Archive and Trace: Curatorial Co-belonging

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An exegesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at
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Curatorial Practice, Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture

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Abstract

The concept of curatorial co-belonging that is advanced in this practice-based curatorial PhD emerged from my curatorial practice and has been fully articulated here for the first time. Curatorial co-belonging offers an opportunity to link the philosophical and instrumental modalities of curating, both broadening and balancing the ways in which thematic group exhibitions of contemporary art can be curated. Curatorial co-belonging is an intimate, collaborative and spatial model of montage, between artwork, curator, the site and the world. Through the paired metaphors of archive and trace, the exegesis argues for exhibitions to enact a shared responsibility (along with the artists, artworks, site and environment) for how we co-belong with the world. Through an ethical approach to the display of the artworks, in individual rooms or "pavilions", where each artist is given the space to breathe, the curatorial method also invites the visitor to linger, respond and create new connections in and between the artworks.

The artists and exhibitions under discussion share an interest in not just what an exhibition is, but what it does. This exegesis reflects on two recent exhibitions that I have curated: *TarraWarra International 2017: All that is solid…*, and *TarraWarra International 2019: The Tangible Trace,* the latter of which forms the practice-based component of this research degree. Through my consideration and curating of artworks and situations that pivot first around the archive, the subject of *All that is solid…*, and second around the trace, the subject of *The Tangible Trace*, I offer a theorisation of curating where visitors are not guided, so much as located in a situation of porous, generative and living connections between the artworks, and within the works themselves, that can alter and reframe our perspectives. This is not to create a sense of wholeness or completeness, but rather a new form of collective connectivity, a co-belonging—a concept that I have drawn from Jacques Rancière's idea of the "sentence-image".

Like the curatorial, a concept developed by Maria Lind (which she distinguishes from the instrumental form of curating), curatorial co-belonging is a montage of connections, real time encounters, a sensitivity to place, site, and an engagement with artists' processes and multiple systems of knowledge in order create new meanings and act on and with the world around us. However, the exegesis shows that curatorial co-belonging is a specific curatorial activity of making an exhibition, restoring, as it were, the distinction that Lind proposed. Drawing on the important precedent of the exhibitions of curator Okwui Enwezor, curatorial co-belonging uses assemblage, montage and radical juxtapositions, as a method that actively prises open the archive, and shows ways in which the traces from diverse histories and cultures can insert their presence into the world around us.

Declaration

This exegesis is an original work of my research and contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this exegesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Victoria Lynn

3 February 2020

Dedication

Dedicated to the memory of Okwui Enwezor (1963 – 2019)

Publications during enrolment

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The two exhibitions that are discussed in the exegesis, *All that is solid…* and *The Tangible Trace* were both presented at TarraWarra Museum of Art, where I am Director. I express my deep thanks to the Museum's Chairman, Mr Marc Besen AO and the Board, for their support of the exhibitions and for the research time granted to me in 2016. I also thank the staff of the Museum, Tony Dutton, General Manager; Mim Armour, Registrar; Anthony Fitzpatrick, Curator; Michelle Mountain, Exhibitions Manager; Stacie Piper, First Nations Yalingwa Curator; Elizabeth Alexander, Marketing Manager; Annemarie Kohn (until September 2019) and Kali Michailidis, Manager of External Relations; Shannon Lyons, Education Coordinator; Hannah Hamilton (until December 2016), Administrator; Rachael Paintin, Steph Tesoriero and Heather Saleeba for Front of House Coordination and Joanne Morice for her research assistance. These exhibitions would not have been possible without the dedication of these staff members and the Museum's volunteers. In addition, the Museum is supported by a number of philanthropic and corporate sponsors, whose contributions enable exhibitions of this scale and ambition to take place, and I am indebted for their support.

I thank each of the artists involved in the two exhibitions for loaning their works, and their collaborative generosity of spirit. *All That is Solid…* artists included Didem Erk, Cao Fei, Tom Nicholson, Patrick Pound and Cyrus Tang. *The Tangible Trace* artists included Francis Alÿs, Carlos Capelán, Simryn Gill, Shilpa Gupta, Hiwa K and Sangeeta Sandresegar. I am also grateful to the writers for the two catalogues, for their insights, Yang Beichen, Nikos Papastergiadis, Geraldine Kirrihi Barlow, John Young, Cuauhtémoc Medina, Annika Capelán Köhler, Naomi Cass, Chaitanya Sambrani, Aneta Szylak and Julie Ewington.

In the early stages of my research on art and the archive, I formally interviewed a number of artists, theorists and curators. I thank them for inspiring me to take my research to new horizons. They include Okwui Enwezor, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Eddie Berg, Tjebbe van Tijen, Geert Lovink, Mela Davila Freire, Tom van Gestel, David Metcalfe, Johan Oomen, Annet Dekker, Paco Barragan and Rosina Gomez-Baeza Tinture. Many of these interviews were conducted during the period of my Churchill Fellowship in 2009. I am truly grateful to the Churchill Trust for their support of sustained periods of research.

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There have been many fellow travellers on this journey, friends and family, too numerous to mention, and I am deeply grateful for their encouragement and support.

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Preamble

The concept of curatorial co-belonging that is advanced in this practice-based curatorial PhD emerged from my curatorial practice and has been fully articulated here for the first time. Curatorial co-belonging both broadens and balances the ways in which thematic group exhibitions of contemporary art can be curated. It offers an ethical approach to the artists' works, so much so that it enables the artists' works to be shown in a series of "pavilions", where one work is not crowding out another. The point of this curatorial approach is to allow the work to breathe, to interrupt, and therefore also allow visitors to generate their own connections between the works. This exegesis will argue that curatorial co-belonging also manifests a connection with the world around us. The artists are not so much "used" to make an intervention on how we belong in the world, rather in combination their works demonstrate an approach to the world around them, and a call to belong in the world in a different, more ethically driven way.

This exegesis reflects on two recent exhibitions that I have curated, in order to more fully theorise my own curatorial voice. The two exhibitions are the third and fourth iteration of a series that I inaugurated at TarraWarra Museum of Art in Australia's Yarra Valley: the TarraWarra International, a biennial exhibition of contemporary Australian and international art. In what follows I discuss both exhibitions: *TarraWarra International 2017: All that is solid*…, and *TarraWarra International 2019: The Tangible Trace,* the latter of which forms the practice-based component of this research degree. Through my consideration and curating of artworks and situations that pivot first around the archive, the subject of *All that is solid*…, and second around the trace, the subject of *The Tangible Trace*, I ask what is it that artists and, in turn, curators do when they assemble, juxtapose and arrange objects and events in space?

I have reflected that the creative pursuits of the artists under discussion here are not unlike that of a curator, who assembles artworks in the form of an exhibition. I will argue in the introduction that follows that this methodology is, however, much more than the assemblage of objects in space. By utilising a concept borrowed from the philosophical work of Jacques Rancière, I propose that my curatorial work enacts a "co-belonging" of objects and images in space, with the site of the museum and in connection with the world around them, in order to open up new understandings of that world.[1] For Rancière, co-belongíng is "a shared world where heterogeneous elements are caught up in the same essential fabric, and are therefore always open to being assembled in accordance with the fraternity of a new metaphor".[2] I propose that my curatorial approach creates new metaphors (archive and trace) for critiquing and understanding contemporary conditions of existence.

Curatorial co-belonging is a different kind of curatorial methodology than that experienced in a one-person show, where the logic of the exhibition is driven by the authorial relationship that the artist has to their work. It is also different from the method that occurs in a chronological survey, where date becomes the overriding logic. Moreover, curatorial co-belonging differs from exhibitions of collections that have been acquired by a collector, where the personality and taste of the collector is the guiding principle. It also differs from the trans-historical method popular in several museums now, where examples of artworks from various cultural and historical epochs are clustered together around a certain theme, such as death and the body.[3]

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[1] Jacques Rancière, *The Future of the Image*, trans. Gregory Elliot (London: Verso 2007), 55.

[2] Rancière, *The Future of the Image*, 57.

Curatorial co-belonging is not evident in all contemporary group exhibitions. It can also be distinguished from thematic exhibitions of contemporary art, including the most high-profile current example, the biennial. True enough, group exhibitions vary enormously in the thematic overlay that is carried through the exhibition. On one level they may issue forth a kind of seamlessness, that is enacted between the individual works, so that the visitor not just experiences but is guided through a pre-determined and overarching set of ideas.[4] At the other end of the spectrum the overlaying theme is so weak that it tends to disappear as one walks through the exhibition.[5] This exegesis shows that in the two exhibitions I have curated, there is something more at stake than a theme. While a thematic exhibition will unfurl and amplify the theme as one travels through it, tracing evidence of the iconography as it proceeds, the curatorial co-belonging in the two exhibitions analysed here takes a position on the issues facing civilisation today.

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[3] Examples of this kind of curating may be found in the exhibitions curated by Jean Hubert Martin such as *Magiciens de la Terre*, Centre Pompidou, 1989; *Artempo*, Museo Fortuny, 2007 and *Theatre of the World*, Museum of Old and New Art, 2013, which came to be a signature style of MONA's permanent collection displays going forward. The permanent collection displays at the Art Gallery of South Australia also partake of this method.

[4] An example of this is *Japan Supernatural*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2 November 2019 – 8 March 2020, that traces the figure of the ghost through historical and contemporary Japanese art, curated by Melanie Eastburn.

[5] An example is the last Venice Biennale curated exhibition, *May You Live in Interesting Times*, 11 May – 24 November 2019, curated by Ralph Rugoff.

Curators like myself, who work in institutions, are often dealing with archives; a broad term that I take to include the collections of museums, artists' archives, museum documentation, libraries and the like. We are indeed driven by what Jacques Derrida calls "archive fever".[6] My doctoral research began with the desire to understand why I was so interested in artworks that involve the use of the archive. I also realised that many of these artworks were present in exhibitions curated by leading international curator Okwui Enwezor (1963 – 2019), whose work has had a profound influence on my own.[7] His passion for the generative force of the archival phenomenon heralds a significant shift in curatorial practice in the last two decades and has been influential on artists, writers and curators throughout the world. Such an approach demonstrated that exhibitions of contemporary art can assemble the aesthetic and political gestures of artists in order to reassess the narratives that have arisen through official archives of culture and society. This way, the contemporary art exhibition becomes an active contributor to and participant in the scholarship and thinking around contemporary realities and disjunctions in global culture. As I will show, his exhibitions had an emancipatory energy, because the artists' use of archives provided a critique of official or historical records—a counter archive—which released the artist and artwork from predetermined narratives, enabling the generation of new ideas and images to occur. It is in part through Enwezor's work, that this exegesis untangles the many facets that drive an interest in the archival on behalf of both artists and myself as curator, and the concomitant conditions of memory and traces that come with the archival phenomenon.[8] As the two exhibitions discussed in this exegesis show, the ways in which artists mobilise both archive and trace generates imaginative heterotopias, a term I borrow from Michel Foucault and will define below.[9]

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[6] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: a Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[7] Exhibitions by Enwezor that have influenced my own work include Documenta 11, Kassel, Germany, 2002; *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art*, International Center of Photography, New York, 2008; *Annual Report*, *The 7th Gwangju Biennale*, Gwangju, South Korea, 2008; *Intense Proximity: An Anthology of the Near and the Far*, La Triennale, Palais de Tokyo, 2012; 56th Venice Biennale, *All the World's Futures*, 2015.

One of the key themes in this exegesis is how artists and curators approach the archival phenomenon. In theories and commentaries on the archive, there have been various ways of describing artists' mobilisation of the archive. Each of these terms involves a sense of movement, flux or shift in the ways in which archives are perceived, used and rearranged. While a complete assessment of these various descriptors is outside the scope of this exegesis, my research has found links between the phrasing used by a diverse range of writers on the archive and art. For example, curator Hans Ulrich Obrist and colleagues title a book developed from an exhibition of Obrist's own archive, "interarchive". [10] The term refers to an intermediate position taken by the volume on the exhibition's display of the archive, through various perspectives on the archive across diverse disciplines, through to a presentation of contemporary archiving practices, suggesting that to interarchive is a process that resonates cross-disciplinarily. Artist and theorist Simone Osthoff uses the phrase "performing the archive" to describe processes of when documentation and memory refuse to settle.[11] The Dutch artist Tjebbe van Tijen, who has devoted his career to working with archives, speaks of an archive in "flux" and the "archive drift" (akin to a Situationist *dérive*).[12] Media theorist Geert Lovink calls the plethora of archives an "archive river" and Judit Bodor uses the phrase "archives in motion". [13] [14] We will see in chapter 2 the power of the term coined by Jacques Derrida: archive fever.[15] Enwezor curated the exhibition *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art*, at the International Center of Photography, New York in 2008 and in 2009 discussed the "precarious archive" and the "generative archive", (another key concept in this exegesis).[16] In his major study on the archive,

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[8] There is a considerable body of knowledge on art and the archive. For further information see: Charles Merewether, ed., *The Archive: Documents of Contemporary Art.* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press; London: Whitechapel, 2006.); Simone Osthoff, *Performing the Archive: The Transformation of the Archive in Contemporary Art from Repository of Documents to Art Medium* (New York, Dresden: Atropos, 2009); Patrik Sjöberg, *The World in Pieces: A Study in Compilation Film* (Stockholm: Aura förlag, 2001); Beatrice von Bismarck et.al., *Interarchive: Archival Practices and Sites in the Contemporary Field* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2002); Gabriella Giannachi, *Archive Everything: Mapping the Everyday* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 2016).

[9] Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias", *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*, ed. Neil Leach (NYC: Routledge, 1997): 330–336.

[10] Beatrice von Bismarck, et. al., *Interarchive: Archival Practices and Sites in the Contemporary Art Field.*

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[11] Simone Osthoff, *Performing the Archive: The Transformation of the Archive in Contemporary Art from Repository of Documents to Art Medium* (New York, Dresden: Atropos, 2009).

[12] Tjebbe van Tijen, http://imaginarymuseum.org/, accessed 3 December 2009.

[13] Victoria Lynn, interview with Geert Lovink, Amsterdam, 2009.

[14] Judit Bodor, *Archives in Motion—"approaches, perspectives, interlinking"*, *Artpool* (Budapest: Artpool Art Research Centre, 2004).

[15] Derrida, *Archive Fever*; Okwui Enwezor and the International Center of Photography, *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art (*New York: International Center of Photography, Gèottingen: Steidl Publishers, 2008).

[16] Enwezor, *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art* ; Okwui Enwezor "Sovereignty of the Archive", conference paper given at *Archive/Counter Archive*, Monash Centre, Prato, Italy, 10–11 July 2009, an initiative of the Contemporary Art and the Archive Research Group, MADA, and organised by

Sven Spieker discusses the archive “at play” and also refers to the “montage” that occurs within the archive.[17] In my own writing, I have made the link between “archives and networks”.[18] Artists David A. Bailey and Sonia Boyce used the term “living archive” to describe their own practices.[19] In 2012 Monash University Museum of Art presented the exhibition *Liquid Archive* (curated by Geraldine Barlow), a result of a research cluster into art and the archive located at Monash University Art and Design.[20] We might also consider the terms “ongoing archives”, “remixing the archive” and “ephemeral archives”.

Many of these terms connote an archive that is set into motion, destabilised, unsettled or caught up in a flow. These words and phrases suggest that archives can be approached as a generative force, a launching pad for new ways of understanding and redrawing historical events, memories and traces. As such, artists and curators deal with archives differently from the archivists—librarians, scholars, historians and archaeologists—who have alternative

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Faculty Art & Design, Monash University, Melbourne and The Centre for Drawing, a Research Centre of the University of the Arts London.

[17] Sven Spieker, *The Big Archive: Art from Bureaucracy* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, MIT Press, 2008).

[18] Victoria Lynn, "Archive, Montage, Network", *Art and Australia* 43, no. 3 (2006): 421–425.

[19] David Bailey and Sonia Boyce, “An introduction, AAVAA’S The Living Archive Papers”, *Third Text*, 2001, 15:54: 87–88.

[20] Geraldine Barlow, ed., *Liquid Archive* (Melbourne: Monash University Museum of Art, 2012). The Contemporary Art and the Archive Research Group (CARGO) comprised Geraldine Barlow (curator at the Monash University Museum of Art), Victoria Lynn (curator and writer), Tom Nicholson (artist, and lecturer, Fine Arts, Faculty of Art and Design, Monash University), Spiros Panigirakis (artist and Lecturer, Sculpture, Faculty of Art and Design), Zara Stanhope (curator and writer) and Kit Wise (artist, Lecturer and Acting Head of Fine Arts, Faculty of Art and Design).

disciplinary and discursive imperatives. Artists will use archival materials as objects, and they also use the material trace as an event. Each is an exploration of memory, while also being a way to bring the past into the present. Most importantly, archive and trace are shown in this exegesis to be ways of activating a different point of view on our contemporary spheres.

The analogy between the artists' works and my own methodology begs the question of whether I am claiming that either the artists are practising a form of curating, or that I am engaged in methods that could be conflated with art-making itself. The role of artists and curators in relation to curatorial studies has been discussed.[21] More relevant for my purposes is the concept of "the curatorial", first introduced by Maria Lind, which is examined in the Introduction.[22] The curatorial is a trans-disciplinary method of perceiving and researching undertaken by curators, artists, researchers, educators alike. Lind conceives the curatorial as a process rather than a role; she sees it as an attitude rather than an instrumental form of curating. The curatorial embraces difference and the co-existence of diverse points of view. Lind writes, "The curatorial involves not just representing but presenting and testing. It is serious about addressing the query, what do we want to add to the world and why?"[23] The two exhibitions discussed in this exegesis enact a form of the curatorial, in that the artists, and the exhibitions, not only assemble fragments, but also seek to act within the public and cultural realm. In this exegesis artmaking and curating are not equivalent or interchangeable; rather they are revealed as participating in a shared process of co-belonging.

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[21] See for example Terry Smith, *Thinking Contemporary Curating* (New York: Independent Curators International 2012), 71 and 132; Paul O'Neill, *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2012) and Elena Filipovic, ed. *The Artist as Curator: An Anthology* (Milan: Mousse Publishing, 2017).

[22] Maria Lind, "Active Cultures: Maria Lind on the Curatorial", *Artforum International* 48, no. 2 (October 2009): 103 and Maria Lind, ed., *Performing the Curatorial With and Beyond Art* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012).

[23] Lind, "Active Cultures: Maria Lind on the Curatorial", 103.

In this exegesis, the concept of curatorial co-belonging emerges as a more specific process than the curatorial. On the one hand, the gathering together of archival fragments or traces by the contemporary artists under discussion here, delves into the realm of the incomplete, the unfinished, the circulating images and materials of memory that have been cut adrift from their original historical or archival home, or indeed from the original action or experience that prompted the trace. On the other hand, there is a will to connect, a relational force, a search for belonging within the logic of the artwork itself. This is not to create a sense of wholeness or completeness, but rather a new form of collective connectivity, a co-belonging. The new metaphor that follows on from Rancière’s concept, is an important element of this process. The curatorial co-belonging that is identified in this exegesis shows that visitors are not guided, so much as located in a situation of porous, generative and living connections between the works, and within the works themselves, that can alter and reframe our perspectives. As we will see, the choice of artworks and their placement are important indicators within this process, so that curatorial co-belonging comes to be both the generation of new metaphors for art, as well as the ethical display of the work of contemporary artists.

Chapter 1

Introduction

This introduction provides a wide-ranging context for the exegesis and is divided into six sections. First is a brief summary of the museum as a heterotopia, a concept that is relevant to my concept of curatorial co-belonging and a term I borrow from Michel Foucault. This can be understood as a place of permanent critique.[1] Second, I categorise the main arguments that arise in the literature on contemporary art curating over the last decade. From this vast amount of literature, I identify two important precursors for my own research: (i) Okwui Enwezor's *Documenta 11* and (ii), Maria Lind's concept of the curatorial.[2] Third, I analyse the work of Rancière, specifically his concept of the sentence-image, which I draw on for my own elaboration of curatorial co-belonging. Fourth, I expand on Rancière's ideas and introduce what I mean by the term curatorial co-belonging, particularly in relation to the exhibitions *All that is solid…* and *The Tangible Trace*. Fifth, I identify the relevant literature on collage and montage across the fields of art history, anthropology, philosophy and media theory, as a significant precursor to many of the ideas in the exegesis. Finally, sixth, I introduce chapters 2, 3 and 4.

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[1] A discussion of museum definitions is beyond the scope of this exegesis and is readily available in publications on the topic.

[2] Okwui Enwezor, ed., *Documenta 11 Platform 5: The Exhibition* (Kassel: Hatje Cantz Publications, 2002); Maria Lind, "Active Cultures: Maria Lind on the Curatorial", *Artforum International* 48, no. 2 (October 2009): 103 and Maria Lind, ed., *Performing the Curatorial Within and Beyond Art* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012).

I. Museums as Heterotopias

In order to understand the significance of the concept of curatorial co-belonging, it is important to briefly consider the ways in which museums have been analysed. The first Western art museums witnessed the transformation of a palace collection into the art museum.[3] Most often museums came into being because they either held or were gifted a collection and then continued to acquire collections.[4] The protocols governing the display of this material vary from institution to institution, but generally the intention has been the care, display and interpretation of the collection. In general, the art museum curator's role emerged in order to undertake these protocols, and, increasingly, to find new and important connections within the collection. Today, there are several conventional methods that are used by the art museum curator to present the collection. The first is connoisseurship and chronology, where the history of style is charted across time. The second is iconography, where like subjects are shown in the same vicinity in order to provide comparative and contrasting examples. The third is to focus on the development of a particular artist's work over time, and the fourth is to chart the progress of an art movement. Eilean Hooper-Greenhill has shown that such models arose in the nineteenth century in the wake of the earlier royal collections (they were formulated in order for the museum to play a public role as part of nation-building).[5]

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[3] The Louvre is a well-known example.

[4] For a recent discussion of the private collector's art museum, see Georgina S. Walker, *The Private Collector's Museum: Public Good Versus Private Gain* (London: Taylor & Francis Ltd: 2019).

[5] Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* (New York and Oxon: Routledge, 2000), 151.

As we will see in chapter 2, Foucault draws a connection between museum collections and the archive, by highlighting the role of the museum as both a repository and a discursive environment. (In chapter 2 I argue that his work, along with that of Jacques Derrida, complicated our understanding of the archive.) Introducing some of the ways in which the nineteenth-century museum controls the viewer's responses through its modes of categorisation, Foucault contends that the museum is more than the container of objects, and that it is also a system of analysis and interpretation.[6] His influential essay "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias" (first outlined by Foucault between 1966–67 and first published in English in 1986) advances the evocative metaphor of the heterotopia: places that mirror, while deviating and disturbing, the world around them.[7] While it could be argued that much has changed since Foucault wrote this essay, and that the rise of global capitalism has meant that such spaces are more difficult to form, Foucault's identification of the museum as a heterotopia of time is significant. Museums juxtapose various timescales, but also exist outside of time because they are built to withstand the ravages of change. For my purpose here, Foucault's definition of the museum as a heterotopia introduces the idea that the museum is a space that links bits and pieces of time. It is a place that sits within a wider space, a world within a world, providing us with an ordered space that is a form of compensation for the disorder in our own lives. Foucault writes:

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[6] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: an Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. Anon. (London: Tavistock Publications, 1970), 131.

[7] Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias", *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*, ed. Neil Leach (NYC: Routledge, 1997): 330–336. The text was originally entitled "Des Espace Autres" and published by the French journal of *Architecture/Movement/Continuité* no. 5 (October 1984): 46–49, and was based on a lecture given by Foucault in March 1967.

> … the idea of accumulating everything, on the contrary, of creating a sort of universal archive, the desire to enclose all times, all eras, forms, and styles within a single place, the concept of making all times into one place, and yet a place that is outside time, inaccessible to the wear and tear of the years, according to a plan of almost perpetual and unlimited accumulation within an irremovable place, all this belongs entirely to our modern outlook. Museums and libraries are heterotopias typical of nineteenth-century Western culture.[8]

Foucault's work has had significant influence on the field of museum studies.[9] Beth Lord, for example, claims that the museum has always been a heterotopia because it is a "space of difference". She writes:

> Because the museum is a space of representation, because it puts on display the problem of relating words and things, the museum "undermines language" and performs a kind of discursive analysis. Like discursive analysis, the museum displays systems of representation and reveals the bodies of rules that are used to bind words

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[8] Foucault, "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias", 5.

[9] Examples include: Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*; Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1995); Susan Mary Pearce, *Museums, Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992); Douglas Crimp, "On the Museum's Ruins" in *The Anti-Aesthetic*, ed. Hal Foster (Port Townsend: Bay Press, 1983), 43–56 and Timothy W. Luke, *Museum Politics: Power Plays at the Exhibition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 2002).

> and things together; it "loosens the embrace" between words and things and shows the rules binding them to be contingent and reversible.[10]

Rather than focusing on the museum as a place that encapsulates values, she argues that it is a heterotopia which cannot, by its very nature, be categorised as either coherent and continuous on the one hand, or post-modern on the other. This is a space in which we can experience resistance to and transgression of various systems. Lord advocates that the museum represents a conjunction or entanglement of both its Enlightenment past and its postmodern present. It participates in an ethos of permanent critique. Lord further contends that it is not enough to define the museum in terms of its representation of diverse temporalities or that it is a space of different objects from different places.[11] Rather, she brings us back to the important concept of the "space of difference" in Foucault's writings:

> The museum is a heterotopia not because it contains different objects, nor because it contains or juxtaposes different times, but rather because it presents a more profound kind of difference: the difference between objects and concepts … Interpretation is the relation between things and the words used to describe them, and this relation always involves a gap.[12]

While Lord's recognition that the museum has always embraced a space of difference is an important contribution to museum studies, it does not consider that the nineteenth and e twentieth century museum presented singular interpretive frameworks through, in part, the

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[10] Beth Lord, "Foucault's Museum: Difference, Representation, and Genealogy", *Museum and Society* 4, no. 1 (2006): 10–11.

[11] Lord, "Foucault's Museum: Difference, Representation, and Genealogy", 4.

[12] Lord, "Foucault's Museum: Difference, Representation, and Genealogy", 5.

absence of certain things. This is especially so in museums that seek to represent a particular period of history through archival materials, or indeed the modernist museum that presents a Euro–American view of modernist art history. An example is the Museum of Modern Art's version of modernism that became the dominant narrative of modern art in the West.

Moreover, Lord's interpretation of the museum does not address the ability for a contemporary museum or exhibition to create a perspective on both the site of the exhibition and the wider world. A museum as a place of permanent critique does not necessarily act on the world nor intervene in accepted positions. While there might be a continual shifting of relations between words and things within the museum, this variability still has the veil of neutrality. Recently such purported neutrality was challenged by a standing committee of members of ICOM (International Council of Museums) who sought to change the definition of a museum to one that actively participates in and engages with the world around us:

> Museums are not for profit. They are participatory and transparent, and work in active partnership with and for diverse communities to collect, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit, and enhance understandings of the world, aiming to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing.[13]

The new definition was rejected in 2019, confirming that museum culture today broadly holds onto the belief that the museum is an objective space. A useful exception, cited by

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[13] International Council of Museums, https://icom.museum/en/activities/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/, accessed 12 November 2019.

Terry Smith, is the Museo Reina Sofía in Madrid.[14] The display of Pablo Picasso's work *Guernica* (1937) in the room *Guernica and '30s,* which includes the impetus and history of the painting, is an example of the museum collection and archive being juxtaposed and intermingled in order to amplify the rich and complex history of this painting (once housed in the Museum of Modern Art in New York). Manuel Borga-Villel (who is Director of Museo Reina Sofía, one of several institutions that form L'Internationale, a confederation of museums across Europe) suggests that collections should be treated as the archive of commons (a key platform of L'Internationale), "displayed as a repository of other narratives, from oral ones to multiple modernities, as stories of belonging, with works of art treated as relational objects, that is, objects to which people can relate in a variety of ways".[15] A similar approach may be found in the collection display, *The Making of Modern Art*, in the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, where the distinction between collection items and archival material is almost erased through the use of copies of original works in their collection exhibition.[16] (IL'Internationale's idea of non-hierarchical and decentralised internationalism has developed alongside notions of the curatorial, in the second decade of the twenty-first century.) [17]

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[14] Museo Reina Sofía has also launched a website in relation to this collection display: https://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/en#encargo.

[15] Smith, *Thinking Contemporary Curating*, 77.

[16] *The Making of Modern Art*, curated by Christiane Berndes, Charles Esche and Steven ten, Thije Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, the Netherlands, 29 April 2017 – 3 January 2021.

[17] Members include Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Antwerpen; Moderna galerija (MG+msum) Ljubljana; Van Abbemuseum, The Netherlands; MACBA, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona; Muzeum Sztuki Nowoczesnej w Warszawie; SALT Research and Programs Istanbul and Ankara and Museo Reina Sofía. https://vanabbemuseum.nl/en/about-the-museum/support-and-partners/linternationale/, accessed 11 November 2019. Nikos Papastergiadis' forthcoming book *The*

Museums today mobilise their collections and their archives, in certain ways to certain ends. The question facing museums is whether or not their status is one of a heterotopia of time, a mirror to a world that offers the opportunity for that world to be transgressed, disturbed or transformed; a place of permanent critique, where the relationship between objects and interpretation are continually changing; or indeed, a site of contribution to human dignity and social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing. This exegesis is written within the context of this complex history. It focuses on the advent of the temporary exhibition as an example of curatorial co-belonging that has the intent of not only forming connections between artwork, site and the broader time in which we live, but also contributing to ways of co-belonging with the world.

II. Curatorial Precursors for Co-Belonging

In the second decade of the twenty-first century a large body of literature on curatorial studies was published. Ranging across a complex set of issues, the material can be broadly categorised as follows: (i) an analysis of the artistic precursors for experimental curating, for example, the influence of El Lissitzky's *Cabinet of Abstraction* on exhibition design; (ii) the history of curatorial practice, for example through interviews with key curators in Europe; (iii) the analysis of the phenomenon of the global periodic exhibition (biennials); (iv) the ways in which contemporary curating can challenge the museological concept of the white cube; (v) the phenomenon of the artist-curator; (vi) the rise of a postcolonial perspective on

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Museums of the Commons, to be published by Routledge in 2020, will chart the history and significance of this confederation.

exhibition making; and (vii) theories of the curatorial.[18] Here I will focus on two specific ideas that have emerged from the important exhibitions and analyses referred to above: the curatorial structure of Okwui Enwezor's *Documenta 11* exhibition in Kassel, Germany (2002), and the concept of the curatorial, as introduced by Maria Lind in 2009. Each of these provides an important background to my concept of curatorial co-belonging. Throughout the exegesis I will show the ways in which my two exhibitions, and my research, both deepen and expand on these two precursors.

(i) Okwui Enwezor's *Documenta 11*

A significant occurrence over the last three decades is the expansion of periodic large-scale contemporary group exhibitions. As a result, a different kind of curating has emerged that seeks to modify conventional museum methods. Many of these exhibitions have made important contributions to the field of art, criticism and curating.[19] They have been the source of new ideas on art, so much so, that audiences look to these exhibitions as a measure of the zeitgeist and as an indicator of new directions in contemporary art. At their best, these periodic exhibitions seek to act upon the critical reception of art. As we will see in the example of Okwui Enwezor's *The 7th Gwangju Biennale*, discussed in chapter 2, along with his text for the exhibition *Archive Fever*, such exhibitions are not simply presentations or surveys of contemporary art; rather they take a position on the art of today, and often rigorously consider the issues that arise from the exhibition's location. Often, we see the curator or biennale director build upon their own life's work, refining and deepening their own research and collaborations with artists.[20] In this way we can understand their exhibitions as part of a practice, a curatorial practice that is developed over time.

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[18] One or more of these categories have been addressed in the scores of books that have been published on curatorial practice. See for example, Hans Ulrich Obrist, *Ways of Curating* (London: Allen Lane, 2014); Hans Ulrich Obrist, *A Brief History of Curating* (Zurich: JRP / Ringier; Dijon: Les Presses du reel, 2008); Terry Smith, *Thinking Contemporary Curating* (New York: Independent Curators International, 2012); Paul O'Neill, *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2012); Gavin Wade, ed., *Curating in the 21st Century* (Walsall, UK: The New Art Gallery/University of Wolverhampton, 2000); Elena Filopovic, ed., *The Artist as Curator: An Anthology* (Milan: Mousse Publishing; London: Koenig Books, 2017); Aileen Burns, Johan Lundh and Tara McDowell, eds., *The Artist As …* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, Curatorial Practice at MADA and IMA, 2018); Paul O'Neill, ed., *Curating Subjects* (London: Open Editions, 2007); and Maria Lind, ed., *Performing the Curatorial With and Beyond Art* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012).

[19] Key examples include *Utopia Station*, 50th Venice Biennale, curated by Molly Nesbit, Hans Ulrich Obrist, and Rirkrit Tiravanija, 2003; *Cities on the Move*, curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Hou Hanru,

One of the most influential exhibitions of this kind was Enwezor's *Documenta 11*. Established in 1955 in the wake of World War II and in a divided Germany, Documenta was

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1997 – 2000; *Documenta 11*, curated by Okwui Enwezor, 2002; *16th Biennale of Sydney: Revolutions—Forms that Turn*, 2008, curated by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, 2008; *dOCUMENTA(13)*, curated by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, and the *10th Istanbul Biennial: Not Only Possible, But Also Necessary—Optimism in the Age of Global Wa*r, curated by Hou Hanru, 2007; amongst many others.

[20] Other scholars have traced the rise of these exhibitions, and this exegesis does not propose to examine this trend. See for example, Anthony Gardner and Charles Green, *Biennials, Triennials and Documenta* (West Sussex UK: John Wiley and Sons, 2016) and René Block, "We Hop On, We Hop Off: The Ever-faster Spinning Carousel of Biennales" in *Shifting Gravity, World Biennale Forum No.1*, eds. Ute Meta Bauer and Hou Hanru (Gwangju: The Gwangju Biennale Foundation/Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2013). Block highlights that based on the Documenta model of a single artistic curator selecting work from around the world, the recurrent, large group exhibition of contemporary art has expanded exponentially. The Biennale of Sydney was the first to appoint a single artistic director in 1973. As René Block has elaborated, the first time Documenta appointed a single organiser was in 1972, although Harald Szeemann was officially named "exhibition secretary" rather than curator or director.

initially conceived as a one-off event and showed modern and contemporary art as a corrective to the National Socialist censorship of modernism in previous years. While a detailed analysis of the exhibition lies outside this introductory chapter, the exhibition structure is relevant for a discussion on curatorial co-belonging. This relevance is highlighted in Ute Meta Bauer's catalogue essay for *Documenta 11: Platform 5: The Exhibition*. Meta Bauer argues that Documenta has a need to be not only about art but also about the world because it is founded on both an artistic statement and a political one.[21] From the period in which Enwezor was appointed, 1998, to the opening of the exhibition in 2002, the world underwent much turbulence (including 9/11). She argues that there was a sense from the beginning of the curatorial process that a single narrative should be avoided, and instead a constellation of ideas and events would need to be created. Enwezor's desire to reorient an appreciation of global art from the perspective of the postcolonial and the global south prompted him to mobilise a wide range of practitioners from multiple disciplines. He appointed five co-curators: Carlos Basualdo, Ute Meta Bauer, Susanne Ghez, Sarat Maharaj, Mark Nash, and Octavio Zaya (a method that he was to echo in *The 7th Gwangju Biennale* six years later) and also established four "platforms", or forums, in different parts of the world with the resulting exhibition being named *Platform 5*.[22] Through the use of the platforms—a circularity and continuity of debate, discourse, translation and diverse localities—the exhibition could be seen overall as a way of rethinking not just art, or exhibition making, but contemporary political ethics as a whole. Enwezor turned to the postcolonial experience for a new model of subjectivity. He writes:

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[21] Ute Meta Bauer, "The Space of Documenta 11: Documenta 11 as a Zone of Activity", in *Documenta II: Platform 5: The Exhibition*, 103–107.

[22] The first platform, *Democracy Unrealized* took place in Vienna, Austria, from March 15 to April 20, 2001 in Vienna. It continued from October 9 to October 30, 2001, in Berlin, Germany. Platform 2, *Experiments with Truth: Transitional Justice and The Processes of Truth and Reconciliation*, took place in New Delhi, India, from May 7 to May 21, 2001, and consisted of five days of public panel discussions, lectures, debates and a video program that included over thirty documentaries and fiction films. The third platform, *Créolité and Creolization*, was held on the West Indian island of St. Lucia in the Caribbean between January 12 and January 16, 2002. Platform 4, held in Lagos from

> In postcoloniality we are incessantly offered counter-models through which the displaced—those placed on the margins of the enjoyment of full global participation—fashion new worlds by producing experimental cultures. By experimental cultures I wish to define a set of practices whereby cultures evolving out of imperialism and colonialism, slavery and indenture, compose a collage of reality from the fragments of collapsing space.[23]

Enwezor's embrace of postcoloniality in *Documenta 11* shows the ways in which artists participating in experimental cultures resist the colonial narrative, so often held in Imperial archives. Enwezor deliberately explores experimental cultures from centres affected by colonial incursions. These artists find the gaps in the archive, and prise open the accepted narratives, tearing them asunder, to propose other models. He then composes a collage of reality in the form of the exhibition.

March 15 to March 21, 2002, *Under Siege: Four African Cities, Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos*, engaged the current state of affairs of fast-growing African urban centres in a public symposium, along with a workshop, "Urban Processes in Africa", organised in collaboration with CODESRIA, https://artfacts.net/exhibition/documenta-11/13612.

[23] Enwezor, *Documenta 11*, 45.

Meta Bauer defines the structure of Documenta 11 as an "*agencement* (stratification) of interrelations"—a term borrowed from Gilles Deleuze and Féliz Guattari.[24] The stratification created a rhizomatic connection across and between territories and sought to generate a global Documenta of ideas as well as art. Instead of confining Documenta to Germany, the platforms were located across other sites in a diverse range of countries and "Documenta not only expanded its territory but also abandoned it".[25] Hence the methodology of the exhibition is formulated through an engagement with changes in the world at that time. A platform is a launching pad for something, but it is also the place where thousands embark and disembark in the processes of mobility. As a term, it invokes the increased mobility of growing middle classes, expansive immigration, and the decreasing mobility of refugees. The opening pages of the catalogue, with images of unrest in Israel, Sierra Leone, Srebrenica, Turkey, Buenos Aires amongst other locations, invokes these changes.

Meta Bauer cites both Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and, in turn, Gilles Deleuze's book *Foucault*. Deleuze provides an analysis of Foucault's three realms of space—collateral, correlative, and complementary space—that encircle any statement.[26] Meta Bauer equates these notions with the three ways in which *Documenta 11* enlivens site, space and context. Deleuze suggests that for Foucault every statement is inseparable from any other heterogenous statement, terming this "collateral". For Meta Bauer, *Documenta 11* is similarly a "zone of activity, in which curatorial and artistic, social and political theories and practices intersect".[27] Correlative space suggests for Meta Bauer the ways in which

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[24] Meta Bauer, "The Space of Documenta 11", 104.

[25] Meta Bauer, "The Space of Documenta 11", 104. Many critiqued *Documenta 11* for ultimately privileging the exhibition, even though publications on each of the Platforms were available.

[26] Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Seán Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 4–10.

[27] Meta Bauer, "The Space of Documenta 11", 106.

Documenta 11 links with the many authors, speakers, artists, issues that together comprise the core statement of the exhibition. Finally, the complementary space of non-discursive formations is analogous to the institutions, economic situations and recent political events. Meta Bauer's purpose is to argue for *Documenta 11* as a discursive field:

> Understood in this way, *Documenta 11* becomes an open, unlimited, unending process, and it keeps itself productive by means of the multiplicity of possibilities for relationships that are opened up in that process. It is not a self-contained event but is more like a constantly changing, fluid organism that will not become rigid … *Documenta 11* serves as an arrangement that provides room for experiments, experiments in thinking, in methodological approaches, in all forms of translation, and in other forms of the production of knowledge.[28]

The structure of *Documenta 11* responded to the period of transition into the new millennium, to the postcolonial turn, and to the political *raison d'être* of Documenta itself. Its multifaceted assemblage of voices allowed for ideas and images to rub up against each other. Rather than a seamless narrative, the stratification created a collage of fragments that, in their juxtaposition, diversity, origin and their content, suggested the artistic and experimental energy that arises from a fragmented world. As we will see in the following chapters, the structure of *Documenta 11* manifests the curatorial co-belonging that I identify in my own exhibitions, and also in Enwezor's *The 7th Gwangju Biennale*. This comprises an assemblage of diverse points of view; a rhizomatic linkage of parts that do not necessarily comprise a whole; and the participation in (and co-belonging with) the worlds in which the artists live and work.

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[28] Meta Bauer, "The Space of Documenta 11", 107.

(ii) Maria Lind's "The Curatorial"

In a short essay in *Artforum* in 2009 (seven years after *Documenta 11*) Maria Lind introduced the term "the curatorial" which she applied to both exhibitions and artworks.[29] She argues that the curatorial operates in ways similar to the definition of the "political" used by Chantal Mouffe, Ernesto Laclau and others—it is the antithesis of consensus, and it involves both antagonism and acknowledging "enemies" or opponents.[30] Drawing on Mouffe's polemical concept of the political as agonistic pluralism, curating would, according to Lind:

> … be the technical modality … and the "curatorial" a more viral presence consisting of signification processes and relationships between objects, people, places, ideas … that strives to create friction and push new ideas—to do something other than "business as usual" within and beyond contemporary art.[31]

For Lind and the other contributors to her volume *Performing the Curatorial* (and its preceding symposium and exhibition) the curatorial is not exclusive to curators and exhibitions, it is also present in the work of artists and in the field of research. This expanded understanding of the curatorial adds to the important work of Enwezor and Meta Bauer, as it recognises the participation of artworks in the curatorial. By way of example, Lind comments on German artist and writer Hito Steyerl's film *November* (2004). It traces the journey of a young woman to Turkey, where she was killed by the military for her role as an armed fighter for the outlawed PKK (Kurdistan Worker's Party). Steyerl's film involves the use of archival material with excerpts from news broadcasts and films by Sergei Eisenstein, Bruce Lee and Costa-Gavras. Lind contends that this and other works are part of an expanded notion of curating. It is a methodology developed through praxis. She writes:

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[29] Lind, "Active Cultures: Maria Lind on the Curatorial", 103.

[30] Chantal Mouffe, *The Return of the Political* (London: Verso, 1993) and *On the Political: Thinking in Action* (London: Routledge, 2005). Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso 2001). Controversially, Mouffe engages with the work of right-wing author Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[31] Lind, *Performing the Curatorial*, 20.

> The curatorial is akin to the methodology used by artists focusing on the postproduction approach—that is, the principles of montage, employing disparate images, objects, and other material and immaterial phenomena within a particular time and space-related framework. It also shares some features with essayism—for example, allowing a subjective approach and including empirical observations.[32]

Through the work of various scholars included in her edited volume, Lind maintains that the curatorial involves translation, production, process, mediation and research, allowing for friction and "the permanent coming into being of arguments in larger discussions in the cultural field. It has a relationship to art but it is not dependent on art—it can essentially be performed transdisciplinarily".[33]

A productive example of the artistic basis of the curatorial is explored in one of the essays in Lind's volume entitled "Showing Showing: Louise Lawler and the Art of Curatorial Hospitality". Here Beatrice von Bismarck considers an invitation card that was produced by the artist Louise Lawler in 2000. Not only is the card an invitation, it is also the exhibit itself, being the culmination of a serial project over five months at a commercial gallery in Berlin. Bismarck comments that her "performative gesture, artistic representation of an event, and participation in an event are all inseparably intertwined".[34] Lawler's work combines elements of the archival, artistic and curatorial: it is archival because it lists all the artists who had already participated in the project; it is artistic because it is exhibited as an artwork; and it is curatorial because it comprises an invitation to an exhibition event. Von Bismarck not only places the work in the context of conceptual practices from the 1960s and 1970s, she provides a careful analysis of the notion of hospitality as part of the curatorial, for Lawler's invitation card makes the general act of invitation a dynamic, deliberate act of relationality. Others have written on the curatorial, namely Irit Rogoff who suggests that as art itself has changed, so too the question of the curatorial.[35]

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[32] Lind, *Performing the Curatorial*, 12.

[33] Lind, *Performing the Curatorial*, 19.

Lind's concept of the curatorial provides the expanded context in which curatorial co-belonging can be situated. The curatorial is a broader concept, for it defines an attitude and working method that is research-based, and, as the example of Lawler demonstrates, involves the artist inviting the visitor to be part of a dynamic process of relationality. The curatorial can be performed by artists, curators, writers, educators, galleries and museums through a form of assemblage, montage, networks of connections, real time encounters, a sensitivity to place, site, and an engagement with artists' processes and multiple systems of knowledge in order to create new meanings, and to act on and with the world around us.

