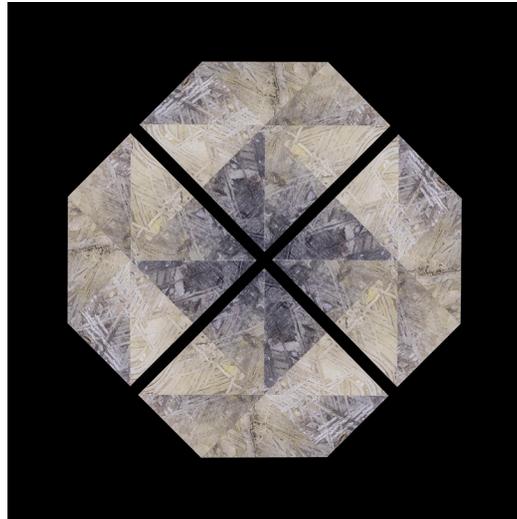


# Patterns from the heart of a planet

16 Nov - 14 Dec, 2019  
Sutton Gallery  
254 Brunswick St, Fitzroy



*'Rocks are verbs, writes Marcia Bjornerud in 'Timefulness', her account of geology's study of earth's planetary history. By offering visible evidence of processes — eruption, accretion, growth — rocks make time legible. Like Bjornerud, Helga Groves reads time's legibility in the surfaces and markings of stone, transforming them into abstract images and sculptural forms.'*<sup>1</sup>

As survivors of planetary evolution over 4.5 billion years, meteorites are the dark lights that hold the memory of our solar system. An exhibition at the Natural History Museum in Paris prompted the artist's current study of meteorites. In this series Groves casts her focus on these extra-terrestrial rocks to explore patterns related to geological phenomena.

The key subject here are the crystalline structures known as Widmanstätten patterns, occurring in octahedrite iron meteorites and some pallasites.<sup>2</sup> Once formed in the core of asteroids, they result from a cooling process that spans millions of years. These abstract patterns reveal how two alloys — kamacite and taenite bands called 'lamellae' interleave.

Two photographic collages featuring such patterns, detail the intricate pathways of these alloys. Configured to resemble crystalline shapes, the collages radiate with geometric opticality.

In a set of three abstract paintings, the visual depth of these patterns is transformed into metallic tones and textures. Close attention to the materials reveals surprising interactions such as small explosions formed by liquid medium and the grainy residue of iridescent paint. Harnessed within the formal structure of the grid, the patterned fragments collide, recalling the restless history of our solar system.

In a separate painting with vertical bands of copper, bronze and metallic blues, we see a divergence from the disorder expressed elsewhere in the exhibition. By contrast, the isolation of 'lamellae' bands manifests as macroscopic stillness.

Finally, a set of Perspex wall sculptures resemble meteorite casings. Disclosing their internal light, like vestiges of past planets, they appear still warm from their 'fall' to becoming a 'find' on this Earth.

<sup>1</sup> Ingrid Periz, Slow Moving Structures, Helga Groves exhibition essay 2018.

<sup>2</sup> "Pallasites: They contain crystalized, sometimes gem-like, grains of olivine, from 1 millimeter to 1 centimeter across, varying in colour from brownish yellow to olive green. This silicate is embedded in an iron-nickel matrix." Meteorites, Published by Alan Carion, Paris, France, 2009, p. 21.