

# LUNAR VOYAGE TOM HAMMICK

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16 March - 5 May 2018

Private View: Thursday 15 March 6-8 PM

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*"Look again at that dot. That's here. That's home. That's us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives... on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam."*

- Carl Sagan, *Pale Blue Dot: A Vision of the Human Future in Space*, 1994

British painter and printmaker Tom Hammick has described landscape in his work as a metaphor to explore an *"imaginary and mythological dreamscape."* Drawing from a wide range of sources, from Japanese woodblock prints to Northern European Romantic painting, utopian Modernism and contemporary cinema, Hammick's depictions of isolated human dwellings grounded in uncanny dreamlike settings summon the uneasy atmosphere of a psychologically-charged thriller, or a dystopian suburban nightmare.

In the present exhibition of woodcuts, shown in its entirety for the first time in the UK, Hammick conjures a metaphorical journey to outer space, weaving interstellar dreams and earthly relationships. A suite of seventeen images traces the cyclical path of his protagonist, an archetypal artist or poet, who leaves life on earth in pursuit of freedom and isolation on the moon - only to be haunted by memories of those he has left behind.

The narrative cycle begins with *Cloud Island*, featuring a solitary family home surrounded by a lush garden under a canopy of ornamental trees. The scene, symbolising a prelapsarian Eden, is watched by the voyager from his boat as he prepares to leave. This initial tranquility is ruptured in *Journey to the Moon*, when his ship is fired out of the Earth's atmosphere, with a voluptuous riot of curling forms in golds, reds, pinks and turquoise evoking the sonic roar of rocket engines. In subsequent images, such as *Lunography* and *Star Path*, where the capsule is seen to embark on its weightless journey towards a solitary camp on the moon, the infinite midnight blue of outer space suggests complete silence and a new-found alienation and abandonment of the past.

As the journey continues, Hammick's explorer is plagued by dreamlike visions of events on Earth, prompting questions within the narrative about whether he ever really left home at all. The space station, seen in images such as *Chamber*, *Pitch* and *Sleeper*, appears to be occupied by the mysterious, spectral presence of a female figure and recurring images from both past and future. Woven within this latter sequence of images are references to the feature films of Stanley Kubrick and Andrei Tarkovsky, bringing to mind the striking sets of Kubrick's *The Shining* and the romantic resurrection of psychologist Kris Kelvin's wife Hari in Tarkovsky's *Solaris*.

Recalling utopian designs from previous eras, the capsule portrays the nostalgic dreams of space travel found in comic books and the cut-and-paste aesthetic of 1970s poster graphics, while the spherical tent-like space station is reminiscent of mid-twentieth century geodesic domes, designed by R. Buckminster Fuller as models for sustainable living. Hammick's concern with sustainability and the fragility of the environment is reflected in the shifting viewpoint from the stars, looking back at the fertile earthly landscape from the barren lunar surface. He says: *"The key Confucian motif in Carl Sagan's Pale Blue Dot is that actually there is no place for us to go. The physical escape in the series, leaving earth for the stars, is in fact a selfish and unrealistic act and could be seen as a fantasy. We must dream on Earth, and we need to be aware of our responsibility as custodians of this planet to conjure up 'Heaven on Earth'."*

For further information and images please contact Hannah Hughes - [Hannah@flowersgallery.com](mailto:Hannah@flowersgallery.com) / 0207 920 7777.



*Lunography*, 2017, reduction woodcut, 166 x 122 cm

In June 2018 Tom Hammick will be artist in residence at Snape Maltings, Suffolk, developing new work in response to the 71st Aldeburgh Festival (8-24 June). Residencies at Snape Maltings provide unique development opportunities for musicians and other artists at any stage of their career. To coincide with Hammick's residency, the exhibition *Lunar Voyage* will travel to the Peter Pears Gallery in Aldeburgh where it will be on view from 9-24 June.  
[www.snapemaltings.co.uk](http://www.snapemaltings.co.uk)

## ABOUT TOM HAMMICK

Tom Hammick (b.1963) is a British painter and printmaker, based in East Sussex and London, UK. He was the winner of the V&A Prize at the International Print Biennale, Newcastle, UK in 2016, and the print *Violetta and Alfredo's Escape*, 2016, was acquired by the V&A. Hammick has work in many major public and corporate collections including the British Museum (Collection of Prints and Drawings); Bibliotheque Nationale de France (Collection of Prints and Drawings); Deutsche Bank; The Library of Congress, Washington DC; The New York Public Library; Towner Gallery and Museum, Eastbourne; V&A (Victoria and Albert Museum); and Yale Centre for British Art.



Clockwise from top left: *Living Room*, 2017, reduction woodcut, 128.9 x 171.8 cm; *Journey to the Moon*, 2017, reduction woodcut, 121 x 121 cm; *Nightfall*, 2017, reduction woodcut, 79 x 109 cm; *Chamber*, 2017, reduction woodcut, 76 x 71 cm.

## NOTES TO EDITORS

Opening Hours: Tuesday - Saturday 10am - 6pm.

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