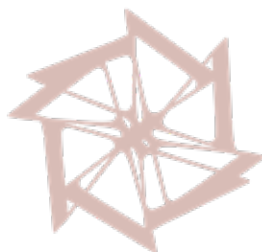
ATMOSPHERE

Emotional Landscapes

Emily Fritze | visual art | 24

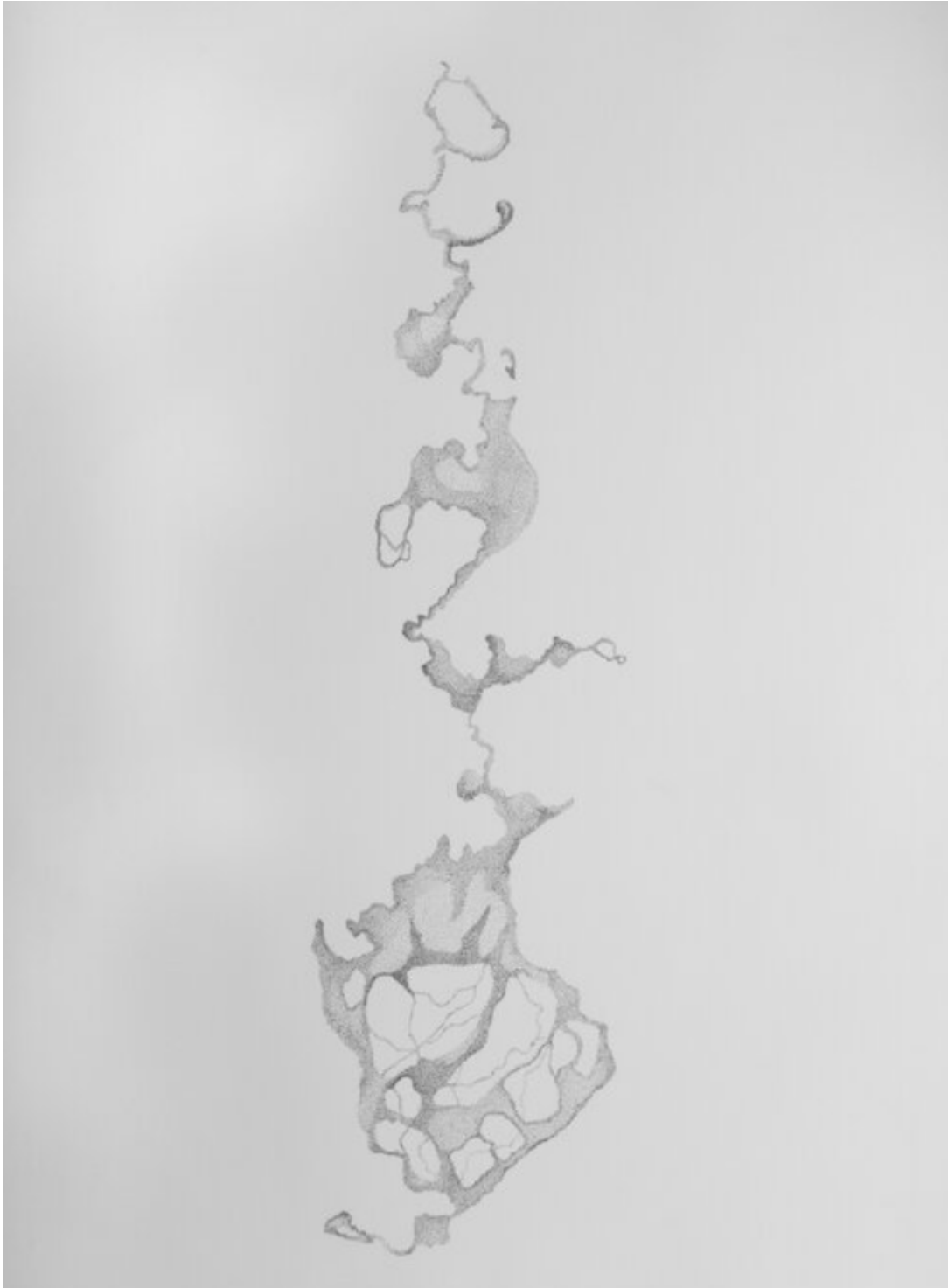
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EMOTIONAL LANDSCAPES

Emily Fritze



Interspersed throughout the inaugural issue of *Venti* are ink drawings created using a stippling technique by emerging artist, Emily Fritze. At first glance, these pieces look simplistic, wisps of smoke floating over the paper. Continuing to look, patterns and texture emerge in the soft curves and winding lines. Each piece has intentional absence, where the white space that fills the majority of the paper is interrupted by the soft subtleness of the ink. This binary of cream paper and dark, yet vaporous forms belies the traditional harsh contrast between positive and negative space and instead composes the page as gentle and nurturing. Entitled *Emotional Landscapes*, Fritze uses daily intuitive drawing to trace the “emotional movement” in her body. Combined, the series title and the subject blend two of the oldest, most classical, forms of artistic creation — sketches of the human body and the landscape.