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[34] Beatrice von Bismarck, "Showing Showing: Louise Lawler and the Art of Curatorial Hospitality" in *Performing the Curatorial,* 136. Bismarck has also edited with Benjamin Meyer-Krahmer, *Hospitality, Hosting Relations in Exhibitions* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, and Leipzig: Cultures of the Curatorial, Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig, 2016).

[35] Irit Rogoff, "The Expanded Field" in *The Curatorial*, ed. Jean-Paul Martinon (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013). The curatorial is also covered in Terry Smith, *Thinking Contemporary Curating* (New York: Independent Curators International, 2012).

While the curatorial changes over time, and is responsive to the present, both Lind and Rogoff mention the archive as an important starting point out of which the curatorial emerges, distinguishing itself from conventional museum displays. There is a search for alternative archives as the curatorial also seeks to understand the changing shape of contemporary art and society. As we will see, this awareness of the importance of the archive, along with the methods of assemblage and montage that are present within the curatorial, form a basis for curatorial co-belonging. The concept of the curatorial as described by Lind, Rogoff and Smith amongst others, has been an important identification of a method of making art and exhibitions, one that embraces research and transdisciplinarity as an ongoing and open-ended component of the project and that operates as a disrupter, a virus, in the broader field of museum culture.

However these ideas around the curatorial do not specifically address the activity of curating and designing the floorplan of an exhibition, one that partakes of the curatorial relationality, and that also addresses the ways in which the curator, the artist and the exhibition co-belong in the exhibition space and the broader horizons of contemporary society. Lind made a distinction between the curatorial and curating, explaining the latter as the instrumental aspect of the work of curators. Curatorial co-belonging offers an opportunity to link between the philosophical and instrumental modalities of curating. I will argue in this exegesis that curatorial co-belonging is an intimate process of collaboration between artwork, curator, site and the world around each of these entities. Like the curatorial, curatorial co-belonging is not just interested in what an exhibition is, but what it does. Through assemblage, montage and radical juxtapositions, it is a method that actively prises open the archive, links with the real world, and shows ways in which art and ideas can insert their presence into the world around us.

III. Jacques Rancière's Co-belonging

The term co-belonging is one that I located in the work of the contemporary political philosopher, Jacques Rancière. He does not discuss the term at length, rather it is one of the figures of speech he uses to expand his concept of the "sentence-image", which is examined in detail below. This is a concept that embraces montage, which, we will see, underpins the curatorial methods I advance in the exegesis.

Rancière has been influential in fields as varied as cultural studies, literature, political theory, sociology, the visual arts and education. A former student of Louis Althusser, and a contemporary of the generation of post-1968 philosophers in France, Rancière's writings extend across cultural criticism, social and visual history, education, aesthetics, democracy and emancipation. As has been highlighted by Gianpaolo Baiocchi and Brian T Connor, "the enduring theme in his work is a preoccupation with equality and emancipation, though perhaps uniquely among his peers he does so from the point of view of the capacity of the excluded to define the terms of their own emancipation".[36]

For Rancière the aesthetic regime is political, that is, what determines the visible and sayable, who gets to determine the visible and the sayable, as well as those who are excluded from this process:

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[36] Gianpaolo Baiocchi and Brian T Connor, "Politics as Interruption: Rancière's Community of Equals and Governmentality", *Thesis Eleven* 117, no. 1 (2013): 90.

> The distribution of the sensible reveals who can have a share in what is common to the community based on what they do and on the time and space in which this activity is performed …[37]

In his influential book *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation* (1991), Rancière has sought to understand the ways in which those who are excluded from speaking, can be emancipated (find a voice). In *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, he writes,

> We can thus dream of a society of the emancipated that would be a society of artists. Such a society would repudiate the division between those who know and those who don't, between those who possess or don't possess the property of intelligence.[38]

Inspired by the teachings of a lecturer in French literature at the University of Louvain, Joseph Jacotot, who in 1818 proposed that it was possible for students to learn a language that the teacher did not know, Rancière claims that pedagogy is in fact a form of politics, an instrument of power that can be turned on its head. If to explicate was to dominate, then to distribute power systematically in an alternative cluster of equals—an equality between teacher and student—is to acknowledge that everyone has intelligence, and everyone has reason.

Through a redistribution of power (such as in the work of an artistic collective) he posits a community of equals (albeit ones that he signifies as male):

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[37] Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (London: Continuum, 2004), 12–13.

[38] Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Development*, trans. Kristin Ross (California: Standford University Press, 1999), 71.

> The artist's emancipatory lesson, opposed on every count to the professor's stultifying lesson, is this: each one of us is an artist to the extent that he carries out a double process; he is not content to be a mere journeyman but wants to make all work a means of expression, and he is not content to feel something but tries to impart it to others. The artist needs equality as the explicator needs inequality. And he therefore designs the model of a reasonable society where the very thing that is outside of reason—matter, linguistic signs—is traversed by reasonable will: that of telling the story and making others feel the ways in which we are similar to them.[39]

Rancière's approach is not as utopian as Joseph Beuys's similar claim that everyone can be an artist. Rather, he says that there "is no such thing as a possible society. There is only the society that exists".[40] And further he says of Jacotot's methods, "Equality was not an end to attain, but a point of departure, a supposition to maintain in every circumstance".[41] Rancière believes in an emancipatory power that can be achieved through the concept of interruptions that call the social order into question. I will argue that the concept of curatorial co-belonging can have a similar emancipatory role in the practice of curating exhibitions.

In *The Future of the Image*, Rancière proposes the concept of the sentence-image through Jean-Luc Godard's video essay *Histoire(s) du cinema*. Based on lectures delivered by Godard on the history of cinema in 1978, the video series traces the history of twentieth-century cinema. Created between 1988 and 1998, *Histoire(s) du cinema* includes many leaps and bounds across films, narrative and chronology in effect using a form of cinematic montage to produce yet another montage of disparate elements. Rancière's concept of the sentence-image paradoxically undoes the "representative relationship between text and image".[42] He writes:

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[39] Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, 70–71.

[40] Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, 75.

[41] Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, 138.

> A power of contact, not of translation or explanation; an ability to exhibit a community constructed by the "fraternity of metaphors". It is not a question of showing that cinema speaks of its time, but of establishing that cinema makes a world, that it should have made a world. The history of cinema is the history of a power, of making history. Its time, Godard tells us, is one when sentence-images had the power, dismissing stories, to write history, by connecting directly up with their outside. This power of connecting is not that of the homogeneous—not that of using a horror story to speak to us of Nazism and the extermination. It is that of the heterogeneous, of the immediate clash between three solitudes: the solitude of the shot, that of the photograph, and that of the words which speak of something else entirely in a quite different context. It is the clash of heterogeneous elements that provides a common measure.[43]

The sentence-image still hangs together as it were, without falling into chaos (what he calls "schizophrenia").[44] But it also stops short of being so smoothly combined, that we see a harmonious, and seamless "consensus" of text and image.[45] This is a central point of relevance for my own notion of curatorial co-belonging. As we will see, the two group exhibitions under discussion here seek to strike a balance between the loose associations between the artists (the chaos) and seamless domination (the consensus) of an overriding theme. Rather, the pavilion-like display of the artists' works, with spaces for thought and consideration in between, enables a fraternity of metaphors to arise.

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[42] Jacques Rancière, *The Future of the Image* (London: Verso, 2007), 46.

[43] Rancière, *The Future of the Image*, 55.

[44] Rancière, *The Future of the Image*, 46.

[45] Rancière, *The Future of the Image*, 46.

In further formulating his concept of the sentence-image Rancière highlights two forms of montage: dialectic and symbolic. Dialectical montage creates internal clashes, interruptions, fragmentations and violence. But together, these heterogeneous elements create another common measure: the power of disruption that, according to Rancière, reveals,

> … one world behind another: the far-off conflict behind home comforts; the homeless expelled by urban renovation behind the new buildings and old emblems of the polity … It involves organizing a clash, presenting the strangeness of the familiar, in order to reveal a different order of measurement that is only uncovered by the violence of the conflict.[46]

Here we see that Rancière uses this dialectic form of montage to highlight social unrest that is nevertheless brought into relation through the power of resistant political acts.

By contrast, symbolic montage works to establish a familiarity between heterogeneous elements, in a shared world. He refers to this symbolic montage as a mystery—it is the mystery of co-belonging. It is a montage that forms a new community: "The machine of mystery is a machine for making something common, not to contrast worlds, but to present, in the most unexpected ways, a *co-belonging*".[47]

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[46] Rancière, *The Future of the Image*, 57.

[47] Rancière, *The Future of the Image*, 58.

According to Rancière, Godard's film exemplifies a continuous switching between the dialectic and the symbolic forms of montage. In this sense, Godard does two things simultaneously: he both disrupts and creates a continuum. "History", Rancière writes in reference to *Histoire(s) du cinema,* "can indeed be two contradictory things: the discontinuous line of revealing clashes or the continuum of co-presence".[48] In the context of the philosopher's commitment to equality and the emancipatory actions in broader society, that is, his notion of the "distribution of the sensible", the dialectic and symbolic montage in the two exhibitions discussed here become an expression of both emancipation and equality of parts. The dialectic and symbolic forms of the sentence-image reveal one world behind another, an action that is very much at play in artworks that consider the archive and trace, as well as a shared world, a new metaphor. The curatorial co-belonging in my exhibitions call to belong in the world in a different way.

In the original French the word co-belonging is *une co-appartenance,* the latter being a feminine substantive from the verb appartenir ("to belong"), and related in the distant past to the now-mostly moribund English "appurtenance", which means a belonging or an accessory.[49] We can interpret the word quite straight forwardly as co-belonging, but also be mindful that its original etymology references something that is incidental in law.[50] It is perhaps this underlying meaning that gives the term co-belonging its richness as a metaphor, because it means to both be co-present, or co-habit, but also refers to matter that might be regarded as an incidental accessory. In relation to the arguments in this exegesis, such incidentals may be understood as fragments, such as a piece of paper torn from a book, or indeed, pieces of rock and stone collected from the seaside. Co-belonging seeks out the incidental as a part of a larger relationship with the world.

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[48] Rancière, *The Future of the Image*, 60.

[49] Justin Clemens, email correspondence with author, May 27, 2019. Clemens is a published translator of French philosophy.

[50] Merriam-Webster, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/appurtenance#h1, accessed 4 November 2019.

IV. Curatorial Co-belonging in *All that is solid…* and *The Tangible Trace*

The term co-belonging holds within it three dimensions that are important for my argument about curatorial co-belonging. First is the notion of familiarity: things belong together; second, is the role of the hyphen in co-belonging, or the idea that there is a generative space implied by the term; and, third, the question: to co-belong to what? What is the wider world with which the action of co-belonging intermingles? Following is a brief description of each of these three elements with references not only to Rancière but also examples of artists' works in both *All that is solid…* and *The Tangible Trace*.

(i) The Familiarity of Co-belonging

As we have seen in Rancière's ideas around symbolic montage, there is a familiarity between disparate and heterogeneous parts. They are brought together in what he terms a shared world. One image or form co-habits with another, without merging. One form does not subsume the other. Nor does a uniting of forms take on a narrative or sequential relationship. They are juxtaposed. These fragments may or may not have an historical connection. They are re-assembled by the artist and the curator. It is the coming together that forms the relation, not a comparison of like with like, but an activation by the artist and the curator that causes the viewer to see a connection. There is an ethical dimension in this. The fragment is not absorbed by its combination with other fragments, and the artwork is not subsumed by the exhibition and vice versa. Rather, the fragment and the artwork are given space to breathe; an openness to connect with its fellow participants in this action of symbolic co-belonging. The idea of a shared world and cohabitation is not simply about one part (or artist or artwork) giving space to another, but also about shared responsibility for that shared world. Co-belonging as a belonging together, is indeed a shared project, a common ground, a sense of co-habitation and collective responsibility. It arises at a time of heightened awareness of our shared world, the planet earth, as we co-belong together, different but together in a shared space.

In the exhibition *All that is solid…* explored in Chapter 2, we will see, for example, the ways in which the combinations of works by Australian artists Patrick Pound and Cyrus Tang enact a curatorial co-belonging that seeks this sense of familiarity between each artist, and yet allows space for difference. In Chapter 3 we will explore the exhibition *The Tangible Trace*, and connections between the works of, for example, Malaysian artist Simryn Gill and Indian artist Shilpa Gupta in their relationship to place through the metaphor of trace. Gill assembles fragments with a micro sense of place, while Gupta disperses them through the frame of dissolving map making.

(ii) The Hyphen in Co-belonging

As much as there is symbolic montage, a familiarity between the commensurable and the incommensurable, implied in the term co-belonging, there is also a second dimension: the gap or fissure between the artworks, or between the fragments in a single artwork. Rancière calls this a clash of parts, a dialectic montage. I argue that this dialectic approach (which Rancière characterises in terms of conflict) also contains within it the “mystery of co-belonging”. Indeed, the hyphen that appears in the word co-belonging could be seen as a metaphor for this notion that space between fragments, between the objects, is cleaved open. This hyphen is the gap for the viewer to wander, encounter, experience and apprehend the artworks in the context of an exhibition, and the space for connections to be made between them. It is also the generative space of the curator, for it is the curator who determines the location and proximity of one work to another. In this sense, the curator is also the hyphen between the works.

The spaces between the works are not empty, but rather resonant with a type of silent trauma or loss invoked by the artworks and the exhibitions. In the exhibition *All that is solid…* artists used archival images and stories in their works. Rather than presenting a continuous temporal identity, the archive provided the artists with a discontinuous representation of history. Because of the gaps in the archive, any sense of the self as whole or "transcendental" is prised open. As such, the artists showed that we are the product of different histories, discourses, masks and distinctions. They do so through the use of abject processes, such as the use of dust, chewing and cutting. Australian artist Tom Nicholson's installation *Cartoons for Joseph Selleny* (2012 – 2017) unveiled a colonial story that linked Edouard Manet to Sydney harbour. The North Gallery of the Museum was covered in a floor to ceiling charcoal dust drawing created by Nicholson through the Renaissance method of pouncing. Juxtaposed with the work of Turkish artist Didem Erk, whose video installations and sewn books consider literary archives, we see both historical and contemporary violence embedded in the archive, and the will of the artists to reframe and dislodge that violence through situations and performances. Similarly, the video work of Hiwa K included in *The Tangible Trace* retraces the trauma of the artist's journey as an asylum seeker when he was a young man. The metaphorical hyphens are expressed through the artist's fragmented memories of the journey that are, in turn, reimagined through the cluster of fractured mirror images reflected in his device balanced on his forehead.

(iii) Co-Belonging with the World

For an artist, the artwork itself is the context for the action of co-belonging. But what does it mean for different artworks to co-belong in an exhibition? To what do they co-belong, and how is this different from any exhibition, historical or otherwise? I would suggest that in the two exhibitions I have curated, art is seen as something that is not cut off from life, but connected to multiple and changing histories, places, events and situations. These exhibitions reach out to the larger question of what it means to belong in our turbulent and shifting world. Curatorial co-belonging is a form of encounter with and between art objects, recreating and making links, bonds, meanings and metaphors that collectively call for a new way of connecting to the world around us. In short, the exhibitions co-belong with the world around them, through these same structures of being both commensurable and incommensurable, of being both familiar and a disruptor. Moreover, the exhibitions acknowledge the museum as site, situation and structure, and hold within them a level of site-specificity.

Through this analysis of the sentence-image in relation to art, Rancière comments on the connections between art making and the wider world:

> Today, the photographic sequences, the video monitors or projections, the installations of familiar or strange objects that fill the spaces of our museums and galleries seek less to create the sense of a gap between two orders—between everyday appearances and the laws of domination—than to increase a new sensitivity to the signs and traces that testify to a common history and a common world. It is sometimes the case that forms of art explicitly declare themselves to this effect, that

> they invoke a “loss of community” or undoing of the “social bond”, assigning the assemblages and performances of art the task of recreating social bonds or a sense of community.[51]

This is a methodology that is sensitive to “signs and traces”, that is, fragments that come together through either dialectic of symbolic means. Ranciére calls this an “uncoupling” as well as a “melange”, which through the concept of co-belonging can create something new, beckoning a bond and a relation with the wider world.

The use of the trace in the work of the artists in *The Tangible Trace* is part of this beckoning of a bond with the wider world. Like the archival fragments in *All that is solid…*, traces are by their very nature, of the world around them, they are part of it. In the work of Shilpa Gupta to enact co-belonging in visual and conceptual terms, is also to rethink the ways in which we might belong in the world, and retrace our relationship place, with an implied reference to the history of colonisation in Australia. The installation by Sangeeta Sandresegar creates a direct relationship with the spine of the museum architecture, and the windows along that axis, responding to the view beyond in the form of a shadow.

TarraWarra Museum of Art is situated in an area in the Yarra Valley called Tarrawarra. (The museum distinguishes its name through its use of a capital W). Tarrawarra stems from the Woiworrung word for “slow moving water”. It is thought that the nearby bend in the Yarra River, where the water slows down, is the source. With this Indigenous name and the many views onto the landscape outside the museum walls, how can a curator not think of the ways in which art exhibitions beckon a connection with the wider world? Curator, museum, exhibition, land, inside and outside co-belong in a melange that is simultaneously incongruous and commensurate; that is continually shifting between being linked and being prised open. And because of the great beauty of TarraWarra Museum of Art, and the seamless ways in which the building is nestled into the landscape, it is all the more important for the curator and exhibition to be a disruptor; an irritant to the architectural suture with the land. For underpinning this picture of beauty are stories of trauma, theft of land and denial of sovereignty for the Wurundjeri people. Hence, both exhibitions seek to co-belong with these stories, rearticulating how exhibition making can both link in a general way and yet respectfully give wide open space for those stories to exist in their own right, for the people who "belong" on country, the Wurundjeri.

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[51] Rancière, *The Future of the Image*, 67.

There is a level of contingency and precarity embedded in the curatorial co-belonging with the world around us. Time is revealed as contingent and multi-dimensional (it shifts with each memory and each trace in the exhibition) and situations are precarious as the artists use archival fragments and traces from the past to speak to the idea of survival in the present.[52] As such, a new kind of spatial/temporal archaeology is created, introducing the exhibitions as a form of chronotope (a term used by Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin) where there are multiple interdependencies between time and space.[53] Art and curating are not isolated from life, but connected to multiple histories, places, events and situations. Following Rancière this exegesis reveals that the artists and curators most likely to employ such methods are keen to respond to political and social upheaval. Montage is used today not so much for its "shock" factor (the ways in which Walter Benjamin might have considered it) but as a collaborative method with material, images, texts, sounds and sites in the world around us, in order to generate or produce new perspectives on that which we may assume to be fixed systems of knowledge, places or situations. As curator, I also perform a collaborative co-belonging with the artists, their works, the site and architecture.

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[52] Sven Spieker argues that contingency was first registered in 19th century conceptions of the archive. Sven Spieker, *The Big Archive: Art from Bureaucracy*, (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 2008), 5.

[53] Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin and Michael Holquist, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).

V. Precedents for Curatorial Co-belonging

Curatorial co-belonging is a form of encounter with and between art objects, recreating and making links, bonds, meanings and metaphors that are not necessarily fixed in time and do not add up to a single narrative structure. The art historical and theoretical precedents of collage and montage, which span the history of modern art, anthropology, philosophy and media theory are important precedents for the notion of co-belonging. In this section, I will consider the protagonists who are most relevant to my own ways of thinking about curatorial co-belonging, Rancière's dialectic and symbolic forms of montage and the world-building that form the basis of my argument.

In broad terms, discussion on collage has varied between, on the one hand, a study in the formal compositional approaches of artists, and on the other, a claim that collage was a modern form of connecting to everyday life to produce a new, critical perspective. The two interlocutors most relevant to my argument include American art historian Donald B. Kuspit and poet and critic Marjorie Perloff. Kuspit writes:

> … collage composition does not cohere … it implies an easy shift from the material of life to the material of art—the self-evidence of the relationship between the two. Decisions are involved in its creation–from the choice of material to the "composing"

> of the incongruous effect–but these seem secondary to the expectation of easy crossover between life and art, the easy 'translatability' of the one to the other … [54]

As such, the process at work is what Kuspit defines as an aesthetic treatment of the fragment of life, which elevates it, as it were, to the status of art. In this way, collage "brings the whole idea of art into question".[55] Kuspit draws on the theory of relativity, as defined by Alfred North Whitehead, who writes, "every actual entity is present in every other actual entity".[56]

Following Whitehead, Kuspit maintains that:

> … collage is a demonstration of this process of the many becoming the one, with the one never fully resolved because of the many that continue to impinge upon it. Every entity is potentially relevant to every other entity's existence, is potentially a fragment in every other entity's existence … This is the poetry of becoming—the poetry of relativity—and it is what collage is about: the tentativeness of every unity of being because of the persistence of becoming, even when absolute entity-ness seems achieved.[57]

For Kuspit, process is always in the foreground because the image never settles into a resolved entity. There is nevertheless a community of equals.

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[54] Donald B. Kuspit, "Collage: The Organizing Principle of Art in the Age of the Relativity of Art" in *Collage: Critical Views,* ed. Katherine Hoffman (London: Ann Arbor, UMI Research Press 1989), 39–40.

[55] Kuspit, "Collage: The Organizing Principle of Art in the Age of the Relativity of Art", 40.

[56] Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: Humanities Press 1955), 33.

[57] Kuspit, "Collage: The Organizing Principle of Art in the Age of the Relativity of Art", 42.

This idea of collage is different from an exhibition such as *All that is solid…* and *The Tangible Trace*, where there is not the same interpenetration of one fragment into another. There are gaps in between art works, breathing spaces that become a generative space. On the other hand, there is a continual state of becoming through the collaboration with the viewer in the exhibition because meaning never ceases or resolves into a dominant narrative or thread. The viewer is encouraged to experience the tentative associations and is invited to be part of the poetry of becoming. If, as Perloff describes, the collagist "establish[es] continuity between one's private universe and the world outside, to make from what is already there something that is one's own", then the viewer can, in turn, take from the collage, something that is in the world outside of themselves, and make it their own.[58] The etymology of belonging—the appurtenance—signals that fragments (or incidentals) are "belongings". Like a collage fragment, they are always in a process of "belonging" through tentative associations. This tentative nature of collage—a world in bits and pieces that is brought together through the artistic action into an unexpected relation—underpins, to some degree, curatorial co-belonging.

However, as Rancière signals, it is the practice of artistic and cinematic montage (with its spatio-temporal dimensions) that is perhaps most compelling for the discussion of co-belonging. While I do not propose to outline a history, what follows are the commentators on montage whose insights magnify my own understanding of how artworks can co-belong within an exhibition framework.

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[58] Marjorie Perloff, "The Invention of Collage", *New York Literary Forum* 10–11 (1983): 5–47 cited in David Banash, "From Advertising to the Avant-Garde: Rethinking the Invention of Collage", *Postmodern Culture* 14, no. 2 (2004): 2–3.

Aby Warburg

The art historian Aby Warburg (1866 – 1929) is also an important precedent for my understanding of co-belonging. Between 1924 and 1929 he created the *Mnemosyne Atlas*, sixty-three wooden boards to which he attached photographs of images. The panels no longer survive but were documented through 971 photographs that are held in the Warburg Institute in London. Georges Didi-Huberman argues that Warburg's *Atlas*, as it is colloquially known, is a key example of the ways in which the art historian wished to undermine traditional art history, by exploring a visual display that created connections between seemingly unrelated images.[59] While this argument has been partially contested,[60] Warburg's *Atlas* has continued to inspire artists and theorists to inquire on the value of visual montage and its relation to both memory and metaphor.[61]

Warburg is particularly interested in the emotional intensity of images and how art is able to create passionate immediacy without overwhelming the viewer. These panels create what he terms *Denkraum*, or "thought space". He understands forms "in terms of forces—'configuring energies'—that are in turn seen as 'in the center of the storm and of the whirlwind of life itself' ".[62] Didi-Huberman characterises the *Atlas* as a "battle of ideas [that] was accompanied by a battle of images: a struggle against certain images (propaganda, lies, anti-Semitism) in favor of others (survivals, comparisons, deconstructions of ideology)".[63] He argues that it was a response to both World War I and the madness that he saw around him, such as images of anti-Semitism. As such Warburg's *Atlas* is a thought space for trauma as well as history. Trauma is particularly present in *All that is solid…* in particular lurking in the gaps between things/texts/images/drawings/gestures of the works of Nicholson and Erk.

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[59] George Didi-Huberman, "Warburg's Haunted House", *Common Knowledge* 18, no. 1, (Winter 2012): 50–78.

[60] See M. Rampley, "Aby Warburg, Images and Exhibitions", *Journal of Art Historiography* 7 (December 2012).

[61] Christopher D. Johnson, *Memory, Metaphor, and Aby Warburg's Atlas of Images* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press and Cornell University library, 2012).

[62] Didi-Huberman, "Warburg's Haunted House", citing Ernst Cassirer's funeral eulogy for Warburg, 56.

In 2010, Didi-Huberman curated the exhibition *Atlas: How to carry the world on one's back?* at the Reina Sofia Museo Nacional Centro de Arte in Madrid. The artists in the exhibition shared "a non-standard transverse knowledge of our world". [64] The exhibition included works such as Richter's *Atlas*, Josef Albers' photographic album devoted to pre-Columbian architecture, Sol LeWitt's photographs of New York walls and works by Susan Hiller, Hanne Darboven, Jean-Luc Godard, Hannah Höch and Roni Horn amongst many others. As such, it focused on the artistic process of "dismantling" images of the world in order to "imagine alternative models".[65] Instead of understanding the process of mapping as a form of conquering (as a colonial power would do) or mapping to spatially orientate oneself, Didi-Huberman proposes:

> To make an atlas is to reconfigure space, to redistribute it, in short, to redirect it: to dismantle it where we thought it was continuous; to reunite it where we thought there were boundaries … Warburg … had already understood that every image—every production of culture in general—is the crossing of numerous migrations…If the atlas

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[63] Didi-Huberman, *Atlas How to Carry the World on One's Back?* exhibition brochure, 26 November 2010 – 28 March 2011, http://www.museoreinasofia.es, accessed 30 Jan, 2014.

[64] Didi-Huberman, *Atlas How to Carry the World on One's Back*?

[65] Didi-Huberman, *Atlas How to Carry the World on One's Back?*

> appears as an incessant work of re-composing of the world, it is first of all because the world itself does not cease to undergo decomposition upon decomposition … We could say that many artists adopted this point of view by reacting against the historical tragedies of their time with a work in which montage, once again, played a central role.[66]

The processes of decomposition and re-composition of the world invoke a method that is displayed by many of the artworks in *All that is solid…* and *The Tangible Trace*. It is also a curatorial process at the heart of curatorial co-belonging. Rather than using the trope of the map, as Didi-Huberman did, the concept of co-belonging with the world is a curatorial process of decomposing inherited concepts and recomposing them into alternative points of view. Warburg dismantled and reassembled the world through his *Atlas* and so too, the artists in *All that is solid…* and *The Tangible Trace* gather segments of the world. But they do something more than this: they also invest in those segments renewed articulation of what it means to co-belong with the world. Their works are not simply an arrangement or constellation. They take positions on the world around them and, so too, do the exhibitions themselves.

Sergei Eisenstein

For Sergei Eisenstein (1898 – 1948), montage was the combination of photographic and cinematic fragments from diverse sources in order to comprise a synthetic whole.[67] He writes, "the logic of organic form vs. the logic of rational form yields, in collision, the dialectic of the art-form".[68] This is a triad of relationships: thought, language and then, cinema. Together, they created a synthesis. In his 1923 manifesto *The Montage of Attractions* Eisenstein comments:

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[66] Didi-Huberman, *Atlas How to Carry the World on One's Back*?

[67] Christopher Philips, "Introduction", *Montage and Modern Life 1919 – 1942*, ed. Mathew Teitelbaum (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1992).

> … the strength of montage resides in this, that it involves the creative process, the emotions and mind of the spectator. The spectator is compelled to proceed along that selfsame creative path that the author travelled in creating the image (idea). The spectator not only sees the represented elements of the finished work, but also experiences the dynamic process of the emergence and assembly of the image (idea) just as it was experienced by the author.[69]

In this statement, Eisenstein brings the spectator into the montage affect. Michael Selig suggests that as he came further under the influence of the Soviet regime, Eisenstein shifted his views to address the content of his work more than the structure.[70] In addition, he argues that Eisenstein showed a growing interest in the chain reaction that the montage caused amongst the spectators. Eisenstein's theories are not as open as we might first imagine: his theory of montage involves a very specific set of relationships and rules that pivot around propaganda. The synthesis that Eisenstein sought is, in many ways, the opposite of what is being proposed by curatorial co-belonging. Rather than being open to multiple interpretations, Eisenstein's montage seeks to culminate in a renewed attitude to the future.

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[68] Sergei Eisenstein, "A Dialectic Approach to Film Form", Eisenstein, S. and J. Leyda, *Film form; Essays in Film Theory* (San Diego, New York, London: A Harvest Book, Harcourt Inc., A Helen and Kurt Wolff Book, 1949), 46.

[69] Sergei Eisenstein, "Word and Image" in *The Film Sense*, ed. and trans. by Jay Leyd, 1942, 32 (cited in A. Michelson, "The Wings of Hypothesis On Montage and the Theory of the Interval" in *Montage and Modern Life 1919 – 1942*, ed. Mathew Teitelbaum (Cambridge, Mass. And London: The MIT Press).

[70] Michael Selig, "Passion and Politics: Eisenstein and Montage", in *Collage: Critical Views*, ed. Katherine Hoffman, (London: Ann Arbor, 1989), 343.

Several other writers have used the metaphor of montage to analyse a situation or context. An important historical precedent in the field of museum display is Alexander Dorner who, commissioned El Lissitzky's *Cabinet of Abstraction* (ca1930), destroyed by the Nazis but recreated in the Sprengel Museum, Hanover. Lissitzky's environments comprised a montage of relationships between works, time, location and space. They anticipated the interpenetration of archives, montage and filmic techniques in many of the art works under discussion in this exegesis, in particular the performative function of exhibitions as events. Dorner wrote about "a reintegration of art history, aesthetics and the art museum with actual life. All these artistic disciplines must become energies which transform life itself".[71] In 1986 the anthropologist Michael Taussig proposed a concept of collaborative montage in his accounts of the rubber trade, shamanism and the law in Colombian society.[72] Lev Manovich, a leading expert on digital culture, also had an interest in montage in his early writings, coining the term "spatial montage" for the video installations of the late twentieth century.[73] More recently he has developed a method called Cultural Analytics (a term he introduced in 2007) that he hopes will recognise, map, visualise and measure diversity, variability, structure and dynamics, challenging the human propensity to think in terms of categories. [74]

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[71] Alexander Dorner, *The Way Beyond 'Art'—The Work of Herbert Bayer* (New York: Wittenborn, Schultz, Inc. 1947), 19. Dorner's work has influenced Hans Ulrich Obrist.

[72] Michael Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man: a Study in Terror and Healing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

[73] Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 2001), 325.

In many respects the two exhibitions I describe in this exegesis, and the artists that are included in them, do not directly address the other "player" in our midst, the algorithm. This is not done out of ignorance, rather it is an alternative perspective. Along with the artists I focus on the fragments and traces of everyday life that resist the smooth compilation of the dataset. Together we prise open the terms of co-belonging, whether it is within the body of an artwork itself, or the space between the exhibits, in order to understand what happens in the generative gaps between objects. I am not interested in comparing like with like or finding conclusive patterns across time. As Rancière says of the "sentence-image", I do not seek to delve into bland consensus or descend into chaos. Moreover, I participate in a collaborative form of montage that seeks to connect with and reveal aspects of the world around us, embracing counter-presentations.

VI. The Chapters

This exegesis will look in detail at the two exhibitions *All that is solid…* and *The Tangible Trace*, together with the theoretical texts and exhibition precedents that amplify their content and layout, in order to develop the concept of curatorial co-belonging. Chapter 2, *All that is solid… and Theories of the Archive*, discusses the concept of the archive in detail, through the theoretical work of Foucault, Thomas Richards, Derrida, and the curatorial work of Enwezor. It also considers the historical antecedents of modern archives. The chapter contrasts the methods of gap and suture that Enwezor finds in the archive, with the methods used by the artists in *All that is solid…* showing that the latter group adopt abject processes in their counter archival strategies. Drawing on the concept of “stray ethics” from Barbara Creed and “archival metabolism” from Doreen Mende, I then argue that the artists create situations and environments that are in turn co-mingled in the space, creating spatial and temporal links with the wider aspects of life around us.

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[74] Lev Manovich, "Can we Think without Categories?", *Digital Culture & Society* (DCS) 4, no. 1 (2018): 17–28. Special issue "Rethinking AI: Neural Networks, Biometrics and the New Artificial Intelligence", ed. Ramón Reichert, Mathias Fuchs, Pablo Abend, Annika Richterich, and Karin Wenz (Bielefeld and London: Transcript-Verlag): 18.

Chapter 3, *The Tangible Trace*, considers the notion of trace arising from the exhibition *The Tangible Trace*. It also gives a detailed examination of the journey I have created for the visitor through the exhibition. Pliny the Elder’s *Natural History* is invoked in terms of his description of Butades’ daughter’s portrait of her departing lover. The context of the world’s oldest continuing First People’s culture is highlighted, in terms of the traces that can be found in rock shelters. These precedents highlight the relationship between the poles of absence and presence that are at stake in the notion of trace. The concept of trace is further distinguished from theories of the index. The chapter then explicates the activity of co-belonging in the works and exhibition layout. In addition, the chapter considers Benjamin’s concept of trace and aura, and its relation to the idea of proximity and distance. It also discusses Benjamin’s concept of dialectical images and his *The Arcades Project* as a series of traces. The final section of the chapter considers the idea of passages, the ways in which many of the artists, and the exhibition itself, involve a journey by both artist and viewer.

Chapter 4, *Curatorial Co-belonging*, a concluding chapter, considers the ways in which curatorial co-belonging, as it has been developed in this exegesis, is a more specific term than the curatorial, and provides a spatio-temporal situation within exhibition curating that generates new ways of being in the world.

Chapter 2

***All that is solid…* and Theories of the Archive**

This chapter discusses the exhibition *All that is solid…* presented at TarraWarra Museum of Art from 2 September – 12 November 2017.[1] Responding to the archival turn in contemporary art, (apparent since the late 1990s) the exhibition included the work of Didem Erk, Cao Fei, Tom Nicholson, Patrick Pound and Cyrus Tang. The chapter first considers histories and theories of the archive, in particular through the work of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida—who continue to impact on how the archive figures and functions within contemporary art. It then discusses the influential exhibition *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art*, curated by Okwui Enwezor, with a focus on Enwezor's catalogue text which highlights gaps in the archive, and the suturing that can occur when artists work with archival material.[2] After establishing Enwezor's own approach to the archive, I consider another groundbreaking exhibition curated by him—*Annual Report*, *The 7th Gwangju Biennale*, 2008—as an exemplar of curatorial co-belonging, driven by his interest in the archive.[3] The chapter then outlines the ways in which *All that is solid…* draws on and also distinguishes itself from these precedents, in particular through the concept of the abject. In addition, I discuss the choices that were made in terms of the layout and assemblage of the works on display in order to chart the co-belonging that emerged in the exhibition.

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[1] Victoria Lynn, ed., *TarraWarra International 2017: All that is solid…* (Healesville: TarraWarra Museum of Art, 2017).

[2] Okwui Enwezor, ed., *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art* (New York: International Center of Photography; Gèottingen, Germany: Steidl Publishers, 2008).

[3] Okwui Enwezor, ed., *Annual Report: A Year in Exhibitions*, The 7th Gwangju Biennale (Gwangju: Gwangju Biennale Foundation, 2008).

Museums are archives. In order to develop a critical approach to the idea of the archive in general and the museum archive in particular, *All that is solid…* was in some respects a self-reflexive exhibition that posited a counter-archival approach. Inspired by the curatorial work of Enwezor, *All that is solid…* showed how artists investigate or explore that which is missing in the archive—the gaps—and the ways in which new memories are forged through their counter-archival strategies. Each of the artists used archival images and objects in varying degrees which were treated with "non-solid" and abject methods such as dissolution, tearing, cutting, melting, ruination, chewing, piercing and the act of cancelling.[4] The title of the exhibition was borrowed from the phrase "all that is solid melts into air" originally published in the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) by Karl Marx with assistance from Friedrich Engel*s*. Marx writes:

> Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify.

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[4] The term abject is being used here to signal the processes akin to being literally cast aside. In her 1980 work *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, Kristeva describes ways in which abjection can disturb the status quo, such as horror and marginalisation. See Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

> All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.[5]

He describes a society that was replacing Feudalism, one where everything was ascribed a value, to be bought or sold. It is a society, according to Marx, that is in continual renewal, where anything that is solid—including buildings, factories, employment, towns, cities and neighbourhoods—is replaced. Out of the relentless economic crises, and the collisions between the bourgeois class and the proletariat, Marx hoped for an uprising and the creation of a Communist state in which the working class would be the driving force. He expected that "capitalism [would] be melted by the heat of its own incandescent energies …".[6]

In his analysis of the Manifesto, Marshall Berman's 1982 book, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air*, posits that, on the one hand, twentieth century modernity was characterised by a sense of urgency, adventure, change and transformation and, on the other, by the turbulence of destruction and renewal:

> … the glory of modern energy and dynamism, the ravages of modern disintegration and nihilism, the strange intimacy between them; the sense of being caught in a vortex where

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[5] Karl Marx, "Bourgeois and Proletarians", *The Communist Manifesto*, ed. Friedrich Engels (Minneapolis, MN: First Avenue Editions, a division of Lerner Publishing Group, 2018), 4.

[6] Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Penguin, 1988), 97.

> all facts and values are whirled, exploded, decomposed, recombined; a basic uncertainty about what is basic, what is valuable, even what is real …[7]

Berman draws on Marx's understanding of the contradictions in modern society, the maelstrom of forces that throw people together and tear them apart, and the questions posed by Marx rather than his solutions. "To be modern", according to Berman, "… is to experience personal and social life as a maelstrom … To be a modernist is to make oneself somehow at home in the maelstrom … ".[8]

Today, in a globalised, highly mobile world, the very notion of "making oneself somehow at home" is not available to vast numbers of people as they attempt to move across the world in precarious circumstances. Moreover, making oneself at home has a different meaning in terms of colonialist histories, especially here in Australia. Hence the maelstroms of contemporary life do not settle, the dust continues to circulate and imagery is perpetually transforming. In recognition of this instability, for this exhibition, I borrowed the first part of Marx's phrase, followed by an ellipsis. By suspending the phrase in this way, I aimed to open up the proposition not only of why "all that is solid" dissolves, but also to examine the very nature of the archive (and its ostensible solidity).

The artists in this exhibition take an alternative approach to the modern capitalist rhythm of destruction and renewal. They work transversally across epochs, cultures and artistic disciplines.[9] Rather than eschewing the past, they create lasting connections with historical moments, often retaining the original archival source materials in their artworks. In addition, the artists introduce us to events, situations, conditions and environments that have arisen in periods of great change, precarity and transformation. As explained in the introduction to this exegesis, this is not the montage of the early twentieth century filmmakers such as Sergei Eisenstein, who sought a fusion of imagery that would result in the transition to a new world order. Montage in these works is understood in terms of the loose connections generated by the artist, among their lived experiences, the artwork, the situation created by the work and ultimately, the viewer. Heterogeneous elements are combined, co-belonging in the artworks, while memories are not dissolved and replaced so much as invoked and situated by the artists. There are three concepts that we can elucidate in relation to the artworks in this exhibition that give further insight into how the artists work with montage in response to this evolving set of conditions. First is the use of archival fragments; second are the gaps between diverse elements within the art works; and third is the notion that the artists create a situation of co-belonging which is in turn reflected in the exhibition's layout itself. I will argue that the processes of dissolving, breaking, perforating, cutting, tearing, chewing and burning evident in the artworks are creative gestures that suggest both violence and fragility.

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[7] Berman, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, 121.

[8] Berman, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, 345.

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[9] This is part of a larger historical turn in contemporary art over the past two decades, as evidenced in exhibitions such as Charlotte Day, *Lost & Found: An Archeology of the Present*, TarraWarra Biennial, 2008 (Healesville: TarraWarra Museum of Art, 2008); Dieter Roelstraete, *The Way of the Shovel On the Archaeological Imaginary in Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press Books, 2013); and in the text by Mark Godfrey, "The Artist as Historian", *October* 120 (March 2007): 140–172.

I. The Archive as a Generative Force

In this exegesis, I show that far from being a simple repository of historical documents, archives are inherently entangled in the power relations that have formed them. Moreover, archives are experiences in themselves, and generate, in artists' hands, a myriad of memories. Archives, like exhibitions, can produce a re-ordering or rearrangement by the artist into new associations, and new imaginative communities of objects. In addition, the memories invoked by archives can lead to the presentation of alternative and, often, collective memories. Finally, the artistic mobilisation of the archive—its presentation as an artistic form of co-belonging—leads to an encounter among artist, artwork and viewer, that signals the production of new meanings. *All that is solid…* demonstrated that it is in the gaps within the archive, that artists can find the potential for resilient action.

Official and physical archives are compiled on behalf of the state or a government organisation, with a threefold purpose: record keeping, housing with the purpose of preservation, and access. Archives are generally intended to be "living", in the sense that they do not stop accepting and decommissioning material into their corpus, but they are also controlled in terms of who can access them. In cases where the archive has been uncovered from a previous era, the original context is often unknowable, or the archive has been previously disturbed, or deliberately abandoned. In the situation where the purpose of the archive is subject to limited resources, or has a very refined and specific purpose, we could use the term "complete". Mostly, however, archives are established with the intention that they will grow, that they are preserved and that they are accessible. They are inherently generative. Furthermore, there is an intricate interdependency between the context of an archive (where it is housed), and the methods used to assemble its materials. The context—social, political, cultural—provides the purpose and reason for such assemblies along with predetermining who is granted access to the archive.

Historian Maria Brosius' study of ancient public archives demonstrates that they belonged to the administration of the state or were held in private archives of the ruling elite. Mostly economic records, or documentation of land ownership and slave trade, ancient archives were only accessible to those with certain permissions and authority.[10] Some records were transferred to stone with the intention of being publicly visible, as a representation of the state's values.[11] Archives are never neutral or unmotivated. While there are differences between Near Eastern and Ancient Greek archives, Brosius posits that ancient public archives shared the following features:

> Archives are first a physical space within a public space (palace or temple complex, public archive) or within a private building or private complex of buildings, and second, a collection of stored documents. The building which housed archival records was a 'house of tablets', while an archival room in the private sphere was a guarded place or simply a storeroom. A collection of records reflects a deliberate choice or selection of documents. These documents cover a certain period of time … a certain flexibility existed in the allocation of documents between … rooms, reflecting the process of administering a

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[10] Maria Brosius, ed., *Ancient Archives and Archival Traditions: Concepts of Record-Keeping in the Ancient World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 11.

[11] Brosius, *Ancient Archives and Archival Traditions*, 10.

> document and whether it was likely to be required for regular immediate access or more irregular and long-term retrieval.[12]

Further shared characteristics of these ancient archives included how they were kept in cities, with their records inscribed on tablets shaped for this specific intention, and distributed according to a set of procedures. As Brosius concludes, "ancient archives share more characteristics with modern archives than we might at first suspect".[13] The ancient archive established conventions that have persisted into the modern era: the use of specific housing; the establishment of a system to assemble the records; a social and/or governmental purpose; an intention to preserve the documents for a duration; the ability for others to access the files; a level of accountability; the development of retention and disposal strategies; and the sorting procedures undertaken were for activities that existed outside of the archival institution itself.

During the middle ages, archives were held in religious institutions, and were only accessible to a select few. In Europe, the French Revolution saw certain laws established that granted limited public access to the national archive. (It was at this time that the National Assembly established the Louvre as a museum). It was with the emergence of nationalism and Romanticism in the second half of the nineteenth century that archives in Europe began to be accessible for research as the nation state sought to further understand itself through its own archives.[14]

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[12] Brosius, *Ancient Archives and Archival Traditions*, 10–11.

[13] Brosius, *Ancient Archives and Archival Traditions*, 15.

[14] Ramon Alberch i Fugueras, "The Democratic Dimension of Archives" in *Archive Cultures*, eds. Jorge Blasco Gallardo and Nuria Enguita Maya (Barcelona: Antoni Tàpies Foundation, University of Valencia, University of Salamanca, 2002), 297.

