

CRISTIN TIERNEY

# ARTFORUM

New York

**Peter Campus**

CRISTIN TIERNEY  
540 West 28th Street  
January 19–March 4



Peter Campus, *affect*, 1987, digital photo projection, dimensions variable.

The photograph *Earthrise*, taken from NASA's Apollo 8 space shuttle in 1968, captured the Earth as seen from the distance of the moon. Half engulfed in shadow, our home planet looks radiant and fragile—a kaleidoscopic cobalt-blue-and-misty-white shard floating in a vast and unbroken pitch-black sky.

The picture's capacity to transmit the beauty and vulnerability of Earth is credited with helping to launch the environmental movement of the 1970s. But today, decades after *Earthrise* and the advent of satellite imagery, we've grown accustomed to such all-encompassing aerial views of the planet and, with this familiarity, more confident that we can understand (or even control) its course. We've also set our collective sights higher—space missions now explore far beyond our world, plumbing the outer edges of the solar system.

Peter Campus's black-box exhibition feels remarkable for directing our gaze firmly back to the ground and for imbuing the most minuscule pieces of the Earth's surface with a sense of mystery and magnificence. On display for the first time in public are five monumental black-and-white photographs of rocks Campus collected in Montauk, New York. The images, all from 1987, illuminate the darkened gallery walls as glittering three-dimensional digital projections. Campus's head-on, enlarged views of the rocks—with evocative titles such as *affect*, *schism*, and *half-life*—reveal their intricate patterns of pockmarks, grooves, and ridges. Through the artist's lens, the beach pebbles are transformed into precious gemstones and meteorites that demand the same awe and rapt attention as a night sky.

— Hannah Stampler