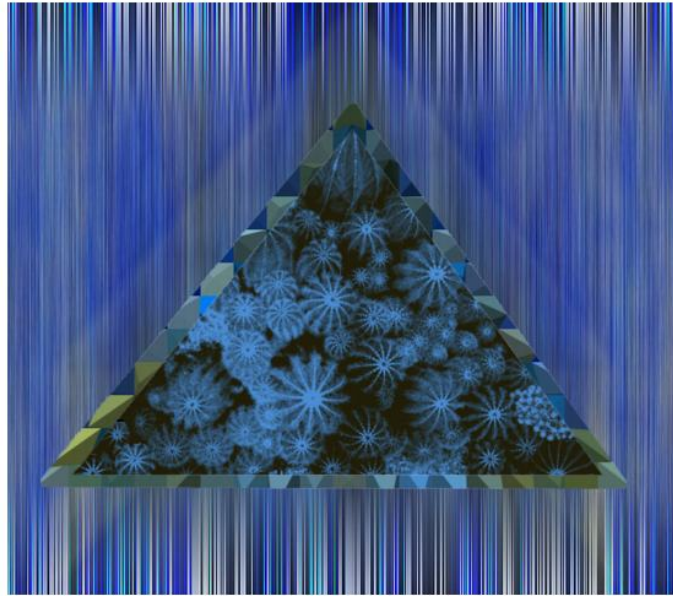


DESERT CHANTS:

Some Geometries of Silence



Desert Chant

T Newfields

The artwork hung like a parched window, a portal to a realm where silence breathes. At its core, a stark, obsidian triangle pierced through a sea of sun-bleached ochre, whispering secrets beneath the shimmering heat.

Reed stood before the canvas, his brow furrowed as he traced the sharp geometry with his eyes. "Does the triangle represent anything?" he asked, his voice hushed, as if loud speech might disturb the dust on the painted horizon.

Carla leaned against the gallery wall, her arms crossed with a studied nonchalance. She didn't even look at the painting; she watched the way the shadows moved across Reed's face instead. "If you let it," she replied, a lazy, cryptic smile playing on her lips. "Though, I must say... that seems like a rather prickly question to ask."

Reed turned his gaze toward her, his expression tightening. "Questions with any real depth usually are," he countered, the weight of his curiosity hanging heavy in the air.

Carla pushed off from the wall, taking a slow, deliberate step toward him. The air between them felt as dry as the landscape on the wall. "Well," she murmured, her tone sharpening with a sudden, intellectual edge, "if you truly want something more than glib answers, then you mustn't fear a few barbs along the way."

Yahui, standing a few paces back, leaned toward Carlos and whispered out of the corner of her mouth. Her eyes flitted between the two debaters and the sharp obsidian shape. "Do you actually understand what they are saying?" she hissed, her voice laced with bewilderment.

Carlos let out a long, weary sigh, rubbing his temples as if a migraine were bloomingly behind his eyes. "I don't," he groaned, turning away from the painting and the pair in front of it. "It is simply too painful to think that hard today."

- T Newfields

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