

Air pressure, temperature, motion and light are the concerns of Sophie Green's practice; an immaculate contemplation of atmosphere. We are offered thresholds—the point of one space ending and another beginning—but they are evasive and permeable. The thresholds are not spatial, they are not about locating the point at which the work ends and the world begins. Rather, they are in our oscillation between micro and macro. Green draws our attention to tiny moments by placing them in the immensity of the world. This shift of scale becomes the threshold, the margin in which we stand and see a single breath in relation to infinite sky.

Green's works are minute displacements that speak of the near-weightless space of the world. I am reminded of this while viewing *Tidal Volume*, a plinth that bows to accommodate the volume of a breath. Archimedes' principle of fluid dynamics states that 'any body wholly or partially immersed in a fluid experiences an upward force equal to the weight of the fluid displaced'.<sup>1</sup> The principle comes to mind because it talks of the point of contact between materials. It accounts for a minuscule displacement in an immense world of matter—similar to how the world's sea levels rise when you run into the ocean (it is technically true, but its scale makes it unfathomable). The mention of Archimedes also identifies something else about the works—they flirt with the empirical. Systems of volume, mass, scale and altitude are the tools we use to measure atmosphere. These tools typically quantify phenomena in order to make them translatable, so they can interface with the systems of science and technology. Such a quantification can deaden phenomena by abstracting it (it's difficult to calculate pollution or ozone levels based on the sky's affective value) but in these works such systems are laced with poetry. *08:29 GMT (northern)* and *08:29 GMT (southern)* demonstrate this: two images of the sky, taken in synchronisation from different hemispheres. They observe planetary systems of hemispheres and equators, but the photographs frame the same sky—the poetry is in the position.

By addressing air and atmosphere itself, these works situate themselves in previously 'empty' space, drawing our attention to small changes in our surroundings otherwise overlooked. In radiating a subtle warmth, *Diffuse* constantly (and almost imperceptibly) alters the atmosphere of its surroundings. Its atmosphere is its substance—how do we contain that warmth? How do we demarcate its boundaries and measure its scale? A characteristic of atmosphere is 'the co-existence of embodied experience and the material environment'.<sup>2</sup> Atmospheres 'hinge on the material world as well as subjective dispositions'.<sup>3</sup> *Diffuse* is an object, as well as an atmosphere, it has both fixed and mobile components. It can be seen leaning against the wall, but it can also be walked through, displaced and breathed.

That breath is a connection with atmosphere, an act of exchange between interior and exterior spaces. To breathe is to internalise atmosphere. *Distil* is the process of intercepting this exchange—capturing breath and condensing it back into vapour. The small condensation speaks back to the immense world in tiny iterations—the collection of thousands of breaths, dozens of hours and countless preoccupations. Again, we are offered the immeasurable and the immense in the accumulation of gesture. Within its container, the work transitions between gas and liquid, vapour and condensation, determined by the warmth and light of its environment. Even while the bottle is sealed, the harvested breath inside still responds to atmosphere. This ubiquity of matter makes us reflect on space as simultaneously negative and positive, and makes us aware of the reactivity of atmosphere with the bodies that occupy it. We are made to contemplate on an endlessly shifting environment that offers no point of reference or fixation.

---

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Little Heath, trans., 'On floating bodies I', in *The works of Archimedes*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897), 257. 'Any solid lighter than a fluid will, if placed in the fluid, be so far immersed that the weight of the solid will be equal to the weight of the fluid displaced.'

<sup>2</sup> Mikkel Bille, Peter Bjerregaard and Tim Flohr Sørensen, 'Staging atmospheres: Materiality, culture and the texture of the in-between,' *Emotion, Space and Society* (2014): 6. accessed May 29, 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2014.11.002>

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.* 2

In Threshold we see a rehearsal of atmosphere; it is embodied in breath, abstracted in sky, felt in warmth and altered in matter. These works are enacted with such a light touch, I am concerned that my paragraphs are the heaviest things about them. Through a manipulation of scale, measurement and space, Sophie Green draws our attention to the unseen elements of our atmosphere, and consequently, ourselves in relation to it. 'Threshold' is a nod at our preconceived notions of space; the divisions between bodies. Through this acknowledgement, Green's work then circumvents these divisions, and transmutes a formerly vacuous expanse into a vibrant, shifting airspace.

Ash Tower

June 2015