

# SEANKELLY

Yu, Ashley. "Interview with Spotlight Artist: Julian Charrière." *Musée Magazine*.  
April 9, 2019.



*An Invitation to Disappear-Sorong, 2018. Archival pigment print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag, mounted on aluminium dibond, framed, Mirogard anti-reflective glass. Paper: 59 1/6 x 73 13/16 inches (150 x 187.5 cm). Framed 60 9/16 x 75 5/16 x 2 inches (153.8 x 191.3 x 5 cm) Edition of 3 with 1 AP. ©Julian Charrière/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2018. Courtesy Sean Kelly, New York*

**Ashley Yu:** You work, *Invitation to Disappear*, was recently featured in our current issue of RISK. In what ways do you think your project reflects that?

**Julian Charrière:** My work in general reflects the RISK issue more than *An Invitation to Disappear*, because I like taking risks as part of my practice. I like being confronted by unusual situations that are great vectors in my artistic practice.

**Ashley:** Why did you choose a rave atmosphere to tell the story of the video and how does that illuminate your work?

**Julian:** The philosopher Dehlia Hannah and I were amazed by the number of palm oil plantations around the volcano. What fascinated me was both the beauty and the horror they emanate. I wanted to highlight the consequences of the

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encounter between man and nature. There was something so cinematic about the emptiness of the plantations, like a suspended reality. I had to do a film about it. The idea of throwing a rave within the plantation came a bit later to exacerbate the surreality of this place.

**Ashley:** How were you inspired to collaborate with philosopher Dehlia Hannah and DJ Inland?

**Julian:** I met Dehlia Hannah in 2017 at the Antarctic Biennale. She was working on her project “A Year Without a Winter”. We both were concerned about the same topics and decided to travel together to Tambora, Indonesia. In 1815, there occurred the largest volcanic eruption in 10,000 years that plunged the world into darkness. It was very natural to invite Ed Davenport (alias Inland), since he already had produced the scores of some of my previous videos.

**Ashley:** Why do you incorporate so much scientific/geological phenomena into your work?

**Julian:** Science always attracted me because of its ability to address different scales and systems within one discourse but it is often expressed in a way that only the scientific community is able to make sense of. Therefore, I try to appropriate scientific methodology and translate it into a comprehensible pictorial language.



*An Invitation to Disappear-Tawan*, 2018. Archival pigment print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag, mounted on aluminium dibond, framed, Mirogard anti-reflective glass. Paper: 59 1/6 x 73 13/16 inches (150 x 187.5 cm). Framed 60 9/16 x 75 5/16 x 2 inches (153.8 x 191.3 x 5 cm) Edition of 3 with 1 AP. ©Julian Charrière/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2018. Courtesy Sean Kelly, New York

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**Ashley:** Your work has been described as “post-romantic constructions” of nature. Could you explain that to us?

**Julian:** I'm not a fan of the “post-“ terminology. “Post” is always connected to the past. The western view of nature means separation, which we inherited from romanticism. We have separated ourselves from nature as observers. The tools we use to describe our reality still date back to the 19th century. We must detach ourselves from this “dusty romantic backpack.” Our radius of action is now planetary, so we need to change the way we describe the world.

**Ashley:** You often travel to locations with very specific geographical characteristics, such as radioactive sites or remote icebergs. Why do you choose these sites over more day-to-day landscapes?

**Julian:** I have to leave my comfort zone as a catalyst for my creative process. The uncanniness of some locations fascinates me. The point when beauty and atrocity coalesce within the unknown is the right terrain to start a new research. I mostly focus on places where human influence is strong and when it is a priori not visible. In short, in places that can be read in many ways.

**Ashley:** You're very aware of the materials that you use in your art, especially their origins and history. Why is that significant to you?

**Julian:** Most of the time, they are linked to the places I travelled to. For projects such as *Polygon* (2014) and *First Light* (2016), I exposed the film stock to radioactive material I found in the Semipalatinsk site and Bikini Atoll. What is interesting is that this action destroys one mode of visual information while at the same time adding another.

**Ashley:** What is your research process like?

**Julian:** There is no recipe! Generally, an idea emerges from readings, meetings, travels and some project can also dictate another. Once I have a feeling about something, I usually go on location for some research on site. An immersion is always fundamental to focus, as the spaces are very often compressed and crushed by societal constructions. I need to dive within a place to start a dialogue, which then becomes a story and perhaps an artwork.