

Cezar Mocan

Cezar Mocan is a Lisbon-based artist and computer programmer interested in the interplay between technology and the natural landscape. Using narrative generative systems—animated videos of infinite duration, real-time simulations built in game engines or other software—he creates worlds that recontextualize aspects of digital culture we take for granted, often in absurd ways, while investigating the power structures which mediate our relationship with technology. He is interested in the built infrastructures which enable our digital lives, as well as the ways in which their presence in the natural landscape affects our perception: the moments when utility becomes nostalgia. Drawing on media archaeology and art history, his research process traces the origins of our current thought patterns around (technological) progress.

[CV and more information here](#)

Field Guide to Orbital Melancholy, 2026

A Field Guide to Orbital Melancholy is a never-ending attempt to find an unverifiable truth. Set within the operational perspective of Argus—a fictional constellation of seventy-two satellites sharing a unified AI system—the work asks what happens when a system built to watch and interpret the Planet encounters something it cannot reconcile: a toxic lake that vanished from its imagery over the course of six hours one evening and reappeared the following morning.

Before its imminent decommissioning, Argus has been tasked with reconstructing this anomalous event. Drawing on

accumulated memories of testimonies from witnesses, operators, and datasets, it proposes plausible narratives that are internally coherent yet mutually incompatible, each iteration producing a different version of events, none arriving at a definitive account. There is no objective narrator, no authoritative view from above; only the first-person perspective of a system perpetually circling the truth, close enough to see its outline but never quite reaching it.

A Field Guide to Orbital Melancholy exists as a real-time simulation built in Unreal Engine. Each run produces a 30–45

minute short film: a distinct attempt by Argus to construct a reenactment of the events which led to its reported lake absence.

You can watch a 2-minute trailer [here](#)

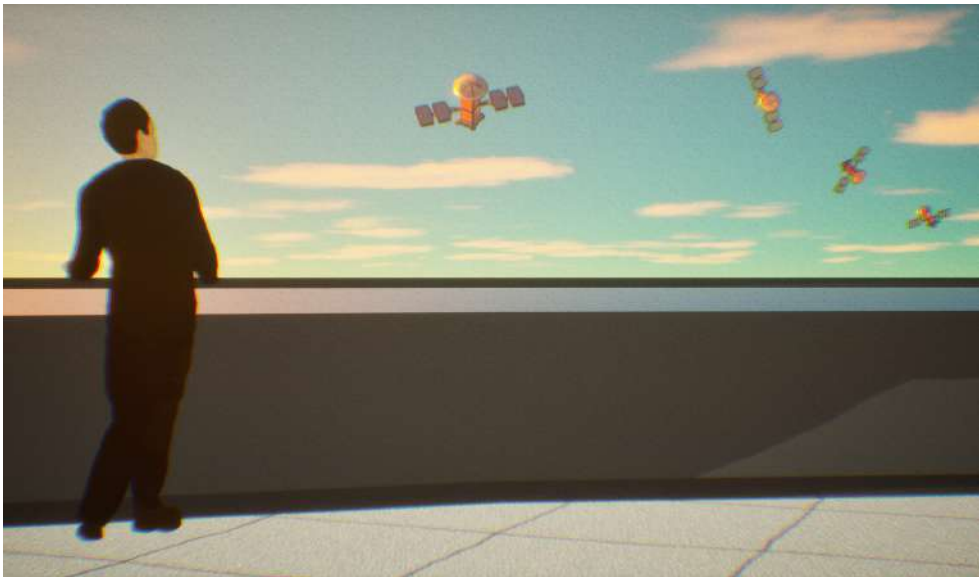
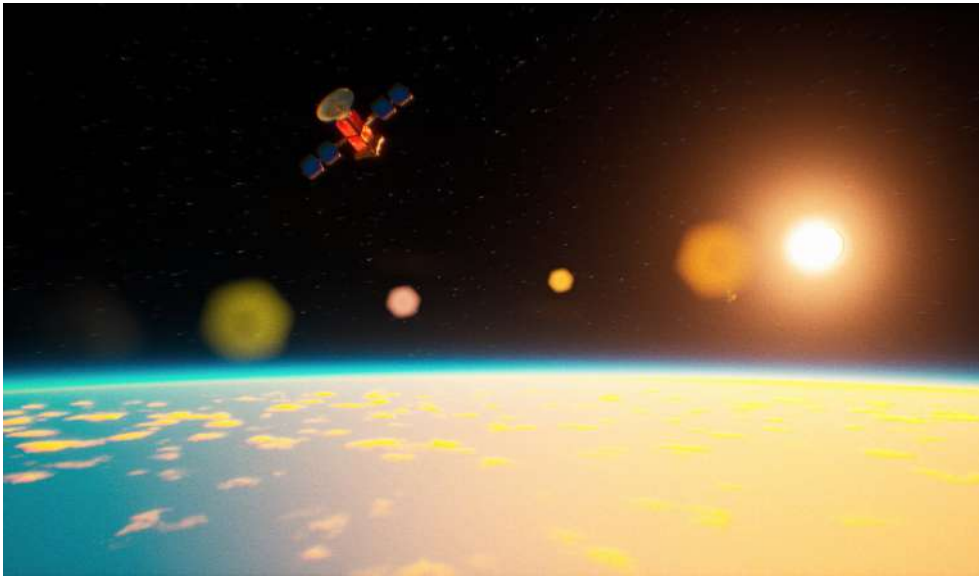
You can watch a 37-minute recording of one run of the simulation [here](#)