During the widening British colonisation, the archive became part of the engine of conquest as imperial armies captured information on the colonies as a mark of their own power. To colonise was to archive, and to archive was to control—it was an instrument of the state. In *The Imperial Archive, Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire*[15] the literary historian Thomas Richards argues that the British imperial archive project was a fantasy of sorts, that was administered through various archival institutions, libraries and geographical expeditions throughout the colonies. In his study of late nineteenth and early twentieth century literature, he demonstrates that the assemblage of archives was pursued in the utopian and essentially romantic hope that all of this information could be mapped onto one coherent imperial whole. The pursuit of knowledge was married to the pursuit of power, with the aim that control of knowledge would equal control of the state. Charting the ways in which the accumulation of knowledge rapidly transformed into the control of information, Richards maintains that, "the archive, the sum total of what can or cannot be said or done, has become the very form of the modern state".[16] Richards discusses a number of literary texts—Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* are examples—revealing the impossibility of this task of total mapping. In each of his examples, there are oxymoronic combinations of the forming of archives and their defeat. For example, in *Kim*, "the India Survey, a geographical bureau, defeats a Russian plot to extend influence in the Indian subcontinent".[17] The tension between the role of state archives and the rights of citizens to access them has become more pronounced since the Second World War. Citizens have investigated the archives held by totalitarian and autocratic states, in which human rights were violated. For example, testimonies held in archives have enabled the documentation of genocide during times of war. Our current digital age has given rise to a new set of challenges. Wikileaks, for example, has emerged as a response to the diverse laws across various nations protecting official digital data from public access.

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[15] Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (London, New York: Verso, 1993).

[16] Richards, *The Imperial Archive*, 152.

[17] Richards, *The Imperial Archive*, 5.

The traits of the archive outlined above signal that it is a generative force—archives manifest in ways beyond the sum of their parts. Archives may not preserve experience, but they are experiences in themselves. They contain practices of sorting, selecting, preparation, combining and assembling. Archives are defined as much by external factors—political, cultural and social—as they are by the curatorial decisions that are made about what to include and exclude. There is a complex web of power relations, from the authorities who establish the archive, to the workers inside the archive who make daily decisions on classification of information. Indeed, the collection that lies within an archive cannot be read separately from its context, and from its reasons for being. Often, archives arise in periods of precarious history. They are an *aide memoire*, however partial and imperfect, to turbulent times. They are replete with evidence, statements, documents and chronicles and yet they always include oversights and omissions. Once we enter into an archive, we are immersed in its logic, its flow, and in its exhausting quest to be complete.

These gaps amount to what is missing from archives—what and who is silenced, and what is implied by the absence of objects, things and images and what might be erroneously, inadequately or imperfectly represented. We will come to see that the abject processes of dissolving, breaking, perforating, cutting, tearing, chewing and burning evident in the artworks in *All that is solid…* use the idea of the gap in the archive as a starting point for a creative intervention that becomes a counter archival strategy, by which I mean a strategy that refuses the logic of the archive. By actively engaging with archives these artists remobilise the stories, and highlight the missing parts, giving life to the archive by also countering it, tearing it apart, and reorganising its elements in creative ways. In doing this, the artists enact co-belonging within their artworks, creatively responding to the generative force of the archive, and suggesting new ways of connecting with both the past, and present.

II. Michel Foucault’s Archive Theory

Michel Foucault remains one of the most significant thinkers in the Western philosophical tradition on the archive, a subject he first explored in his 1969 work, *L'archéologie du savoir,* published in English in 1972 as *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. According to Foucault, rather than being a static set of records gathering dust, safeguarding knowledge and presenting a unified story from the past, the archive is an active system of enunciability and functioning. Foucault describes the archive as a “system of discursivity”:[18]

> The archive is the first law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events. But the archive is also that which determines that all these things said do not accumulate endlessly in an amorphous mass, nor are they inscribed in an unbroken linearity, nor do they disappear at the mercy of chance external accidents;

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[18] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London and New York: Tavistock Publications, 1972 English ed.), 129.

> but they are grouped together in distinct figures, composed together in accordance with multiple relations, maintained or blurred in accordance with specific regularities.[19]

Foucault recognises the complexity and density of the archive. He shows that an archive can hold within it multiple points of view and that the connections between the objects and events are systems of discursive content. Hence the relevance of the archive to the museum. Foucault suggests that instead of reading history through the archive in terms of a narrative over sequential time, we should consider the discontinuities that occur in history—the breaks, interruptions and heterogeneous units—"as a working concept". He identifies a "paradox" in that the discontinuities in history are both an effect of events, but also a tool to compare such events.[20] In other words, an event can change the course of history, and in doing so it provides the comparative point for history's changes. In this way, the event allows us to interpret it through the filter of the past and present. As such, Foucault analyses the ways in which related events are linked outside of narrative occurrence. Instead of a homogenous narrative, the archive allows a multiplicity of statements to emerge. "It is the general system of the formation and transformation of statements", he writes.[21] He elaborates:

> We are now dealing with a complex volume, in which heterogeneous regions are differentiated or deployed, in accordance with specific rules and practices that cannot be superposed. Instead of seeing, on the great mythical book of history, lines of words that

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[19] Michel Foucault, "The Historical A Priori and the Archive" in *The Archive: Documents of Contemporary Art,* ed. Charles Merewether (London: Whitechapel and The MIT Press, 2006), 28–29.

[20] Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, 9.

[21] Foucault, "The Historical A Priori and the Archive", 29.

> translate in visible characters thoughts that were formed in some other time and place, we have the density of discursive practices, systems that establish statements as events (with their own conditions and domain of appearance) and things (with their own possibility and field of use). They are all these systems of statements (whether events or things) that I propose to call archive.[22]

Foucault goes on to suggest that rather than presenting a unified image of our subjectivity, the archive dissipates, breaks and interrupts our subjectivity:

> It deprives us of our continuities; it dissipates that temporal identity in which we are pleased to look at ourselves when we wish to exorcise the discontinuities of history; it breaks the thread of transcendental teleologies; and where anthropological thought once questioned man's being or subjectivity, it now bursts open the other, and the outside. In this sense, the diagnosis does not establish the fact of our identity by the play of distinctions. It establishes that we are difference, that our reason is the difference of discourses, our history the difference of times, our selves the difference of masks. That difference, far from being forgotten and recovered origin, is this dispersion that we are and make.[23]

The dispersal of objects and events in the archive is in itself a symptom of this "difference". In this analysis of the archive through the filter of archaeology, Foucault offers the possibility to understand the archive as a system of knowledge. He invites us to consider it in terms of differences rather than similarities; in terms of heterogeneity rather than homogeneity. Foucault’s writings on the archive conjure an image of dense interrelatedness (in itself a form of co-belonging), where events and objects give rise to numerous possible recombinant linkages. In characterising the archive as a compilation of systems of statements, as enunciability and discursive presence, the archive “bursts open”. Rather than an image of an archive that is hidden, secret or forgotten, this is an archive that speaks not only through its own contents, but also through the a priori of its history. Within this archive lies difference, attainable through the comparison of diverse statements and events.

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[22] Foucault, "The Historical A Priori and the Archive", 28.

[23] Foucault, "The Historical A Priori and the Archive", 30.

III. Jacques Derrida’s *Archive Fever*

Written in 1995 by French philosopher Jacques Derrida (a student of Foucault), *Archive Fever: a Freudian Impression* has had a significant impact on cultural interpretations of the archive.[24] While both Foucault and Derrida sought to renew the critique of thought itself, they differed in their methodologies. (Derrida had considerable objections to the work of Foucault that lie outside the parameters of this exegesis. While he wrote *Archive Fever* a decade after Foucault’s death, it has been argued that it is evidence of his continued polemic with Foucault, particularly the latter’s *Archaeology of Knowledge* which others have argued was a response to Derrida’s criticisms.)[25] Our determination to collect and record our history, conquests, culture and society is defined as "archive fever" by Derrida. Like Foucault, he describes the archive as more than simply a place for the preservation of documents of history. He argues that it holds within its definition the set of laws governing the use of these documents.[26] The archive is defined by Derrida as an entity that aims for truthful documentation and imposes a set of regulations through which it can be used, as both a repository, and a system.

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[24] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: a Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). One of the most direct influences was on the exhibition conceived by Okwui Enzwezor entitled *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art*, which is discussed below. See also Charles Merewether, ed., *The Archive: Documents of Contemporary Ar*t (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 2006; London: Whitechapel).

He begins by introducing two interrelated meanings for the word archive. "Arkhe" is the notion or principle of "commencement" as well as "command", a place where authority is exercised. Citing the Greek term "Arkheion", Derrida articulates that it is "initially a house, a domicile, an address, the residence of the superior magistrates, the archons, those who commanded".[27] The housing and its protocols are as important as the documents held within. Derrida writes of the official residence of archives: "This place where they dwell permanently, marks this institutional passage from the private to the public, which does not always mean from the secret to the nonsecret".[28] According to Derrida there is also the principle of consignation at play in the archive—the perception that there is a coordination of elements within a logical system. The use of the archive, then, or archival material, or indeed, the spectre of a fictional archive, has embedded within it the notion of a housing, similar to most exhibitions. This housing can be used literally or metaphorically. The concept reminds us that the content has a relation to space, to its arrangement in that space and to its context and purpose in a place or site.

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[25] Adina Arvatu, "Spectres of Freud: The Figure of the Archive in Derrida and Foucault", *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journ*al 44, no. 4 (December 2011): 141–159. See other texts on the relationship between Foucault and Derrida as follows: Antonio Campillo, "Foucault and Derrida—the History of a Debate on History", *Angelaki: Journal of Theoretical Humanities* 5, no.2 (2000): 113–135; Yubraj Aryal, et.al., eds., *Between Foucault and Derrida* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016) and Olivia Custer, Penelope Deutscher, and Samir Haddad, eds., *Foucault/Derrida Fifty Years Later: The Futures of Genealogy, Deconstruction, and Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).

[26] Derrida, *Archive Fever.*

[27] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 2.

Derrida's work on the archive introduces a Freudian perspective—the psychological dimensions of how archives work. Specifically, he discusses Freud's notion of the death or destruction drive, as outlined in "A Note Upon the Mystic Writing Pad" (1925) and "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" (1920) in which Freud makes a link between his idea of the death drive and the repetitive act of recollection in trauma victims—the notion that the patient returns to the original trauma through recurring dreams, rather than seeking out pleasure. Freud treated the unconscious memory as a writing machine (the mystic writing pad). Conversely, Derrida writes that in seeking death or destruction we are engaged in the annihilation of memory, and also in the eradication of the archive itself. Instead of seeing archives as an *aide memoire* with the aim of preserving history and, by association, life, Derrida claims the archive "will never be either memory or anamnesis as spontaneous, alive and internal experience. On the contrary: the archive takes place at the place of originary and structural breakdown of said memory".[29] In other words, we do not have a need for the archive unless there has been some kind of break down in memory in the first place. Further, the archive cannot replace the experience of memory. Not only does the concept of the archive build on the originary experience of destruction, it also "menaces with destruction, introducing, a priori, forgetfulness and the archiviolithic into the heart of the monument".[30] He concludes that Freud's notion of the death drive is, in fact, *le mal d'archive*, "archive fever":[31]

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[28] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 2–3.

[29] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 11.

> There would indeed be no archive desire without the radical finitude, without the possibility of a forgetfulness which does not limit itself to repression … there is no archive fever without the threat of this death drive, this aggression and destruction drive.[32]

Derrida explains that we are in need of archives, a need which he describes as a passion as well as a fever:

> It is never to rest, interminably, from searching for the archive right where it slips away. It is to run after the archive, even if there's too much of it, right where something in it anarchives itself. It is to have a compulsive, repetitive and nostalgic desire for the archive, an irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a homesickness, a nostalgia for the return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement.[33]

Following Freud, Derrida suggests that the archive is a kind of prosthesis. The archive is "a question of the future, the question of the future itself, the question of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow".[34] This raises the problem of what happens in virtual space and time:

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[30] The term *archiviolithic* is Derrida's and can broadly be defined as the archive's death drive.

[31] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 12.

[32] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 19.

[33] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 91.

> … it will be necessary, to keep a rigorous account of this other virtuality, to abandon or restructure from top to bottom our inherited concept of the archive. The moment has come to accept a great stirring in our concept of the archive, and in it to cross a "logic of the unconscious" with a way of thinking of the virtual which is no longer limited by the traditional philosophical opposition between act and power.[35]

We live in an era obsessed with storing data, collecting information and images, and archiving. Such is the massive fragmentation and technical fluidity of the digital landscape, however, that the whole notion of the archive is being re-examined: what to collect, how to collect it and how to store and access it is being revisited with a new intensity and awareness of security. Technologies that were previously distinct, such as audio and video, are now converged. Items that were once difficult to preserve can now be reproduced and stored digitally. Access is more easily monitored by virtual, rather than physical, means. Yet, with an increasing trust in the digital tool for preservation comes both an underlying fear that it could all disappear in an instant or that it can be hacked. Even though he was writing in 1995, Derrida anticipated this problem of the digitalisation of the archive, arguing that the digital process can in itself produce meaning through creating structure:

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[34] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 36.

[35] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 67.

> … the technical structure of the archiving archive also determines the structure of the archivable content even in its very coming into existence and in its relationship to the future. The archivization produces as much as it records the event. This is our political experience of the so-called news media.[36]

The figure of the archive has had enormous cultural and methodological influence, particularly in the last three decades. This is in many respects due to the work of Foucault and Derrida, which has been continued and interpreted by numerous scholars since. For Foucault, there is an assemblage of events and things, a system that consists of rules about how such statements arise. Foucault argues that the archive cannot comment on itself, for all statements about it would be drawn from it. Derrida's interpretation begins with the political nature of the archive. It is established through the power of the law or command. It does not reveal its own process of coming into being, nor is it transparent to its own role in the system of power for which it has been created. Moreover, Derrida tackles memory and the archive, for the archive does not hold memory as such, but rather documents. Memory is archived through political authority and therefore the memory becomes transformed into document. While Foucault introduces us to the notion that the archive is in fragments that are essentially discursive, Derrida suggests that the archive is "archiviolithic", essentially an archival death drive. While Foucault explains the systems of power that lie within the archive, Derrida invokes an inherent structural breakdown of the archive.

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[36] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 17. Internet theorists such as Geert Lovink have shown the increasing reliance that structures of governance have on virtual databases. Institute of Network Cultures, www.networkcultures.org, accessed 9 January 2015.

The work of these two French philosophers opens up the dialogue around the archive itself, problematising the museum as archive, and the exhibition as a housing, display and interpretation of an archive. Their theories enlighten us to the very nature of archives themselves: their inherent power structures, the discursive statements that lie within, the fever to collect and archive. For Foucault and Derrida archives are not definable and they are most valuable as an expression of a methodology: in Foucault, this is the methodology of discursive statements, a law of conceptualisation of historical research while in Derrida it is the death drive. As Derrida says, archives form an impression. This means that the constant repetition inherent in the museum archive, for example, suggests a trauma that is in turn repeated through incessant collecting, resulting in the archival death drive. In relation to the work of both Foucault and Derrida, and citing Derrida, Adina Arvatu has argued:

> … despite its (grammatically) singular form, the archive does not name any one unified thing, concept or institution, but rather a 'principle of disturbance' … a radical principle of disunity and infinite divisibility of all things … As such, the archive is never the element of the *as such,* never 'properly' named. Its structure is 'spectral *a priori*: neither present nor absent…neither visible nor invisible.'[37]

The principle of disturbance inherent in archival methodology contains a richly generative potential for artists and curators alike to create counter-archival strategies, ones that, paradoxically, are part of the methodology of said archives.

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[37] Arvatu, "Spectres of Freud", 156.

IV. Okwui Enwezor: Gap and Suture in the Archive

In his influential essay for the exhibition *Archive Fever*, held in 2008 at the New York City International Center of Photography, Okwui Enwezor draws on the work of Derrida and Foucault, as well as three key twentieth century artworks that prefigure the contemporary interest in using archives.[38] They include Marcel Duchamp's *La boîte-en-valise* (1935–41): both an artwork and a mini-museum comprised of reproductions of Duchamp's own works. It is simultaneously artistic, curatorial and archival. It was assembled over the course of five years in France, and smuggled out of the Occupied territory to the United States on trips the artist made with a cheese merchant's identity card.[39] Duchamp referred to this work as a "portable museum."[40] The second work cited by Enwezor is Marcel Broodthaers' *Musée d'Art Moderne, Départment des Aigles*, 1968: an exhibition that was first realised in the artist's home with representations of eagles contained in glass boxes with signs saying "this is not a work of art", thereby commenting on the classificatory nature of museum archives. The third work in Enwezor's list is Gerhard Richter's *Atlas* (1964 – present), an archive of personal and found photographs that chart both familial and historical events in the twentieth and twenty-first century. In his analysis of these works Enwezor advances that “the archive is a compensation (in the psychoanalytic sense) of the unwieldly, diachronic state of photography and, as such, exists as a representational form of the ungainly dispersion and pictorial multiplicity of the photograph”.[41] In the face of the ubiquity of the image in contemporary society, the artistic archive offers an assembled antidote. So too, can the exhibition. Yet Enwezor also writes that artists do more than assemble:

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[38] Okwui Enwezor, "Archive Fever: Photography between History and the Monument" in *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art* (New York: International Center of Photography, 2008), 14.

[39] Robert Lebel, cited in Arturo Schwarz, *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Abrams, 1970), 512.

[40] Marcel Duchamp, interview by James Johnson Sweeney Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1955. Cited in Arturo Schwarz, *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Abrams, 1970), 513. For a study of the relationship between Duchamp and exile, see T. J. Demos, *The Exiles of Marcel Duchamp* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 2007).

> … artists interrogate the self-evidentiary claims of the archive by reading it against the grain. This interrogation may take aim at the structural and functional principles underlying the use of the archival document, or it may result in the creation of another archival structure as a means of establishing an archaeological relationship to history, evidence, information, and data that will give rise to its own interpretive categories.[42]

Reading the archive against the grain is a counter-archival strategy, albeit one that also acknowledges the value in creating alternative archives and new means of understanding the world–making activities of artists. I will argue below that the exhibition *All that is solid…* operates in a similar way as a collection of interwoven counter-archival gestures by artists that together offer an alternative reading of the world around us. Artists deal with an “historical legacy of archival production”, argues Enwezor, because archiving is an instrument of the state and continues to be utilised as a colonising force—a feverish desire to have knowledge about the other. [43] As Richards shows above, this is the desire to control the flow of information through the archive.[44] Enwezor follows:

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[41] Enwezor, “Archive Fever: Photography between History and the Monument”, 16.

[42] Enwezor, “Archive Fever: Photography between History and the Monument”, 18.

[43] Enwezor, “Archive Fever: Photography between History and the Monument”, 21.

> The issue grappled with here is not so much the artist's employment of archival logic but, rather, the artist's relationship to images or instruments of mass culture or media in which the archival is sought out—especially in the digital arena—as part of a broad culture of sampling, sharing and recombining of visual data in infinite calibrations of users and receivers. We are fundamentally concerned with the overlay of the iconographic, taxonomic, indexical, typological, and archaeological means by which artists derive and generate new historical as well as analytical readings of the archive.[45]

Enwezor's essay and exhibition contributes to artistic research about the archive in an important way. In a contemporary environment in which almost anything goes, the artist provides a critical filter through which to approach the vast archives of images available today. His exhibition was both a riposte to the ubiquity of the image and an analysis of the ways in which artists unravel the power and systemic domination within the archive. Enwezor argues that we now "look at archives as a space of productive relationship between different systems of knowledge, as the space of reimagining our relationship to meaning, ideas, culture, and various systems for interpreting and translating aesthetic and artistic forms".[46] Here he describes a process of prising open the space of the archive in order to generate new meaning. Like Foucault, he also defines the art object (and here he is referring specifically to art objects that use archival material) as a system of knowledge. For Enwezor, the archive performs a kind of suturing of these open gaps within archival systems of knowledge. He comments:

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[44] Richards, *The Imperial Archive.*

[45] Enwezor, "Archive Fever: Photography between History and the Monument", 23.

[46] Okwui Enwezor, interview with author, Sydney, 2008.

> Within *Archive Fever*, the artist serves as the historic agent of memory, while the archive emerges as a place in which concerns with the past are touched by the astringent vapors of death, destruction, and degeneration. Yet, against the tendency of contemporary forms of amnesia whereby the archive becomes a site of lost origins and memory is dispossessed, it is also within the archive that acts of remembering and regeneration occur, where a suture between the past and present is performed, in the indeterminate zone between event and image, document and monument.[47]

The term suture has been widely used in film theory. In the 1970s, Jean-Pierre Oudart drew on Lacanian psychoanalytical theories to develop an analysis of the ways in which classical narrative cinema situates the subject. He developed the concept that there is a relationship between how the subject sees, and how the subject is seen by others. This is best understood in the classic shot/reverse shot scenario, where we see the character looking at something off-screen. In the next frame we see what they are looking at. In order to complete the illusion, in the third frame we once again see the character.[48] In psychoanalysis, suturing means that the subject is not a unified and stable entity, but is comprised of the desire of others, and yet finds ways to suture these contradictory discourses into the appearance of a unified whole. For cinema, suturing means that the desire of the spectator for a seamless narrative is provided by a sequence of shots that allow the spectator to "look *at* the scene of the other, but also to look *from* the place of the other."[49] Cultural theorist Scott McQuire has suggested that it is all too easy to posit the two methods—montage and suture—in oppositional terms: montage and fragmentation on the one hand, and suture and narrative continuity on the other. Instead, he argues that independent and narrative cinema occupy both positions as a "metaphor for the exigencies of modern identity–the oscillation of real and imaginary, the displacement of stable centres of existence, the dislocation of fixed boundaries, the interruption of the continuous horizon of self-presence."[50] I would argue that this continual switching between the methodologies of montage and the suture can not only be likened to Rancière's idea of the sentence-image (as explained in the introduction) but can also be understood as a curatorial method of co-belonging.

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[47] Enwezor "Archive Fever: Photography between History and the Monument", 46–47.

[48] For further discussion on suture see Stephen Heath, "Notes on Suture", *Screen*, XVIII, iss. 4 (Winter 1977–78): 48–76.

V. Okwui Enwezor: *Annual Report*, *The 7th Gwangju Biennale*, 2008

Annual Report, *The 7th Gwangju Biennale* (which Enwezor curated in the same year as *Archive Fever*) put these practices of montage and suture into practice, with the aim of making a site specific, and locally relevant, comment on both historical and contemporary issues in South Korea.[51] While the topic was not centred on the archive and art, there were several works that addressed the archive. I would argue that the structure of the exhibition drew on some of the archival methodologies arising from the work of Foucault and Derrida, in particular, the continual switching between diverse statements (montage) and the suturing that occurs in exhibition making to create links with larger and urgent issues of the time. *Annual Report* was,

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[49] Scott McQuire, *Visions of Modernity: Representation, Memory, Time and Space in the Age of the Camera* (London: Sage Publications, 1998), 83.

[50] McQuire, *Visions of Modernity*, 90.

[51] Unlike the exhibition *Archive Fever*, I was able to see *Annual Report* during its opening weekend.

Enwezor commented, “specifically designed to deal with the temporality of the exhibition as a network of event, place, and time, as well as to manifest an engagement with the multipolar compass of contemporary art”.[52]

During the opening weekend a special event unfolded in the centre of the city. Students, whose bodies were rubbed in ochre paint, carried a large polystyrene float—in the shape of a miniature city—through the streets. The surfaces of the float were marked with references to carbon emissions. One group of performers were dressed in white gowns with spiky war-like body extensions; others had grey-blue garments and walked with a fragile armature that offered the promise of protection. Cubes of light, the size of a small room on wheels, revealed the silhouette of two figures encased in a traditional pouring jug. Entitled *Spring*, this event was a collaboration across several cultural traditions in the form of a street procession.[53] The participants and onlookers gathered in a spirit of hope and emancipation on a significant civic square in Gwangju—the site of the May 1980 Spring student uprising, in which a number of students were shot and killed by the military dictatorship of the time. This protest movement—known as the *minjung* movement—is a people’s power that has come to define South Korean politics and life. While *Spring* made reference to this site, and tragic local events, it also drew on the global phenomenon of riots, uprisings, protests and Carnival street parades. *Spring* arose in this context in a spirit of civic renewal. Enwezor has commented:

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[52] Victoria Lynn, "Okwui Enwezor: A Space of Encounter." *Art and Australia* 46, iss. 2 (2008): 216–217.

[53] *Spring* was a collaboration between Jarbas Lopes (Brazil), Karyn Oliver (USA), Mario Benjamin (Port-au-Prince), Marlon Griffith (Trinidad/UK), MAP office (France/Hong Kong), Caecilia Tripp (France) and Jin Won Lee (aka GAZAEBAL South Korea) and was curated by Claire Tancons.

> Etymologically the term ‘curator’ is, in the modern and contemporary sense, an archivist. It is the task of the arkheion—the function of the curator is the archontic function, is the function of both interpretation and the function of translation, the function of legitimation. In this sense the work of the curator is deeply embedded in the archive of modern culture and its spill-overs into art and exhibitions. So the exhibition as such is ur-archiv, so that even though the exhibition becomes an assembly of archives, of the art work as archive, of the art work as domiciled in the archive, in the collection or in the studios of artists and so on, what the work of the curator and the activity of curating reveals is that we are fundamentally operating on the logic that modern culture is an archival culture. This means that art is fundamentally part of an archival system.[54]

Annual Report A Year in Exhibitions included the work of 127 artists from thirty-six countries and was a complex collective effort.[55] Enwezor worked with co-curators Ranjit Hoskote and Hyunjin Kim on the overall concept. There were three main “organising principles”: *On the Road*, thirty-seven exhibitions that had already taken place elsewhere in the world in 2007 and 2008 (including excellent presentations of the work of Hans Haacke, Gordon Matta-Clark, Jennifer Allora & Guillermo Calzadilla, Kerry James Marshall and Lili Dujourie); *Position Papers*, five curatorial proposals by curators working in Southeast Asia, North Africa, South Korea, and the United States (Patrick D. Flores, Abdellah Karroum, Jang Un Kim, Sung-Hyen Park, and Claire Tancons); and *Insertions*, a series of commissioned projects.

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[54] Okwui Enwezor, interview with author, Sydney, 2008.

[55] Museums produce annual reports each year as a record of their activities, which then forms part of the museum archive.

While this assemblage of artists and curators proclaimed no overarching themes, the concerns of *Spring* were echoed throughout *The 7th Gwangju Biennale*, namely the question of how we negotiate civic space in an age of globalisation. As Enwezor explains, "In its many forms of expression, civil society … challenges the assumed authority of state and supra-state institutions by providing a framework for civic assemblies that are, by their very nature, extra-political associations. These assemblies consistently construct, but never exceed, the horizon of possible new communities."[56] As an exhibition that was in many respects installed as a montage across five venues (one of which was a local market place), the Biennale sought to resonate (suture) with a society that experiences collective moments of assembly. In this context, the décollages of Jacques Villeglé (France), one of the featured artists in *Insertions*, became a celebration of the seam, the juxtaposition, the fissures, overlaps, comparisons and connections that come with the intermingling of ideas. This set of motivations distinguishes this Biennale from the more classical model of a survey show. While the size of the exhibition, and its loose connections suggested a survey, (not to mention the very dry title *Annual Report*), the exhibition's construction was a reflection of modes of communal expression in South Korea and also an indication of the decentred and yet networked nature of contemporary art in the present time. Indeed, the structure pointed to the ecology of relationships that go into making any exhibition, between private and public organizations, artists, curators and writers. This co-belonging became a curatorial methodology that was a response to the times.

The theme of architectural and emotional ruin and renewal emerged in a number of works. Nina Fischer and Maroan El Sani's work *Spelling Dystopia* is a two-screen video projection about

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[56] Okwui Enwezor, "Introduction" in *7th Gwangju Biennale Exhibition Guide*, 9 (Gwangju: Gwangju Biennale Foundation, 2008).

Hashima, an island off the coast of Japan that was entirely man-made. Initially used as a camp for prisoners during World War II, it later served as a coalmining island. Fischer and El Sani's camera explores the ruined corners, debris, and brutal architecture of an island that once was home to 5000 inhabitants.[57] The installation entitled *Utopia Possible* by Felipe Dulzaides and Roberto Gottardi (Cuba) was presented in a small pavilion located near the Uije Museum of Korean Art. Through an archive of video interviews, architectural models, drawings, digital slide projection and a partially built brick wall, it chronicled the aborted construction of an art school in Havana. In a second pavilion, Chen Shaoxing (China) showed three animated videos of his own black ink drawings, with a soundtrack that resonated with the intensity of modernisation in Chinese cities. We see skyscrapers and bridges being built and removed and recreated in quick succession. A similar sense of the personal disruption that accompanies civic change was to be found in the photographs by Area Park, the Korean artist who documented protest movements in South Korea. Further, a large body of drawings by South Koreans Donghwan Jo and Haejun Jo, installed in wooden frames that one could turn as if they were pages in a book, were presented like a comic strip of memories about personal life, a personal archive documenting the democratic uprising and everyday observations in contemporary South Korea.

In the Biennale Hall, Isaac Julien (UK) presented *Western Union: Small Boats* (2007) set in the village of Agriegento and the Palazzo Gangi (where *The Leopard* was filmed). Julien juxtaposes haunting images that consider the perils, displacements, and colonial history inherent in the act of voyaging: small brightly coloured fishing boats strewn with faded, abandoned clothing; a figure wrapped in foil on the beach; a man struggling under water; the reflection of light on a stark white coastline; and a Palazzo that is variously visited by black and white protagonists who, in essence, reverse the history of this site. Nearby was Dayanita Singh's (India) black and white photographs of archives and interior spaces in India suggesting a more gradual sense of transformation of space over time. Ranging from empty theatre spaces through to institutional corridors piled with papers, shops and fragments of everyday life, these photographs picture a society in transition, not from old to new, but in a sense of shuttling from past to present and back again.

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[57] I later included this work in the exhibition *Apart We Are Together, Adelaide International, 2010*, various venues Adelaide, 2010.

Enwezor steered clear of creating a thematic exhibition because he felt that the moment called for something different. He describes a structure resonant with the curatorial co-belonging developed in this exegesis, in the sense that he gathered various self-contained exhibitions (pavilions as it were) within the overriding exhibition, collaging diverse and incommensurate points of view that together could not only reflect societies in transition, but also create a new space in which a conversation could take place. He commented:

> There were two immediate points of importance while I was reflecting on *The 7th Gwangju Biennale*. First, I was wary of putting together a project around another theme, simply because in my view we are in a moment of crisis in terms of the large thematic biennale exhibitions. This crisis has been precipitated by the fact that biennales have expanded exponentially, (which I think is a good thing), but also, because there is often little time and resources available to develop a fully realized, intellectually rich, and historically timely theme. Unless the curator had been planning such an exhibition over a period of time prior to the biennale (as seems obvious with Carolyn Christov-Barkagiev's Biennale of Sydney) it seemed to me not the way to go

forward with Gwangju, especially at a moment when the compass of contemporary art is pointing in so many directions. For *The 7th Gwangju Biennale*, *Annual Report* was specifically designed to deal with the temporality of the exhibition as a network of event, place, and time, as well as to manifest an engagement with the multipolar compass of contemporary art.

Second, the more I thought about it, the more I thought about how, since the beginning of this decade, exhibitions themselves have really become a medium unto themselves. I wanted to explore what is this exhibition 'space': the exhibition as a space of encounter.

In order to do that, I embarked on the notion of transparent research to show that exhibitions themselves are objects of intercultural dialogue by which I mean that I did not want to go to exhibitions and then emerge having made some kind of fresh discovery. I am analysing the exhibition system and my relation to that system: my dialogue with colleagues and the general construct of the exhibition as an intellectual and cultural proposition. In that sense *Annual Report* will also show the limits of the network of the global system. I have invited about thirty-seven exhibitions to be part of the larger constellation of projects within the *Annual Report* exhibition, but I have not actually seen all the exhibitions. For me, the exhibition is a kind of *portamanteau* that you can carry to different places. So the earliest exhibition in the Biennale is Dayanita Singh's show, *Go Away*, *Closer* at Nature Morte in New Delhi. Exhibitions like hers or one by Luis Molina-Pantin at Sala Mendoza in Caracas or Hiroshi Sugito in

> Tokyo, or Chen Quilen at Long March Space in Beijing, points to the fact there is a global conversation taking place, and we are part of this global conversation.[58]

The *7th Gwangju Biennale* was inextricably intertwined with a history of democratic uprising in the city of Gwangju and, as such, was emancipatory. Enwezor's own interest in "societies in transition", anticipates the link that I make between curating and Rancière's notions of democracy as a framework in which to understand this curatorial model.[59] In Rancière's view, democracy is based on what is shared and what is not shared. And within that, there is what is perceptibly shared and what is invisible. The idea of "cutting" and "redistribution" (terms that we can associate with the method of montage) are central:

> I understand by this phrase the cutting up [*decoupage*] of the perceptual world that anticipates, through its sensible evidence, the distribution of shares and social parties … And this redistribution itself presupposes a cutting up of what is visible and what is not, of what can be heard and what cannot, of what is noise and what is speech.[60]

According to Ross Birrell, Rancière has a debt to Foucault and Deleuze, but builds on their work through his belief in "the emancipatory capacity and potential he finds in individuals and collectives to redistribute knowledge and assume a 'community of equals'".[61] For Rancière, democracy is born of division: "For politics, the fact that the people are internally divided is not, actually, a scandal to be deplored. It is the primary condition of the exercise of politics".[62] But it also offers the opportunity for visibility.

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[58] Lynn, "Okwui Enwezor: A Space of Encounter", 216.

[59] Lynn, "Okwui Enwezor: A Space of Encounter", 217.

[60] Jacques Rancière, *The Philosopher and His Poor*, trans. John Drury, Corinne Oster and Andrew Parker, ed. Andrew Parker (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 225.

This sense of division is not simply pluralism. It is more structured. In a published lecture entitled, "Aesthetic Separation, Aesthetic Community: Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art" Rancière considers the paradox inherent in what he terms the "distribution of the sensible". [63]

> The artistic 'dissensual community' has a double body: it is a combination of means for producing an effect outside of itself: creating a new community between human beings, a new political people … To the extent that it is a dissensual community, an aesthetic community is a community structured by disconnection.[64]

Rancière's way of seeing the world may be compared with Enwezor's commitment to supporting the work of artists who are deeply aware of the inequalities facing contemporary societies:

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[61] Ross Birrell, "Jacques Rancière and The (Re)Distribution of the Sensible: Five Lessons in Artistic Research", *Art & Research: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods* 2, no.1, (Summer 2008): 3.

[62] Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy,* trans. Julie Rose
(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1999), 87.

[63] Jacques Rancière, "Aesthetic Separation, Aesthetic Community: Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art", *Art & Research: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods* 2 no. 1. (Summer 2008): 1–15.

[64] Rancière, "Aesthetic Separation, Aesthetic Community".

> It goes without saying that under conditions of unequal access to institutional legitimation artists are immediately thrown into a politics of visibility, the politics of legitimation. And that is something that we cannot avoid under the postcolonial condition because it is a politics of not only resources, it is a politics of breaking up the kind of economic instruments that deny the unruly agency that emanates from—call it from below, call it from the edges, call it what ever you wish—that emanates from some of these areas.
>
> Whether we like it or not, under the postcolonial condition, art is deeply implicated in politics, because the institutions of art are largely institutions of modernity.[65]

Rancière's concept of the distribution of the sensible is relevant to Enwezor's Gwangju Biennale. It was structured so that there was a capacity to create a new community of relations (if not a political people, then new collective, if disparate, gestures), through co-belonging: disconnection, bricolage, montage and fragments. The diverse points of view acknowledged the breaks and fissures in contemporary image making, and brought together collective gestures in dialogue with one another echoing Rancière's suggestion that "it is a multiplication of connections and disconnections that reframe the relation between bodies, the world where they live and the way in which they are 'equipped' for fitting it".[66]

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[65] Okwui Enwezor, interview with author, Sydney, 2008.

[66] Rancière, "Aesthetic Separation, Aesthetic Community", 11.

In discussing Gwangju, Enwezor used the term, a "space of encounter" drawing on the work of Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin's notion of the chronotope.[67] For Bakhtin, the novel was the supreme example of a chronotope, for it contained a sense of open time, where characters, places and socio-political forces change through a complex process of interaction.[68] In a keynote presentation at Monash University Prato, Italy, Enwezor made a connection between archives, and their chronotopic relation—seeing them not as residing in a fixed domain, but in a spatio-temporal configuration.[69] He discussed the library as spatial, and a lifetime as temporal. When an old person passes away, he commented, it is as if a library has burned down, for the memories die with the person. The space between memory and forgetting, between memory and amnesia—this is a space that Enwezor classes as "generative". Can we then see the diverse exhibitions within the larger exhibition at Gwangju, as a set of archives in dialogue, a form of conversation in a living body—the exhibition—where discord sits in equal measure with agreement? This notion of dialogue also draws on the work of Bakhtin, for whom utterance is dialogic. This means that an utterance is always made in anticipation of a response; it contains within it references to earlier utterances on the same topic.[70]

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[67] Lynn, "Okwui Enwezor: A Space of Encounter", 217.

[68] Gary Soul Morson, "Bakhtin, Mikhail Mikhailovich (1895-1975)", *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 10.4324/9780415249126-E001-1.

[69] Okwui Enwezor, "Sovereignty of the Archive", conference paper given at *Archive/Counter-Archive*, Prato, Italy, 2009 (unpublished). I was one of the organisers of this conference, part of CARGO, an independent association of artists, writers and curators based at the Monash University Faculty of Art & Design in Melbourne. A partnership between the Faculty of Art & Design, Monash University, Melbourne and The Centre for Drawing, a Research Centre of the University of the Arts London, *Archive/ Counter-Archive* was held at the Monash Centre in Prato, Italy, on 10 and 11 July 2009.

As I will argue below, the exhibition *All that is solid…* is informed by the research and exhibition practice outlined above. These complex processes are also at play not only within the actual artworks themselves, but also in their juxtaposition and co-mingling. This is a continual switching between the gap and the suture, between the fragment and its location in a suite of both commensurable and incommensurable relationships. Co-belonging is restless, never settled, and always open to interpretation by the viewer. The exhibition, then, is not a seamless narrative of thematic statements, but rather a cluster of relationships that form and unfurl as the visitor walks through the space.

VI. *All that is solid…*and The Abject

In *All that is solid…* I sought to highlight gaps in the archives, the missing memories, through a process of artistic and curatorial mobilisation of the archive. The artists I selected inserted into those gaps a new set of imagery, text and relationships in order to reassert the memories, stories and historical conditions that have been elided by the archives. Their methods of dissolving or disrupting the archival fragments not only read them against the grain, but also enacted a renewed sense of co-belonging with the world. While the artists are cutting, tearing, melting, burning, dislodging and interrupting the internal logic of the archive, they are simultaneously creating new productions, new connections and meanings. This is their mobilisation of the archive. Foucault suggests that knowledge "is not made for understanding; it is made for cutting".[71] Similarly, the artists create new gaps through cutting and tearing. As the curator, I arrange, combine, and deepen new alignments of knowledge. The artworks are small but intense heterotopias in which the gap between words and things, objects and their interpretation, is prised open, mobilised and made anew. So too, the exhibition is a larger heterotopia that situates the viewer in the midst of archival memories, and the establishment of new imaginative forms of approaching those memories.

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[70] Morson, "Bakhtin, Mikhail Mikhailovich".

A distinctive feature of the approach in this exhibition, and one that builds on previous exhibitions about art and the archive, is the abject nature of the ways in which the artists have treated the archival fragment. These abject processes create a set of sensations in the exhibition that defy an easy relationship between what is within an archive and what is missing, i.e. the gap and suture model. The presence of dust, decay, tearing, and chewing in the artworks provided the exhibition with a restless energy that supported and underpinned the co-belonging both within and between the art works. The abject nature of these processes as a distinguishing feature of the exhibition was not evident to me when I originally curated the exhibition, and has become more apparent as I contextualise the exhibition within the body of knowledge and practice above.

Abjection is described by Julia Kristeva as a state that cannot be "assimilated".[72] Neither subject nor object, she compares it to a "discharge, a convulsion, a crying out".[73] We expel that which is abject from within us, in order to safeguard culture. The abject disturbs borders, identity, system and order. It is also ambiguity itself, because abjection does not cut off from the subject that it threatens. "The deject is in short a stray", writes Kristeva, arguing that human society uses literature, ritual and art to connect with the abject. We do so in order to draw a distinction between a civilised human subject and what threatens to make us more "animal".[74] While society expels the abject, the outsider, in order to retain its own sense of order, the artists in *All that is solid…* embrace the abject, the stray, as a positive source of creativity. Cinema theorist Barbara Creed has argued for a "stray ethics". [75] Writing in relation to the era of the Anthropocene, stray ethics addresses the marginalised and abandoned first, reminding us that anthropocentric hierarchies are the problem. Strays survive, they show resistance, and they are not necessarily the victims.[76]

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[71] Michel Foucault, "Nietzche, Genealogy, History" in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (London: Penguin, 1991), 88.

[72] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 10.

[73] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 11.

The collapse of the distinction between human and inhuman is at the centre of Primo Levi's notion of the paradoxical nature of the witness to traumatic events. Levi's paradox is relevant here, because many of the artists in *All that is solid…* are dealing with horrific circumstances (albeit not the trauma of Auschwitz, the subject of Levi's writing), such as poverty during the Great Depression in America, the dissolution of cities in China, the colonial conquest of Aboriginal artefacts and identity in Australia, and censorship and division in Turkey. An Italian–Jewish writer and holocaust survivor, Levi writes about the *Muselmann* in the camps, the inmate resigned to his death, suffering from starvation, weakness and silence, suggesting paradoxically, "the *Muselmann* is the complete witness". [77] Levi suggests that there is a limit to the witness's account of trauma, which can be understood as a lacuna or void in language. Paradoxically he argues that this void is in itself a testimony to horror. This silence or limit of the testimony, its incomplete nature, its gaps if you like, gives the witness's testimony its strength. A zombie-like figure, this *Muselmann* is like a stray, completely dehumanised, a person without voice or power, abandoned, and indeed, treated like an animal. In *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive* Giorgio Agamben follows the logic of Levi's paradox, and maintains that to bear witness is to place oneself "outside both the archive and the corpus of what has already been said … what cannot be archived is the language in which the author succeeds in bearing witness to his incapacity to speak".[78]

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[74] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 17, 19.

[75] Barbara Creed, *Stray: Human-Animal Ethics in the Anthropocene* (Sydney: Power Publications, 2017).

[76] I invited Barbara Creed as keynote speaker to the forum, *Animate-Inanimate.* The forum was held at the Healesville Sanctuary, 1 September 2013, in association with the exhibition I curated of the same title. This lecture prefigured many of the ideas in *Stray*.

How do these theorisations of the stray, the abject, and the witness, in relation to the archive, enlighten our understanding of the artists in *All that is solid…*? Through their use of abject processes, such as dissolving, chewing, piercing, the use of dust, cutting and tearing, these artists deterritorialise the archives that they work with, taking them out of the control of the archons, the guardians of the archive, and dislocating them from their original holding places. In allowing the gaps and fissures held within archives to be silent, to not be sutured, they also acknowledge Levi's Paradox. Their actions make for a polyvalent approach to the archive, one that does not obey the singular law of the archive. As we will see in the analysis that follows, the processes of physical dissolution of the archival fragment and image activates and mobilises the archive into a new kind of "archival metabolism". This is a term that I borrow from Doreen Mende whose article, "The Undutiful Daughter's Concept of Archival Metabolism", articulates the ways in which undutiful daughters can move beyond the law of the archive, which she characterises as dominant and male.[79] While Mende's article discusses the digital archive in terms of its metabolism, "spreading, travelling and reaching beyond the 'law of what can be said'", the artists in *All that is solid…* have also enacted a kind of metabolism by not allowing the dust to settle, as it were.[80]

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[77] *Muselmann* (pl. *Muselmänner*, the German version of *Musulman*, meaning Muslim) was a slang term used among captives of World War II Nazi concentration camps to refer to those suffering from a combination of starvation (known also as "hunger disease") and exhaustion and who were resigned to their impending death. "Muselmann", Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muselmann, accessed 15 December 2019 and Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved,* trans. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Summit Books, 1986).

[78] Georgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen, (New York: Zone Books, 2002, first published 1989), 161–62.

VII. Co-belonging in *All that is solid…*

As is evident in the floorplan, in the museum's first South Gallery, I placed the work of three artists: Patrick Pound, Cyrus Tang and Cao Fei (fig.1). Each artist had a distinct space, with Cao Fei's video contained in its own room. The exhibition opened with a work by Patrick Pound entitled *Cancelled archive* (2017), a set of black and white photographs printed from the Farm Security Archive (FSA) (figs. 2–3). Each image has a black hole in the middle, disrupting the image in an almost violent fashion. Punched into the negatives by the Director of the FSA, Roy Stryker, the holes marked the decision that the images were no longer useful for the archive, but were nevertheless retained within it. As such, a new kind of archive was created, a cancelled archive. The American struggle is still evident in these images: the poverty-stricken house, the solitary figure of a woman at the doorway, the dry fields. The black circles are, as Pound comments, “a harbinger of trouble”:

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[79] Doreen Mende, "The Undutiful Daughter's Concept of Archival Metabolism", *e-flux journal*, no. 93 (September 2018): https://www.e-flux.com/journal/93/215339/the-undutiful-daughter-s-concept-of-archival-metabolism/, accessed 24 April 2019.

[80] Mende, "The Undutiful Daughter", 8.

