



CHUNG 24 GALLERY

# *Perceptions*

NOVEMBER 30, 2022 —

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CHARLOTTA HAUKSDÓTTIR  
*solo exhibition*

CHUNG 24 GALLERY  
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California  
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ARTIST'S VOICE



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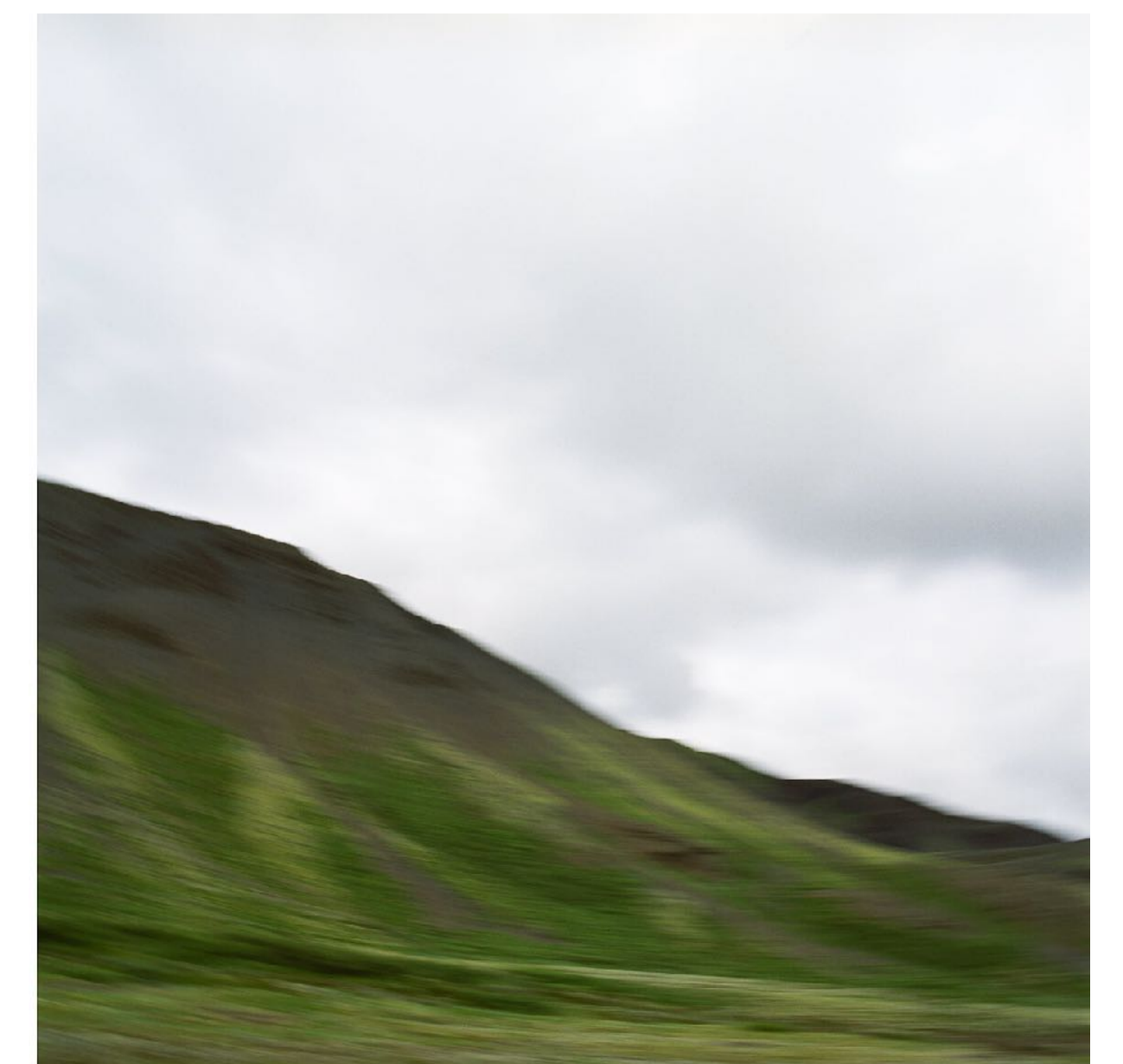
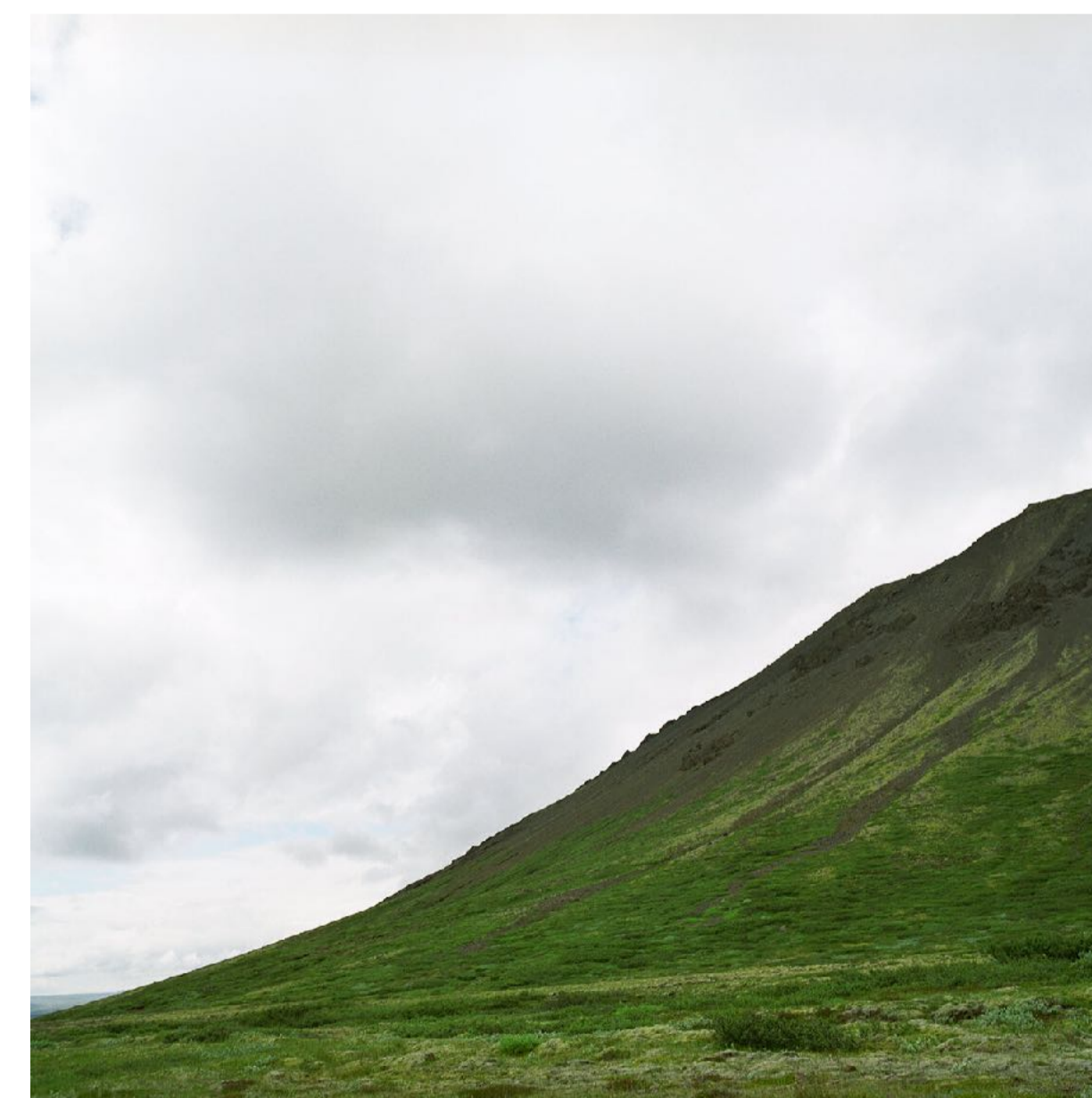
# ARTIST'S VOICE

I was inspired to photograph the Icelandic landscape 19 years ago, after I moved to the United States and realized how closely my homeland was connected to my identity and sense of being.

