

1. Mathilde Heu

'Epicentre'

Bone conductors, 3.7m x 3.6m x 2m, 2018

I'm not sure how best to approach it, though I'm instructed, Kneel, and raise your elbows, position them on the coin-shaped recesses of the cube you've fallen before, press your palms against your ears. It's a commonplace to vaunt art's power to prostrate us; rarer, in my experience, for an installation to bring us to our knees.

Cubes in the gallery—arranged as mirrors, or cast in hot-rolled steel, six foot by six foot—were used by mid-century minimalists (Robert Morris, Tony Smith) to play our bodies back to us, whether glanced in glass, or figured in the dimensions of oiled metal. This feels different; not only because I can almost rest my cheek on steel, not only because I am urged to touch.

The cube is tilted, sliced away so as to seem part-sunk into the floor; lanced through with harpoon-axes (marking  $x, y, z$ ). Leaning forward in this elbow-embrace, with the room's sounds muffled, my body is made conduit, a message channelled through my bones. Between my palms, through my skull, icebergs scrape the ocean floor, volcanoes burble underwater; another world, alien, inscrutable, sounds closed within this frame.

An epicentre is not the focus or fulcrum of activity, but above it; the point on the earth's surface under which the ground shivers. 'Epicentre' decentres us: it makes the origin, the zero-point—where  $x, y, z$  meet at  $O$ —unreachable, unknowable; the cube's slant sets us and our world off-kilter. We are held outside, fixed to an edge; the work asks us to lean, to fall, so it might enter us instead.

Kit Webb