> These images that have been cancelled offer an alternative archive of the indeterminacy of things; of peoples and of places. They speak of an archive subset—an archive of failure within a grand scheme, yet they have a quality all of their own to withstand their cancellation as negatives as they find a second life as printed evidence of their subjects and their master and the FSA photographers (known as “information officers”) in between.[81]

Pound arranges the photographs in a single line across a long wall so that the black discs float across as if in a sequence forming a passing black moon. As such, he binds the images into a new community, or fraternity. They come to share a fabric, even though they are diverse in their content. The cancelled archive is, as it were, re-imagined by Pound in his creation of an alternative structure. Not only have the images been excised from their original archive, they were also “cancelled” by that self-same archive. Here Pound deliberately wills them together again, through the intervention of the rise and fall of an imaginary moon.

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[81] Patrick Pound, email to author, 7 June 2017.

In consultation with the artists (the Australian artists were able to view the spaces prior to the exhibition installation) we placed a sequence of photographs by Hong Kong–Australian artist Cyrus Tang opposite Pound's images. Tang's suite of photographs *Lacrimae Rerum* (2016) begin with a city made of clay which is gradually dissolving in water (figs. 4–5). But Tang turns the city upside down, reversing the process so that it appears like a mirage. Each of these photographs is titled with a period of time exposure in seconds that the camera took to achieve this visual outcome, some of which were up to three and a half hours. The city in ruin transforms into intersecting planes of light, expressing a kind of shudder. *Lacrimae Rerum* is Latin for "tears for things", suggesting that the work is exploring a loss of the city.

The juxtaposition of Pound and Tang proposes the familiarity of co-belonging: they both simultaneously deal with a loss. For Pound it is the loss of the land during the Depression era along with the loss of the archive through its cancellation while in Tang's work it is the loss of the city in present-day China, where large sections are cleared to make way for new skyscrapers. As a result, the city's own historical archive is lost. In Pound's photographs we see the impact on the land of the Great Depression of the 1930s in photographs by Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans. In Tang we see a city literally dissolve. Underpinning each sequence of photographs is the unspoken history of the global financial crises of 1929 and 2008. Moreover, each artist actively alters our perspective on the photographic image.

Tang's work was in turn located next to a projected video by Chinese artist Cao Fei, which took as its subject the demolition of artisans' studios in contemporary Beijing. *Rumba II: Nomad* (2015) shows the debris of a building that is in the process of being destroyed to make way for another skyscraper in Beijing (not illustrated). In the video the dust is overwhelming and pervasive. The building used to be part of an urban fringe, where rural, artistic and industrial communities co-habited. We see a structure in the state of collapse, and Cao Fei inserts several characters into this concrete and brick ruin: robotic vacuum cleaners, fake plastic fowl, and a living community of people who occupy the space for different purposes including laborers, a child at play, another walking through the site, police, some men drinking, and a man dressed as a farmer, partly deranged, playing a saxophone in a discordant manner. The robotic vacuum cleaners (which also appear in a nearby installation on a plinth, *Rumba 01 & 02* (2016 – 2017), are choreographed into a dance—a rumba—attempting some kind of structured existence in the midst of chaos, yet unable to manage the debris around them. While the memory of the past is still present, albeit in a state of collapse, Cao Fei creates a new science fictional situation for these homeless inhabitants. They are both apart and together, co-existing in a strange futuristic space. While Tang imagines a dissolving city from the perspective of Australia (perhaps a memory of Hong Kong where she was born), Cao Fei works from within the city of Beijing. The works become familiar to one another through the idea of loss (present in Pound as well) along with processes of dissolution, crumbling and dust (which is also visible in the drought-stricken plains of the American Midwest).

Tang's works were spread throughout the exhibition, interspersed with works by other artists. As such, her work was not held within the space of one pavilion-like section of the exhibition. It was as if her works performed a choreography through the space in a sequence of co-belonging. The visitor would encounter her works throughout the space, as though her work was dancing in and through the experiences of other artists' works. In her 2016 – 2017 video works *The Final Cut Off—Daisy Kwok* and *The Final Cut Off—Alice Lim Kee,* Tang used historical photographs of the two women referred to in the title of the work, transposing the images into a photographic screen mesh (fig. 6). Tang scattered incense and ash through the screen onto trays of milk creating the outlines of the portraits. The artist then documented the ways in which the outlines began to move, distort and dissolve across the milky surface. She projected the resulting video images onto two Chinese scrolls suspended in the middle of the space within the exhibition. In search of a better future, the Australian-born Chinese women relocated to Shanghai in the early twentieth century, but eventually were caught up in the rise of Communism.[82] Like a memory that fades, the images distort and the ash and incense become a liquid abstraction. (Dust, ash and incense also have significance in Tang's childhood memories of offerings at shrines in Hong Kong.) The installation becomes a testament to the memory of the women (and by extension the plight of the Australian–Chinese people who returned to China in the early twentieth century) but it also enacts the quiet dissolution of memory and the archive.

Accompanying these works were Tang's encyclopaedia sculptures (fig. 7). For these works, the artist cremated volumes from *The Children's Encyclopaedia* (2016) and *The Modern World Encyclopaedia* (2017) in a kiln. Through this process, Tang creates a delicate afterlife for the books and they are transformed into concave forms and cascading volumes. This action recognises the looming death of the encyclopaedia, once the authoritative text at home or school. She writes, "to me, burning is not disappearing or destroying. It is a transformation of material; it is a convergence of past and present. The knowledge about this modern world disappears in the fire that burns away this book, and it brings to the heart of us the fact that people didn't learn from history".[83] These works invoke book burnings during dictatorial regimes and the associated censorship of modern knowledge and progressive literature.

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[82] The videos were originally created for an exhibition created by Hong Kong–Australian artist John Young, *Modernity's End: Half the Sky* 2016, ARC ONE Gallery, Melbourne. Alice Lim Kee had become a teacher, journalist and radio announcer in 1920s Shanghai. Daisy Kwok moved to Shanghai in the early 1900s with her family when her father founded a large department store. Daisy was the first woman in Shanghai to own and drive a car. After the Communists took over, Daisy's husband was imprisoned, and she lived in poverty.

If, as Enwezor suggests, following Foucault, the archive is a system of knowledge, here the system dissipates. All the discursive statements are literally burned, and we are left with the memory of the departed in the form of a delicate object where the words are no longer legible. And if, as Derrida suggests, the archive contains its own death drive, its fever, then here we see the archive's destruction, and the trauma of the repetition of history, the trauma embedded in the archive. The volumes are presented in a group on a large table, barely hanging onto the fact that they were part of a series of numbered volumes. Violently fragmented, they nevertheless come together, co-belonging as ruins in a world where encyclopaedic dictionaries are being replaced by virtual systems. These cremated encyclopaedias are metabolised, in the sense that they are transformed, altered, signalling the arrival of new systems of communication and knowledge.

From these two works by Tang, the viewer can see the work of Australian artist Tom Nicholson (figs. 8–10). Charcoal dust is Nicholson's medium in the installation *Cartoons for Joseph Selleny* (2012 – 2017). Rather than consider oneself as a product of a continuous temporal identity, the archive provides a discontinuous representation of history. Because of the gaps in the archive, any sense of the whole self or "transcendental" is prised open. The archive teaches us that we are the product of different histories, discourses, masks and distinctions. Four walls of a room were covered in a drawing from floor to ceiling that had been created by Nicholson through the Renaissance method of pouncing with porous cloth. Charcoal is ground up to make dust and large pieces of paper have been perforated with small holes so that when the charcoal-filled cloth is pounced through the holes, an image is created on the wall without being directly drawn. (This is a method used by Renaissance artists to transfer a drawing to a canvas.) The abstract expanse holds within it the imagery of Nicholson's original drawings that are based on four versions of *The Execution of Maximilian* painted by the French artist Edouard Manet between 1867 and 1869. Nicholson has produced preparatory drawings for these four versions of Manet's painting after the fact. The same Archduke Maximilian had sponsored an Austrian frigate that visited Sydney Harbour in 1858, resulting in the appropriation of Aboriginal objects that are now held in the Museum of Ethnology in Vienna. Joseph Selleny was the artist aboard the ship. For the exhibition, Nicholson also produced a small artist's book with imaginary texts addressing the journey of the Novara to Sydney. This montage of images, text, drawings and references leaves a great many fragmented narratives for the viewer to consider. In some ways, the letters that appear in the artist's book are the imaginary links between the visual elements of the installation. An example of what I term the hyphen of co-belonging, these letters responded to the opportunity of the gap in the archival stories of the past to be creatively enhanced and mobilised by the artist.

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[83] Cyrus Tang, email to author, 5 June 2017.

Located in the Museum's North Gallery, with a view across the landscape of the Yarra Valley, where stories of Aboriginal dispossession are equally present, Nicholson's installation comes to be about various acts of legibility: the written word, the drawings after Manet, and the abstract wall drawing. Violence is present in the images of the execution, in the act of perforating the drawings, and in the theft of the objects. The colonial explorations, borders and journeys continue to have a presence in museum archives around the world, where the results of colonial collecting remain in evidence. Nicholson's installation crosses epochs, countries and artistic disciplines. The large dust drawing is spatial—a place for the imagination to wander. It feels like it contains light and air, but its energy is not the incandescent energy of modernity ("all that is solid melts into air") but instead a quiet and delicate pulse of the human hand that contains within it the trace of the complex narratives chosen by Nicholson. Dust does not settle—it is always with us, its abject stray particles invisible to the eye, circulating in the air and stirred by our mobility through space.

The central room of the Museum, the Main Gallery, featured two video-installations by Turkish artist Didem Erk. *"I wish I could not be traced in the archives" (Sırkıran I Secret Decipherer I Mistiko Spastis)* (2013) and *"I wish I could not be traced in the archives" (Mekanım Datça Olsun | May Datça Be My Resting Place)* (2017) are each two-channel video installations where the screens are opposite one another (figs. 11–12). In the 2013 video we see the artist walking on both sides of the border between the Turkish and Greek sections of the Cypriot city of Nicosia. The artist is reading from a text by Gür Genç, or Gürgenç Korkmazel, a poet, writer, translator and literary editor.[84] As Erk completes each page, she tears it from the book, chews it and then abandons it on the path. This action recalls the popular cinematic device of reading a secret message during war and eating the evidence so that it cannot be traced. Yet the chewed pages do leave a trace, a line of evidence that follows the artist's physical trajectory. The second video created especially for the exhibition, is located in Datça, the rural area where the artist lives.

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[84] Born in 1969 in the Republic of Cyrus, Paphos, he lived for four years in Turkey and seven years in Britain, resettling in Cyprus in 2003. Between 1992 and 2005 he published four books of poetry, and, in 2007, a collection of short stories.

Datça is a small town that divides the Aegean and Mediterranean and a natural border where refugees cross over to Greece. Their perilous journeys have resulted in dead bodies being washed up on shore several times in recent years. One channel of the video is performed in Gereme facing the Aegean, the other channel is performed in Knidos, facing the Mediterranean. Erk reads from a book called *Mekanım Datça Olsun* (*May Datça Be My Resting Place*) by Can Yücel (1926 – 1999), one of the foremost Turkish poets and writers known for his use of colloquial language.[85]

Erk encounters multiple kinds of borders: natural, political and national. These actions of walking on a borderline, reading about place and chewing pages of a book, situate the landscape as an archive or library—as a place that holds stories within it. Erk comments:

> The pathways I walk are non-places which have no specific identity. We see no people, only the sea. We hear no voices, only the wind and the waves. I don't walk from point A to point B but the total isolation and feeling of being trapped creates a link with the words of

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[85] He studied classics at Ankara University and then at Cambridge University, before working as a translator at several Turkish embassies and then as a Turkish announcer at the BBC in London for five years. After moving to Istanbul in 1965, he also became a freelance translator. During his years in Istanbul, he pursued his political interests by continuing his support for the Labour party. It was during these years in Istanbul, following the Military Coup in 1971, that Yücel was first sentenced to fifteen years of imprisonment because of two translations. He was released in 1974 because of a general amnesty.

> the poems that are read aloud … As long as I walk, I eat the memories and nothing is set still. Sunset and sunrise remind the viewer of the temporary feeling of time.[86]

Erk positioned the screens on the North/South axis of the Museum, and the viewer was located in between the screens, as if on a border. The soundtracks were intermingled and this level of disorientation meant that the viewer experienced a kind of sonic instability.

Since 2015 Erk has worked on a series of installations with second-hand books that have been censored—such as by Can Yücel. She comments:

> To cover something sometimes makes it visible, to underline or to cross-out a word makes it legible. How does the memory relate to performativity? Pages are sewn word-by-word, sentence-by-sentence. The act obliterates the legibility but it connects the thread of writing and thread of sewing. The needle working through the page operates an invisible violence. However sewing is also a form of healing that asks the question, how is it possible to connect all the words (ideas) on the page, how to heal them?[87]

For this exhibition, she chose two books that were once censored in Australia, sourcing actual copies of the editions that were banned: James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (figs. 13‒14). Like the black discs in *Cancelled archive* by Patrick Pound, or the cremated remains of encyclopaedias in the works of Cyrus Tang, the piercing of needle and thread enacts a kind of violence on the page, while also representing a suturing, or healing, across the words, pages, and book. To pierce and sew, to cancel out the word with the thread, is also an abject process, a crying out, as Kristeva contends, in order to disturb the borders of power and the archive.

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[86] Didem Erk, "Artist Statement", *TarraWarra International 2017: All that is solid…* (Healesville: TarraWarra Museum of Art, 2017), 50–51.

[87] Didem Erk, "Artist Statement", 51.

There is a clash of parts both within and between the works of Erk and Nicholson. They are each made up of segments—texts, books, images, journeys both implied and real, archives–and their juxtaposition creates an intermingling of sensations. As Rancière suggests, there is both a conflict between and separation of these elements, along with the shaping of "continuous phrasing", the "pure continuity of the uncoupled sentence".[88] Their juxtaposition is an "expression of intense co-presence".[89] This co-belonging is reflected in the combination of their works in the exhibition (each was visible to the other).

VIII. Conclusion

The artists in *All that is solid…* create worlds and situations based on lived experiences. They dissolve, fragment and prise apart significant histories, and reassemble situations anew. Their works question "all that is solid", reframing memories, borders, journeys and archives in heterogeneous combinations. The viewer comes to know each situation through the action of the artist. They become our guide, and so the artwork is not fixed, but part of a fluid process of exploration, residue and co-belonging. There is an underlying violence embedded in the processes of cutting, tearing, piercing, melting, burning, ruining, and cancelling—perhaps reflecting the continuing violence that is enacted on landscapes and cityscapes. As the title of the exhibition suggests, today, the maelstroms of contemporary life do not settle, the dust continues to circulate and imagery is perpetually transforming. But there are also moments of great fragility and, at times, humour, in these imaginative situations. The co-belonging at play in this exhibition is aimed at dismantling the authority of the archive, de-framing it as it were, and cleaving open a space between what we see and what we know. In the context of artworks that provide counter-archival strategies, the curatorial co-belonging that was needed in this particular exhibition allows for uncertainty, fragility, non-alignments and incommensurable connections. This is not a compact assemblage of art objects. Rather it is a spatial situation of porous connections that embrace the familiarity, the hyphen, and the connection to the world around us—and its loss—that the concept of co-belonging engenders. As such, the artists in the exhibition reveal hidden traumas in history, and break the archival death drive, stopping it in its whirling energy, and resisting its endless hunger for more and more statements. The exhibition is a comment on our world, and a call to the visitor to consider such urgent issues as censorship, unlawful colonisation, global financial hardship, the impact of borders and the dissolution of systems of knowledge in our digital age.

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[88] Jacques Rancière, *The Future of the Image*, trans. Gregory Elliot (London: Verso, 2007), 58–59.

[89] Rancière, *The Future of the Image*, 62.

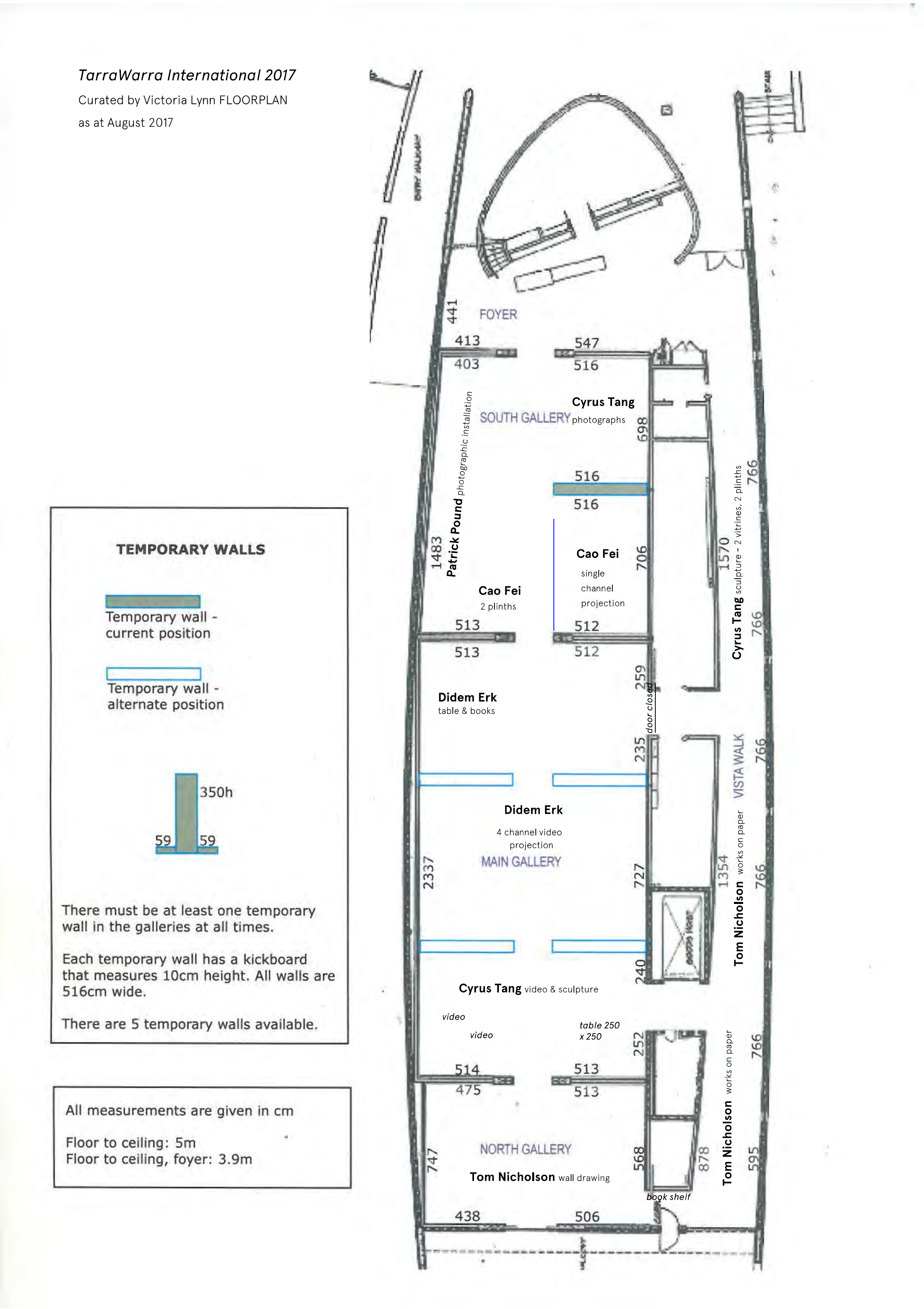
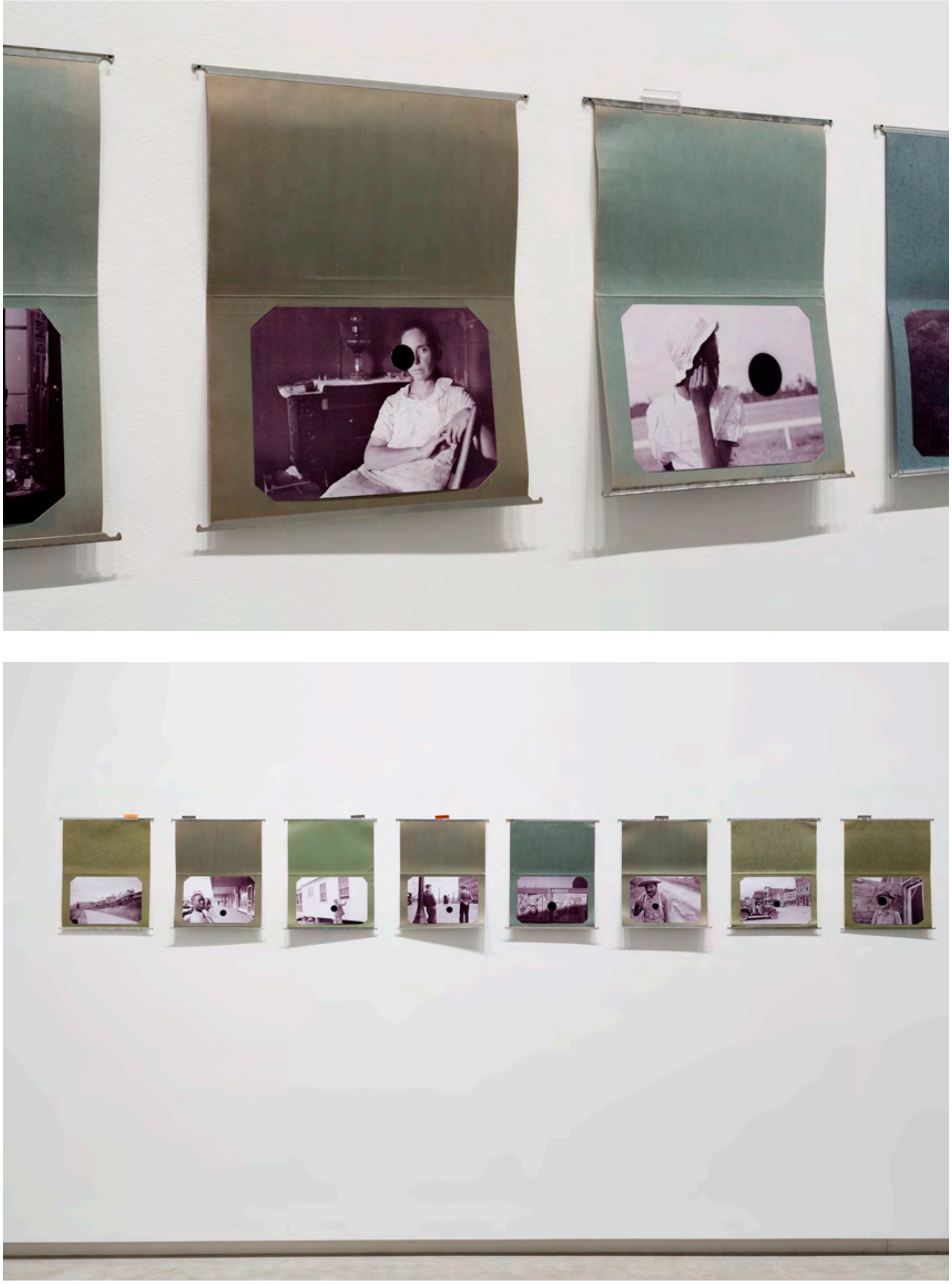
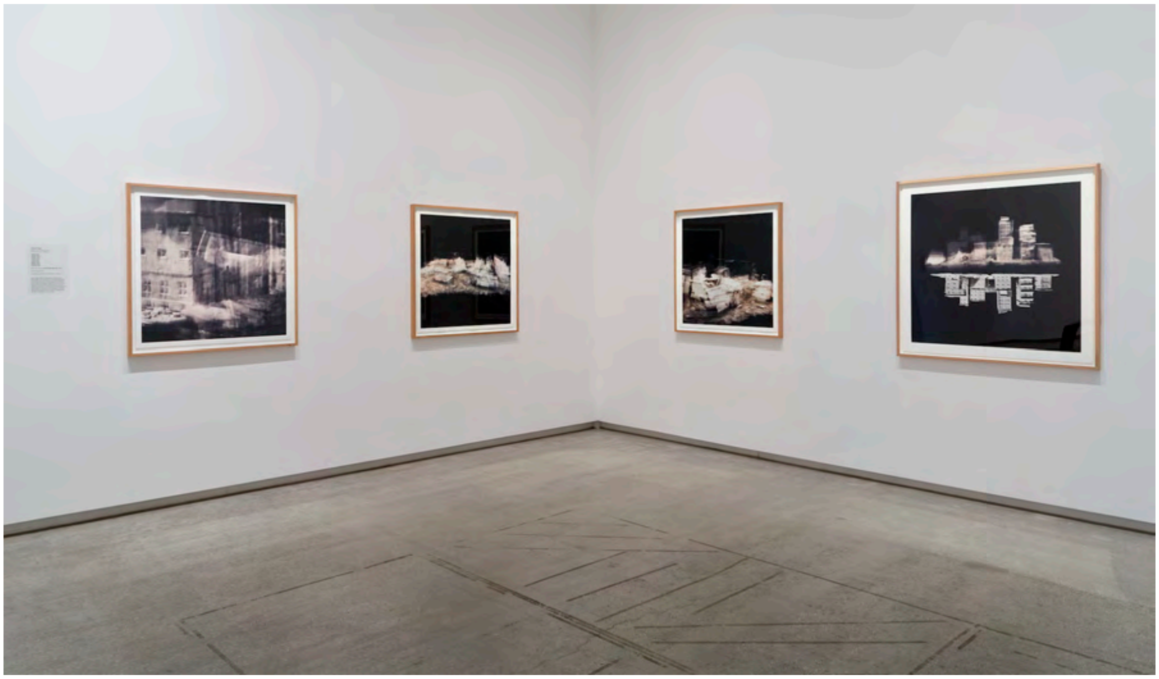
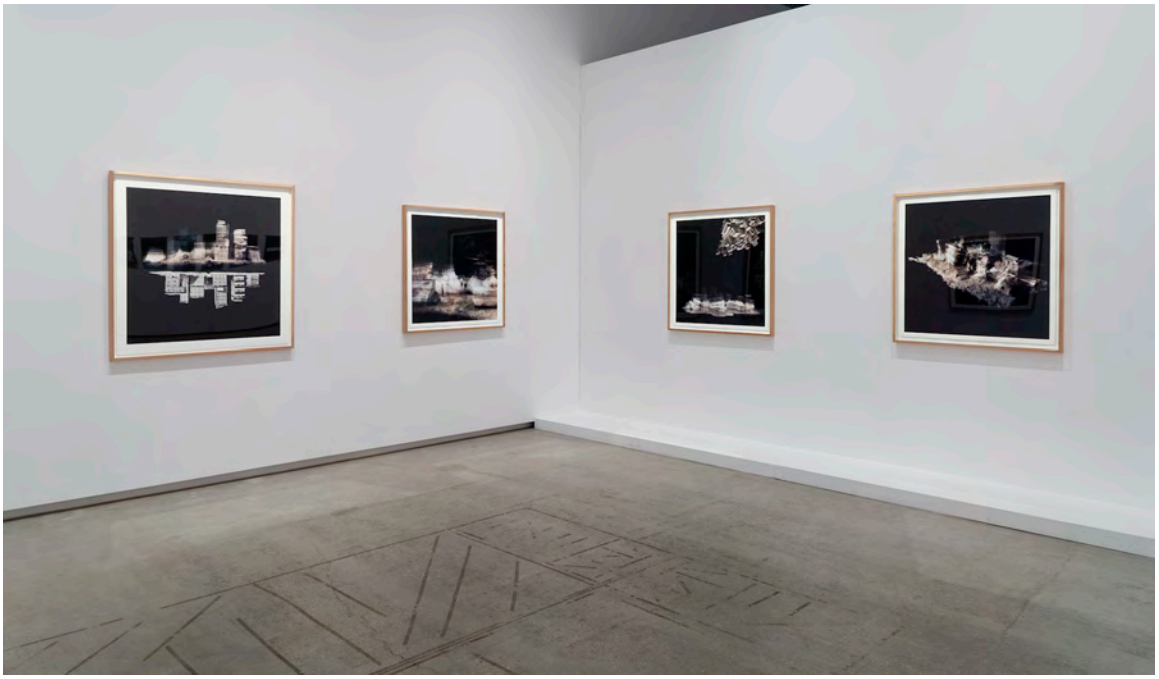

TarraWarra International 2017
Curated by Victoria Lynn FLOORPLAN
as at August 2017
TEMPORARY WALLS
Temporary wall - current position
Temporary wall - alternate position
350h
59
59
There must be at least one temporary wall in the galleries at all times.
Each temporary wall has a kickboard that measures 10cm height. All walls are 516cm wide.
There are 5 temporary walls available.
All measurements are given in cm
Floor to ceiling: 5m
Floor to ceiling, foyer: 3.9m
FOYER
441
413
403
547
516
SOUTH GALLERY
Cyrus Tang photographs
698
Patrick Pound photographic installation
1483
516
516
Cao Fei single channel projection
706
Cao Fei 2 plinths
513
513
512
512
Cyrus Tang sculpture - 2 vitrines, 2 plinths
1570
766
766
Didem Erk table & books
259
door closed
235
VISTA WALK
766
Didem Erk 4 channel video projection
MAIN GALLERY
2337
727
1354
Tom Nicholson works on paper
766
240
Cyrus Tang video & sculpture
video
video
table 250 x 250
252
514
475
513
513
Tom Nicholson works on paper
766
NORTH GALLERY
747
568
878
595
Tom Nicholson wall drawing
book shelf
438
506

Fig. 1. *All that is solid…,* floorplan.



Figures 2 and 3. Patrick Pound, *Cancelled Archive* (2017), found photographs (from FSA negatives held in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.), dimensions variable, installation view. Photography: Christian Capurro.





Figures 4 and 5. Cyrus Tang, *Lacrimae Rerum* series (2016), archival giclée prints, installation view. Photography: Christian Capurro.

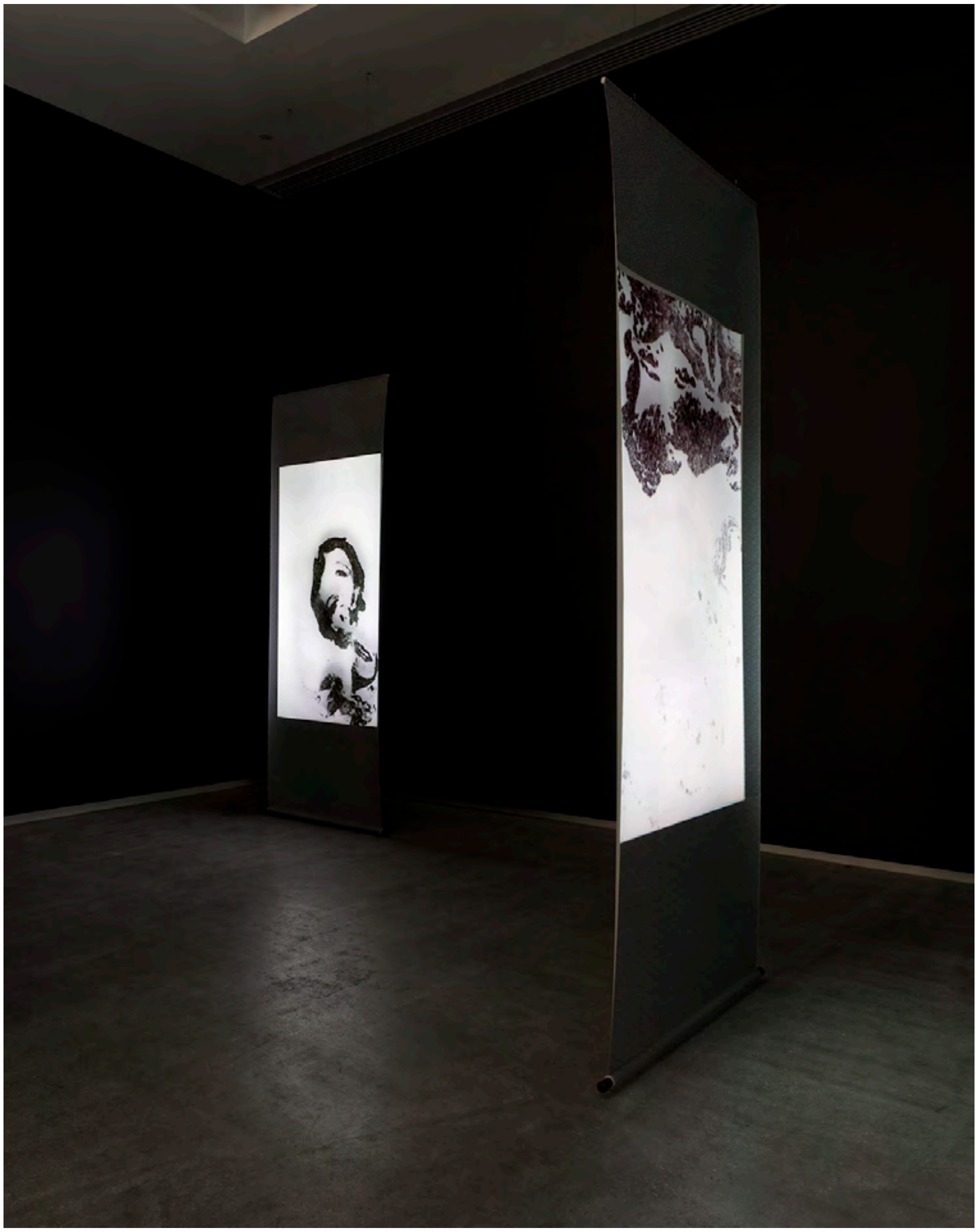


Fig. 6. Cyrus Tang, *The Final Cut Off—Alice Lim Kee* (2016 – 2017), video projection on traditional Chinese rice paper scroll, 8:05 min. *The Final Cut Off—Daisy Kwok* (2016–17), video projection on traditional Chinese rice paper scroll, 8:05 min. Installation view. Photography: Christian Capurro.

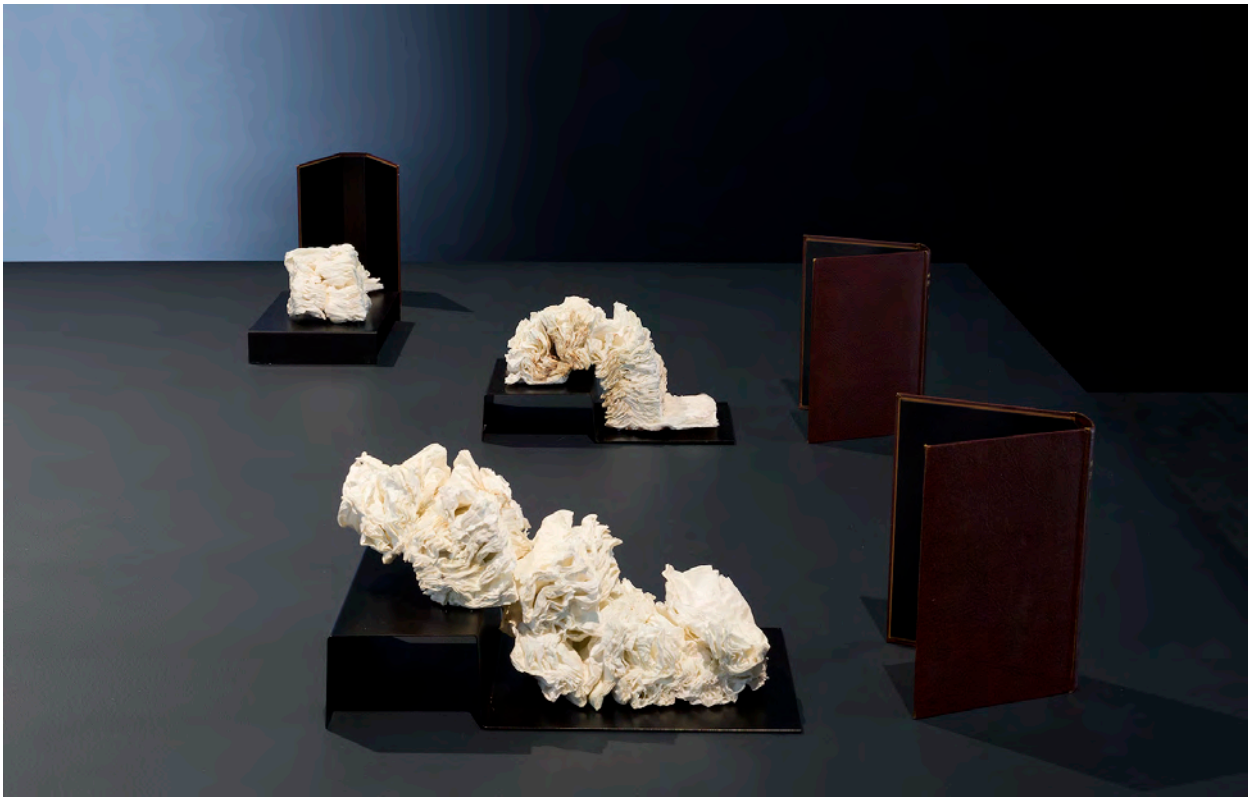


Fig. 7. Cyrus Tang, *The Modern World Encyclopaedia Vol 1–8* (2017), cremated book ashes, book cover, dimensions variable, installation view. Photography: Christian Capurro.

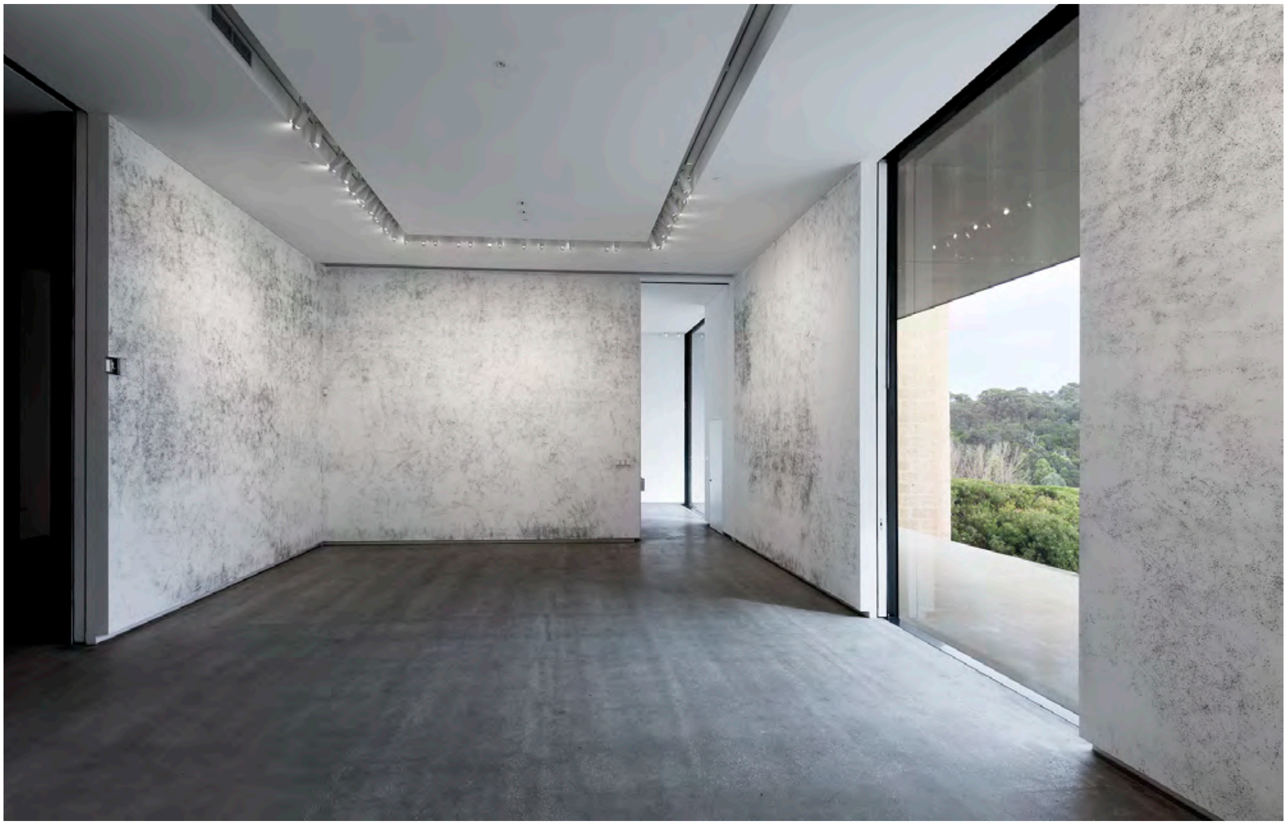


Fig. 8. Tom Nicholson, *Cartoons for Joseph Selleny* (2012 – 2017), installation view of wall drawing created through pouncing with cheesecloth full of ground charcoal, dimensions variable. Photography: Christian Capurro.

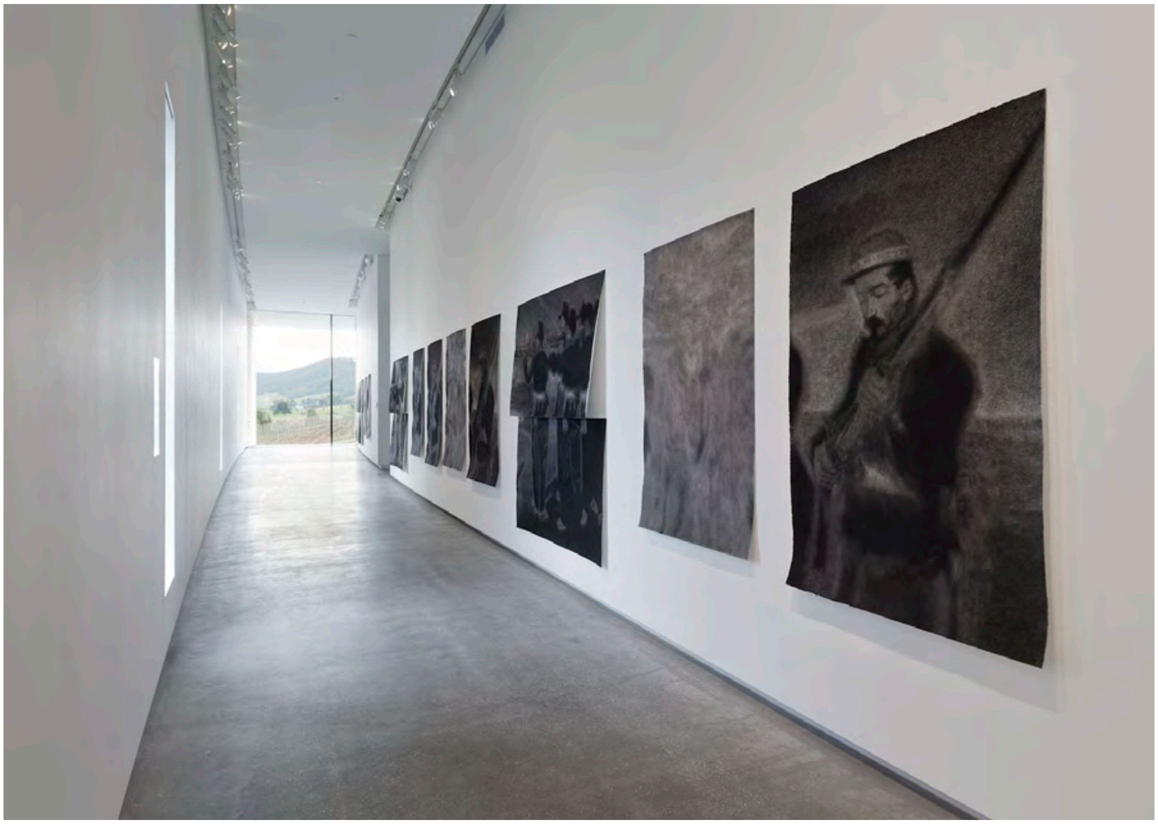


Fig. 9. Tom Nicholson, *Cartoons for Joseph Selleny* (2012 – 2017), installation view of 12 cartoons. Photography: Christian Capurro.

