

# MEGAN CUMP BLACK MOON

Megan Cump’s “Black Moon” series constructs a world swallowed by darkness terrains that skirt the visible. For Cump, the dark is itself a wilderness of sorts, full of the promise of the unknown. It is fitting that the locations she has photographed: underground caves, deep woods, night skies and oceans, conjure up mythic tales of transformation and the underworld. Some of these landscapes are inhabited by wild creatures, including a ghostly white deer and a shadowy woman who, in one photograph, floats in water black as the night, bringing to mind the ancient Hermetic axiom “as above, so below.” This woman is, in fact, the artist, but one could argue that all of Cump’s figures, even the animals, are enigmatic self-portraits.

Replete with auspicious meteor showers and subterranean passages, these photographs transport us, suggesting the other side of things. Stars appear to burn through the atmosphere and the evening sky fills with otherworldly light. In the past, Cump notes, the night imparted fundamental knowledge, serving as navigational field, timekeeper, and source of cosmologies. Distinctions were not drawn between scientific observation, spirituality, and art. Recent research suggests that some Paleolithic cave paintings are also prehistoric star maps the stray dots and dashes overlaid on depictions of animals mark the earliest constellations.

“Black Moon” draws from folktales, spirit photography, epic poems, and the alchemy of analog photography. It connects photography’s historical relationship with making the unseen visible with tales of metamorphoses, animism, and the netherworld. Megan Cump’s photographs are earthly and astral, dark and ecstatic.