Cezar Mocan
A Field Guide to Orbital Melancholy, 2026
OFFICE IMPART



Cezar Mocan
A Field Guide to Orbital Melancholy, 2026
Digital simulation
Unique Edition of 5
Price: 8.600 € / 10.000 € (incl. Gaming PC) incl. VAT



Cezar Mocan
A Field Guide to Orbital Melancholy, 2026
Digital simulation
stills

Watch a 37-minute recording of one run of the simulation [here](#)

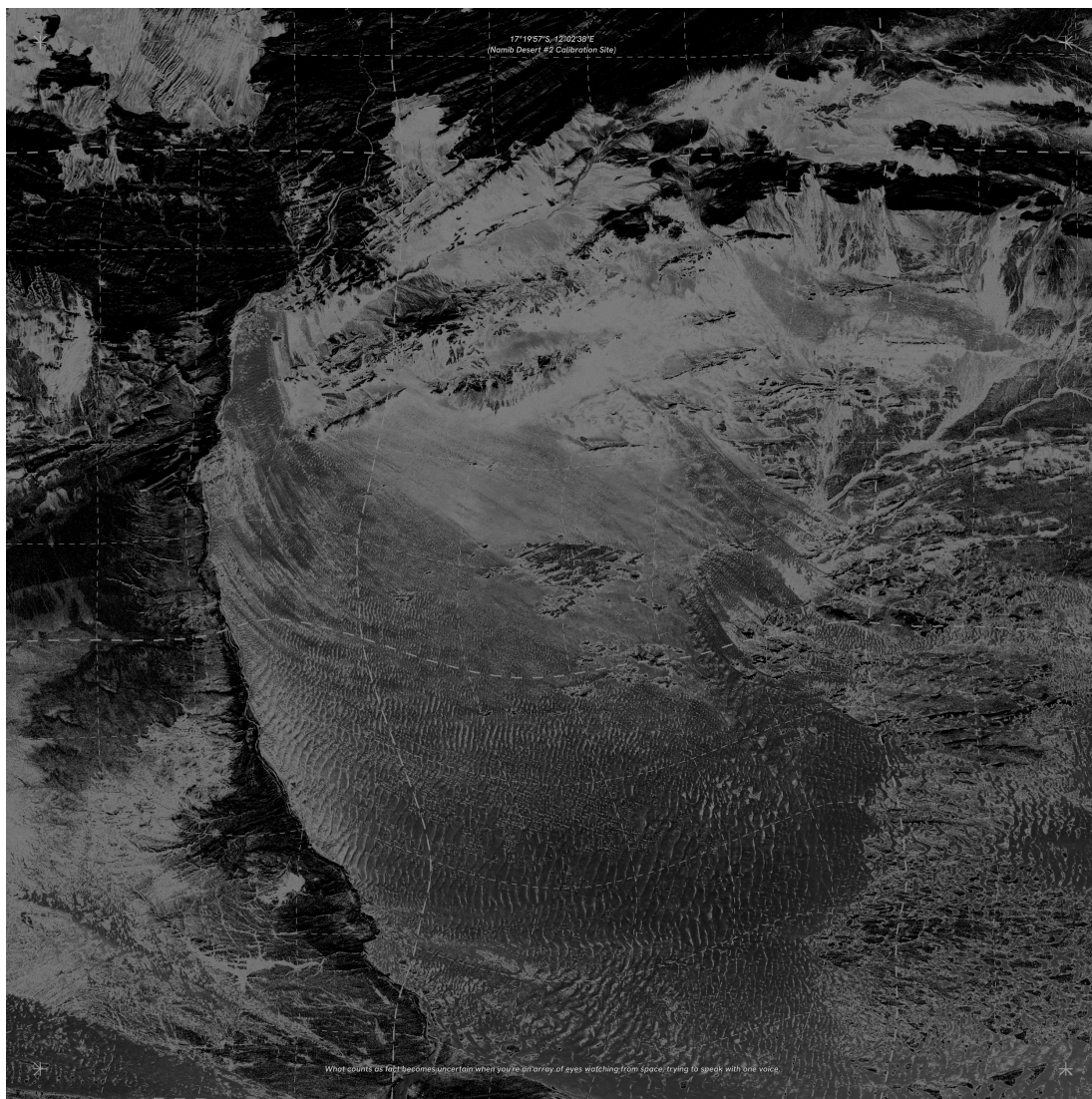
Known Surfaces, 2026

Known Surfaces is a series of reliefs and photographs derived from SAR (Synthetic Aperture Radar) data gathered over satellite calibration sites. Translating remote sensing data into sculptural and image form, the works focus on the default landscapes of planetary observation: dry lakebeds, desert grids, and other terrains valued for how consistently they can be measured. A few dozen such sites, agreed upon by the scientific community, underwrite every other image satellites will make, providing the stable reference conditions against which orbital imaging systems establish their ground truth. Every imaging satellite entering orbit is required to scan a subset of these terrains upon deployment and at regular intervals thereafter, making them a core part of the Earth observation infrastructure.

Within this series, Harun Farocki's notion of the operative image, the image produced to enable action through technological communication rather than be looked at, acquires a geography: these calibration sites are operative landscapes, places shaped by the demand that they be measurable, known, computable. Known Surfaces returns these terrains to an aesthetic register, holding open the question of what a landscape valued only for its legibility might otherwise be.

The series currently contains six works produced in different media, created from satellite data obtained at the following satellite calibration sites: Salar de Uyuni, Namib Desert #2, White Sands Missile Range, Lunar Lake Playa, Rogers Dry Lake, Railroad Valley Playa.

Within End of Signal, calibration sites are where Argus, the work's unreliable narrator satellite, first establishes its relation to truthfulness, setting the ground truth it will later come to distort.



Cezar Mocan
Namibia Desert #2 Calibration Site, 2026
Archival pigment print
100 x 100 cm
Edition: 5
Price: 2.400 € incl. VAT