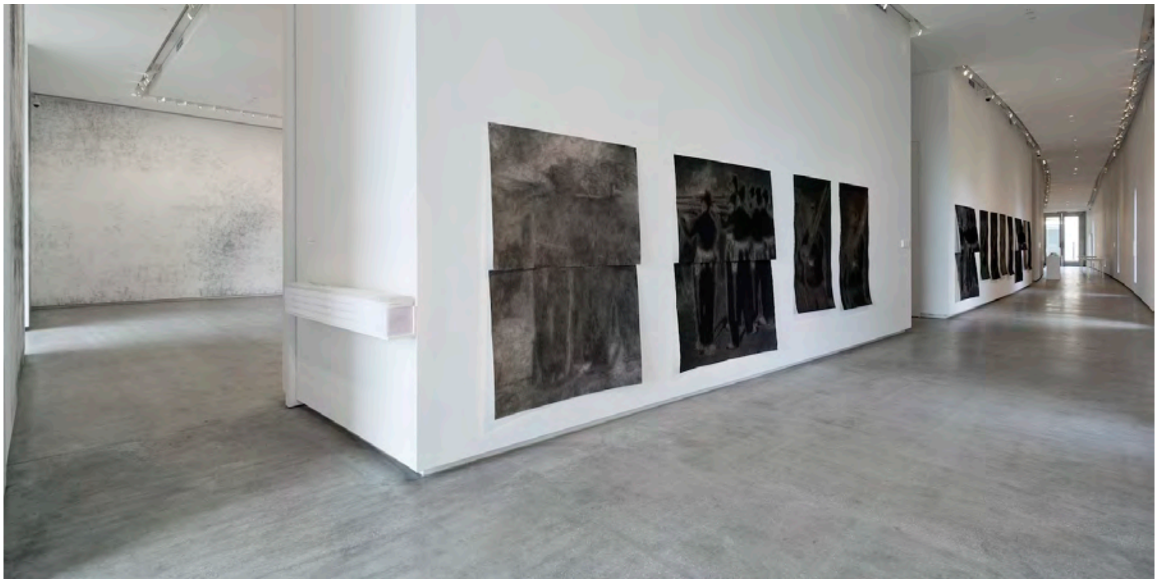


Fig. 10. Tom Nicholson, *Cartoons for Joseph Selleny* (2012 – 2017), installation view of 12 cartoons, charcoal wall drawing and off-set printed artist's book to take. Photography: Christian Capurro.

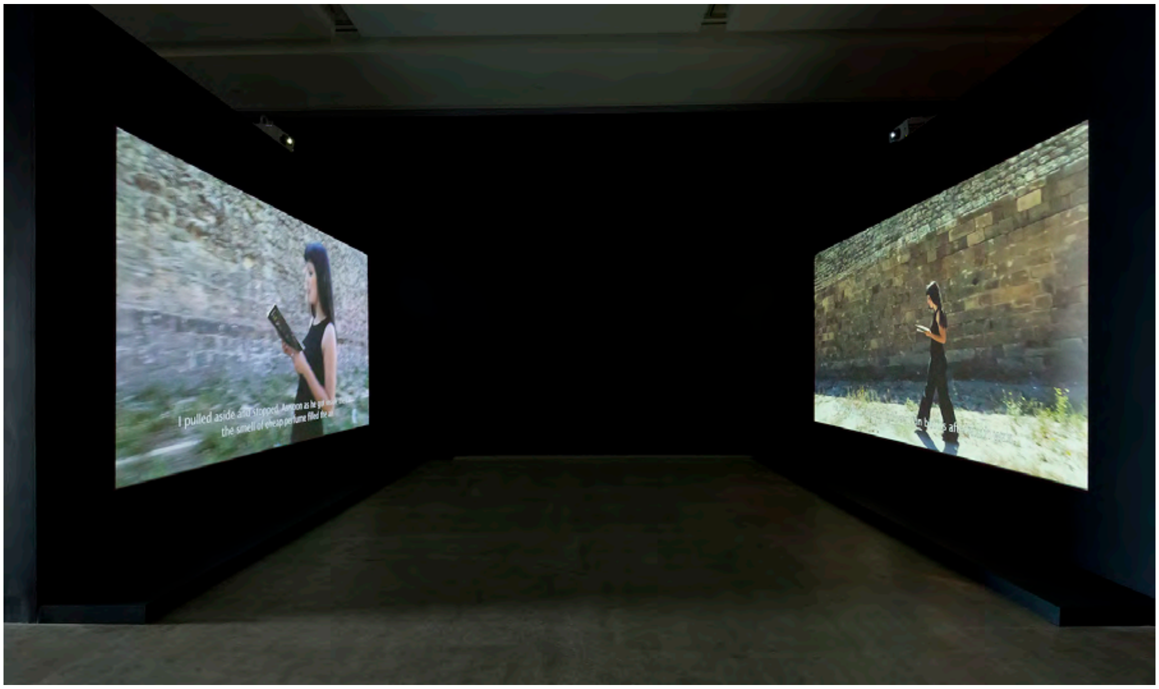


Fig. 11. Didem Erk, *"I wish I could not be traced in the archives" (Sırkıran I Secret Decipherer I Mistiko Spastis)* (2013), installation view. Photography: Christian Capurro.

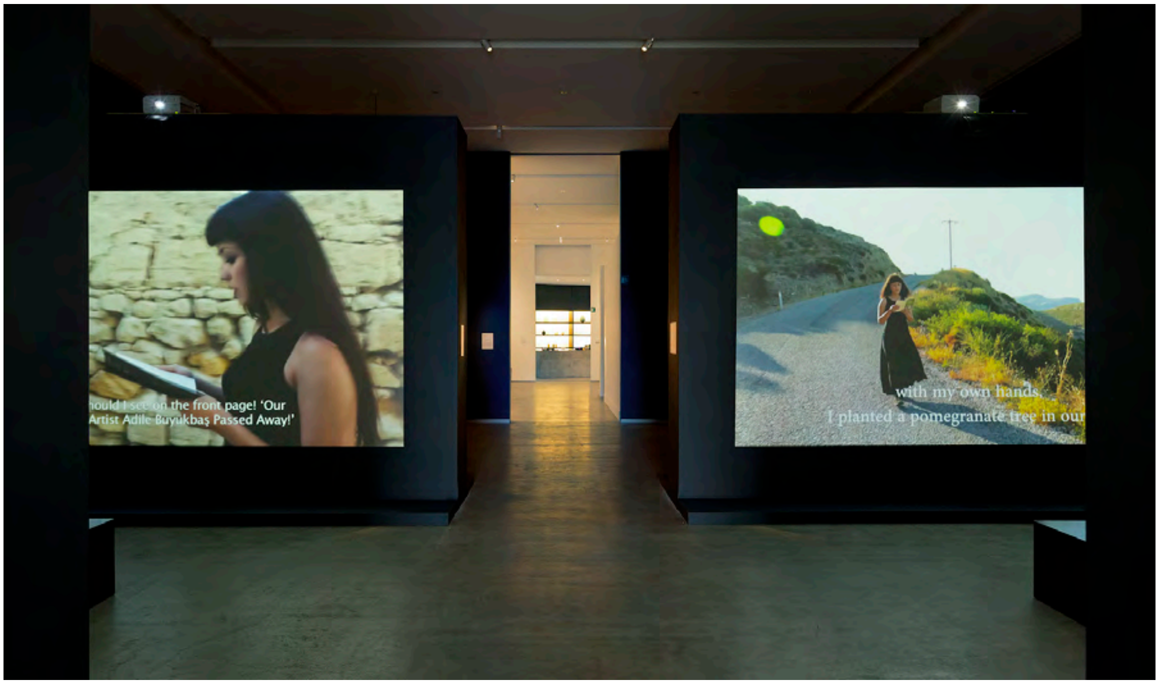

the front page! 'Our
Artist Adile Büyükbaş Passed Away!'
with my own hands,
I planted a pomegranate tree in our

Fig. 12. Left: Didem Erk, *"I wish I could not be traced in the archives" (Sırkıran I Secret Decipherer I Mistiko Spastis)* (2013). Right: Didem Erk, *"I wish I could not be traced in the archives" (Mekanım Datça Olsun | May Datça Be My Resting Place)* (2017) installation view. Photography: Christian Capurro.

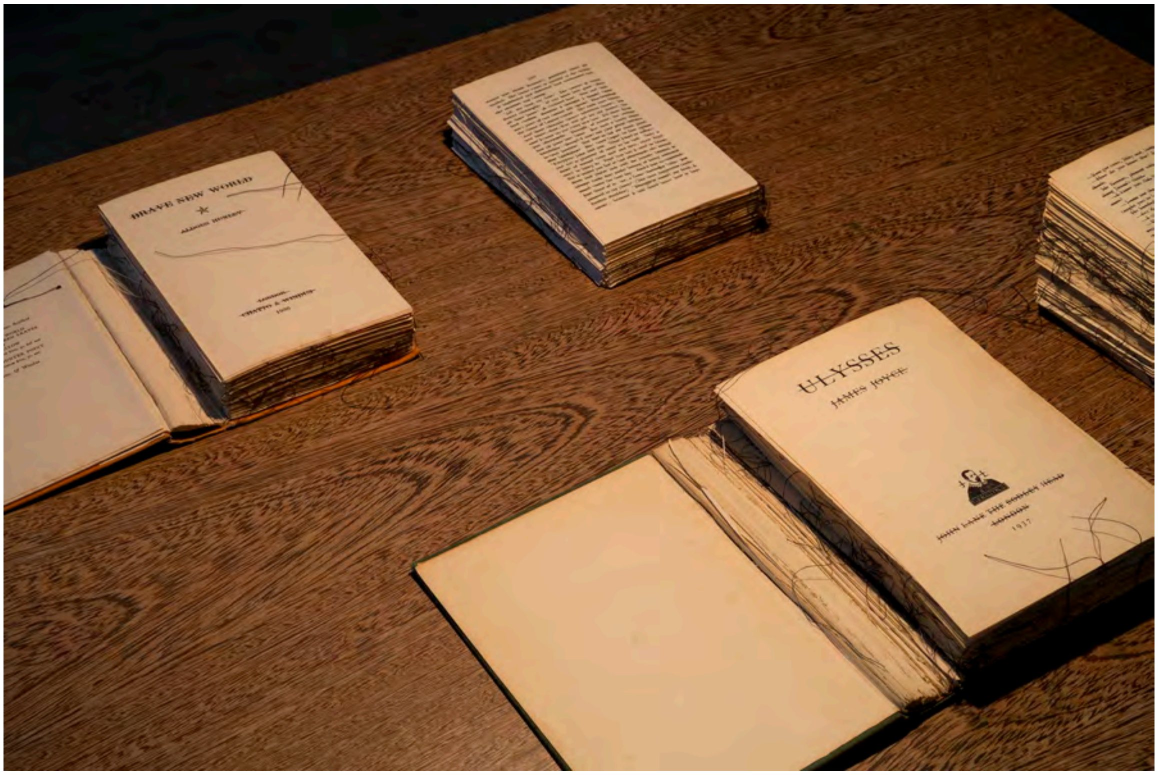


Fig. 13. Didem Erk, *Black Thread* (2016 – 2017), detail, installation, sewn books, wooden table, wooden chair, light, dimensions variable, installation view. Photography Christian Capurro.

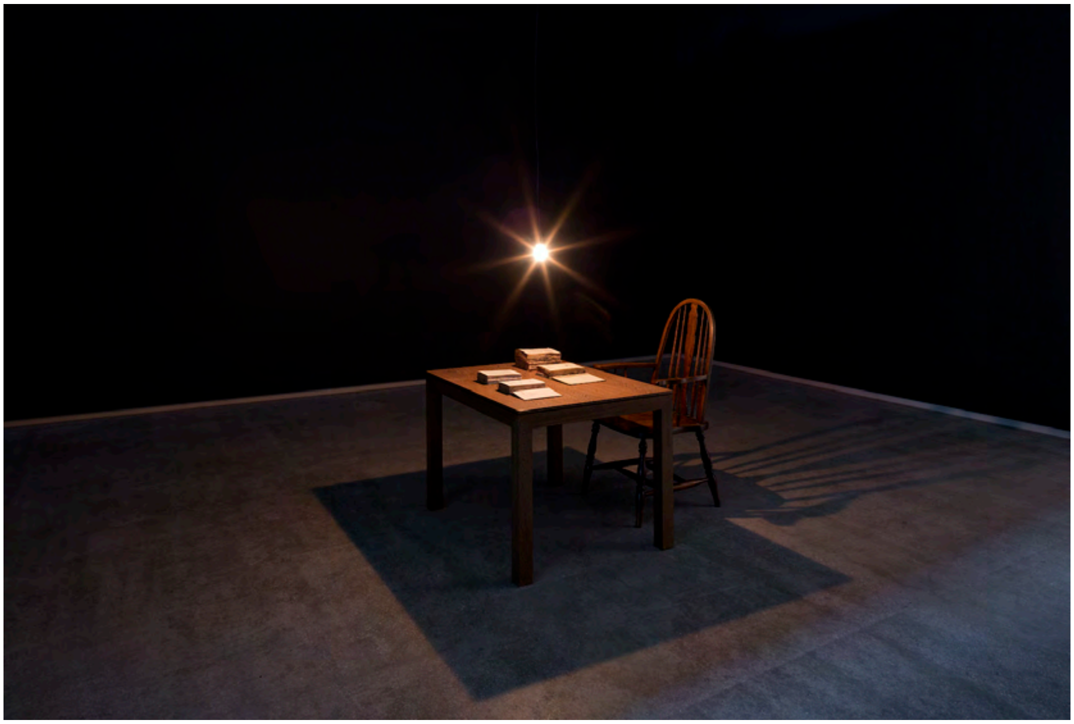


Fig. 14. Didem Erk, *Black Thread* (2016 – 2017), installation, sewn books, wooden table, wooden chair, light, dimensions variable, installation view. Photography Christian Capurro.

Chapter 3

The Tangible Trace

The Tangible Trace exhibition included the works of Simryn Gill, Hiwa K, Shilpa Gupta, Carlos Capelán, Francis Alÿs and Sangeeta Sandresegar.[1] Each artist's work was presented as if it were a one-person exhibition, situated in what I term a "pavilion" of their own. The works were linked through the metaphor of trace. Even though the visitor could not necessarily see one work in juxtaposition with another, the works echoed each other through their shared concern with the traces and fragments of our everyday world. The spaces between each work were deliberately intended to be a space for the visitor to ponder and reflect on the works, and their assemblage in the exhibition. This chapter discusses the exhibition in the context of the overall concept of curatorial co-belonging. After an introduction to the exhibition through the work of Simryn Gill, I introduce a suite of concepts relevant to the work of the artists in the following sections: (I) trace; (II) co-belonging; (III) proximity; (IV) dialectical images and (V) passages. Following the circuit of the exhibition's floorplan, (fig. 15), these five sections build through the chapter accumulatively to realise the spatial co-belonging at play in the exhibition.

A poem by the Australian modernist artist and poet, Joy Hester, is the source of the title of the exhibition. In her 1947 poem, *Sleep*, she uses the phrase: "the tangible shadow".[2] If we understand the term "tangible" through its dictionary definition, to mean the ability to be physically touched, then we can interpret Hester's phrase as an oxymoron, because a shadow cannot be touched. In essence a shadow is ephemeral and takes no physical form. Through poetic licence, however, Hester highlights the shadow (the double) of the object, suggesting that there are depths and meanings therein that might not be obvious. By intimating that the shadow is tangible, Hester brings it closer to us. She magnifies its significance and reconfigures our sense of what tangible means. Hester's phrase struck me because at the time I read it, I was still exploring concepts for the exhibition, while in discussion with Australian artist, Sangeeta Sandrasegar, about her work. Sandrasegar works with shadows, so much so that they are often more significant than the solid forms in her works. For the exhibition title, I transposed the term "shadow" with the term "trace", because trace provides a wider resonance for the exhibition, and affords the opportunity to include a variety of artworks. Like a shadow, a trace—in the form of a residue, or material fragment, or an outline—may at first appear inconsequential. However, much like the impact of an afterthought, traces can indeed contain within them the potential to both be touched, and to touch us, to convey a set of meanings that are greater than might at first appear to be possible. The term trace is both a verb and a noun and both are deeply important to art making. It can be an action—tracing an outline or tracing a journey—and an object, such as an archaeological record or a material remnant. Traces remain, they are present in our world, and also beckon a memory of their past life, situation or objecthood.

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[1] *TarraWarra International 2019: The Tangible Trace* was exhibited at TarraWarra Museum of Art, Healesville, Victoria, 8 June – 1 September 2019.

[2] Joy Hester, "Sleep" (1947), in *Joy Hester*, Janine Burke (Sydney: Random House, 1983), 199–200.

As the viewer entered the exhibition *The Tangible Trace*, she was faced with hundreds of stone fragments collected by the artist Simryn Gill for her installation *Domino Theory* (2014) (figs. 16–17). Comprising a group of custom made, internally lit wooden vitrines with glass shelves, this work included scores of stones and a smattering of shells of various sizes, weights, colours and shapes. Gill collects these objects during her walks at the edges of the shore of her hometown of Port Dickson, Malaysia (Gill works between Port Dickson and Sydney, Australia). Worn by water over time, some of the natural forms are the size of a bread crumb and would eventually be absorbed by the ebb and flow of the sea. The Strait of Malacca is a busy shipping route and also experiences king tides. After a tide, various flotsam and jetsam are left behind. Gill says that this is “the domestic alter of use and abuse, attachment and detachment, in the rhythms of small, provincial lives”.[3] It is impossible to know how long it takes for a stone to become so tiny, and it is impossible to know how big it was in the first place. In the exhibition, we were presented with traces of an “original” larger stone whose dimensions, weight, colour and scale can only be imagined. They appeared in relation to one another, often in grid-like arrangements as if by a careful collector, prompting us to question: does a larger rock represent how a smaller fragment once looked? Do the two, placed side by side, have a kind of chronological connection, or are they on different pathways and different trajectories?

Additionally, the pink-toned teak vitrines included a number of cube-like forms that the artist has created from soil that she found in and around termite mounds in Port Dickson (fig. 17). The vitrines, then, housed items both found and made, as if collapsing the distinction between the fact and fiction of these material traces. Termites make the mound with a mixture of dung, saliva and soil. These are complex structures, with a central chimney and various chambers in which the termites store their food—primarily wood and fungal matter. Gill’s cubes vary in colour depending on what kind of soil the termites have brought to their mound. Varying from soft greys, darker grey, beige and brown, each cube created by Gill bears the traces of the colour of its original earthen location. A reflection on the idea of the building block itself, Gill’s cubes make a reference to both the natural processes engaged by the termites to construct their mounds, and a modernist icon—the white cube—that has been central to theoretical discussions of modernist gallery architecture and minimalism.[4] In this way, Gill's cubes come to be self-reflexive modules that collapse nature's building blocks (the termite soil) with that of modernism (the museum interior).

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[3] Simryn Gill, *Pressing In* (Melbourne: Negative Press, 2016), 3.

A product of an artist's obsessive and forever deepening act of understanding the minutiae of her surroundings, Gill's vitrines did not look like they belong inside the white seamless cube-like spaces of TarraWarra Museum of Art. The cabinets were arranged in what seemed to be a random or haphazard order. They were not placed in a grid, instead compressing the ways in which the viewer circumnavigated their contents. The viewer had to double back, walk one way then the next in order to see each object. This is an artist's archive, but one that has no obvious beginning, middle or end; no chronology. As we looked upon a shelf, we saw the shelf below, and an optical shift was at play, where the patterns created for the upper most shelves, were penetrated, through our line of sight, by the assemblages from below. At the base is a mirror, and we saw the underside of the objects. The clarity of the view at first promised by the vitrine comes to be entangled by the arrangement of the items, just as the implied promise of an archive is complicated by the artist's own production of the termite cubes. Gill's cabinets are not heirs to the Wunderkammer of the sixteenth century (a precursor to the modern museum which included curios assembled by aristocracy, across the sciences, arts and antiquities) nor are they assembled according to scientific museum displays. Rather, they have their antecedents in the ecological and conceptual practices of artists in the 1970s such as Australia's John Davis (1936–99), or Germany's Nikolaus Lang (1941–) who, exhibiting in the Biennale of Sydney in 1979, collected and arranged piles of earth in different colours, in order to develop an increased awareness of changes to the natural world, albeit an awareness that was filtered through the conceptual propensity to serialise or number the objects. Gill's work is more acutely attuned to the climatic changes in our contemporary midst. As curator, Naomi Cass, has commented, "from gathering through to sculpture, Gill makes a quiet but determined enquiry of the world around the question—what it is to be human alongside nature."[5]

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[4] Brian Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: the Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Santa Monica, CA: Lapis Press, 1986).

Domino Theory, the title of the work, refers to a political concept propagated during the Cold War (1947–91) that if one country came under the impact of communism, others around it would soon follow. In particular, it was applied to the fear of an on-flow of communism from China throughout South East Asia, becoming the main justification of the US military intervention into Vietnam. The theory refers to an ancient game of numbers and chance, first mentioned during the Song Dynasty in China, in which the domino, one rectangular black piece with white dots, is joined to another with matching dots in order to form a line. These blocks can also be lined up on their edges so that they "fall", hence the proposition that countries infected by communism will also fall one by one. The title suggests a political dimension. In Gill's lifetime, the borders of Malaysia have changed (she was born in Singapore when it was part of Malaysia). The region has also experienced extended periods of British occupation. As her repeated visits to the coast of Port Dickson attest, location is very important to the artist, but this is not a location framed by the larger questions of nation state. Instead, she proposes a sense of place that is evidenced and read through its minute material traces.

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[5] Naomi Cass, "Simryn Gill: On the Verge" in *The Tangible Trace* (Healesville: TarraWarra Museum of Art, 2019), 58.

The previous chapter established that the artists in *All that is solid…*worked with archival fragments—photographic, textual, written and drawn—and arranged them in new contexts created by the artist in order to comment upon and critique the notion of the archive. Similarly, Gill has created her own archive, using nature's abject detritus to give the fragment a greater visibility and significance. Her archive misbehaves. Rather than follow the "law" of the archive, it instead invokes what Doreen Mende refers to as "the undutiful daughter's concept of archival metabolism."[6] Drawing on the title of the book, *Undutiful daughters: new directions in feminist thought and practice,* Mende says,[7]

> Inhabiting the place of the daughter is not a matter of biological essentialism or of provided subjectivity; instead, we become an undutiful daughter through, as Rosi Braidotti suggests, a process of "conceptual disobedience".[8] (Anyone can become an undutiful daughter.) In other words, she does not struggle for representation and recognition within the logic of the law; rather, she continuously rehearses the actualization of intensities and forces (Deleuze) by radically challenging the archive's mind-set.[9]

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[6] Doreen Mende, "The Undutiful Daughter's Concept of Archival Metabolism", *e-flux journal*, no. 93 (September 2018): https://www.e-flux.com/journal/93/215339/the-undutiful-daughter-s-concept-of-archival-metabolism/, accessed 24 April 2019.

[7] Henriette Gunkel, Chrysanthi Nigianni and Fanny Söderbäck, eds., *Undutiful Daughters: New Directions in Feminist Thought and Practice* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

[8] Braidotti, "Preface: The Society of Undutiful Daughters" in Gunkel et. al., 12.

[9] Mende, "The Undutiful Daughter's Concept of Archival Metabolism", 4.

Similarly, Gill is “undutiful” because she eschews a single way of approaching the archive. The metamorphosis of the material traces is imprecise, their temporality is not measured and the objects speak to a different set of principles from the patriarchal structure of the archive—they are abject, unidentified and unpredictable. Their abjectness is evident in the fact that the worn stones are leftovers scattered on the beach. They are not identified, although there is a level of sorting that has been carried out in terms of types of stones. The unpredictability lies in the fact that each time they are displayed, they can be rearranged. As such, they give rise to an “undutiful” set of combinations that are varied and broken. This is a polyphonic voice rather than a patriarchal one.

Gill’s *Domino Theory* introduced the visitor to a number of themes that are relevant not only to the exhibition as a whole, but also to the broader curatorial theories of this exegesis. These themes will be discussed at length in the following chapter sections, but I close by briefly showing how Gill’s work evokes them all—as such, this work is a paradigmatic introduction to both this chapter and the exhibition. Firstly: *Trace*, or the ways in which a trace fragment, such as a stone found by the beach, invokes not only its “present” materiality, its objecthood, but also, the “absence” of what has been worn away by a fluctuating ocean. A trace is not only “tangible” but has value: it is something to be found, touched, collected and remembered. *Co-belonging*, section two, is the artistic and curatorial method of assembling an undutiful archive where stacked, clustered, lined up and juxtaposed pieces belong with each other, but do not subsume one another. *Proximity*, section three, is the encouragement for us to look down at minute fragments, that are close to one another and to us; and the fact that she collects the fragments from the beach near her home in Port Dickson. *Dialectic*, section four, argues that a trace is, by its very nature, dialectic—in that it is both from the past, and exists in our time—just as Gill's assemblage of fragments sit within a dialectic relationship to the Museum itself. *Passages*, section five, Gill walks along the shore, collecting her traces, and we walked in and through her cabinets, absorbing the ebb and flow of their material assemblages.

I. Trace

One of the first Classical texts to associate the idea of trace with the act of making art is Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* (CE 77–79) in which he writes that while the geographic location of the first painting is uncertain, "all agree that it began with tracing an outline around a man's shadow and consequently that pictures were originally done in this way".[10] He cites the myth of Butades, a potter from Sicyon, Corinth, who modelled what were thought to be the first portraits from clay in approximately 600BC. Butades' daughter Kora had made a profile drawing of her lover's shadow before he departed for battle. Butades, in turn, pressed clay onto his daughter's drawing and made a relief. What is most significant for my research, is not so much that Butades went on to create ceramic tiles with portraits, but that his daughter made a trace of a shadow.[11] The myth has led to numerous interpretations in the history of art, such as Jean-Baptiste Regnault's *L'Origine de la Peinture* (1786), which hangs in the palace of Versailles.

Contemporary philosopher Hagi Kenaan has observed the wider philosophical implications of this particular trace, suggesting that Kora

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[10] Pliny the Elder, *Natural History, XXXV*, trans. H. Rackman (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Loeb Classical Library, 1952), 15.

[11] Pliny is here discussing the "birth of painting" in terms that are not actually about the act of painting, but rather drawing and sculpture.

> draws the first line as she finds herself in and responds to an unresolved tension intrinsic to the human condition. This is the tension between the character of the world as a domain of meaningful things which we want and love and care about and the character of the world as a place in which we inevitably also find ourselves separated and cut off from, forsaken by the things and people we care about and love … Her act is not an attempt to replace absence with a new form of presence but, on the contrary, it reflects an attempt to create a new place for her self in between the opposite poles of *absence and presence*.[12]

Kenaan's comment suggests that the act of tracing is not simply to observe or record the world around us, but to reflect upon and indeed intervene in it. As Kora's memorialisation of her lover shows, a creative action can cleave out a "new place" for the self in between the "poles of absence and presence". While the act of tracing the shadow becomes a way to preserve, retain, and remember what is absent, we can also understand the resultant trace, as a method of being in the world, relating to the world, and finding one's place in it. A trace, then is not simply a residue, it is a relationship with what has gone, and what remains.

In addition to the Classical tradition, the idea of trace has a particular potency in the context of Australian Indigenous histories. At TarraWarra Museum of Art, I have worked closely with local Indigenous elders, such as Aunty Joy Murphy Wandin, and I have pursued a rigorous policy of showing work by First Nation artists, several of whom have researched and sought permission to reference the local history of Coranderrk, an Aboriginal station that was located in what is modern day Healesville, near the Museum between 1863 and 1924.[13] *Unititled (seven monuments)*, for example, is an art project by Aunty Joy Murphy Wandin (Wurundjeri), Jonathan Jones (Wiradjuri/Kamilaroi) and Tom Nicholson (Celtic-Australian). Seven permanent monuments mark the historical boundary of Coranderrk Aboriginal Station, one of Australia's most significant sites.[14] While *The Tangible Trace* does not include Indigenous artists, it is presented within a framework of a Museum program that is very engaged with the dialogue around the sovereign rights of Indigenous people. The Indigenous traces around Healesville have all but disappeared. Hence, oral accounts, historical photographs, parliamentary inquiries and newspaper reports are some of the ways in which First Nation peoples have been able to discover more about their own tragic ancestral stories. The Museum honours those stories with an active program of Indigenous exhibitions and forums.

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[12] Hagi Kenaan, "Tracing Shadows: Reflections on the Origins of Painting" in *Pictorial Languages and Their Meanings: Liber Amicorum in Honor of Nurith Kenaan-Kedar,* eds. C. Versar and G. Fishof (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Publishing, 2006), 23.

In the context of Australia's enduring, oldest and continuous Indigenous history, trace is both a human-spiritual relationship as well as an archaeological record. The most ancient dated piece of Indigenous rock art found in Australia is located in South-Western Arnhem Land (28,000 years old), but evidence suggests that Arnhem Land pigment art of some kind had already begun to be made by around 50,000 years ago.[15] Experts have suggested that the stencilled handprints found on rock faces signified both the identity of a person, and an expression of their relationship with the site, to which that person had various ritual obligations.[16] The outline or print of the hand is a manifestation of an ongoing relationship between the person, their trace, and their connection to country. Of particular interest is the appearance of patterned handprints in the Kulpi Mara complex of rock shelters in Central Australia, which appear to be a type of monoprint made onto the rock face. The anthropologist R. G. Gunn argues that the patterns on the hands were not made from another object, but rather scraped directly onto the pigmented hand and then pressed onto the wall.[17] Less than 2000 years old, they nevertheless are located in shelters that have been occupied for 30,000 years. Many of such patterned handprints are also covered with newer versions.

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[13] Examples include: *Katie West: Clearing*, 2019; *Yhonnie Scarce: Hollowing Earth*, 2017; *Judy Watson: the scarifier*, 2016; *John Mawurndjul and Gulumbu Yunupingu: Earth and Sky*, 2015; installations by Daniel Boyd in *Whisper in My Mask: TarraWarra Biennial*, 2014; Dale Harding in *From Will to Form: TarraWarra Biennial*, 2018 and the forum *Conversations on Country*, 2019.

[14] www.untitledsevenmonuments.com.au was commissioned by TarraWarra Museum of Art, as part of the exhibition *Future Memorials*, 2013–14, curated by Victoria Lynn, and was realised in 2019 with the support of Yarra Ranges Council, the artwork's custodian.

In both Pliny's story and Indigenous rock art, the painted, drawn or handprint trace is an action of capturing a part of the human form. In the case of Kora, it is done in the form of memorialising. In the case of the Indigenous rock art, it has been surmised that the intention is to impose a trace onto the rock not only of a hand, but also of a sacred connection. From the perspective of the present, the ancient handprints offer trace evidence of human occupation of the land. The tracing that takes place is much more than a depiction or manifestation of the original. It is also a symbolic action to capture a set of human bonds and belief systems. This action maintains an element of presence (of the trace) in the face of absence (of that which is traced), while also creating a visual residue of a past event. For Kora, the event is the departure of her lover. In the ancient rock paintings, while less definable, the event is most likely a ritual and symbolic connection with the site.

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[15] Bruno David, Bryce Barker, Fiona Petchey, Jean-Jacques Delannoy, Jean-Michel Geneste, Cassandra Rowe, Mark Eccleston, Lara Lambe, and Ray Whear, "A 28,000 Year Old Excavated Painted Rock from Nawarla Gabarnmang, Northern Australia", *Journal of Archaeological Science* 40, issue 5 (May 2013): 2493–2501.

[16] R.G. Gunn, "The Interpretation of Handedness in Australian Aboriginal Rock Art", *Rock Art Research: The Journal of the Australian Rock Art Research Association (AURA)* 24, iss. 2 (November 2007): 199–208.

[17] R. G. Gunn, "Patterned Hand Prints: A Unique Form from Central Australia", *Rock Art Research: The Journal of the Australian Rock Art Research Association (AURA)* 15, iss. 2 (November 1998): 75–80.

In *The Tangible Trace* the artists recognised the creative potential of finding a place between the poles of absence and presence through the use of traces. Moreover, their actions reflected upon their human bond with the world around them, and their location within and upon that world. For example, Gill's second body of work in the exhibition, *Passing Through* (2017–ongoing) exemplified will to connect with the larger world, and the shared responsibility that we have for it (fig. 18). The work explored the surfaces and crevices of an architectural ruin in Malaysia, a hotel that had fallen into a dilapidated state. As if to conserve elements of its presence, before its total collapse, its absence, Gill documented the tiled floors and the doorways in the bathrooms, through print and photographic means. The series began with photographs the artist made of this abandoned luxury resort overgrown with nature. Gill also painted a geometric pattern of brightly coloured rectangles over the tiled floors in the hotel, from which she then made monotypes. Gill's bond with the ruined hotel is echoed through the various media she has used to "document" the site. In this way, as the title suggests, the image "passes through" various hands, media and metamorphoses. Gill's traces of the hotel acknowledge a potential loss over time and form part of a memorialisation of the structure, but also ponder on

Gill's own relationship to it. Her repeated visits to the decaying building create a place for her own inquiry into what remains on the foreshore of Port Dickson, a city that has undergone vast changes: "Nowadays … numerous failed shopping centres and partially constructed … high-rise apartment blocks jut out over the shoreline and into the sea … so there isn't much of a beach anymore".[18]

In 1977 Rosalind Krauss proposed that contemporary art was shaped by the index.[19] As Charles Sanders Peirce demonstrated in his complex theory of signs, indexes are signs that have a physical connection to their referents, the way smoke, for instance, is a sign for the referent "fire". [20] Drawing as well on the work of Walter Benjamin, André Bazin and Roland Barthes, expands the definition of the index as follows,[21]

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[18] Gill, *Pressing In*, 1.

[19] Rosalind Krauss, "Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America", *October* 3 (Spring 1977): 68–81 and "Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America. Part 2", *October* 4 (Autumn 1977): 58–67.

[20] Charles Sanders Peirce, "Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs", *Philosophic Writings of Peirce,* ed. Justus Buchler (New York: Dover, 1955), 98–119. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy summarises the icon as: "If the constraints of successful signification require that the sign utilize some existential or physical connection between it and its object, then the sign is an *index.*", <plato.stanford.edu/entries/peirce-semiotics/#Bib> accessed 25 January 2020.

[21] Krauss used Pierce's trichotomy of the icon, index and symbol (which he then divided in many sub-signs) as well as Roland Barthes' theory of the photograph as a "*message sans code*" in "Rhetorique de l'image", *Communications*, no. 4 (1964); André Bazin, *What is Cinema?* trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967) and Walter Benjamin's "Work of Art in the Age of Technological Reproduction" in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books 1969).

> They are the marks or traces of a particular cause, and that cause is the thing to which they refer, the object they signify. Into the category of the index, we would place physical traces (like footprints), medical symptoms, or the actual referents of the shifters. Cast shadows could also serve as the indexical signs of objects.[22]

Krauss is part of a group of art historians and theoreticians who founded the journal *October*, spearheading the importance of theoretical, psychoanalytic and philosophical interpretations of contemporary art. [23] At the time, she sought to find a broad framework for a period of contemporary art that had been labelled pluralist. After decades of art movements (such as abstract expressionism and minimalism), the 1970s ushered in a variety of practices. Krauss determines that it is “Duchamp who first establishes the connection between the index (as a type of sign) and the photograph” and that photographic and documentary means of making art in the 1970s are the best examples of the indexical relationship between the artwork and its referent.[24]

It is important to distinguish the ideas of *The Tangible Trace* from this twentieth century theoretical discussion that took place in New York. Notwithstanding Krauss’s use of the theory of the index above, the concept of trace in this exhibition is not so much concerned with the relationship of the works with broader indexical concepts of representation, but rather arises from the small fragments and gestures within each of the artworks. These traces do have an indexical, physical, relationship with their referents, particularly in *Domino Theory* by Gill. However, the artists are not so concerned with this relationship. Rather, their focus is on the material traces that both survive and guide us. Tellingly, Mary Anne Doane and others have more recently asked, "Are the terms 'index' and 'indexicality' the most appropriate or accurate terms in gauging the impact of photographic and cinematic representation in modernity?" acknowledging that with the digital transmission of images, there is a convergence of representations.[25] She suggests that in digital media there is no separation between the original and its reproduction.[26] We can surmise that the plethora of digital imagery in our daily lives underpins the choice of the artists like Gill, to focus on found materials and to document fading and dilapidated structures. While this position is not actually stated by the artist, her fascination for the paraphernalia of life, for the ways in which signs of humanity intersect with natural forces, may be considered a necessary alternative to the digital vortex of contemporary living.

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[22] Krauss, “Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America”, 70.

[23] At *October’s* inception, the editors sought to find a broad framework for a period of contemporary art that was more pluralist in its formal and conceptual concerns. By the 1970s, particularly with the emergence of post-minimalism, artists and historians began to embrace a variety of different approaches to art practice that could not be neatly assigned to the more singular concerns of the past, for example, in the way abstract expressionism had been the narrow focus of the influential American critic, Clement Greenberg.

[24] Krauss, “Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America”, 71.

We will see in the following sections that the ways in which the artists create works in this exhibition has inspired how the exhibition has been conceived and unfolds through the space. As the curator, I also bring together the collection of works in the exhibition as traces of larger artistic oeuvres of each artist that encourage us to reflect upon the world around us. *The Tangible Trace* expresses the notion that the world can be seen, felt, and experienced through the metaphor of trace. The exhibition then, in turn, offers the viewer an opportunity to explore human bonds with the fragments before her and the memories that they each invoke. Trace also speaks to the profound desire to hold onto a memory for how do we retain memories if not through a trace? Kora’s drawing speaks so much to that need, while the repeated gestures of the Aboriginal hand stencils, over generations, also confirms the human desire for remembering and honouring through trace.

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[25] Mary Ann Doane, "Indexicality: Trace and Sign: Introduction", *differences*, *A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 18, no.1 (2007): 6.

[26] Doane, "Indexicality: Trace and Sign: Introduction", 6.

II. Co-belonging

In this exhibition, there is an accumulation of materials, or journeys, in space and over time. Each of the artists displays an interest in the assemblage of traces in space. These arrangements into assemblages of loose associations can be further understood as an open process of co-belonging. For the purpose of this chapter, and within the context of this exhibition, co-belonging may be defined as follows: i) commensurable and incommensurable associations are created within and among the artworks so that the network of relationships is not horizontal, linear or chronological, but carries within it internal antagonisms that nevertheless co-habit; ii) the gaps in and between traces either within an artwork or between different artworks, are spaces for the generation of temporal and spatial experiences; iii) a new set of relations with the wider world are established, a new sense of common measure even in the face of the incommensurable differences.

In addition, co-belonging in this exhibition is an expression of a shared desire among the artists to actively contribute to and intervene in the interpretations of place and cultural histories in their midst. This is a shared responsibility for co-belonging with the world around us. Hailing from diverse backgrounds and cultures, and residing either temporarily or permanently in the global south, the artists are acutely aware of dominant systems of knowledge about place. Curatorial co-belonging creates relationships between diverse bodies of knowledge, and the contrasting perspectives of the artists, not with the purpose of manifesting identity politics (a common modality of exhibitions of contemporary art in the 1990s), but rather as an ethical and collaborative emancipatory action, that arises from the assemblage of the artists, the exhibition and the site in dialogue. Through this process a metaphor arises—trace—that brings the diverse gestures into an undutiful conversation, one that threads in and through the structure of the exhibition itself.

I have shown how Simryn Gill's use of trace fragments enabled the artist to situate herself between absence and presence, between what once was and what remains, between the absence of a use value for the rocks and stones, and their presence as detritus on the beach. Hiwa K's work is also concerned with retracing, which is similarly an act of locating oneself between absence and presence; between what has disappeared, and the trace that remains. Like Gill he embarked on a journey, albeit a different one. His is the journey of the asylum seeker, and in his video *Pre-Image (Blind as the Mother Tongue)*, 2017 he retraced his original route, highlighting through an assemblage of images, the minutiae of the experience (figs. 19–20). Located inside a darkened room, adjacent to Gill's works, the video charted the artist's journey though another port—the port of Athens, a city that he had walked some twenty-five years prior when he arrived in Europe by foot from Kurdish Iraq eventually to find refuge, via Rome, in Germany. The artist constructed an unwieldy object comprised of motorbike mirrors—an assemblage that generated a montage of views—attached to a long stick that he balanced on his nose as he walks. Inevitably, his stride was interrupted, and his awareness is only of what is immediately below him as he gazes up at the mirrors. These vertical reflections are a "sub-set" of what appears below. They are traces of it that co-belong in an ever-changing montage. This kind of gaze does not have the confident horizontality or panopticon viewpoint that a citizen might have. It is instead a journey splintered through a set of what the artist terms "pre-images". The artist comments:

> The mirror is not meant however mainly to reflect but to navigate. It is a form of survival kit, as I never arrive at the full picture of the place through which I am strolling but functionality of it helps me to complete my journey.[27]

Traditionally, a pre-image is created before the final image (such as in Renaissance painting), through a process of working up a painting into a complete picture. In his discussion of Minimalism, Richard Wollheim describes another version of this, where the pre-image is covered over and dismantled by the artist (he cites the work of Ad Reinhardt), as the artist reduces the detail to the most minimalist of surfaces.[28] Hiwa K reverses these processes by retaining the pre-image. They co-belong. As he struggles to navigate and find his way, the sub-set of pre-images invokes the "blindness" of the "mother-tongue" (the immigrant)—the inability to see or experience a total picture of a foreign land. The pre-images are a composite of incommensurable reflections that co-belong through Hiwa K's mirror structure without forming a seamless, whole and readable image.

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[27] Hiwa K, *Artist's Statement*, www.hiwak.net, accessed 22 September 2019.

[28] Richard Wollheim, "Minimal Art" in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battock (Studio Vista: New York, 1968), 398. "Pre-image" is also a mathematical term (also known as "inverse image") where one subset relates to another through a process of transformation.

Indeed, the implication is that the pre-image is the only way that the immigrant or asylum seeker can “see”. This co-belonging of the mirror images, the assemblage, has the larger implication that a whole or total image is never possible. Both metaphor and tool, the mirror images are traces of a journey that was replete with uncertainties, illegal activities and a precarious, unsteady route. In the video voiceover, we hear Hiwa K comment:

> To remember, sometimes you need different archaeological tools. Tools with which you can dig upwards. To see your fragmented, scattered parts. Or other tools with which you can excavate silence … or mirrors that rather reflect your voice than your appearance.

By both tracing his original journey, and also, within the video itself, creating a sequence of fragmented and mirror traces of the video’s journey, the subject is fragmented, rather than whole. Rather than looking down at his feet, he looks up to see his navigation as if from a distance. Underlining this condition Hiwa K narrates a question that he is asked:

> “Where are you based?” I said “On my feet”. “Where are your feet based?” I say, “My feet are never based”.

As if to reflect this state of baselessness, in the concluding scenes we see what the mirror sees: as he arrives in Rome, the Roman floor mosaics appear in a vertigo-like sequence, never quite settling. We come to understand the artist’s relationship with that floor that seems not to be “based” on the ground, but rather spinning and turning, as a metaphor for the artist’s diasporic relationship with Europe.

Hiwa K’s walk can be seen in the broader context of artists who make artworks through the act of walking. The Situationist *dérive* was a revolutionary strategy originally proposed by Guy Debord in his "Theory of the *Dérive*" (1956). These ambient walks in the city were seen to be a way of disrupting an everyday complacency by making the *dériver* aware of the dominance of capitalist structures and their alienating effects. Conceptual artists such as Richard Long enacted walks from the late 1960s at a time when artists sought to reshape the terms of art, by making art outside the Museum environment. His walks were documented through text, or photographic means after the artist traversed vast regional fields in the United Kingdom, often from the beginning point of Bristol. Artworks such as Tehching Hsieh’s *One Year Performance (Outdoor Piece*) (1981–1982) in which he never went inside, and Marina Abramovic and Ulay’s *The Lovers–The Great Wall Walk* (1988) perform the walk as a kind of endurance, testing the emotional and physical parameters of the self while also considering the notion of time and struggle.

Artist walks feature in the works of Francis Alÿs (whose work is also in *The Tangible Trace*) such as *The Green Line,* (1995), Jerusalem and *The Collector* (1991-2006), Mexico City and Regina José Galindo, such as *Who Can Erase the Traces* (2003), Guatemala. Like Hiwa K’s walk these examples have a more specific relationship to the history of the sites and places where they take place. They insert the voice of the artist, as dissident, as disruptor, to the political significance of sites. In terms of the notion of co-belonging we can see their walks, captured on video, as carrying internal antagonisms between the gestures of the artist, and the sites through which they walk. The walks trace a journey that does not become absorbed by the location, but rather sits incommensurably within it, nevertheless co-habiting, albeit briefly, with the city.

These walks are performances. Hiwa K re-enacts his original journey, his own body no doubt transmitting his memories of his previous journeys, not as an original of this trace, but rather as part of the assemblage of seen and forgotten objects and encounters. One journey becomes part of another. As Rebecca Schneider has shown, the performance artist's body "becomes a kind of archive and host to a collective memory":

> This body, given to performance, is arguably engaged with disappearance chiasmatically – not only disappearing but resiliently eruptive, remaining through performance like so many ghosts at the door marked 'disappeared'. In this sense performance itself becomes itself through messy and eruptive reappearance, challenging, via the performative trace, any neat antinomy between appearance and disappearance, or presence and absence.[29]

In other words, the performance artist's body is itself a container of the traces of previous performances and, as she writes, it is also an archive, thereby linking trace and archive. Hiwa K's journey from Iraq to Germany was not a performance (it was an escape from persecution), and his body contains the traces of this life-changing experience. But his performative body now carries the traces of Hiwa K's re-tracing. As such, we can garner a further understanding of the notion of co-belonging from Schneider's comment. Multiple journeys and memories co-belong within the artist's body, as memories that challenge conventional notions of belonging and instead provide a generative force for future performative actions.

