

REGINE PETERSEN

text extract tbc



Suggestive, poetic and otherworldly, the work of German multimedia artist Regine Petersen spans notions of time, history, memory and myth. A graduate of the Royal College of Art in 2009, Petersen has won international acclaim; notably as recipient of the 2010 National Media Museum bursary and in her nomination for the prestigious Discovery Award at the Rencontres d'Arles in 2012.

Petersen's most celebrated body of work is a collection of three chapters, all exploring the phenomenon of meteorites. 'Find a Fallen Star' (Kehrer, 2015) was inspired by Petersen's chance encounter with a photograph of Ann Hodges, the first person to be officially recorded as being hit by a meteorite in modern times. In the photo we see Hodges, eyes downcast, surrounded by two police officers inspecting a large hole in her ceiling. One is holding a large black rock, the size of a grapefruit, and no one seems to know what's going on. Petersen says: "I had to know how the meteorite changed her life, and what became of her." Hodges was to become the subject of a Special Forces investigation, media frenzy, a bidding war and a lawsuit; divorce and a breakdown ensued. She died in 1972, having gifted the troublesome meteorite that unquestionably changed her life to the Alabama Museum of Natural History.

The fascination in Hodges' photograph and story propels Petersen to an 'investigation' into three extraordinary, though somewhat similar, events. She travels to Kanwarpura, a village in India, where a 6.8kg meteorite fell close to an atomic plant in 2006, and to Ramsdorf in Germany, where in 1958 local children uncovered a meteorite, which they broke into smaller pieces as individual keepsakes, and subsequently argued over for decades to follow.

For Petersen, the meteorite embodies a contradictory physical entity, both scientific object and heavenly apparition; a 'time capsule' from another era. There are parallels to be drawn between the meteorite as historic cache of information and photography's ability to communicate the same. Petersen uses the medium to weave effortlessly between historic and contemporary narratives, science and superstition, and reality and mythology.

Find a Fallen Star becomes a playground for Petersen's artistic imagination; her fragile, ethereal photographs are interspersed between scientific reports, newspaper clippings, transcripts and archival photographs. She documents the meteorites themselves; photographing them as curiosity pieces and artefacts of the uncanny and unknown. Landscapes are seen in half light,

as if unearthly creatures are scanning the scenery before them. In her portraits, Petersen's subjects look quizzically through half-smiles, as if they know something we don't.

The book includes eyewitness accounts of events, but these are often misremembered, exaggerated or forgotten. Her research and collection of ephemera is impressively thorough and somehow amplifies the bizarre nature of the stories she presents to us; stories which are so outrageous and unusual, that they couldn't possibly be made up.



McKinney explains his possession of his piece of "black pearl" by saying: "I think the Lord gave it to me—but my mule found it and showed it to me." He further ed into the army during W came home where he began dale Mills between farming



McKINNEYS MIGHTY PROUD of meteorite found near their home on December 1st. They examine the black colored pearl in their house near Sylacauga, Ala.

DETINUE BOND (Box 418-B) MARSHALL & PRICE

The State of Alabama, TALLADEGA County

CIRCUIT COURT

Know all Men by these Presents, That we, Hulitt Hodges

are held and firmly bound unto Ed J. Howard

in the sum of Five Hundred & No/100 (\$500.00)----- Dollars,

for which payment, well and truly to be made, we bind ourselves and each of us, our and each of our heirs, executors, and administrators, jointly and severally, firmly by these presents.

Sealed with our seals, and dated this _____ day of _____, 19____

The Condition of the above Obligation is such, That whereas, the above bound

Hulitt Hodges

has this day commenced a suit in the Circuit Court of Talladega County, against the said

Ed. J. Howard

for the recovery of the following property, to wit: (1) One sulphide variety meteor, weight about ten (10) pounds, six (6) inches in diameter, black satin color

and having made affidavit that the property sued for belongs to him, and entering into this bond, has obtained an order requiring any Sheriff of the State aforesaid to take the said property sued for into his possession:

Now, if the said Hulitt Hodges shall fail on said suit, and pay the Defendant all such costs and damages as he may sustain by the wrongful complaint, then this obligation to be void; otherwise to remain in full force and effect.

Hulitt Hodges (L. S.)
 Billy Jack Walker (L. S.)
 Mitchell Brown (L. S.)

Approved this _____ day of _____, 19____, Clerk.

Code 1940, Title 7, Sec. 918.

