

Double Mountain by Emma Finn
The Improbable City Catalogue -Essay by Emily Gray

Underneath the mountain, the fossils thrum.

Adults rarely appear in Charles M. Schulz's comic strip *Peanuts*. When they do, it is only as a pair of legs or distant figures with indistinct facial features. In the later television specials they are not depicted at all, but can be heard infrequently as a distorted trombone sound ending with a bell. The adults are noise, they exist peripherally, almost out of reach. *Double Mountain*, Emma Finn's latest video installation, utilises a similar, somewhat inchoate, format with the mountain as narrator. As she points out, it is hardly the mountain's fault "the mountain is an unreliable narrator. They can't tell what is really going on on the surface. Only vibrations."

Inspired by a childhood of cartoons, the aesthetic of graphic novels, and the ability to pare back a narrative to the point where complexities of multiple threads can appear in a single frame, 'the Marks' have become the transmitter through which Finn tells us stories: "I like seeing the Marks I make on pages join together. These Marks become people and things that have stories to share." The Marks blend the real and imaginary, supported by extensive research. The drawing, development and research are in constant cycle, and while sometimes there might be a particular story that is inspired by true events, such as the posting of babies in the early days of the postal service, this can occasionally occur in reverse, with first the development of a drawing or story followed by finding its echo in reality.

The Marks, a driving force for the initial drawings and as characters within themselves, often require taming, and it seems they repeatedly retain a will of their own, bringing their two dimensional forms with them into the video works, perhaps as the wheel of a postal van, or in the form of a wrecking ball. This interplay of two-dimensional drawing and three-dimensional material creates a warped realism, focusing our attention on the overarching theme of perceptions and modes of reality. Capturing these complexities, the resulting videos distil the everyday noise into single frames, into a black and white simplicity. The flattened-down drawn on features of the characters, alongside the prosopopœic narration and collage of dimensions, merge the visual language of comics, film and cinema.

Double Mountain explores these liminal spaces between dimensions and the complexity of layered narratives with an ontological perspective. As narrator, the mountain necessitates a certain distancing from the actual events depicted, becoming a mirror reflecting and commenting, but not actively participating in the unfolding dialogues. Between this almost omniscient presence of the mountain and the thrum of fossils buried beneath, the Marks' vibrations form various dramas and anecdotal moments. From the custodian of the mountain continuously making paper airplanes, to visitors losing their tickets and operators attempting to repair a broken cable car, each occupies the mountain; fleetingly coming into contact, but like winding threads, remaining on their own trajectory.