Material, situated and responsive, the tangible traces created by the artists co-belong in this exhibition. The artworks do not all flow into each other. There are gaps between each work, filled with sound, but not image, so that each work can be appreciated on its own, as a kind of pavilion. The gaps between these trace fragments are a fertile space for analogy and metaphor. I also see this as a sequence of ethical spaces, absences if you like, allowing each of the artists a one-person exhibit, presences, as it were. In this way, as the viewer journeys through the exhibition, one artwork will quietly echo the ones that have come before it. Echo has two meanings: it can be a sound that reverberates after the original sound has stopped. It can also be something that shares characteristics with something else. Traces share the characteristics of their original source, but they also reverberate over time. Reflected in Hiwa K's mobile mirror sculpture are a myriad of material states that have existed beforehand, and these states are echoed by the remnant or pre-image before us. Like an echo, traces are temporal. So too, the artworks, echo one another over time, even beyond the immediate experience of the exhibition.

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[29] Rebecca Schneider, "Performance Remains", *Performance Research* 6, no. 2 (2001): 103.

III. Proximity

We are rarely given distant views of the city of Athens in Hiwa K's video. Rather, the camera focuses on the close fragmented images that reflect back to Hiwa K through his own act of retracing his steps. The fragment—or trace—is a matter of proximity, rather than distance. Similarly, Simryn Gill's walks on the beach after a king tide in Port Dickson pose the question for the artist as to whether she has come full circle. In relation to the pieces of wood that she finds, that have been worn smooth, we no longer see the mark of an axe or saw: "Does this full circle I'm thinking of deliver a closeness or remoteness? Is it a form of going away or coming back?"[30] In other words, is the trace a matter of closeness, and proximity, rather than distance and remoteness?

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[30] Gill, *Pressing In*, 3.

In the room immediately following the work of Gill and Hiwa K, was the work of Shilpa Gupta. *The markings we have made on this land have increased the distance so much* (2019), was a large cast concrete slab broken into hundreds of pieces, with the phrase from its title written in English, Hindi, Arabic and Chinese (figs. 21–23). The audience was encouraged to disrupt the puzzle of fragments and take a piece of the concrete away with them, as a trace of the work, and the exhibition. They circumnavigated, bent down, and chose a piece with markings that made most sense to them. Just as Simryn Gill collected soft round sea washed bricks, so too the exhibition visitor merged their proximity to Gupta's work as they carried it with them into their own lives, but they did so in consideration of the notion that markings on the land increase distance. Hence there was an enfolded relationship between the proximity of the visitor to the work, the ability to take hold of it, to enact its tangibility, and the conceptual notion of the distance that map-making creates. Gupta invoked the colonial encounter: the "marks" made on the land have the effect of increasing the gap between First Peoples and their invaders. As Chaitanya Sambrani suggests, these marks comprise,

> communities divided, of fence-lines and political boundaries premised on ownership of the land and its resources and reinforced through legislative apparatus that continue to amplify distancing. The quiet voice of Gupta's disappearing work seeks to leave behind echoes that resonate in the poisonous environment of sectarian and nationalist aggression, the global refugee crisis, and in First Nations' struggles for recognition in Australia and elsewhere.[31]

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[31] Chaitanya Sambrani, "Shilpa Gupta: Poetry at the Borderlines" in *The Tangible Trace*, ed. Victoria Lynn (Healesville: TarraWarra Museum of Art, 2019), 61.

The title phrase of the work also suggests the idea of map-making itself, the marking out of land, and the measuring of distance, but injects into this process an emotional tenor of longing. This emotional component of the movement of peoples and belonging is something that cannot be mapped nor bound by any border. Michel de Certeau asserts, "surveys of routes miss what was: the act itself of passing by" and suggests that map-making, and geographical systems, cause "a way of being in the world to be forgotten".[32] Gupta, by contrast, literally puts into action the practice of being in the world through the literal embrace of the trace. As these traces are carried into the lives of other people, so too are the varied combinations of language and marking, suggesting a transcultural understanding of the world. During the exhibition, the artist asked people to post an image of the new home for each trace (#OnThisLand), and as such, the act of co-belonging was extended into the digital realm of the audience. The traces of the work came to co-belong in the homes of those who are lucky enough to take a piece and create a renewed bond between the diverse elements of home, trace, land and artwork. As de Certeau has shown, this is a form of "spatial practice" that arises from living with the "disquieting familiarity" of place.[33] Suggesting the source of wanting to see the world as a whole, from the perspective of a voyeur, stems from the myth of Icarus, flying above the waters, ignoring the labyrinths below, de Certeau maintains that a distant, commanding perspective is nothing more than a “lust to be a viewpoint”, with its concomitant relation to power.[34]

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[32] I am grateful for the comparison with Michel de Certeau that is made by Christine Vial Kayser, "Shilpa Gupta: Art Beyond Borders", *InVisible Culture: An Electronic Journal for Visual Culture*, iss. 25 and 26 (2017): 12–15 and Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 97.

[33] de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life,* 96.

A second work by Gupta is *Map Tracing # 7 – AU* (2019) was a bent copper outline of the map of Australia made with copper tubing that had been rubbed, treated and easily manipulated without breaking (fig. 24). The piece was then folded into a three-dimensional form so that its proportions and shape differed from the map that we are used to seeing in Australia. It was suspended partially on the floor and on the wall, almost collapsing. Gupta invited us to consider the role of the border as a boundary, the space in which we live and travel from and to, but also as the nation-state, the place of power. Moreover, as Sambrani says, this work “resonates in a way quite distinct to similar works Gupta has executed in France or the Netherlands … axial torsion gestures towards the literally warped and tortuous relations of belonging on (and *belonging to*) the land in contemporary Australia”.[35] *Map Tracing #7 – AU* raises the question implicit in the notion of co-belonging, which is: belong to what? And further, who belongs? The map of Australia invites consideration of the tortuous history of Australia’s treatment of its First Peoples and indeed, the myth of terra nullius. This boundary has also provided the terms by which our country accepts immigrants and refugees. As such Gupta’s collapsing map no longer holds the nation state intact in a way that can preserve a sense of distance, but instead posits a porous relationship between inside and outside. Just as in *The markings we have made on this land have increased the distance so much*, the viewer is invited to have a point of view on the map that belies distance and instead invites proximity. Our viewing of it encourages us to walk around it, see it three dimensionally, and look at it askew.

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[34] de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life,* 92.

[35] Sambrani, “Shilpa Gupta: Poetry at the Borderlines”, 61.

Proximity in the work of the artists in *The Tangible Trace* is created by the artistic actions and gestures intent on grasping the traces and details of a fragmented surface beneath our feet. This becomes a political position for the artists in very distinct ways. Their embrace of proximity rather than distance, is to do with interrupting a given situational or political structure. Gill's exploration of minute traces enables her to construct her own archives from the sea, finding her place in relation to nature. Hiwa K's journey is relayed to us in traces that are near to him, and to us, an unsteady and precarious proximity to the landscape he traverses. His treacherous journey crosses the boundaries of the nation state, which cannot take possession of him. In the work of Gupta, proximity and distance has to do with interrogating "seeming certitudes around belonging, and passionate espousals of patriotism and nationalist sentiment".[36] In other words, proximity allows both Gupta and her audience to focus on the details of the land, rather than the maps and boundaries that are drawn for us.

The focus on proximity through trace means that the exhibition encourages the viewer to notice details. In doing so, each of the artists invites us to look in a direction other than straight ahead into the distance. In experiencing the works, the viewer looked down, up and askew. These oblique perspectives created a situation where she became conscious of her location in and circumnavigation of the space. Seeing so many details in combination frustrates the desire to find a homogenous narrative or story in the exhibition. These works, and the exhibition as a whole, are an assemblage of details and small actions. Hence the exhibition is not like a map that seeks to draw a clear outline for the viewer. Like Gupta's cast concrete slab, the exhibition invites the viewer to "carry the traces" into their own worlds; to be in the world and consider how we co-belong with it.

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[36] Sambrani, "Shilpa Gupta: Poetry at the Borderlines", 60.

IV Dialectic

Rolf Tiedemann, one of Walter Benjamin's interlocutors, explains that Benjamin's thought is nurtured by "metaphysical, historical-philosophical, and theological sources".[37] Denouncing the notion of history as continuous, Benjamin's thinking is dialectical, but it differs from the Hegelian-Marxian dialectical method that sees social changes as the synthesis of thesis and antithesis in a continual teleological movement towards resolution (Hegel's *aufheben*). Instead, Benjamin believes in the power of a sudden stop, a crystalisation of time; a Messianic cessation within movement.[38] In his essay "Theses on the Philosophy of History", he comments,

> Thinking involves not only the flow of thoughts, but their arrest as well. Where thinking suddenly stops in a configuration pregnant with tensions, it gives that configuration a shock, by which it crystalizes into a monad. A historical materialist approaches a historical subject only where he encounters it as a monad. In this structure he recognizes the sign of a Messianic cessation of happening, or, put differently, a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past. He takes cognizance of it in order to blast a specific era out of the homogenous course of history …[39]

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[37] Rolf Tiedemann, "Dialectics at a Standstill. Approaches to the *Passagen-Werk*" in *The Arcades Project*, *Walter Benjamin* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 936.

[38] Tiedemann, "Dialectics at a Standstill", 945.

[39] Walter Benjamin, "Thesis on the Philosophy of History" in *Illuminations* (Great Britain: Fontana/Collins, 1982), 264–265.

For Benjamin, the definition of an “image” is “that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words, image is dialectics at a standstill … the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: is not progression but image, suddenly emergent”.[40]

Benjamin’s *The Arcades Project* (a vast assemblage of traces in itself) builds a picture of nineteenth century Paris through the minutiae of appearances.[41] In the section entitled “Convolutes”, Benjamin’s thinking is conveyed through a collection of quotes juxtaposed with his own text. They are aphorisms that relate to one another like a montage, as if to try and grasp at dialectical images through this fragmenting process. In the section on the *flâneur* walking the streets and arcades of Paris, Benjamin seeks to interpret the urban environment by collecting and assembling images of streets, warehouses, types of lighting, fashion, prostitution, interiors and more. He comments:

> Method of this project: literary montage. I needn’t *say* anything. Merely show. I shall appropriate no ingenious formulations, purloin no valuables. But the rags, the refuse– these I will not inventory but allow, in the only way possible, to come into their own: by making use of them. [42]

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[40] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, N2a, 3, 462.

[41] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*.

[42] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, N1a,8, 460.

Benjamin's dialectical image has provoked diverse interpretations and criticisms.[43] Of relevance to the works in this exhibition is the sense that each of the artists works dialectically through the figure of the trace. I would argue, following Benjamin, that in the hands of an artist, a trace is a dialectic image, for it is an interruption in the present, while also being a product of something that existed the past. It is suddenly emergent yet also relates to some past situation. Its meaning is created through this leap in time between the present and the past.

In the hands of the artists thus far discussed, traces are montaged into assemblages. The gaps that open up in the process of dialectical relationships within the artworks allow new meanings to arise. These juxtapositions are the methods by which the artists interrupt and cleave open a space for their own voice within a dominant narrative: Gill's archival collection of worn stones disrupt the smooth interior of the museum with an alternative "constellation"; the images reflected in Hiwa K's mirror contraption are a moving montage as he literally finds his way; and Gupta's broken fragments of concrete with smashed sentences in multiple languages interrupt the "distance" that the "markings on the land" create.

Benjamin's thinking about historicism opposed his theory of historical materialism, which relied on a Messianic image. He believed in a "collective dream or wish image", to which Adorno took particular exception.[44] As Tiedemann surmises, Benjamin's view is that an arcade or a collection of objects is not in itself dialectical. Rather they "become dialectical images only when the historical materialist *deciphers* them as phantasmagorias…in Benjamin's opinion, the key that allows the historical materialist to unlock the code remains connected to the discovery of a messianic force in history".[45] The dialectical image is redemptive, it is rescued from the past, and it has leapt out of its context in order to rupture the homogeneity of the present: it is a form of awakening.

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[43] Theodor Adorno was one such critic in Benjamin's lifetime. For a discussion of the correspondence between Benjamin and Adorno, see Anthony Auerbach, "Imagine no Metaphors: the Dialectical Image of Walter Benjamin", *Image [&] Narrative* [e-journal], 18 (2007): http://www.imageandnarrative.be/thinking_pictures/auerbach.htm, accessed 29 September 2019.

If I interpret Benjamin's notion of an awakening as redemptive thinking, it does not necessarily accord with the artists in question here because they do not pursue the redemptive. Yet his model of the constellation does have a bearing on the ways in which the artists assemble their fragments. Constellation is not a fixed group of stars for Benjamin, but rather a "momentous conjunction".[46] I take this phrase to mean both a dramatic juxtaposition, and an unexpected aggregation. Momentous conjunction could be seen as a form of co-belonging. Such a conjunction is evident not only within individual artworks, but also in the exhibition itself. This is most apparent as the visitor left the work of Shilpa Gupta, when she heard a soundtrack resonating from the Museum's long narrow vista walk. It was part of an installation that she was yet to encounter, but the soaring energy in Ross Edwards' *Symphony no. 1, Da Pacem Domine* (1991), accompanies the journey through the exhibition. The dialectic of unfamiliar sounds combined with disappearing concrete fragments led her into the next room where she encountered Carlos Capelán's paintings (figs 25–27). These works depicted the outlines of a figure, both as portraits and as a bodily form, against a patchwork of abstract squares and rectangles that have, in turn, leapt out of the history of analytical cubism and geometric abstraction. These squares have been treated in a way that makes them appear to be fabric with gentle lines and patterns incised into the surfaces of the squares. The figures are like spectral images, and their gazes are directed both towards the viewer and into an undefined distance. They are like ghosts or echoes from the past. Capelán has referred to the faces in his work as "stuttering portraits". Tattooed with broad brushstrokes, the faces that stare directly at us have hollow eye sockets. The faces with eyes avert their gaze, looking out beyond our location in the space. The heads have no body and tumble and turn in the midst of intersecting geometric planes. There is also a recurring image of a headless body sheltering itself from an unknown threat. Capelán's paintings are layered in the most complex of ways, so that the picture plane is anything but flat as the jostle of abstract planes and figurative traces intersect across the canvas, rupturing one another in dialectic tension. These lines and traces are entangled, decentred, and fragmented. They seem to both dematerialise and rematerialise before our eyes.

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[44] Auerbach, "Imagine no Metaphors".

[45] Tiedemann, "Dialectics at a Standstill", note 23, 1015.

[46] Auerbach, "Imagine no Metaphors".

Capelán's paintings do not have an indexical relationship to that which they depict because they are not physically connected to the many ideas contained within the works. Nevertheless, they invoke the notion of "trace" because they contain a tumble of lines that outline a form or mark a face. Recalling the myth of Butades, these outlines seemed to capture the presence of those who are absent: the cacophony of people on the move in today's Europe. With titles such as *Extended Family (Arrival)* (2019), I suggest that the artist evokes the tides of people arriving from the South to the North.

Capelán's works captured the "constellation" that Benjamin alludes to in his writings. The title of the series is *Implosion*, a metaphor for this contemporary experience of complexity. Modernism is imploding here, and by implication so too is the modernist art museum, as the figurative traces give rise to decolonial perspectives. The artist is present in many of these works, as a self-portrait, particularly in the work *Map of the World (Thursday)* (2018), a painting on paper in which the self-portrait is comprised of abstract geometric shapes and colours. Maps of the world have been determined by colonial power and so too have the institutions of art. In *Self-Portrait as a Museum* (2019), the artist's own portraits are presented as paintings on a wall of geometric abstract patterns. Flipping the modernist idea of the autonomy of the artwork and allowing the other to speak as self-authorising agent, Capelán's tangible traces reinforce a new subject position where the colonial subject is speaking back. The averted gaze comes to be a non-representational representation of the "other".

An enduring image in Capelán's oeuvre is the anamorphic figure, so that only an alternative perspective onto the picture can bring it back into proportion. This oblique perspective has roots in Capelán's own experience of exile from Uruguay in the 1970s (a country that he now continues to spend time in). The figure of the exile is often portrayed askew and here the figure is returning that gaze with multiple images. Like Gill's random display of vitrines, and her abstraction of the "traces" of a dilapidated hotel, or Hiwa K's unsteady journey and montage of images, and like Gupta's encouragement for us to look down instead of into the distance, Capelán's paintings are both motivated by, and encourage an oblique view of the world. Our return of these gazes is also oblique; our position in front of the painting is forced to one side. Moreover, Capelán shares with the aforementioned artists an interest in the fragment, rather than the whole, in what happens inside the "map of the world", rather than the mapping. This is a decolonial position, specific to his own circumstances. Yet it is also to be found in Gill's focus on the detritus on the edge of the Strait of Malaca, in Hiwa K's crossing of borders and in Gupta's collapsed *Map Tracing*.

Benjamin famously discusses Paul Klee's painting *Angelus Novus* (1921) depicting it as the Angel of History, looking back to the past.[47] Each of the artists does the same, and like the Angel, they do not see progress, but ruins. Rather than trying to redeem that which has been broken (as Benjamin's Angel of History does), the artists acknowledge that creating a constellation of parts that are both commensurable and incommensurable—the co-belonging discussed by Rancière—is resistance itself. Their perspective is not to seek a healing, but rather to acknowledge that the condition of looking obliquely, dialectically, and with juxtaposition, is to offer a resilient gesture. Capelán's stuttering portraits continue to stutter.

The exhibition as a whole was a montage, an assemblage of diverse images, installations and objects that sat in a dialectical relationship with one another. As the visitor entered the next space and so on an artwork was suddenly emergent. The exhibition embraced the richness of meanings that come about through non-sequential and non-linear assemblages and the dialectical relationship that existed within the works, among the works, and between the works and the Museum architecture. In *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, Benjamin stated: "Ideas are to objects as constellations [*Sternbilder*] are to stars".[48] As Anthony Auerbach shows, Benjamin's concept of a constellation has two meanings: the constellation of stars that make up the Zodiac, or the larger constellation that happens at any given moment, which forms the basis of a horoscope, a dynamic form of understanding the skies.[49] He further shows the ways in which Benjamin's concept of the dialectical image is akin to his concept of constellation,

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[47] Walter Benjamin, "Thesis on the Philosophy of History", 259–260. Benjamin owned this painting, which he hung in every apartment he lived in, before abandoning it when fleeing the Nazis: a material trace of his own life, eventually lost like Kora's lover.

> It is constellation … which triangulates the position of the materialist historian and tests his or her ability to grasp—in the present—a fleeting (dialectical) image as a signal of revolutionary potential or mundane redemption; to seize the moment invariably missed.[50]

Following on from Benjamin, we could suggest that this exhibition was to the artworks, as constellations are to stars. (This is not to suggest that the exhibition takes part in the belief systems that underpin a tradition such as astrology.) Because it was an assemblage of traces, the exhibition was a dynamic form of interpretation and at times such interpretations are fleeting and transitory. Benjamin's dialectical image has many ambiguities that we cannot delve into here, but it is nevertheless a rich terrain to explore from the point of view of curatorial discourse.

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[48] Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (London: NLB, 1977), 34.

[49] Auerbach, "Imagine no Metaphors".

[50] Auerbach, "Imagine no Metaphors".

V. Passages

Standing in the room of Capelán's paintings, the viewer experienced a montage of sounds, a high-pitched train horn from Francis Alÿs' video mixes with the tones of Ross Edwards's composition. At this point, the visitor walked into the Vista (the corridor that stretches along the length of the Museum), and made a choice to follow it to the end, to look at the view, or enter into the dark space that had been created for the video work of Alÿs, *Paradox of Praxis 5: Sometimes we dream as we live & sometimes we live as we dream, Ciudad Juárez, México* (2013) (not illustrated). Made in collaboration with Julien Devaux, Rafael Ortega, Alejandro Morales, and Félix Blume, Francis Alÿs is seen kicking an enflamed soccer ball through the streets of Ciudad Juárez at night. Ciudad Juárez is a border town city that provides the most common routes from North and Central Mexico into the USA. Once identified as the most dangerous city in the world, Ciudad Juárez, while still in the throes of crime, is also now becoming more industrialised, with many global companies basing their manufacturing there. Within the context of this volatile and tormented city, Alÿs introduces his characteristic act of "play". Illuminated only by the light of the fire, we glimpse details of facades, the underbelly of the freeway, shadowy figures in corners, the faint sounds of the city at night, and we wonder at how he does not catch on fire during these tricky manoeuvres. At times, Alÿs is propelled by the soccer ball's route as much as he, too, drives it through the streets. It is a collaborative performance, where the trace of this route becomes a bodily and perceptual memory that illuminates the city's restless energy and imploding violence. In conversation with Russell Ferguson about similar works made in Mexico City, the artist comments:

> Because of the immense amount of material produced on a daily basis by a huge city … it is very difficult to justify the act of adding another piece of matter to that already saturated environment. My reaction was to insert a story into the city rather than an object. It was my way of affecting a place at the very precise moment of its history, even just for an instant. If the story is right, if it hits a nerve, it can propagate like a rumour. Stories can pass through a place without the need to settle. They have a life of their own.[51]

Stories, suggests Alÿs, pass through a place and leave traces. The light from the soccer ball has an after-effect. It seems to echo through the dark streets, offering an alternative image to the images of violence and abandonment that are already there.[52] Its passage through the streets is not straightforward, and takes no given route. We do not see an overall map of the city, but rather the city in shadow, for example, alongside the railway line. This enflamed soccer ball is of course in a process of dematerialisation. Through the course of the video, it withers into nothing. We follow its light to the very end of its existence where its ashes presumably become one with the ground. Like Hiwa K and Gupta, Alÿs invites our gaze to be down towards the feet, to look towards the ground, instead of into the distance. Light itself becomes dematerialised into an inky darkness. The video is a sequence of traces of light that become ephemeral. The gesture has a dialectical relationship with the city at night. It is not a consequence of the city, but rather a gesture that passes through it. Alÿs creates a passage for the “trace” of light.

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[51] Russell Ferguson,"Russell Ferguson in Conversation with Francis Alÿs" in *Francis Alÿs*, ed. Michele Robecchi (London: Phaidon, 2017), 26.

[52] Due to the violence, more than one hundred thousand houses were left empty by 2010. Cuauhtémoc Medina, "Francis Alÿs: A Poetry of Fire" in *TarraWarra International 2019: The Tangible Trace*, ed. Victoria Lynn (Healesville: TarraWarra Museum of Art, 2019), 54.

To travel through these streets at night is to also absorb the temper of the city—the sounds, temperature and peripheral activities—into the body as traces. This passage through the city and the aphorism that accompanies it—*“Sometimes we dream as we live & sometimes we live as we dream”*—echoed within our own bodies as we leave the Museum into an environment that is in stark contrast to *Ciudad Juárez*.

From this darkened city, and blackened space, the visitor emerged back into the light that streamed through the end window of the Museum’s passageway. Along the skin of the building, was an installation by Sangeeta Sandresagar, the artist with whom my conversation about shadows led to the title *The Tangible Trace*. The series of tall narrow windows along a passageway in the Museum is the site for *Things fall from view*, (2019) (figs. 28–30). Through this view are Indigenous, settler and immigrant stories embedded in how the land has been interpreted, shaped and cultivated. Sandrasegar covered the windows with five panels of Indian Khadi cotton, hand-dyed with indigo and combined with silk organza dyed with Australian native cherry. Each panel covered the window, so that the view was obscured, and instead, the winter sun illuminated and cast an abstract shadow into the space, providing its own natural shifts through the work. While the fabric, touched by the light of the sun, was tangible, it offered an understanding of what falls from view, what is absent, what lies beyond the trace. We looked at a void in the centre of each panel, where the window is situated. Rather than gaze beyond the window frame, we were forced to recollect the view, through the shifting intensities of light that appeared in the fabric and the lingering shadows that fell across the passageway.

The work was accompanied by a musical piece by Australian composer Ross Edwards, *Symphony No. 1 ' Da Pacem Domine'* (1991), a sombre work that has been described as "more like an extended chant over a pulsing drone note, interrupted by occasional bursts of sunlight into its sorrowing darkness".[53] The combination of references to Indian and Australian dyes, in the company of Edwards's composition that mixes Buddhist sounds with traces of the Lord's Prayer, not only gestures towards the Tarrawarra Monastery, which lies beyond the view, adjacent to the TarraWarra Museum property, but also to the ways in which a trace can be fed through processes of (re)location and (dis)location. In this installation the trace reverberated both materially and sonically through a passage of dialectical images and sounds.

In his analysis of how memory works, Sigmund Freud drew on the analogy of the "mystic writing pad", a tool that was readily available in the 1920s. Not unlike today's "magic slate", the pad was made of three layers. The bottom layer was made of resin or wax, the middle layer was a wax sheet, and the top layer was transparent. The written words on the top layer are erased through the action of lifting the celluloid sheet, but the imprint is retained on the lower layers. This palimpsest represented for Freud the layers of perception, short-term memory and permanent trace that occur in our memory system. Memory acquires resilient traces while also receiving new imprints. Memory is an active intersection of traces. Sandrasegar's installation operated on the level of perception, memory and imprint in several ways. There is the memory that the visitor had of the view out the window, for she would have seen it as she arrived at the Museum. There is the memory of each window as she moved from one end of the passage to the other. And there are traces of light and shadow from the outside through the two layers of fabric to the inside, so that the view is imprinted onto the fabric, and into our space, through light. As in the work of Alÿs, trace is experienced through light and through a passage. Its tangibility is more mysterious than for the other artists in the exhibition, for light is not something that can be touched. Like a shadow, it is ephemeral. But using the poetic licence that I found in the poetry of Joy Hester, I would argue that these "light traces" beckon touch. As Alÿs's soccer ball was propelled by the foot of the artist, so too the hanging fabrics beckoned and indeed were touched by the visitors to the exhibition, as they adjusted them in order to see the view. As such, Sandresegar's work, with its uplifting soundtrack, literally "played" the building itself, just as Alÿs playsed with the soccer ball. This is not a game, but an act that calls forth a meditation on a particular site and its history.

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[53] Author not attributed, "Ross Edwards: Symphony no. 1 'Da Pacem Domine' (1991)", 14 December 2018, https://www.abc.net.au/classic/read-and-watch/classic-australia/ross-edwards-symphony-no-1-1991/10619828, accessed 22 April 2019.

In both works, the focus is once again on proximity rather than distance; it is on the detail and fragment. Further, the dialectic relationship can be found in the combination of opposites. For Alÿs it is the juxtaposition of a burning soccer ball in a city at night, rather than a field at day, set against a city in ruins. For Sandresegar, light is juxtaposed with shadow, classical music is combined with contemporary installation, native cherry is combined with Indian indigo, Kadi cotton is combined with silk organza. These dialectic relationships created actions that invited the visitor to focus, with a gaze that was askew, oblique, and interrupted, and to consider alternative perspectives. Ross Edward's musical composition chimed with the high and low passages of sounds from the city from Ciudad Juárez, (an intentional intermingling of sound that was established during the installation of the exhibition when we attended to the sound levels in the space). While the problems of Ciudad Juárez are far removed from the rolling hills of the Yarra Valley and its more tragic Indigenous history, they were brought together in dialectic juxtaposition, co-belonging in the space of the exhibition.

The Tangible Trace was, in many respects, a passage (conceived here differently from Benjamin’s conception of the “passage” as an arcade). Passage has two meanings: it can, like trace, be a verb or a noun. A passage is both the process of moving through a space, and also a narrow way that exists in between spaces. In *The Tangible Trace*, the viewer travelled in a circuit, with glimpses of Sandresegar’s work along the way, as she moved from beginning back to the beginning. In this way, the passage of the viewer was not linear, and therefore there was no narrative, or chronology at play. The passages between artworks both flowed and were ruptured by blackened spaces or curtailed views. Correspondingly, the Museum’s characteristic views through eight windows were reduced to two. Open spaces combined with enclosed ones, an intensity of visual activity, combined with the absence thereof, were the more common experiences within the exhibition layout.

VI. Conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter, I outlined the ways in which *Domino Theory* by Simryn Gill introduced the visitor to key themes in the exhibition. We have also seen the ways in which the artists engage with the notion that a trace provides the opportunity to reflect upon the world around them. They created assemblages of images that co-belong in the body of the artwork. They provide perspectives that encourage us to look down, askew and obliquely rather than straight ahead, focusing on proximity rather than distance. The artists all participated in the creation of dialectical images, albeit ones that do not seek to heal fragmentation, but rather retain the refuse, detritus, traces and imprints of a world in pieces. Each work took us on a journey or passage, however truncated, or metaphorical, of one kind or another. Similarly, the exhibition was conceived to follow and respond to these models of understanding the world around us. It was an assemblage of traces; the works co-belong in the space, and raise the question of what it means to belong at all; the emphasis on proximity and trace rather than distance enabled the visitor to have intense, detailed experiences of the works, that, in turn, triggered memories of her own; the exhibition worked dialectically, where images and ideas burst into our midst, like a constellation, and then momentarily began to interact with another image, that echoed through the space of the Museum; finally, the exhibition offered a circuit for the viewer to explore the artworks where sound is the overlapping experience between each of them.

While many of the works invoke the notion of a "global south" the exhibition was not conceived from this starting point.[54] Nevertheless, the minute, subtle and even ephemeral experiences of place is an important source for the artists. Art is seen as something that is not cut off from life, but connected to multiple and changing histories, sites, events and situations, from the Strait of Malacca (Gill), to the port of Athens (Hiwa K); from the map of Australia (Gupta), to the turbulent mass movement of peoples (Capelán); from Ciudad Juárez (Alÿs) to the Yarra Valley, via cotton imported from Calcutta, India (Sandresegar). This exhibition suggested that it is through the metaphor of the trace—as both noun and verb—that art connects with the question of what it means to co-belong in our dynamic, unsettled and shifting world. The exhibition itself was a constellation of traces—objects, sounds and images—that created images of the world at a particular moment of time, only to dissipate once the exhibition closed.

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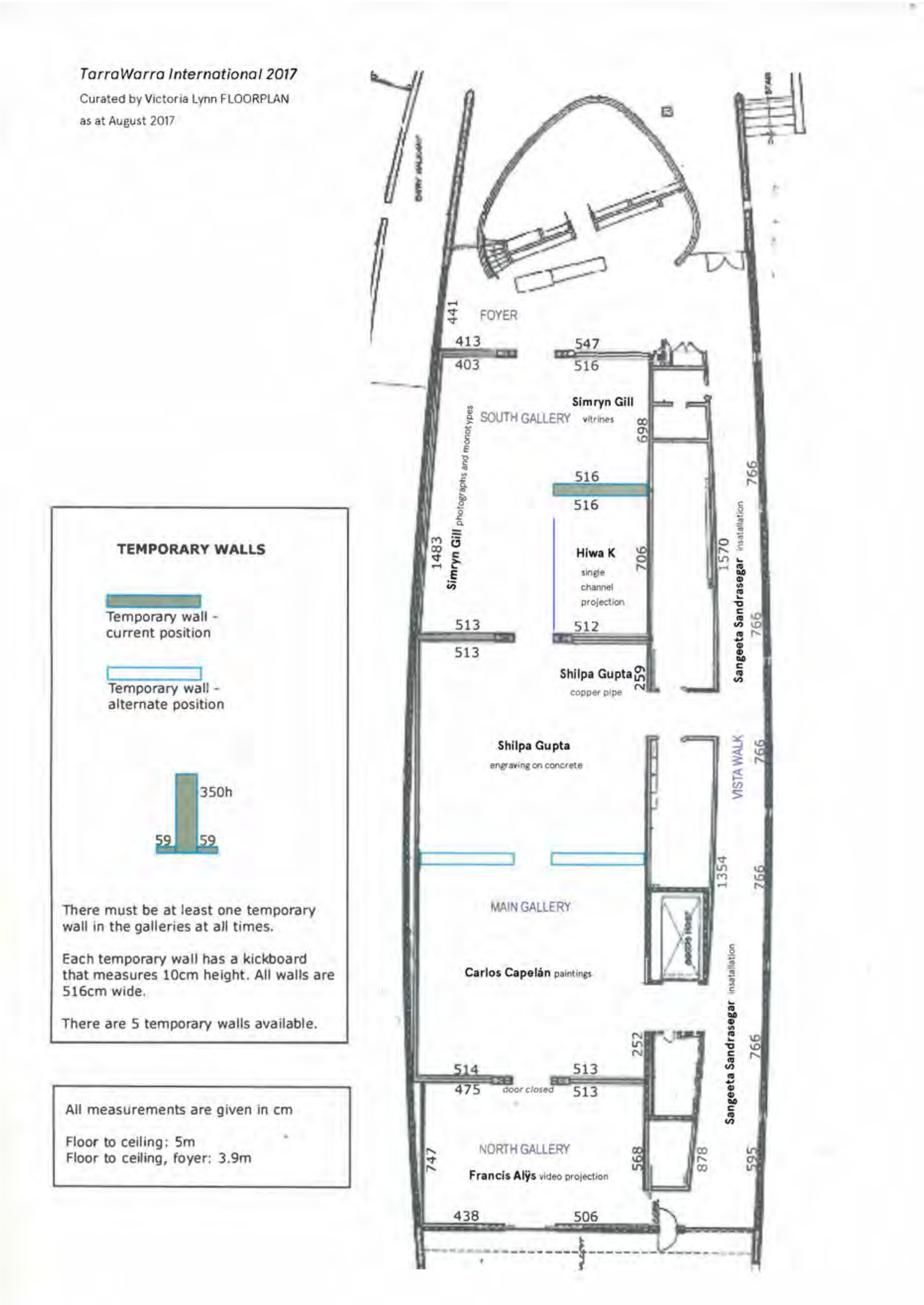
[54] For a discussion on the global south see Nikos Papastergiadis, "The End of the Global South and the Cultures of the South", *Thesis Eleven*, vol.141 no.1 (October, 2017): 69–90.



TarraWarra International 2017
Curated by Victoria Lynn FLOORPLAN
as at August 2017
FOYER
441
413
403
547
516
SOUTH GALLERY
Simryn Gill vitrines
698
Simryn Gill photographs and monotypes
1483
516
516
Hiwa K single channel projection
706
1570
766
Sangeeta Sandrasegar installation
513
513
512
Shilpa Gupta copper pipe
259
Shilpa Gupta engraving on concrete
VISTA WALK
766
1354
766
MAIN GALLERY
Carlos Capelán paintings
Sangeeta Sandrasegar installation
252
766
514
475
door closed
513
513
NORTH GALLERY
Francis Alÿs video projection
747
568
878
595
438
506
TEMPORARY WALLS
Temporary wall - current position
Temporary wall - alternate position
350h
59
59

There must be at least one temporary wall in the galleries at all times.

Each temporary wall has a kickboard that measures 10cm height. All walls are 516cm wide.

There are 5 temporary walls available.

All measurements are given in cm

Floor to ceiling: 5m
Floor to ceiling, foyer: 3.9m

Fig. 15. *The Tangible Trace* floorplan

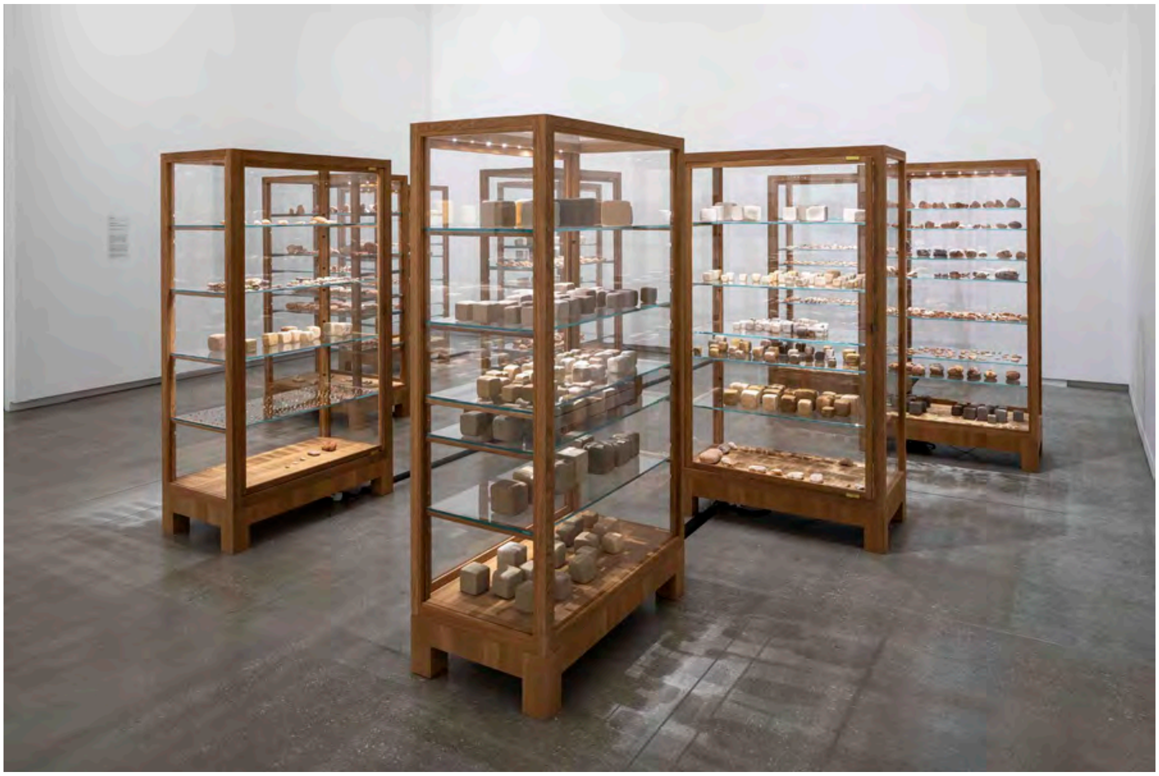


Fig. 16. Simryn Gill, *Domino Theory* (2014), nine wooden and glass vitrines, cubes made from termite clays, collected brick and tiles from the sea, dimensions variable, installation view. Photography: Andrew Curtis.

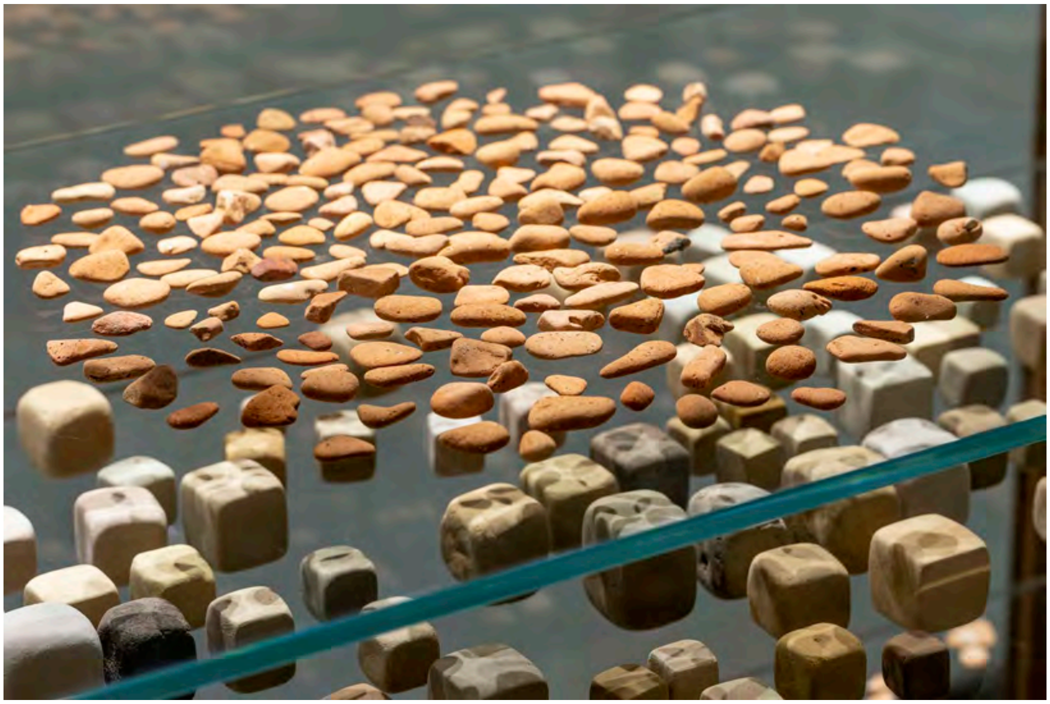


Fig. 17. Simryn Gill, *Domino Theory* (2014), detail, installation view, photography: Andrew Curtis.

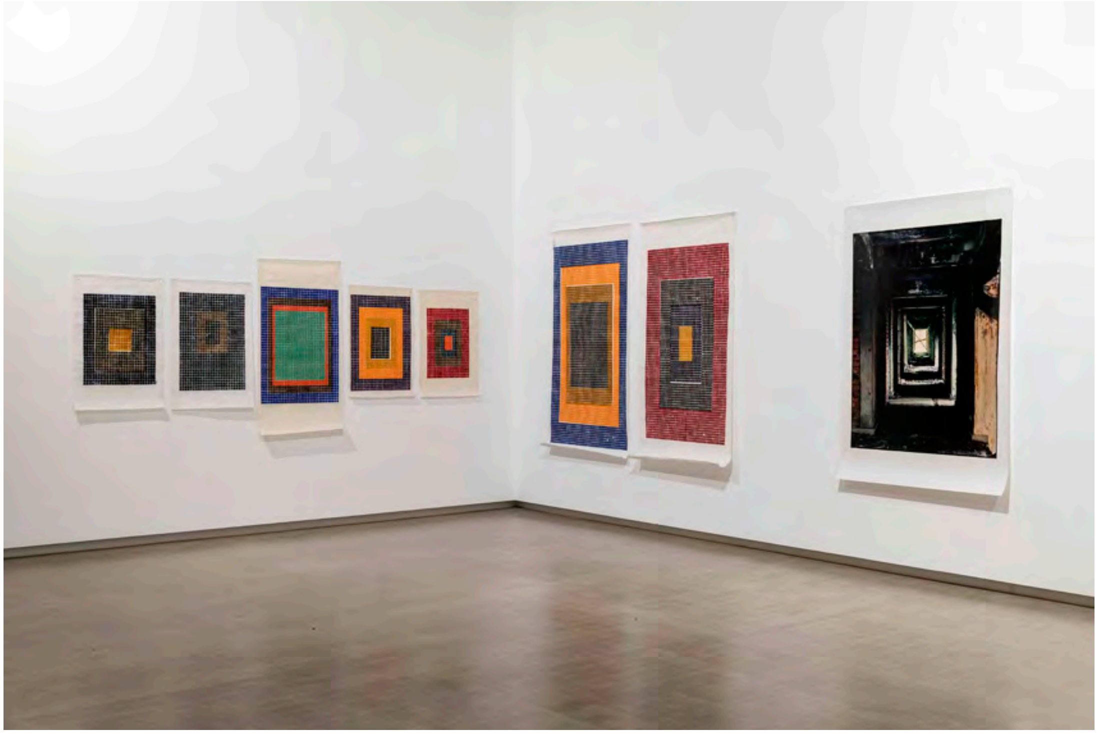
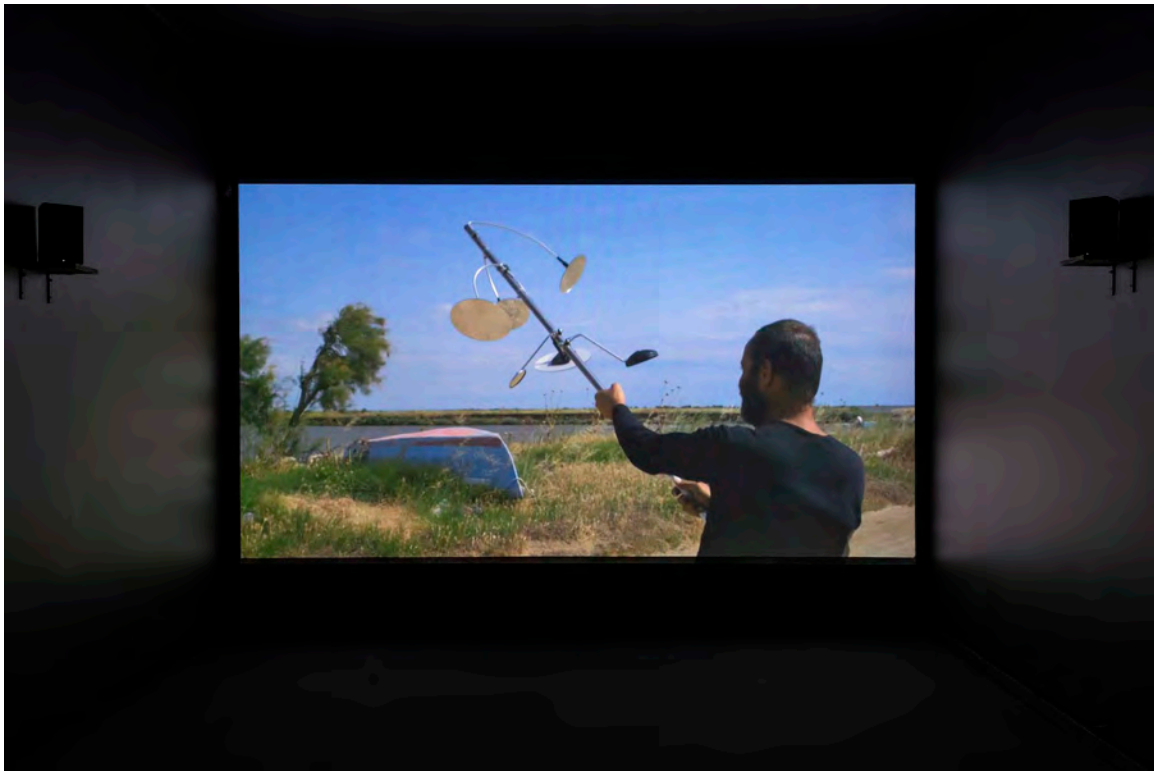
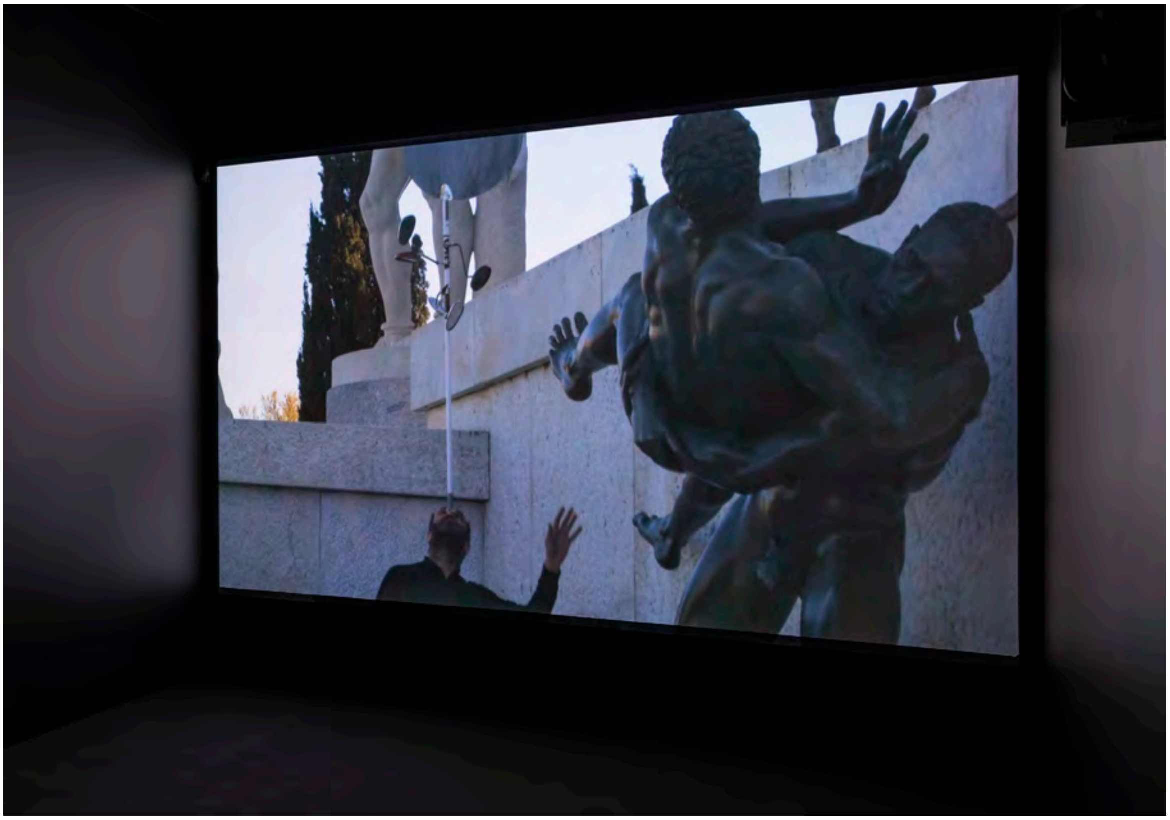


Fig. 18. Simryn Gill, *Passing Through* (2017–ongoing), monotype prints and c-type photograph, installation view. Photography: Andrew Curtis.