My early memories of growing up in Iceland include playing tag with my friends during the long summer evenings and camping with my family. My parents had a farm an hour from Reykjavík and I fondly recall our trips to the countryside attending to the animals, harvesting hay and going horseback riding; sometimes these memories are brought back when I smell freshly cut grass or see dandelions. One especially vivid memory is of the time my dad and I were hit by a heavy snowstorm when driving back from the farm. The weather turned very quickly, as it often does in Iceland, and worsened to complete whiteout conditions. Fortunately for us, we chanced upon a well-equipped transport vehicle whose tail lights were visible as long as we kept within a car length. We progressed slowly, driving all but glued to its rear bumper, passing countless other vehicles that had lost the road and gotten stuck. Eventually, we made it back to the city, but an appreciation of the quick temper and tremendous power behind Iceland's landscapes and weather has remained with me ever since. This was just one of many memorable road trips that my father and I went on together. In later years, he was often my driver on my photography excursions, where he would tell me the name of every landmark we saw—which, sadly, I would promptly forget.

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HAUKSDÓTTIR

As a person with temporal lobe epilepsy, I have always experienced memories coupled with a sense of incompleteness and displacement. While manageable, the epilepsy affects my memory, with frequent déjà vu's and distortions, making actual and perceived memories and experiences often feel equally authentic. In particular, my childhood memories are now tightly coupled to grainy snapshots found in my parents' old photo albums. Thinking back to birthdays and holidays, the secondhand memory of those fuzzy images seem to have subsumed the actual memories. These aspects of my perception and recall are a recurring theme of my work, in which I aim to craft a perspective and atmosphere that creates a similar visual experience.



*The Space Between Diptych, 2003*



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Landscapes are infused with personal history, as both physical spaces and the contexts for our memories. After I started living abroad, every time I traveled back to Iceland I was captivated by the light and the expansive vistas of the familiar, imposing scenery. My first landscape project, "Dreamscapes," aimed to visually represent the feeling of being present in a place and an environment, rather than simply viewing it. The blurring and fragmenting of the landscape was intended to visualize the sense of distortion and loss created by shifting viewpoints, the ever-changing light, and the passing of time. The different perspectives of experiencing space were further explored in my work "Scapes." I began taking multiple photographs from all vantage points in each place I traveled, and when I was back in California I would assemble three photographs creating an alternate view of the space. Printed human scale, the vertical triptychs created an intimate perspective that could transport me back. At first glance the scenery flows together, but closer inspection reveals the transitions between the photographs: a reminder that experiences are never seamless, and can never be fully comprehended or retained.



*Mountainscape, 2003*



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*Imperception IX, 2022*



*Erosion I, 2021*

In the series "Imprints" I am exploring still further the connection between photographs and memories. By physically deconstructing the photographic images, I repurpose them, as we do our memories. The physical process of cutting up the photographs becomes a conscious choice of what to remember, instead of helplessly surrendering to what is lost. To add context, I utilize natural patterns, such as those of human fingerprints, veins in the eyes or brain circuits to suggest our own personal connection to, impact on, and interplay with nature. I also use patterns from geographic topography to visualize the reality that nothing ever stays the same, and that in time everything that is created will eventually be replaced, as newer layers supersede what came before. By stacking one image on top of another, what is hidden becomes as important as what is visible, mirroring reality and inducing the viewer to draw upon their own experiences to complete the work. Over the years I have noticed the changes in the landscape in Iceland and have incorporated that into the work. I have removed parts of the photographs revealing black velvet representing the disappearing landscape, as well as text from an essay by the climatologist Michael E. Mann. Finally, by incorporating human biological patterns, the images also speak to our individual responsibility for our impressions upon nature.