

Martina Amati: UNDER
26 September – 11 October 2015, Ambika P3, University of Westminster, London

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PREVIEW

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Martina Amati, *Under*, 2015. Courtesy the artist

Many exhibitions have struggled to work with the cavernous space of P3 Ambika, 1,300 square metres of raw floor, wall and ceiling beneath the University of Westminster building opposite Madame Tussauds in central London. Occasionally, though, a show gets it just right. Anthony McCall's *Vertical Works* (2011), for example, carved out three-dimensional space with cones of light projected into the pitch-black of this triple-height former concrete construction hall. David Ward's *Rink* (2009) was another: curvilinear light drawings unfurling across the floor in ever-denser layers, as though tracings of ghostly ice-skaters seen from beneath the frozen surface or a time-lapse film of stars in the night sky.

Such confusions of up and down – of immersion, suspension, hovering and floating – may be getting their fullest showing yet in an exhibition opening tonight (Friday 25 September): Martina Amati's *UNDER*. With a large screen floating horizontally across the middle of the space, and multiple projections of freedivers moving through great blue expanses, the British-Italian artist and filmmaker, who has herself long been a freediver, seeks to convey some of the vast stillness and quiet experienced when she takes to the depths and, on a single lungful of air, remains submerged for many minutes. In addition to viewing the central screen from below, visitors will look down upon it from above – much as a freediver experiences the water from the diving platform prior to a dive.

The multiscreen installation, filmed by a freediving camera team in Egypt, has been produced by Pinky Ghundale, who is, among other art and film activities, Steve McQueen's producer. Amati's prizewinning shorts, including a BAFTA for *I Do Air* (2010), have toured widely on the festival circuit. *UNDER*, which represents a turn towards nonnarrative filmmaking, will be on show for two weeks, after which Sunday art fair once again takes up the challenge of how best to use this space, for its annual Frieze week residency.

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