Portrayals of the body typically start as images of rough, round drawings of limbs and torsos. From Michelangelo to Manet, the forms are jotted quickly to capture movement and structure that can be later elevated into rich, realistic musculature and flesh. Fritze’s forms use the subtlety of shape and shade to suggest particular parts of the body, “remnants of feelings that have come and gone, proof of their existence in [her] life and in [her] body.” These emotional remnants take shape on paper in weaving and overlapping lines, at times resembling bone-like structures, drawing parallels to a vertebra or a collarbone. Spotlighted separately from the rest of the body, these shapes abstract the human form into its component parts, a different sort of portraiture than those of centuries past.

The landscape in the history of art is a visceral, textural image of sweeping Italian vistas or lush English countryside, packed Parisian streets or celebrations of the American West. Here, Fritze expands the medium of landscape from the exterior world to the world within the individual. Flesh and bone act as dirt and stone, the emotions the current of a flowing stream we follow across the paper. Tracing the emotions through her body, Fritze creates the sweeping terrain of her sketched landscapes, an internal mountain range made external for us to view.

When installed in the Graham Gund Gallery in 2019, the experience is more restrained, stripped back. A selection of the *Emotional Landscapes* are displayed opposite a set of ceramic “nests,” hanging directly into the gallery space and exuding at times haunting, at times comforting sounds from Fritze’s life while she created this series. People chatting, guitar strumming, birdsong and wind in the trees, even a flowing river reflect the moment in which they were made for the artist. Even calling these ceramic speakers “nests” adds another component reminiscent of the natural world that the shapes seem to replicate on paper, floating in the air above hardwood floors rather than a bird’s nest tucked into a tree trunk. These sounds fill the air with a new layer of ambiance, breaking through the typical silence of the gallery’s white cube, just as the textured cream paper with dark ink interrupted its stark white walls. The sound and drawings together create the intimacy of confiding in a friend, not with words but by showing the strength of the pools of feelings flowing through your limbs. They create a gentle but specific atmosphere for the viewer to take part in, enter and then leave again.

The sounds mirror the ink’s swirls and collect together in spindling curves and dense collections over the paper. From a distance, these patterns of emotions could be mistaken for a topographic map of rivers winding through the Earth’s surface. The fluidity of the strokes and diffusive sounds bring the idea of the aqueous image from paper to ear, from the material artifacts of sight, touch, and sound to the airy realms of imagination and feeling. However, the images capture not a leaf’s trajectory through a forest creek or morning wind but the emotions that flowed through the artist on that particular day. They become a portrait of that moment, that feeling, and the atmosphere.

Emotional Landscapes series, Ink on paper, sound compositions, 22.5” x 30”

Written by Jenna Wendler





ARTIST STATEMENT

Every day for the past year, I've intuitively drawn, with my eyes closed, the emotional movement I feel in my body from head to toe. I have collections of these drawings strewn around my apartment and studio, they've become remnants of feelings that have come and gone, proof of their existence in my life and in my body. Having made an archive of these drawings I've found that the ways in which their forms grow and shrink, darken and lighten, and curve and hollow, create patterns that help me understand my emotions, and where in my body I hold them. The meditative process of making these maps each day has become a ritual for me, and these drawings have become a language.

For this piece, I chose seven meditative drawings whose original forms I have expanded with a stippling technique. In the gallery space, the sounds that play from ceramic nests hung in front of the drawings. The sound nests and the drawings are meant as a call and response. The sounds of my life, of friends laughing and the river moving, have deeply and beautifully influenced the ways I've felt and the shapes that the drawings take. While I began this project from an introspective place, I've come to realize that it is more about connection than anything else. Understanding how I carry emotion in my body means understanding how it originates, how we affect each other, and how we relate. Pairing sound with my drawings is my attempt at reaching outwards, of inviting the viewer into my own emotional landscape and asking them to think about their own.

All works are for sale, please contact emilybfritze@gmail.com for more information, or go to her website, emilyfritze.net.

EMILY FRITZE is a recent graduate of Kenyon College with a B.A. in Studio Art and a Minor in Anthropology. She is a multimedia artist. Her work has been shown in The Gund Gallery & Horvitz Hall in Gambier, OH and in the Schnormeier Gallery in Mt. Vernon, OH.

JENNA WENDLER is a first year graduate student of Art History at American University. She is interested in art from the Renaissance to the Modern period, especially women artists, portrayals of gender, domesticity, everyday life, and portraiture.



Blue Topographies, Letterpress prints, 8"x14", 6"x10"

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