

SETAREH

You & I are Earth

Lexia Hachtmann, Pauline Rintsch, Johanna Seidel

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In 1661, an anonymous artisan in London shaped a shallow dish, glazed it white, and inscribed it, in uneven cobalt letters: “You & I are Earth.”

Three and a half centuries later, the plate resurfaced from the ground. Its message, personal and universal at the same time, feels surprisingly contemporary. It reflects on matter itself, on the fragile condition shared by all living and non-living things. Made of clay — the same earth that shaped its maker’s hands and our own — the plate condenses in six words the circularity of existence.

This awareness forms the pulse of *You & I are Earth*, an exhibition by Lexia Hachtmann, Pauline Rintsch, and Johanna Seidel. Each artist explores through her own language the liminal threshold between human and environment, the intimate and the planetary. Their works echo the plate’s reflection, tracing what it means to exist within a continuous field of energy.

Lexia Hachtmann’s work operates through accretions: layers of pigment build up like geological strata, so that gesture becomes a record of time. Her compositions are tactile and often luminous, hovering between figuration and abstraction; tenderness and tension coexist with signs of erosion and decay. Hachtmann resists an anthropocentric reading — her energies belong equally to landscape and body — and her marks insist that care and entropy are inseparable. Her surfaces make the plate’s claim visible: gestures register as sediment, and time becomes legible in texture, so human presence appears as one activity among many within a continuous field of material relations.

Pauline Rintsch’s portraits unfold at a domestic scale, where figuration and subtle disruption render relational dynamics as visible traces. Her brushwork reveals shifts between proximity and withdrawal, capturing the temporal density of looking and being seen. Rintsch’s restrained gestures and layered paint translate emotion into visible form, turning the surface into a record of sustained attention. Her portraits extend the exhibition’s reflection on continuity — human presence appears not as separate from its ground but as another form within the same mutable field.

Johanna Seidel’s paintings deploy a poetic visual language — symbols drawn from dreams, history, and the everyday — to stage hybrid scenes that feel at once mythic and personal. Surfaces breathe and expand; figures and landscapes blur at the edges, suggesting moments of becoming rather than fixed identity. Seidel’s muted palette recalls dust and soil, as if each image quietly returns to its material origin. Her paintings perform a close reading of the plate’s insistence that form and matter carry histories: intimate narratives and broader temporal layers coexist on the same plane, persisting and returning.

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Placed together, these practices form an ecosystem of sensibilities. What unites Hachtmann, Rintsch, and Seidel is a shared attentiveness: an interest in processes that exceed human control, and a willingness to let material behaviour determine form and meaning.

The plate's inscription is formally simple and morally resonant. It belongs to a 17th-century memento mori tradition — a reminder of humility and mortality — and yet its address is disarming in its tenderness: you and I are earth. The line collapses the distance between maker and viewer, past and present. It also points toward an ethical question that threads through the exhibition: how do we live with the knowledge that we are of the same substance as the world we affect?

That question feels urgent now. The plate's survival — buried, rediscovered, and re-read across centuries — becomes an allegory for continuity of memory and vulnerability. The works of the artists in this exhibition ask us to attend to the modest, often slow ways that matter remembers — and to recognize that such noticing can alter perception, and, perhaps, responsibility.