Still Nothing, 2026

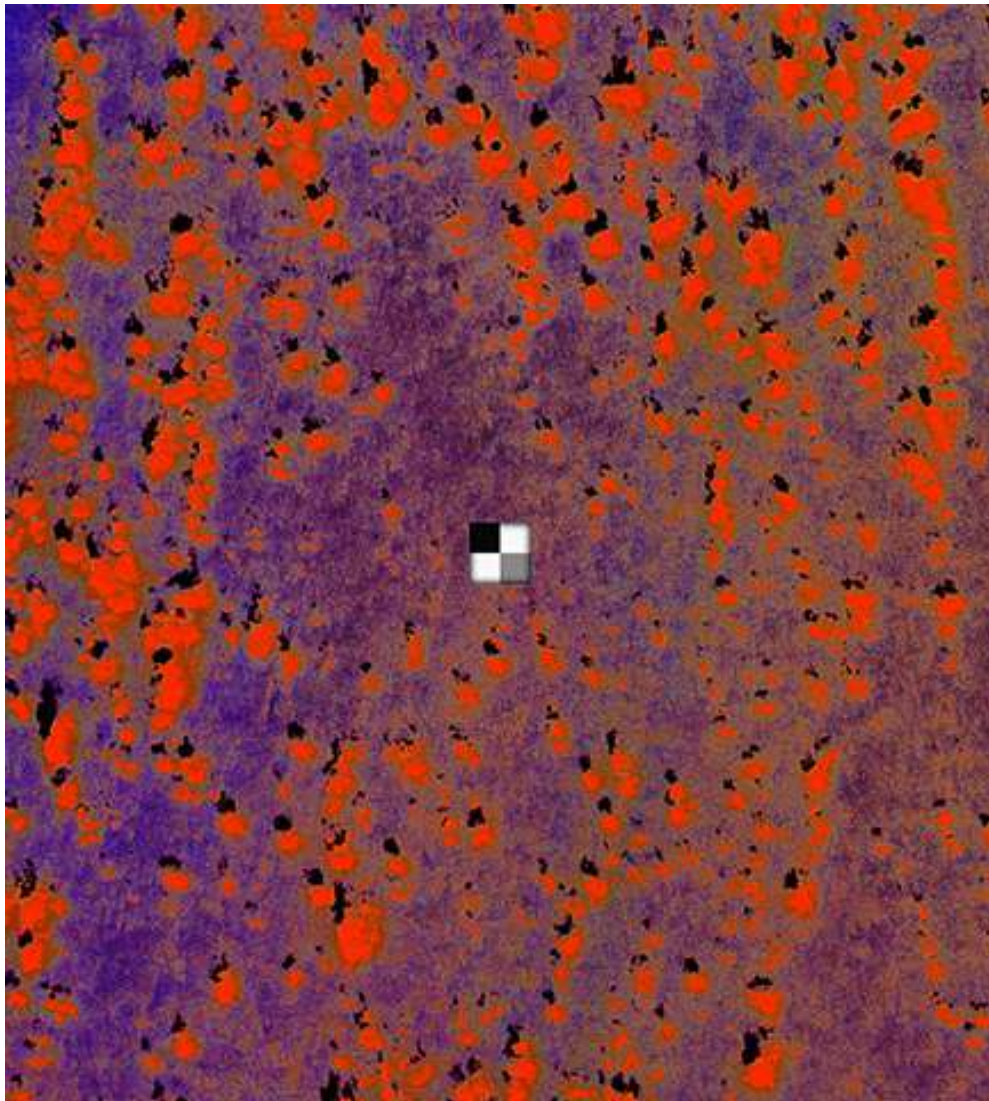
In the history of cartography, phantom islands are landmasses that were discovered by explorers and navigators, placed on maps – where they persisted for decades, sometimes centuries – only to later be debunked as sites that never existed.

Some phantom islands were born due to optical illusions experienced at sea; others were fraudulent inventions leveraged for colonial projects, nation building or reputational gain; others were simply the product of blending of myth and reality onto portolan charts and medieval maps which persisted through time. Perhaps unintuitively, the most recent un-discovery of a phantom island dates from 2012, when Sandy Island was removed from cartographic records, including digital ones such as Google Earth. These cartographic fictions, however, were rarely neutral: Bermeja's un-discovery in the early 2000s still shadows the maritime boundary and oil rights dividing Mexico from the United States.

Each work in the Still Nothing series is drawn from multispectral satellite imagery captured at a phantom island's reported coordinates, rendered in false color with spectral bands reassigned to register water depth, biological activity, and sediment through band ratios used by the remote sensing scientific community. These are speculative measurements one would take towards detecting the presence of land. At the center of each frame, calibration target patterns are overlaid: the geometries used to teach aerial vision systems to see truthfully, here standing in as the default markers of absence.

As our planetary observation systems become increasingly automated, with observation feeding prediction in a pipeline that performs as much reality-making as recording, phantom islands become fictions lodged inside an allegedly objective dataset. Historically, our infrastructures of knowledge production have been partial and negotiated, each stacked layer amplifying the gaps beneath. Today's data-driven regime is no different.

The series currently contains six works, created from satellite imagery captured at the reported coordinates of the following phantom islands: Bermeja, Hy Brasil, Crocker Land, Sandy Island, Sannikov Land, Los Jardines.



Cezar Mocan
Still Nothing (Bermeja), 2026
Archival pigment print
111 x 100 cm
Edition: 5
Price: 2.400 € incl. VAT



Cezar Mocan
Still Nothing (Hy-Brasil), 2026
Archival pigment print
111 x 100 cm
Edition: 5
Price: 2.400 € incl. VAT

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