Figures 19, 20. Hiwa K, *Pre-Image (Blind as the Mother Tongue)* (2017), single-channel HD video, 16:9, colour, sound, video duration 00:17:40, ed. 5 + 2AP. Coproduced by Open-Vizor, Abbas Nokhesteh, installation view. Photography: Andrew Curtis.

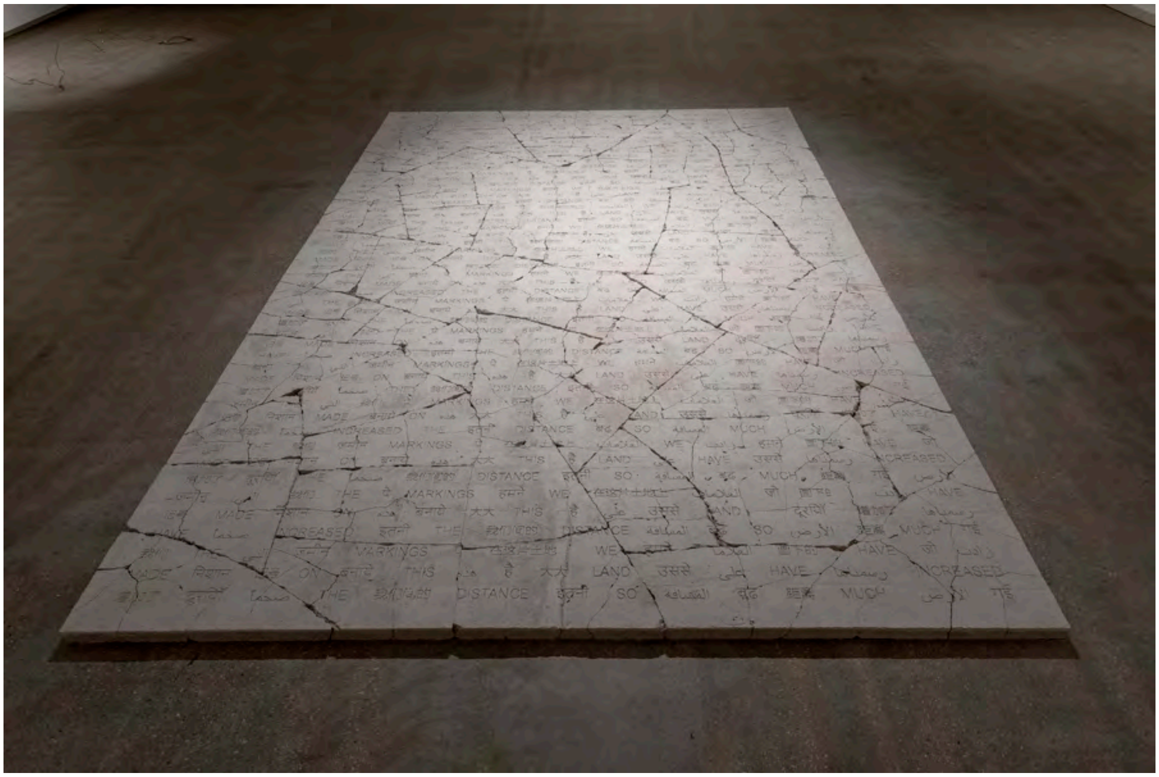
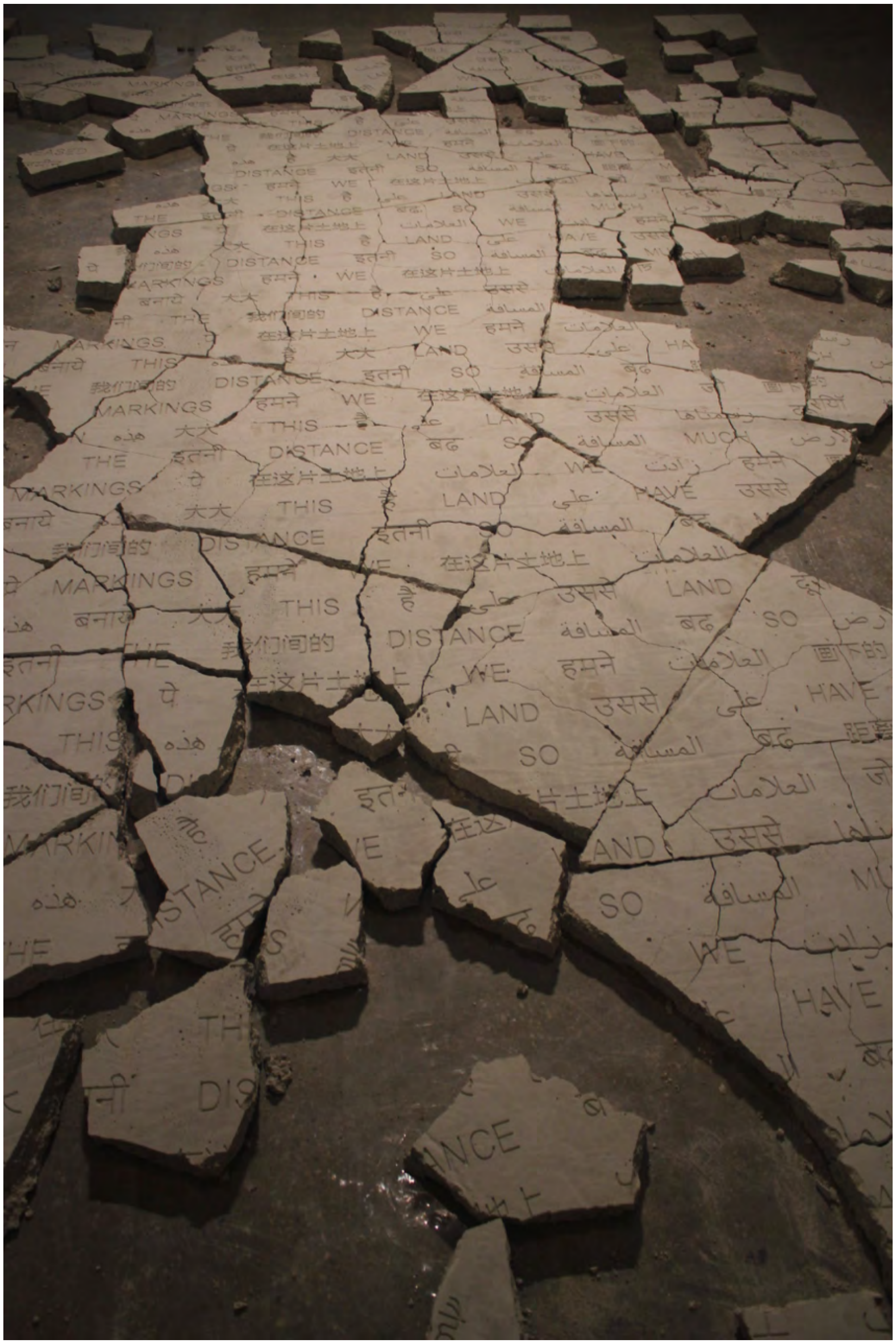


Fig. 21. Shilpa Gupta, *The markings we have made on this land have increased the distance so much* (2019), engraving on concrete, interactive installation, 420 x 280 x 5cm, installation view. Photography: Andrew Curtis.


MARKINGS
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العلامات

Fig. 22. Shilpa Gupta, *The markings we have made on this land have increased the distance so much* (2019), engraving on concrete, interactive installation, 420 x 280 x 5cm, installation view. Photography: Victoria Lynn.

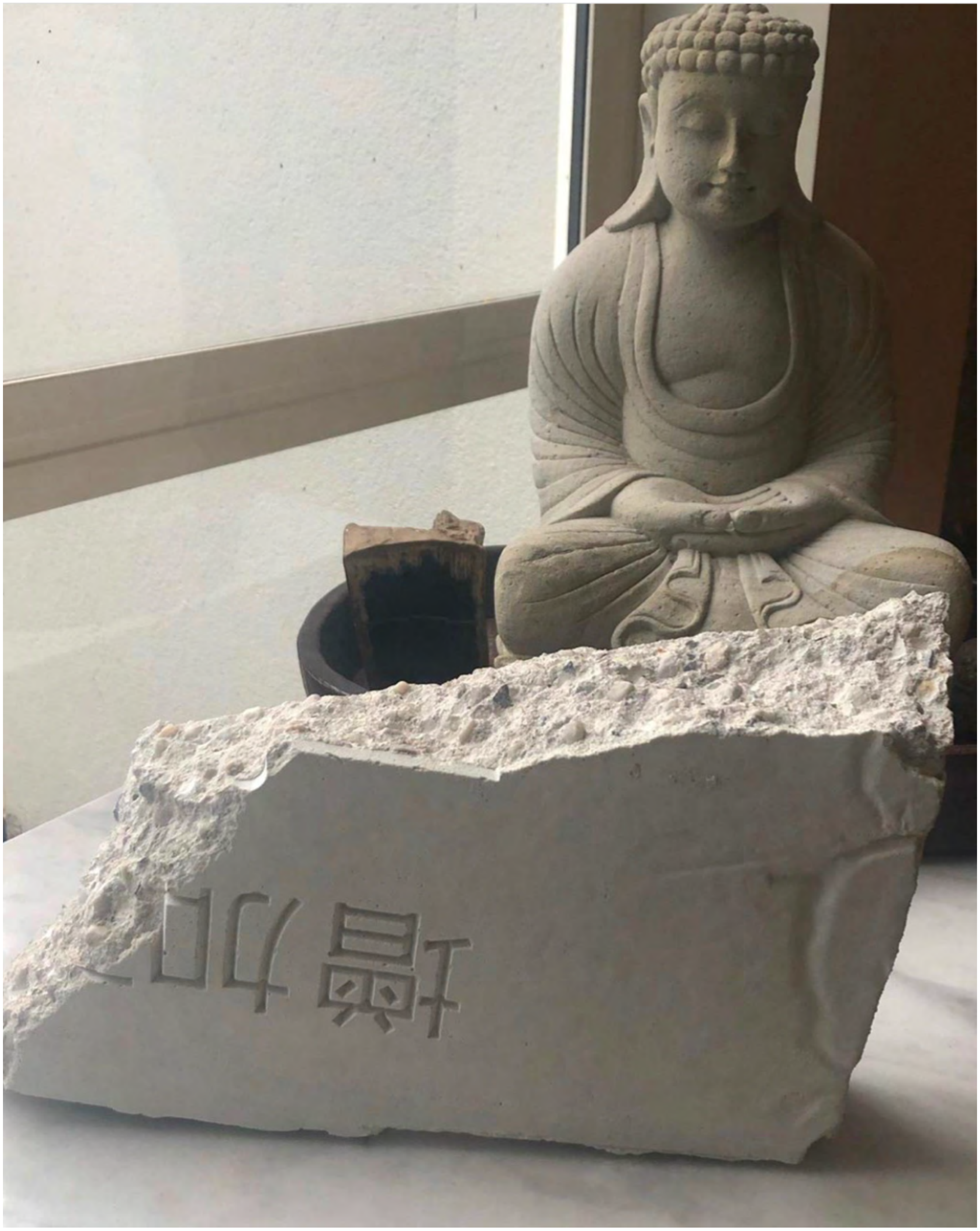


Fig. 23. Shilpa Gupta, *The markings we have made on this land have increased the distance so much* (2019), engraving on concrete, interactive installation, piece taken to a home and posted on Instagram #OnThisLand.

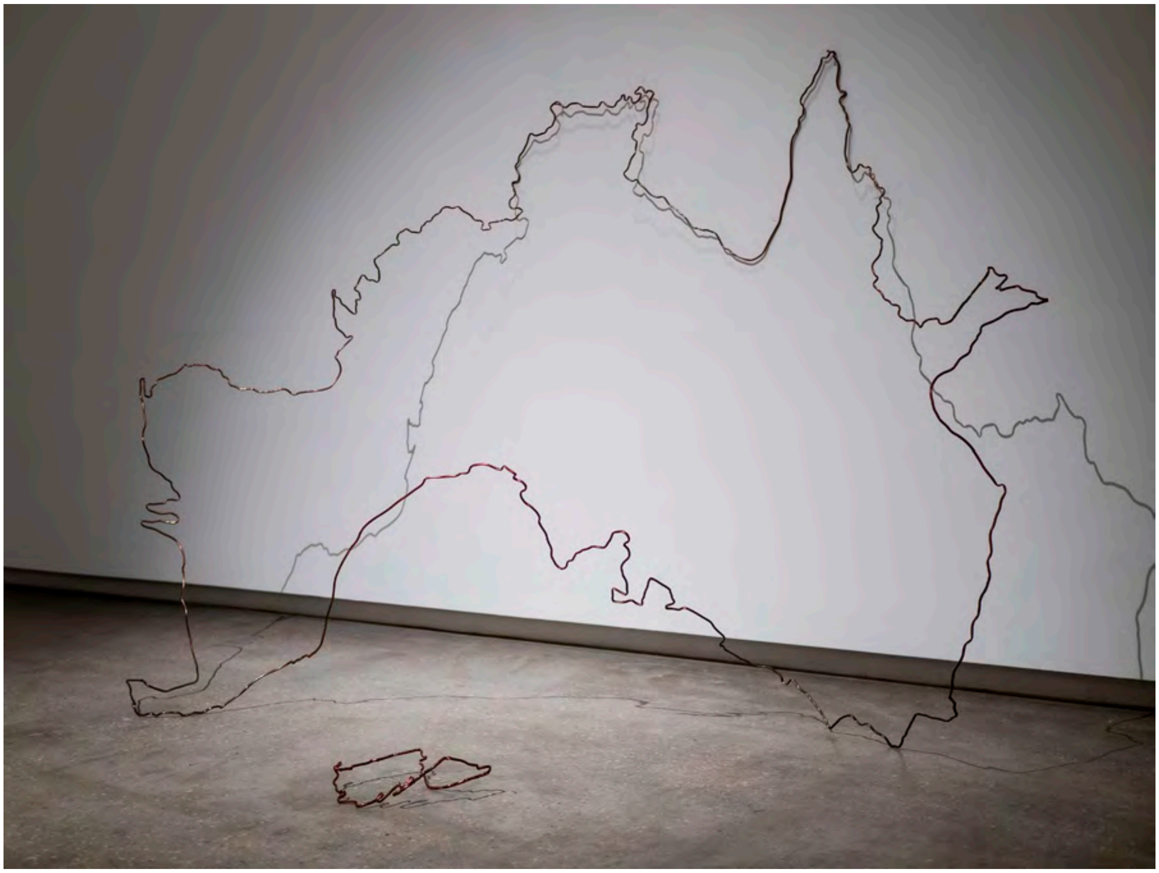


Fig. 24 Shilpa Gupta, *Map Tracing # 7 – AU* (2019), copper pipe, 183 x 183 cm, installation view. Photography: Lou Whelan.

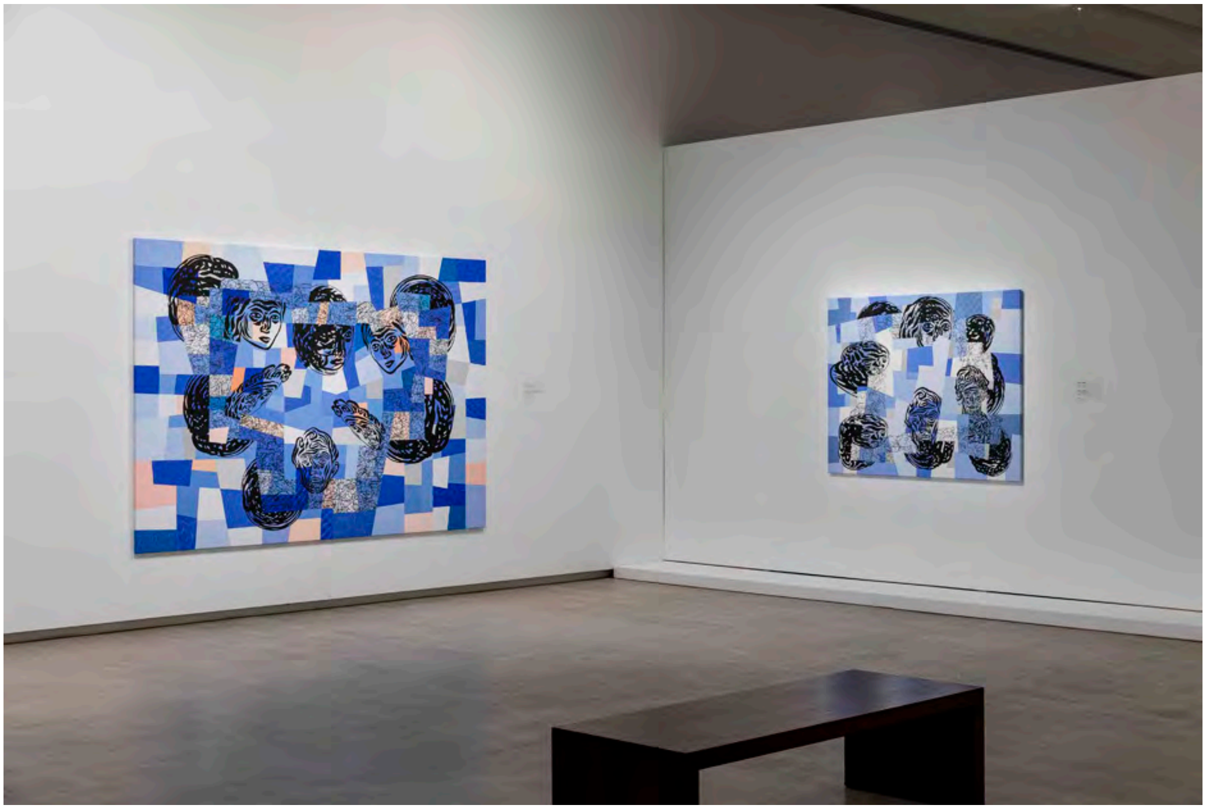


Fig. 25. Carlos Capelán*,* Left: *I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate (External Love)* (2019), from the *Implosion* series, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 200 x 290cm; Right: *A Drop of Water* (2018), from the *Implosion* series, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 132 x 168cm, installation view. Photography: Andrew Curtis.

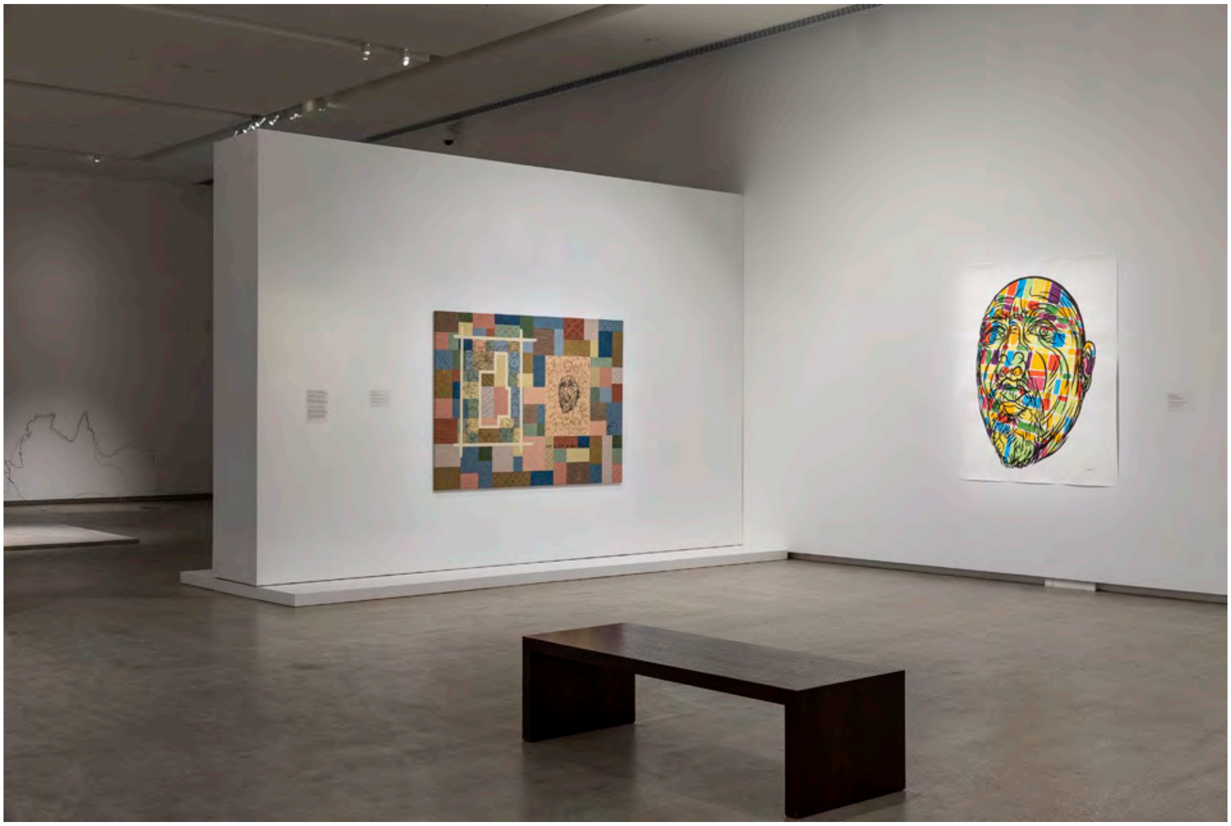


Fig. 26. Carlos Capelán*,* Left: *Self Portrait as a Museum* (2019) from the *Implosion* series, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 147 x 202cm, Right: *Map of the World (Thursday)* (2018), from the *Implosion* series, synthetic polymer paint on paper, 180 x 150cm, installation view. Photography: Andrew Curtis.

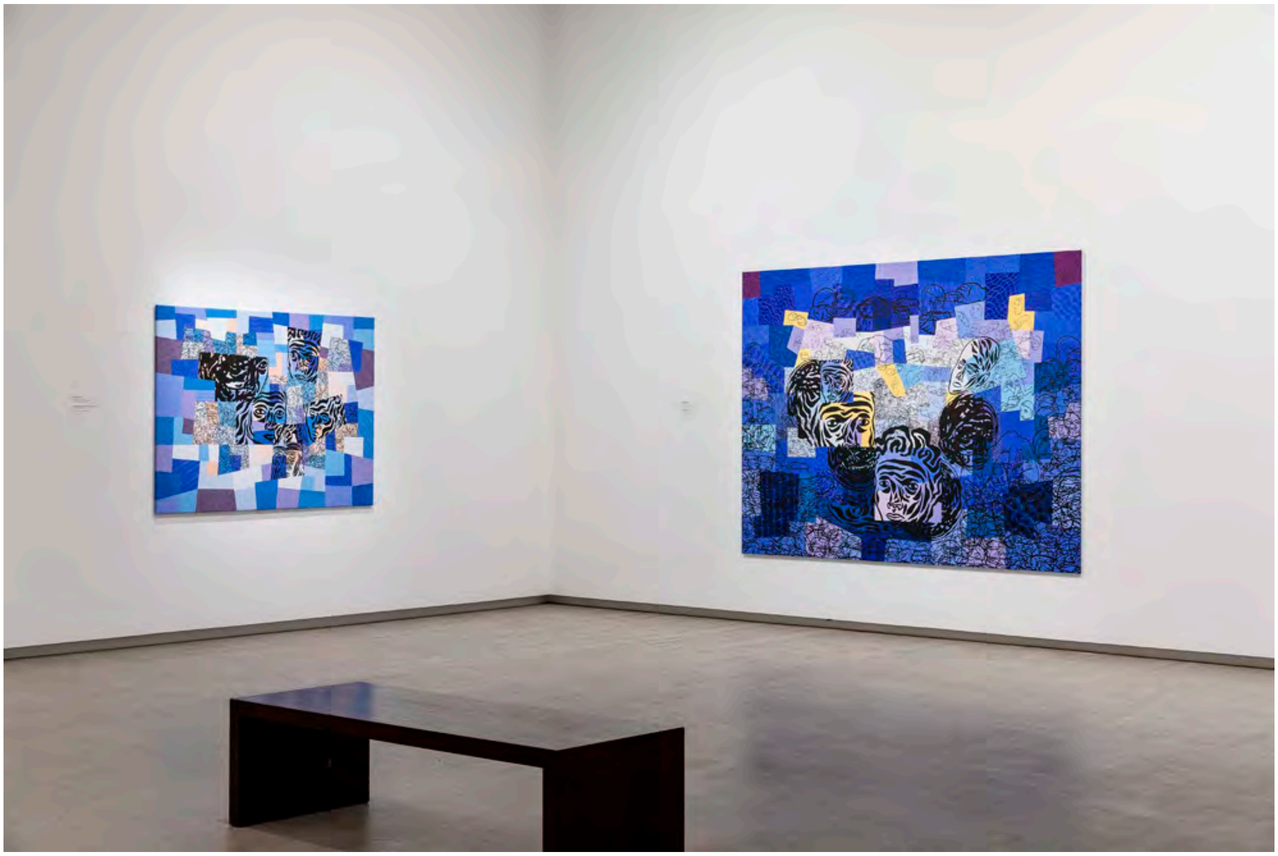


Fig. 27. Carlos Capelán Left: *Extended Family (Arrival)* (2019), from the *Implosion* series, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 132 x 168cm, Right: *Fling (Implosion)* (2019), synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 200 x 265cm, installation view. Photography: Andrew Curtis.

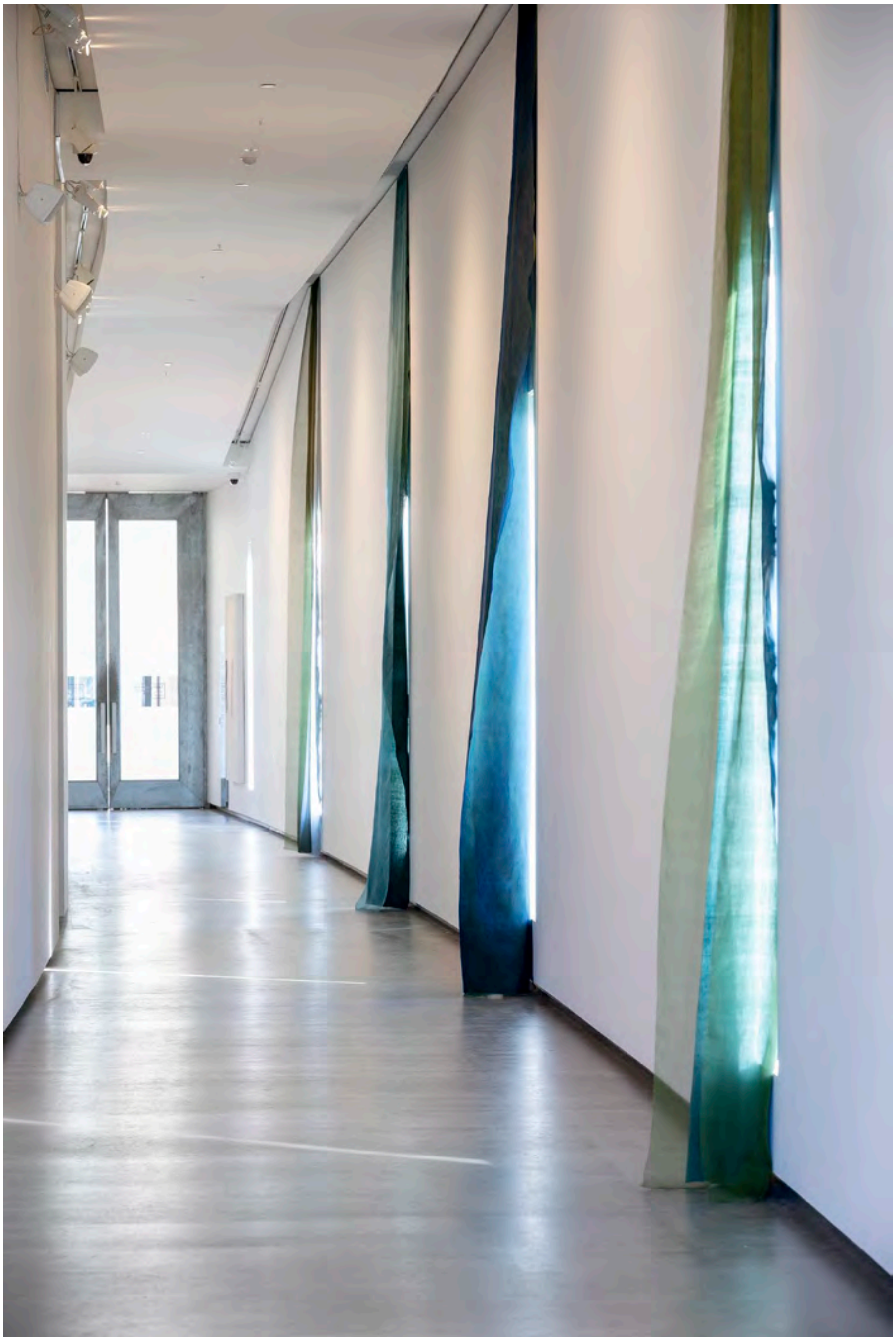
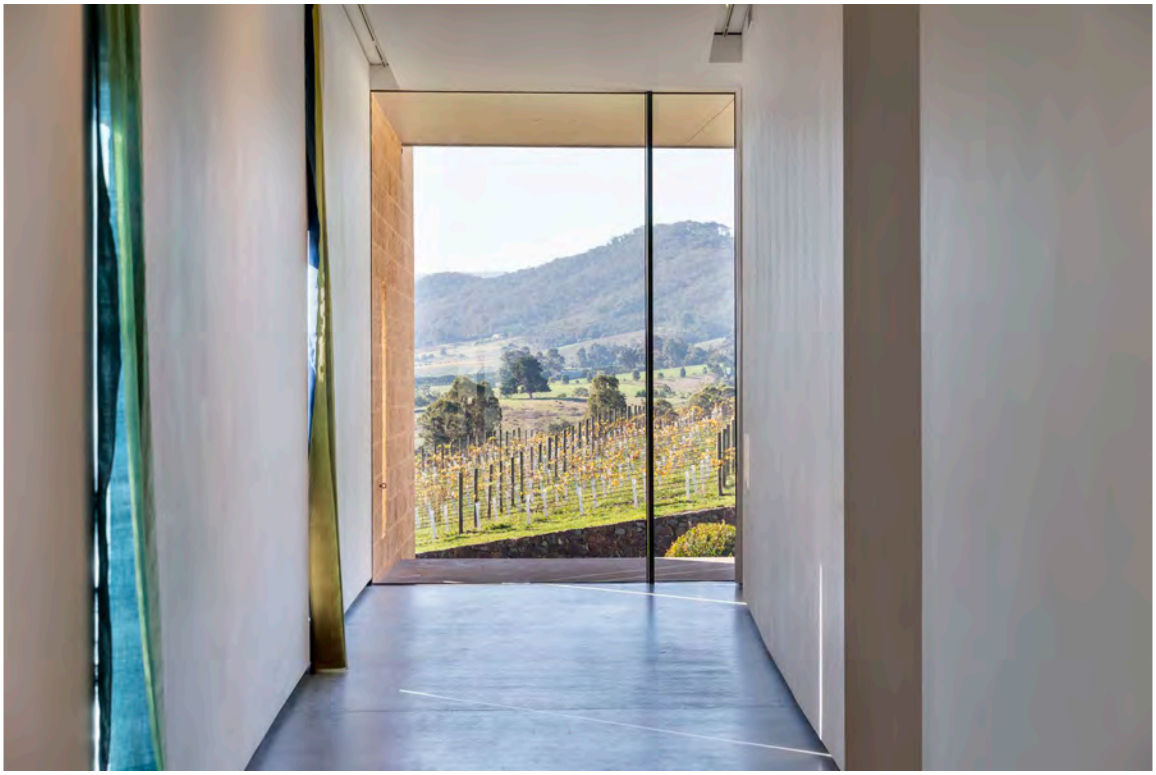
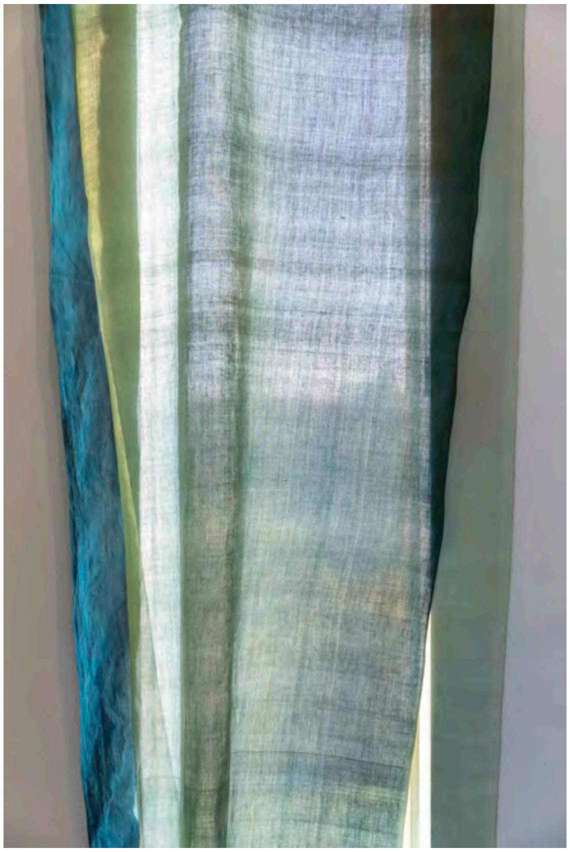


Fig. 28. Sangeeta Sandrasegar, *What Falls from View* (2019), hand–dyed khadi and silk, five panels: each approximately 520 x 90cm, dye studio: Heather Thomas, sound component: Symphony No. 1 *Da Pacem Domine* (1991), composed by Ross Edwards (APRA), published by BMG AM Pty Ltd. Performed by the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra conducted by Richard Mills, Adelaide Town Hall, 2002. Sound recording by ABC Classics. Installation view. Photography: Andrew Curtis.





Figures 29, 30. Sangeeta Sandrasegar, *What Falls from View* (2019), hand–dyed khadi and silk, five panels: each approximately 520 x 90cm, dye studio: Heather Thomas, sound component: Symphony No. 1 *Da Pacem Domine* (1991), composed by Ross Edwards (APRA), published by BMG AM Pty Ltd. Performed by the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra conducted by Richard Mills, Adelaide Town Hall, 2002. Sound recording by ABC Classics. Installation view. Photography: Andrew Curtis.

Chapter 4

Conclusion: Curatorial Co-belonging

Curatorial co-belonging is an entangled, collaborative and spatial model of montage; between artwork, curator, the site and the world. Building on the work of Enwezor, the artists and exhibitions in this exegesis share an interest in not just what an exhibition is, but what it does. Through a process of curatorial juxtaposition (montage), the two exhibitions discussed in this exegesis presented spaces, gaps and moments of reprieve that were actively experienced by the visitor in dynamic ways, inserting and collaborating with their own imagination and personal memory. Links with the real world were generated, albeit through processes of fragmentation in both the artworks and the exhibition itself; the exhibitions co-belonged with the site of the museum (and its embedded meanings) and the world around it.

In Chapter 1 we saw how Rancière highlighted an apparent contradiction between the will of certain images in Godard's film *Histoire(s) du cinema* to be part of a community of images, that are conceived as being in some way linked or commensurable; and the heterogenous elements in the video essay, where combinations of images with words do not seem to make sense, do not seem to share anything in common—they are incommensurable. This introductory chapter identified three dimensions of the term co-belonging. First is the familiarity of co-belonging, where disparate artworks are brought together through their shared attitude to the world. The second aspect of co-belonging is the hyphen between the two parts of the word itself. I liken this hyphen to the role of the curator, and, moreover, to Rancière's concept of dialectic montage, a clash of parts. This is a space between artworks (and within them as well) that is cleaved open by their participation in the exhibition. The gaps between the "pavilions" or individual rooms housing the artworks are intended for both the visitor and the curator to encounter and imagine new connections. It is a generative space for new meanings to arise. My role as curator is to allow the works to breathe, and not impose one work upon another. This is an ethical position that also brings the works together, discreetly, in order to recognise their shared attitudes, and indeed, provide the exhibition with a platform. The third aspect of co-belonging is how these artworks and the exhibitions co-belong with both the site of the exhibitions and the wider world. This is a methodology that is conscious of the archives and traces in the world around us, and through a process of composition and decomposition—of coupling and uncoupling—the exhibitions and the artworks within beckon a new relation with that world. As such, artistic and curatorial imagination arises from both the site of the exhibitions and the fragmentation of the contemporary domain.

If social bonds are lost in the real world, it is the assemblages and performances, encounters and combinations played out through art and curating that can recreate a social bond, or as Rancière argues, a sense of community, even if fleetingly. In the two exhibitions discussed here, curatorial co-belonging manifested as the act of bringing works together into a realm of co-presence, even though the histories of the objects, their methods of becoming, their relationships to the archive and trace were diverse, and at times broken. What eventuated was a new community of relations, arising from the co-presence of these fragments. In this way, one work affected another, without losing its identity. It was mobilised. The past and the future were constituted in the present in both the art and exhibitions. Curatorial co-belonging realigned associations between images, texts, events, stories, archives and traces by providing an emancipatory energy for artworks and exhibitions alike. It renewed our attitudes to situations and communities. Curatorial co-belonging in these exhibitions created spatio-temporal configurations of archives and traces. Curatorial co-belonging embraced precarity and contingency. Curatorial co-belonging connected the artwork to life, to multiple histories and events. Curatorial co-belonging is a form of encounter with and between art objects, recreating and making links, bonds, meanings and metaphors between them that is not necessarily fixed in time. It is temporary, for it is short-lived, and it relies on an audience for its activation.

This exegesis does not propose that the roles of artist, curator and artwork are interchangeable, but as we have seen with the concept of the curatorial, they partake of similar processes. Curatorial co-belonging is not a replacement term for the curatorial, but rather a more specific activity of exhibition making with contemporary artists, sites, and world-making intentions. While Maria Lind separated the curatorial from the more instrumental act of curating, I have shown that the action of curating, of juxtaposing and combining objects in space, is ethically, politically and aesthetically charged, and I have therefore restored the distinction that Lind devised. As curator I have highlighted TarraWarra Museum of Art's specific situation, and I have amplified this context for artistic and curatorial co-belonging. I have engaged in a process of curatorial co-belonging as a form of composition, a process that can be spatial and temporal, that is porous and open and that, together with the artists, comments on and contributes to the world around us, albeit with intimate gestures.

The gaps between different systems of knowledge, between words and things, between fragments and texts, in curatorial co-belonging, is generative of new ways of being in the world—positions that contest the institutions of power that govern our contemporary condition: our map-making, our archives, our borders, our cities and our landscapes. Like the curatorial, my concept of curatorial co-belonging is intended as a disturbance to established knowledge systems. However, curatorial co-belonging specifically mobilises a temporary community of images, objects and sounds in the form of an exhibition, a community of art, site, visitor and environment that is structured both by its connections and disconnections. During the temporary period of the exhibitions' manifestation, artworks and exhibition lived in a shared world of shared metaphors that also welcomed the fissures and dissipated forms of identity.

Curating is fundamentally an archival activity. In chapter 2, however, the archival is explored as more than a collection of events and things, it is also a system that is forming and dispersing, and this is part of the mobilisation of the archive. When an artist or a curator assembles content from an archive, they are encouraged by and seek to further reveal this sense of dispersed difference. I have shown that the artists and curatorial projects in this exegesis were involved with a dismantling of systems of knowledge. They recognised that the archive is a system of power and, as such, they unravelled its form in order to reimagine its content. Their practice disclosed the unstable nature of archival systems and the knowledge that they contain. Their explorations showed the different versions of history, the various masks that we wear and the multiple connections that can be made between objects, events, statements and meaning. Because an archive is a group of items that are linked through the tool of comparison, I have shown that Foucault's notion of discontinuity is relevant. It is through the tool of comparison and the related method of montage that the artists in this exegesis and I have worked.

Further, through the work of Derrida and Thomas Richards, we saw that the archive is a political tool of conquest and power, and that it is a methodology for achieving those ends. In the hands of curators and artists, an archival methodology provides the opportunity to develop counter-archival methods to open up other modes of thought, being and inquiry, and to reveal what was lost, forgotten or repressed by the archive.

In the exhibition *All that is solid…* we saw how artists invoked precarious histories, and offered imaginative responses. Many of them used the format of the archival fragment as a starting point for their work. Others depicted the current social changes, turbulent conflicts, and altered political landscapes with a new imaginative filter. Their methods were revealed as abject, and they embraced a kind of "stray ethics" to mobilise and present counter-archival strategies. The archive was a generative force for their activities, as they explored the gaps and suturing promised by the archival method. I also linked the curatorial work of Okwui Enwezor, and his exhibition structure of a constellation of diverse voices and exhibitions within an exhibition, distributed across the city, with Rancière's thoughts on democracy, specifically the idea that one needs to cut and redistribute power in order to see what is invisible and hidden in society. This is part of Rancière's concept of the emancipatory capacity of the redistribution of the sensible.

