



THE  
VAST  
NESS IS  
BEARABLE

## DESIRÉE HOLMAN

Working across various artistic mediums, in her *Sophont* series, Desirée Holman investigates ways in which pop culture and the pervasiveness of new age ideology influence our perception of outer-worldly realms, and in turn, of ourselves. Claims of pseudoscience imbue her work, in the form of extraterrestrial characters, quasi-invented documentation of the night sky, and time-traveler helmets. In so doing, the artist brings attention to complicated social questions about the shaping of identity in an ever mystifying universe.

Holman experimented with chakra biofeedback imaging technology invented by Guy Coggins as part of her process in creating this series. Seen in *Channeling Aura 2* and *4*, radiant color fields captured by aura cameras diffuse the picture plane in portraits of human beings who wear store-bought alien masks. The lusciously hued dynamism of the sitter's energy is further portrayed in Holman's *Close Contact* videos, seven of which are referred to as abstract auras. In another subset of these videos the viewer sees an animated and glimmering setting of outer space. *Close Contact, 03h 17m 46.16324s, -62° 34' 31.1563"* and *Close Contact, 03h 18m 12.81853s, -62° 30' 22.9048"* consist of black-and-white starscapes—digital hybrids of fictional and real astronomy documents—referencing the coordinates of Zeta Reticuli, a system that could purportedly contain life beyond Earth. As a means to access such other dimensions, *Psionics 13* is constructed as a wearable helmet. It is Holman's newest sculpture in the *Psionics* series, which originates from a performance last year at San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Composed of odds and ends Holman found at nearby flea markets, the pieces allude to a vast array of makeshift technologies that amateur scientists and the like continue to construct, whether to attempt contact with supernatural forces, or otherwise connect on different levels with one another.

At the crux of *Sophont* is the importance of fantasy in all of our lives, although highly mediated at times. While Holman's works trigger curiosity about SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) activities and parapsychology, they elicit a deeper self-reflection on the limitations inherent to homocentric views of otherness and the unknown, which opens an endless expanse of possibility.

*Recent solo exhibitions featuring Holman's work include Sophont, Philip J. Steele Gallery, Rocky Mountain College of Art & Design, Denver, CO; Heterotopias, MATRIX #238, Berkeley Art Museum, CA; and Desirée Holman, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA. She is a recipient of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's SECA Art Award and Artadia: The Fund for Art and Dialogue award, and holds degrees from University of California at Berkeley California College of the Arts. Holman lives and works in Oakland, CA. [www.desireeholman.com](http://www.desireeholman.com)*