This exegesis has helped me realise that, in many ways, *The Tangible Trace* grew out of *All that is solid…* In chapter 3 we see that, like the artists in *All that is solid…* the artists in *The Tangible Trace* sought to manifest something that was lost or map something that was ephemeral. A key link between both exhibitions was the work of Simryn Gill, entitled *Domino Theory*, which was the first exhibit in *The Tangible Trace*. Gill created her own archive, using nature's abject detritus to give the fragment a greater visibility and significance. Her archive misbehaved.

Through the experience of curating *The Tangible Trace*, the richly metaphorical concept of trace expanded my thinking beyond the archive, to a more general theory of the visual fragment and how it can be used by the artist, and in turn, how the curator then brings together artworks as a group of assemblages in order to create a sense of co-belonging, where the commensurable and incommensurable can co-habit in a spatial present. The artists in *The Tangible Trace* explored the concept of trace through tangible fragments—natural materials, pressings, mappings, markings, journeys and gestures. For each of the artists, place and situation were complex and entangled. In their artworks, the trace was like a touchstone for memory but was also part of the formation of a new memory. The trace was both an absent present and a present absence. In this exegesis I have shown the various ways in which the artists engaged with concepts such as trace, proximity, dialectical images and passages, journeys and walks. The artists looked at their surroundings like a living body of knowledge, tracing and retracing their oblique relationship with it. The artworks in *The Tangible Trace* were about sensations that exist in the world: they can be seen, felt and experienced in our real environments.

TarraWarra Museum of Art has embedded in its very architectural structure a connection to country, to the natural environment surrounding the museum, and the various Indigenous, colonial, settler and ecological narratives that permeate the views through the museum windows. In *All that is solid…* Tom Nicholson chose the North Gallery to recreate his work about colonial exploration, *Cartoons for Joseph Selleny* (2012 – 2017), in a gesture of recognition of the colonial stories of the Yarra Ranges. In this way, the large window at the end of the museum became part of the exhibition. Similarly, Sangeeta Sandrasegar's work in *The Tangible Trace*, *What falls from view* (2019), used the spine of the museum—the windows along the edge—to activate shadows and sensations of light that speak to traces of nature and culture. Each artist revealed one world behind another. Through the structure of loose associations, curatorial co-belonging sees meaning being assembled from the archives and traces in our midst, from the site of the museum, through to the shared and urgent experience of participating in the world. The metaphors of archive and trace lend themselves to curatorial co-belonging and this exegesis now opens up the opportunity for this methodology to be identified and applied in future exhibitions of contemporary art.

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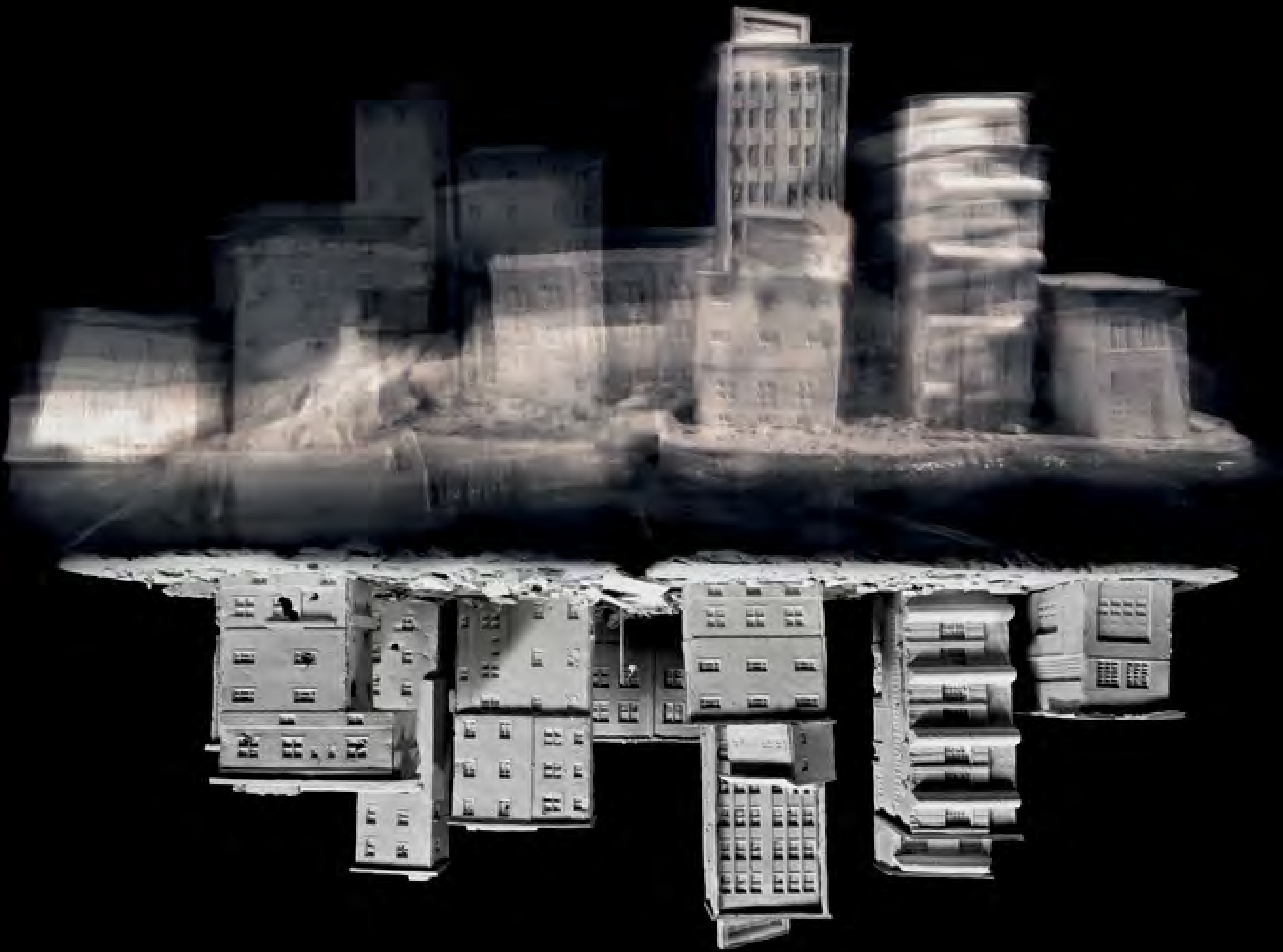
ALL THAT IS SOLID...



TARRAWARRA INTERNATIONAL 2017

ALL THAT IS SOLID…

CURATED BY VICTORIA LYNN

> DIDEM ERK > CAO FEI > TOM NICHOLSON > PATRICK POUND > CYRUS TANG

TARRAWARRA
MUSEUM
OF ART

INTERNATIONAL 2017
TARRAWARRA
MUSEUM
OF ART

ALL THAT IS SOLID…

CURATED BY VICTORIA LYNN

**2 SEPTEMBER –
12 NOVEMBER 2017**

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FRONT COVER:
Cyrus Tang *4505.00s* 2016

FRONT ENDPAPERS:
Tom Nicholson *Cartoons for Joseph Selleny* 2012–17 (detail)

BACK ENDPAPERS:
Didem Erk *Black Thread* 2016–17 (detail)

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Didem Erk
'I wish I could not be traced in the archives' (Mekanım Datça Olsun | May Datça Be My Resting Place) 2017 (video still)

FOREWORD

The TarraWarra International was inaugurated in 2013 as a regular series in the Museum's program and is designed to showcase leading contemporary art practice in a global context. The first exhibition in the series, *Animate/Inanimate*, featured works by Allora & Calzadilla (USA), Amar Kanwar (India), Janet Laurence (Australia), Lin Tianmiao (China), and Louise Weaver (Australia), which consider the profound interconnections between diverse life forms (natural, animal and human). In 2015, the first solo exhibition in Australia by internationally renowned contemporary French artist *Pierre Huyghe* focused on his ongoing investigations into temporality, culture and nature.

The Australian and international artists in this year's TarraWarra International: *All that is solid …* depict precarious histories, and their art offers imaginative responses. Many of them use the format of the archival fragment as a starting point for their work. Others depict the current social changes, turbulent conflicts, and altered political landscapes with a new, imaginative filter. In 2012 the Museum presented a two-day symposium entitled *The Landscape Awry*. Since that time, we have deepened our engagement with art, place and ideas, commissioning and presenting contemporary art works that reflect upon these themes. This exhibition considers the precarious nature of the city and landscape: the evolving conditions of change, histories of dispossession, archival documentation and lost knowledge.

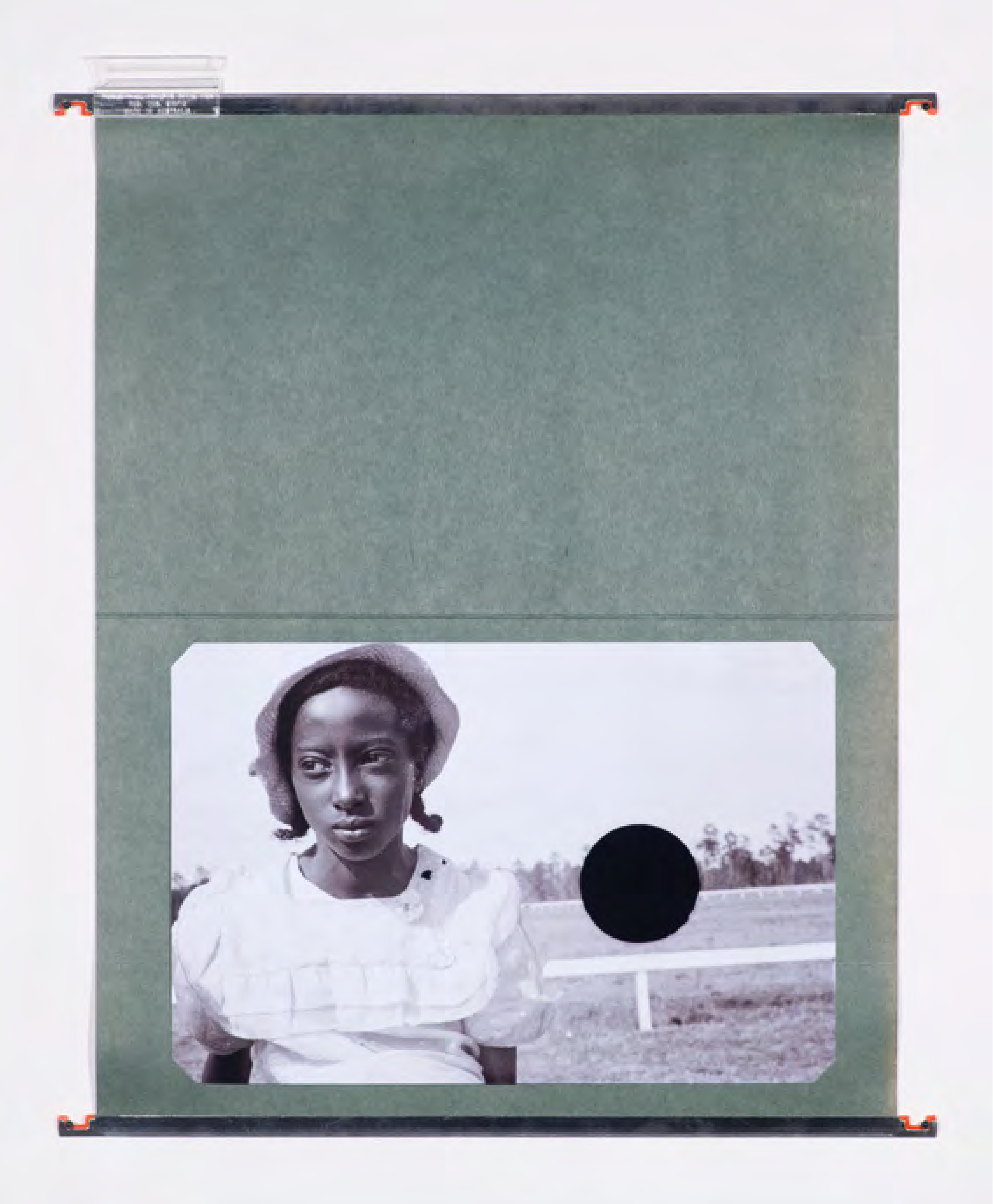
I would like to acknowledge and thank the artists in this year's TarraWarra International for their remarkable contributions to this exhibition: Didem Erk, Cao Fei, Tom Nicholson, Patrick Pound, and Cyrus Tang.

We are also grateful to: SAHA who provided support for the production of the new works by Didem Erk; x-ist gallery, Istanbul; Cao Fei Studio and Vitamin Creative Space; Milani Gallery, Brisbane; Station, Melbourne, Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington and Melanie Roger Gallery, Auckland; and ARC ONE Gallery, Melbourne.

We extend our appreciation to Nicholas Tsoutas for opening the exhibition and sincerely thank Geraldine Kirrihi Barlow, Yang Beichen, Didem Erk, Nikos Papastergiadis, and John Young for their insightful texts.

Exhibitions of this complexity would not be possible without the support of the Museum's principal sponsor: the Besen Family Foundation; our major sponsors: Arnold Bloch Leibler Lawyers and Advisers and Probuild; and our major partners: Paoli Smith Creative, IAS Fine Art Logistics and RACV Country Club Healesville. I also extend my gratitude to the dedicated volunteers and staff of our organisation: Mim Armour, Tony Dutton, Anthony Fitzpatrick, Annemarie Kohn, Claire Richardson, Steph Tesoriero, Joanne Morice and Heather Saleeba. Finally, my sincere thanks to Eva Besen AO and Marc Besen AC, our founding patrons, and our Board, for their continued support of the Museum and its program.

Victoria Lynn
Director



Patrick Pound
Cancelled archive 2017 (detail)

ALL THAT IS SOLID...

The worlds created by the artists in this exhibition and the situations that have inspired them are characterised by forms of transition, change and fluidity. Didem Erk, Cao Fei, Tom Nicholson, Patrick Pound and Cyrus Tang each work with 'non-solid' processes such as dissolution, tearing, cutting, melting, ruination, chewing, piercing and cancelling.

The title of this exhibition is borrowed from the phrase 'all that is solid melts into air' which was originally published in the Communist Manifesto (1848) penned by Karl Marx with assistance from Friedrich Engels. Later popularised in 1982 through the success of Marshall Berman's book of the same title, the phrase refers to the transformational conditions of modernity, where old methods, structures and social systems are dissolved and replaced by new ones. For this exhibition, I have borrowed the first part of the phrase, followed by an ellipsis, or three dots.[1] By suspending the phrase in this way, I aim to open up the proposition not only of how 'all that is solid' dissolves, but also the very nature of solidity itself.

The phrase, 'all that is solid melts into air' is widely considered to represent a modernist impulse where each action causes a contrary reaction. The desire to tear down what has gone before and replace it with something new was part of a revolutionary compulsion common to the historical avant-garde. The artists in this exhibition take an alternative approach. They work far more transversally across epochs, cultures and artistic disciplines. Rather than eschewing the past, they connect with it, often retaining the source materials in their artworks. For many of the artists exhibited here, the archive is an important generator of ideas. They find within it visual elements that flow and rhyme across time.

In addition, these artists introduce us to events, situations, conditions and environments that have arisen in periods of great change, precarity and transformation. They become our guide, and so the artwork is not necessarily something solid, but part of a fluid process of exploration, archival trace and montage. This is not the montage of the early 20th century artists such as Sergei Eisenstein, who sought a fusion of imagery that would result in the transition to a new world order. Montage in these works is understood in terms of the loose connections generated by the artist, between their lived experiences, the artwork, the situation created by the work and ultimately, the viewer.[2] Heterogeneous elements are combined, 'co-belonging' in the artworks, while memories are not dissolved and replaced so much as invoked and situated by the artists.

* * *

'All that is solid melts into air' appears in the first section of the Communist Manifesto. Describing the evolution of bourgeois capitalist society, Marx wrote:

> All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and men at last are forced to face ... the real conditions of their lives and their relations with their fellow men.[3]

He describes a society that was replacing Feudalism, one where everything was ascribed a value, to be bought or sold. It is a society, according to Marx, that is in continual renewal, where anything that is solid – including buildings, factories, employment, towns, cities and neighbourhoods – is dissolved and replaced. Out of the relentless economic crises, and the collisions between the bourgeois class and the proletariat, Marx hoped for an uprising and the creation of a Communist state. He expected that 'capitalism [would] be melted by the heat of its own incandescent energies ...'[4]

In his analysis of the Manifesto, Marshall Berman's book, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air*, posits that, on the one hand, 20th century modernity was characterised by a sense of urgency, adventure, change and transformation and, on the other, by the turbulence of destruction and renewal:

> ... the glory of modern energy and dynamism, the ravages of modern disintegration and nihilism, the strange intimacy between them; the sense of being caught in a vortex where all facts and values are whirled, exploded, decomposed, recombined; a basic uncertainty about what is basic, what is valuable, even what is real ...[5]

This text was written at the close of the 1970s in reaction to the rise of Marxist and modernist orthodoxies. The value of Marx's phrase for Berman is the former's understanding of the contradictions in modern society, the maelstrom of forces that throw people together and tear them apart, and the questions posed by Marx rather than his solutions. 'To be modern', according to Berman, '... is to experience personal and social life as a maelstrom ... To be a modernist is to make oneself somehow at home in the maelstrom ...'[6]

Today, the very notion of 'making oneself somehow at home' is not available to vast numbers of people as they attempt to move across the world in precarious circumstances. Moreover, 'making oneself at home' has a different meaning in terms of colonialist histories, especially here in Australia. Hence the maelstroms of contemporary life do not settle, the dust continues to circulate and imagery is perpetually transforming. There are three concepts that we can elucidate in relation to the artworks in this exhibition that give further insight into how the artists work with montage in response to this evolving set of conditions. First is the use of archival fragments; second are the gaps between diverse elements within the art works; and third is the notion that the artists create a situation of co-belonging.

We will come to see that the processes of dissolving, breaking, perforating, cutting, tearing, chewing and burning evident in the artworks are creative gestures that suggest both violence and fragility.

Each of the artists in this year's TarraWarra International bring into play archival images and objects in varying degrees. An 'archive' is a collection of material, assembled in some kind of order, with the purpose of registering and preserving a set of historical facts. The term 'archive' can be traced back to the Greek words *arkheia* meaning 'public records' and *arkhē*, meaning 'government'. Archives can be official, or personal. They can be photographic, textual, visual or electronic. They are a system of knowledge. As the origin of the term 'archive' suggests, archiving is both ancient and continuous. It has been shown that it was in the colonial era that archiving expanded and became an instrument of imperial power. To archive was to colonise and vice versa. The archival turn in art (evident in contemporary art since the 1990s) is more than simply an interest in archives: it includes the critical analysis of how archives are assembled, their links with structures of political power and their creative potential.

Archives hold within them many items, and yet there are gaps. Comprised of numerous fragments, archives contain both knowledge and omissions in knowledge. There is also another kind of fissure: between the image, text or object and the associated event; between the archival piece and its original context. I would argue that there is a connection between the generative potential of archival collections, and the practices of collage, montage and assemblage that are often employed to create art works with archives. These early 20th century methods involve the idea of cutting and reassembling. Such temporal and spatial articulations are embedded in the very form of archives themselves: fragments are reassembled.

Okwui Enwezor suggests that artists who use archives in their works, become an 'agent of memory ... against the tendency of contemporary forms of amnesia ... it is also within the archive that acts of remembering and regeneration occur, where a suture between past and present is performed, in the indeterminate zone between event and image, document and monument'.[7] It is not that the artist proposes a new kind of archival order; rather they work within this 'indeterminate zone'. As we can see in this exhibition, the artists actively 'cut' and 'tear', 'suture' and 'montage' the materials and images. This is their mobilisation of the archive. They create small heterotopias in which the gap between words and things, objects and their interpretation, is prised open so that new meanings are formed. The archive is unravelled to reveal alternative networks of meaning that variously signal the interconnection between aesthetic and political gestures.

Moreover, in *All that is solid* ... we see memories questioned and transformed into a new situation; the past is reflected upon without being replaced; historical images are revived without nostalgia; archives are montaged without the modernist impetus of revolutionary change or universal values. A useful way of understanding the contemporary montage in these artworks is through Jacques Rancière's notion of 'co-belonging'. For Rancière, our very way of communicating with one another, and our relationship to the everyday distribution of power is played out through montage. And it is through this mobilisation of fragments that resistance, activism, and new communities can arise. Symbolic montage, he writes, establishes a familiarity between heterogeneous elements:

> ... an occasional analogy, attesting to a more fundamental relationship of co-belonging, a shared world where heterogeneous elements are caught up in the same essential fabric, and are therefore always open to being assembled in accordance with the fraternity of a new metaphor.[8]

Heterogeneous elements are montaged together, not in the dialectic manner of modernism, where 'all that is solid melts into air'; rather, the varied elements share a world, a 'fabric', and are open to being reassembled according to a new metaphor. It is a generative form of montage, one that can create new bonds and new associations across time, place and object. What follows is a more detailed analysis of each of the works that draws out many of these ideas.

Cyrus Tang's suite of photographs *Lacrimae Rerum* (2016) begin with a city made of clay which is gradually dissolving in water. But Tang turns the city upside down, reversing the process so that it appears like a mirage. Each of these photographs is titled with a period of time exposure in seconds that the camera took to achieve this visual outcome, some of which were up to three and a half hours. The city in ruin transforms into intersecting planes of light, expressing a kind of shudder. *Lacrimae Rerum* is Latin for 'tears for things' suggesting that the work is exploring a loss of the city. The disintegration of the image is also evident in her 2016-17 video works *The Final Cut Off – Daisy Kwok* and *The Final Cut Off – Alice Lim Kee* where incense and ash are screen-printed onto a liquid surface outlining the portraits of two Australian-born Chinese women. In search of a better future, the two women relocated to Shanghai in the early 20th century, but eventually were caught up in the rise of Communism.[9] Like a memory that fades, the images distort and the ash and incense become a liquid abstraction.

Accompanying these works are Tang's encyclopedia sculptures. *The Children's Encyclopedia* (2016) and *The Modern World Encyclopaedia* (2017) have been cremated in a kiln. Through this process, Tang creates a delicate afterlife for the books and they are transformed into concave forms and cascading volumes. This action recognises the looming death of the encyclopedia, once the authoritative text at home or school and one that many of us collectively recall. Additionally, these works invoke book burnings during dictatorial regimes and the associated censorship of modern knowledge and progressive literature. Dust, ash and incense also have significance in Tang's childhood memories of offerings at shrines in Hong Kong. *All Our Yesterdays* (2017) is comprised of porcelain painted on pages from *The New International Illustrated Encyclopaedia*. These archival sheets are both preserved and enclosed; what we see is a faint trace of the original page, but the text is absent.

Cao Fei's video *Rumba II: Nomad* (2015) shows the debris of a building that is in the process of being destroyed to make way for another skyscraper in Beijing. In the video the dust is overwhelming and pervasive. The building used to be part of an urban fringe, where rural, artistic and industrial communities co-habited. We see a structure in the state of collapse, and Cao Fei inserts several characters into this concrete and brick ruin: robotic vacuum cleaners, fake plastic fowl, and a living community of people who occupy the space for different purposes, including labourers, a child at play, another walking through the site, police, some men drinking, and a man dressed as a farmer, partly deranged, playing a saxophone in a discordant manner. The robotic cleaners are choreographed into a dance – a rumba – attempting some kind of structured existence in the midst of chaos, yet unable to manage the debris around them. The aliens here are the chickens. They are reminders of the past (as fowl and other animals once roamed here) but because they sit atop the cleaners, it is as if they have arrived from the future. An identity card (a small archival fragment) is visible in the ruins, yet in the environment Cao Fei presents there is a fluid, unstructured and unidentified community. While the memory of the past is still present, albeit in a state of collapse, Cao Fei creates a new situation for these homeless inhabitants. They are both apart and together, co-existing in a strange futuristic space.

Cancelled archive (2017) by Patrick Pound is a set of black and white photographs printed from the Farm Security Archive (FSA). Each image has a black hole in the middle, disrupting the image in an almost violent fashion. Punched into the negatives by the Director of the FSA, Roy Stryker, the holes marked the decision that the images were no longer useful for the archive. As such, a new kind of archive was created, a cancelled archive. The American struggle is still evident in these images: the poverty-stricken house, the solitary figure of a woman at the doorway, the dry fields. The black circles are, as Pound comments, 'a harbinger of trouble':

> These images that have been cancelled offer an alternative archive of the indeterminacy of things; of peoples and of places. They speak of an archive subset – an archive of failure within a grand scheme, yet they have a quality all of their own to withstand their cancellation as negatives as they find a second life as printed evidence of their subjects and their master and the FSA photographers (known as 'information officers') in between.[10]

Pound arranges the photographs in a single line across a long wall so that the black discs float across as if in a sequence forming a passing black moon. As such, he binds the images into a new community, or fraternity. They come to share a fabric, even though they are diverse in their content. The cancelled archive is, as it were, re-imagined by Pound in his creation of an alternative structure.

`I wish I could not be traced in the archives' (Sırkıran I Secret Decipherer I Mistiko Spastis)* (2013) and *`I wish I could not be traced in the archives' (Mekanım Datça Olsun | May Datça Be My Resting Place) (2017) are each two-channel video installations by Turkish artist Didem Erk. In the 2013 video we see the artist walking on both sides of the border between the Turkish and Greek sections of the Cypriot city of Nicosia. The artist is reading from a text by Gür Genç, aka Gürgenç Korkmazel, a poet, writer, translator and literary editor.[11] As Erk completes each page, she tears it from the book, chews it and then abandons it on the path. This action recalls the popular cinematic device of reading a secret message during war, and eating the evidence so that it cannot be traced. Yet the chewed pages do leave a trace, a line of evidence that follows the artist's physical trajectory. The second video created especially for this exhibition, is located in Datça, the rural area where the artist lives. Datça is a small town that divides the Aegean and Mediterranean and a natural border where refugees cross over to Greece. Their perilous journeys have resulted in dead bodies being washed up on shore several times in recent years. One channel of the video is performed in Gereme facing the Aegean, the other channel is performed in Knidos, facing the Mediterranean. Erk reads from a book called *Mekanım Datça Olsun (May Datça Be My Resting Place)* by Can Yücel (1926 – 1999), one of the foremost Turkish poets and writers known for his use of colloquial language.[12] Erk encounters multiple kinds of borders: natural, political and national. These actions of walking on a borderline, reading about place and chewing pages of a book, situate the landscape as an archive or library – as a place that holds stories within it. Erk has positioned the screens on the North/South axis of the Museum, and the viewer is located in between the screens, as if on a border. The soundtracks are intermingled and this level of disorientation means that the viewer experiences a kind of sonic instability.

Since 2015, Erk has worked on a series of installations with second-hand books that have been censored – such as by Can Yücel. She comments:

> To cover something sometimes makes it visible, to underline or to cross-out a word makes it legible. How does the memory relate to performativity? Pages are sewn word by word, sentence by sentence. The act obliterates the legibility but it connects the thread of writing and thread of sewing. The needle working through the page operates an invisible violence. However sewing is also a form of healing that asks the question, how is it possible to connect all the words (ideas) on the page, how to heal them?[13]

For this exhibition, she chose two books that were once censored in Australia: James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. Like the black discs in *Cancelled archive* by Patrick Pound, or the cremated remains of encyclopedias in the works of Cyrus Tang, the piercing of needle and thread enacts a kind of violence on the page, while also representing a suturing, or healing, across the words, pages, and book.

Charcoal dust is Tom Nicholson's medium in the installation *Cartoons for Joseph Selleny* (2012–17). Rather than consider oneself as a product of a continuous temporal identity, the archive provides a discontinuous representation of history. Because of the gaps in the archive, any sense of the self as whole or `transcendental' is prised open. The archive teaches us that we are the product of different histories, discourses, masks and distinctions. The North Gallery of the Museum is covered in a drawing that has been created by Nicholson through the Renaissance method of pouncing with porous cloth. Charcoal is ground up to make dust and large pieces of paper have been perforated with small holes so that when the charcoal-filled cloth is pounced through the holes, an image is created on the wall without being directly drawn. This is a method used by Renaissance artists to transfer a drawing to a canvas.

The abstract expanse holds within it the imagery of Nicholson's original drawings that are based on four versions of *The Execution of Maximilian* painted by the French artist Edouard Manet between 1867 and 1869. Nicholson has produced preparatory drawings for these four versions of Manet's painting after the fact. Also exhibited are take-away artist's books of letters, written by Nicholson, to imaginary people caught up in the story of the Novara – the Austrian frigate that visited Sydney Harbour in 1858, sponsored by the Archduke Maximilian, the subject of Manet's paintings. Joseph Selleny was the artist aboard the Novara – a colonial journey that resulted in the appropriation of Aboriginal objects that are now held in the Museum of Ethnology in Vienna.

As we look out over the landscape of the Yarra Valley, where stories of Aboriginal dispossession are equally present, Nicholson's installation comes to be about various acts of legibility: the written word, the drawings after Manet, and the abstract wall drawing. Violence is present in the images of the execution, in the act of perforating the drawings, and in the theft of the objects. The colonial explorations, borders and journeys continue to have a presence in museum archives around the world, where the results of colonial collecting remain in evidence. Nicholson's installation crosses epochs, countries and artistic disciplines. The large dust drawing is spatial – a place for the imagination to wander. It feels like it contains light and air, but its energy is not the incandescent energy of modernity ('all that is solid melts into air') but instead a quiet and delicate pulse of the human hand that contains within it the trace of the complex narratives chosen by Nicholson. Dust does not settle – it is always with us, its particles invisible to the eye, circulating in the air and stirred by our mobility through space.

The artists in *All that is solid* … create worlds and situations based on lived experiences. They dissolve, fragment and prise apart significant histories, and reassemble situations anew. Their works question 'all that is solid', reframing memories, borders, journeys and archives in heterogeneous combinations. The viewer comes to know each situation through the action of the artist. They become our guide, and so the artwork is not fixed, but part of a fluid process of exploration, residue and co-belonging. There is an underlying violence embedded in the processes of cutting, tearing, piercing, melting, burning, ruining, and cancelling – perhaps reflecting the historical and contemporary violence that is enacted on landscapes and cityscapes today. But there are also moments of great fragility and, at times, humour, in these imaginative situations. At TarraWarra Museum of Art we continue to explore the connections between art, place and ideas, by turning around common expectations. The artworks in *All that is solid* … are our connection to precarious histories and resilient actions.

Victoria Lynn

1 The author acknowledges the previous use of this exhibition title by Cyrus Tang for her 2014 exhibition at Artereal Gallery, Sydney.

2 For the purposes of this essay, I use the filmic term 'montage' to describe a broad set of practices that include collage and assemblage. Each term has specific histories.

3 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, 'Manifesto of the Communist Party' in Robert Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader*, (2nd edition), New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1978, pp. 475-76. Cited by Berman, p. 21.

4 Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, (2nd edition), New York: Penguin, 1988, p. 97.

5 ibid. p. 121.

6 ibid. p. 345.

7 Okwui Enwezor, 'Archive Fever: Photography between History and the Monument' in (ed. Okwui Enwezor), *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art*, New York: International Center of Photography; Gèottingen, Germany: Steidl Publishers, 2008, pp. 46-47.

8 Jacques Rancière, *The Future of the Image*, London: Verso, 2007, p. 57.

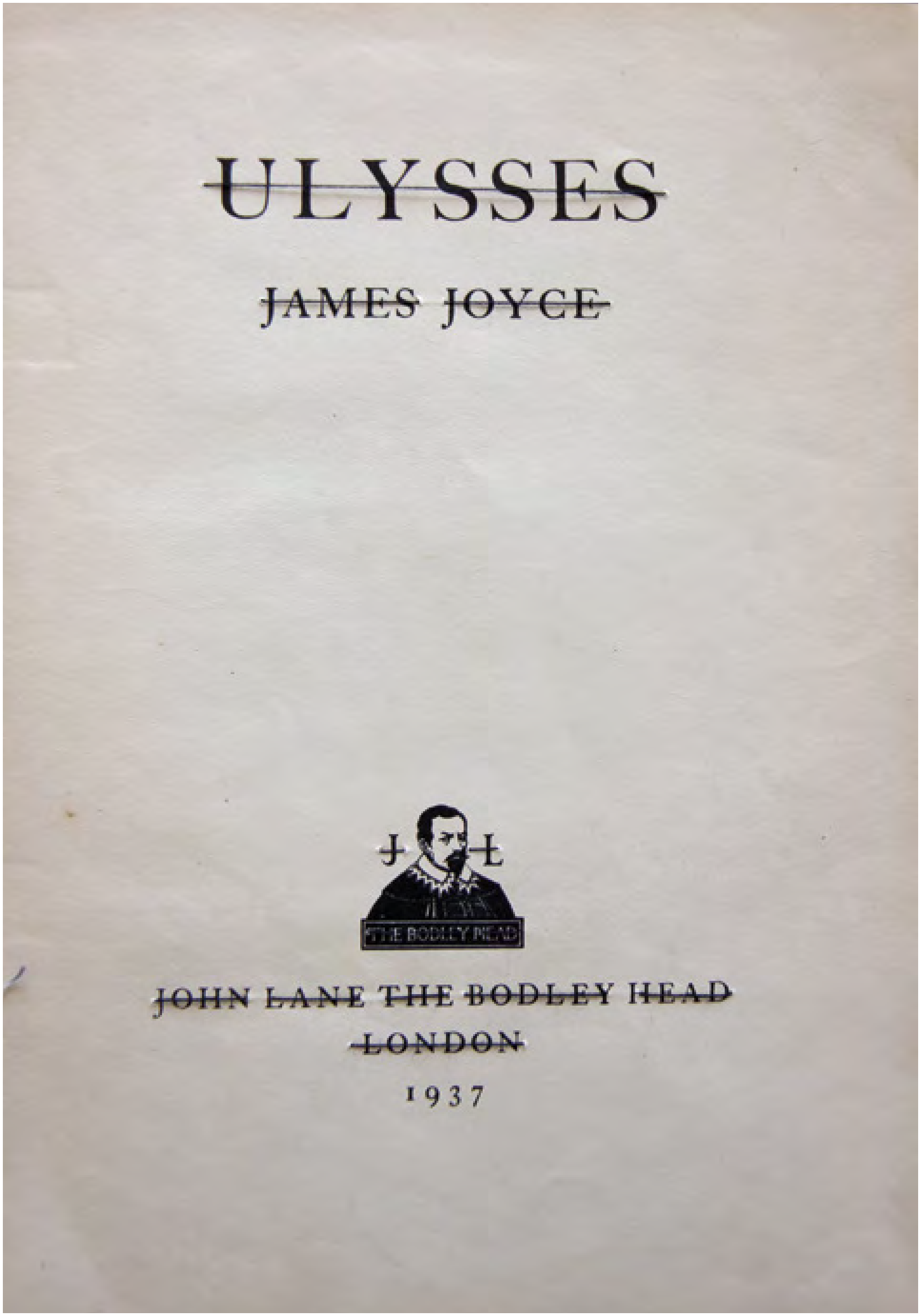
9 The videos were originally created for an exhibition by John Young, *Modernity's End: Half the Sky*, 2016, ARC ONE Gallery, Melbourne.

10 Patrick Pound, email to the author, 7 June 2017.

11 Born in Paphos in 1969 he lived for four years in Turkey and seven years in Britain, resettling in Cyprus in 2003. Between 1992 and 2005 he published four books of poetry, and, in 2007, a collection of short stories.

12 He studied classics at Ankara University and then at Cambridge University, before working as a translator at several Turkish embassies and then as a Turkish announcer at the BBC in London for 5 years. After moving to Istanbul in 1965, he also became a freelance translator. During his years in Istanbul, he pursued his political interests by continuing his support for the Labour party. It was during these years in Istanbul, following the Military Coup in 1971, that Yücel was first sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment because of two translations. He was released in 1974 because of a general amnesty.

13 Didem Erk, email to the author, 8 March 2017.



~~ULYSSES~~

~~JAMES JOYCE~~

~~J~~ ~~L~~
THE BODLEY HEAD

~~JOHN LANE THE BODLEY HEAD~~
~~LONDON~~
1937

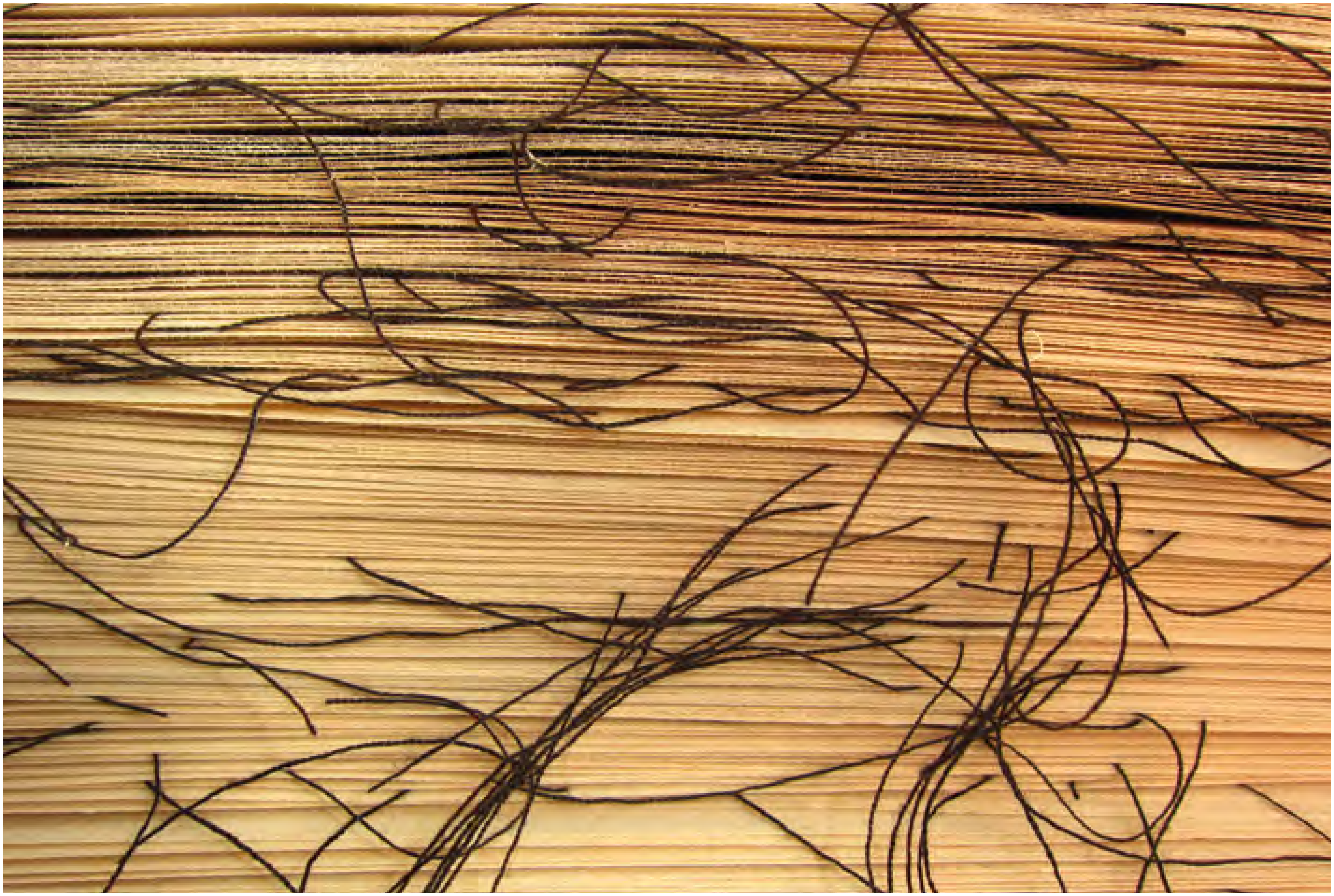
Didem Erk
Black Thread 2016–17 (detail)

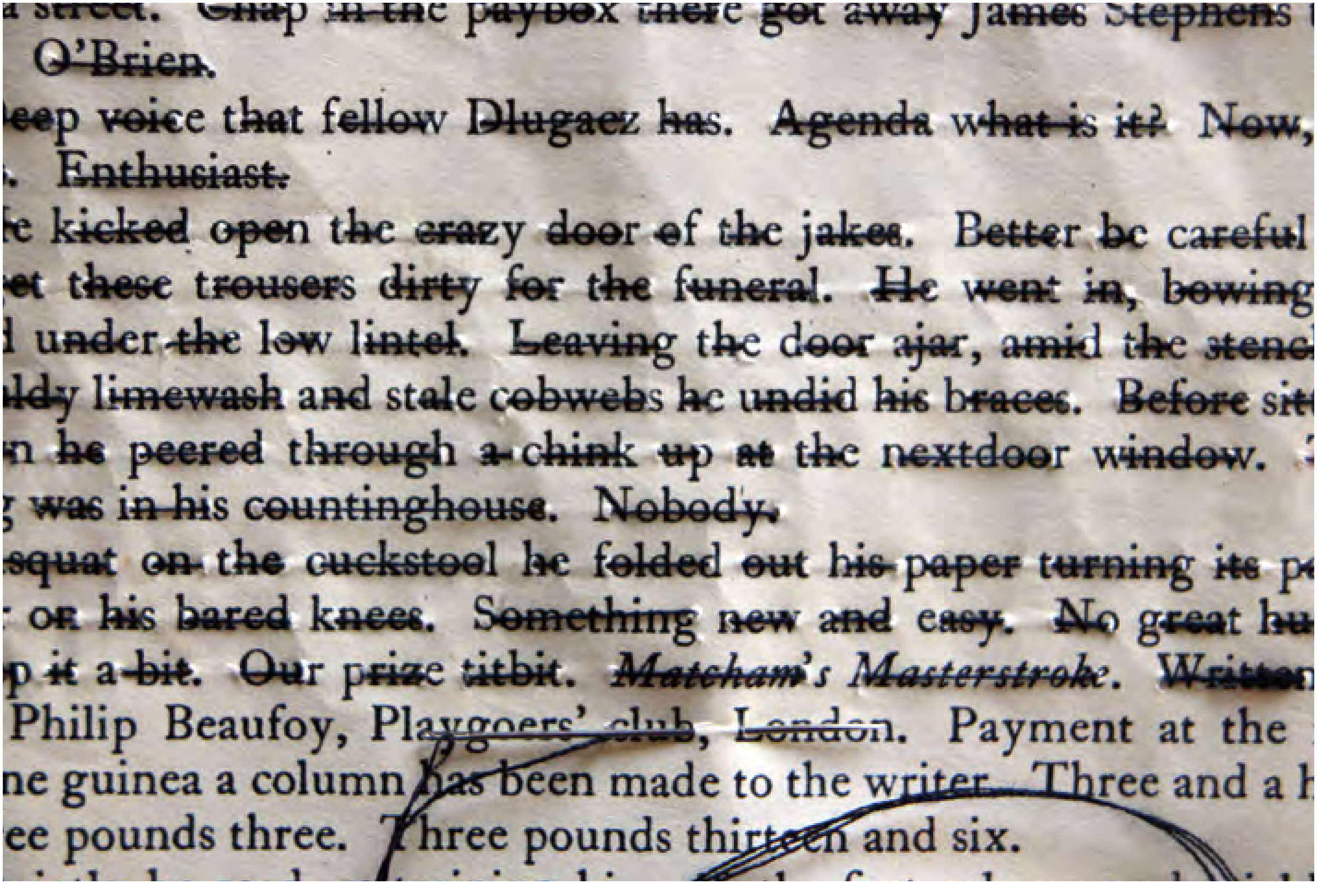
ARTISTS

DIDEM ERK

PAGES 18–19:
'I wish I could not be traced in the archives' (Mekanım Datça Olsun | May Datça Be My Resting Place) 2017 (video stills)

PAGES 20–21:
Black Thread 2016–17 (details)





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eep ~~voice~~ that ~~fellow~~ ~~Dlugacz~~ ~~has.~~ ~~Agenda~~ w~~hat is~~ ~~it?~~ ~~Now,~~
. ~~Enthusiast.~~
e ~~kicked~~ ~~open~~ the crazy ~~door~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ jakes. ~~Better~~ ~~be~~ careful
~~et~~ ~~these~~ ~~trousers~~ dirty ~~for~~ ~~the~~ funeral. ~~He~~ ~~went~~ ~~in,~~ ~~bowing~~
d under ~~the~~ low lintel. ~~Leaving~~ the door ~~ajar,~~ ~~amid~~ the ~~stenc~~
ldy ~~limewash~~ and stale ~~cobwebs~~ ~~he~~ ~~undid~~ ~~his~~ braces. ~~Before~~ sit
n ~~he~~ ~~peered~~ ~~through~~ ~~a~~ ~~chink~~ ~~up~~ ~~at~~ the ~~nextdoor~~ ~~window.~~
g ~~was~~ ~~in his~~ ~~countinghouse.~~ ~~Nobody.~~
~~squat~~ ~~on~~ ~~the~~ ~~cuckstool~~ ~~he~~ ~~folded~~ ~~out~~ ~~his~~ paper ~~turning~~ ~~its~~ p
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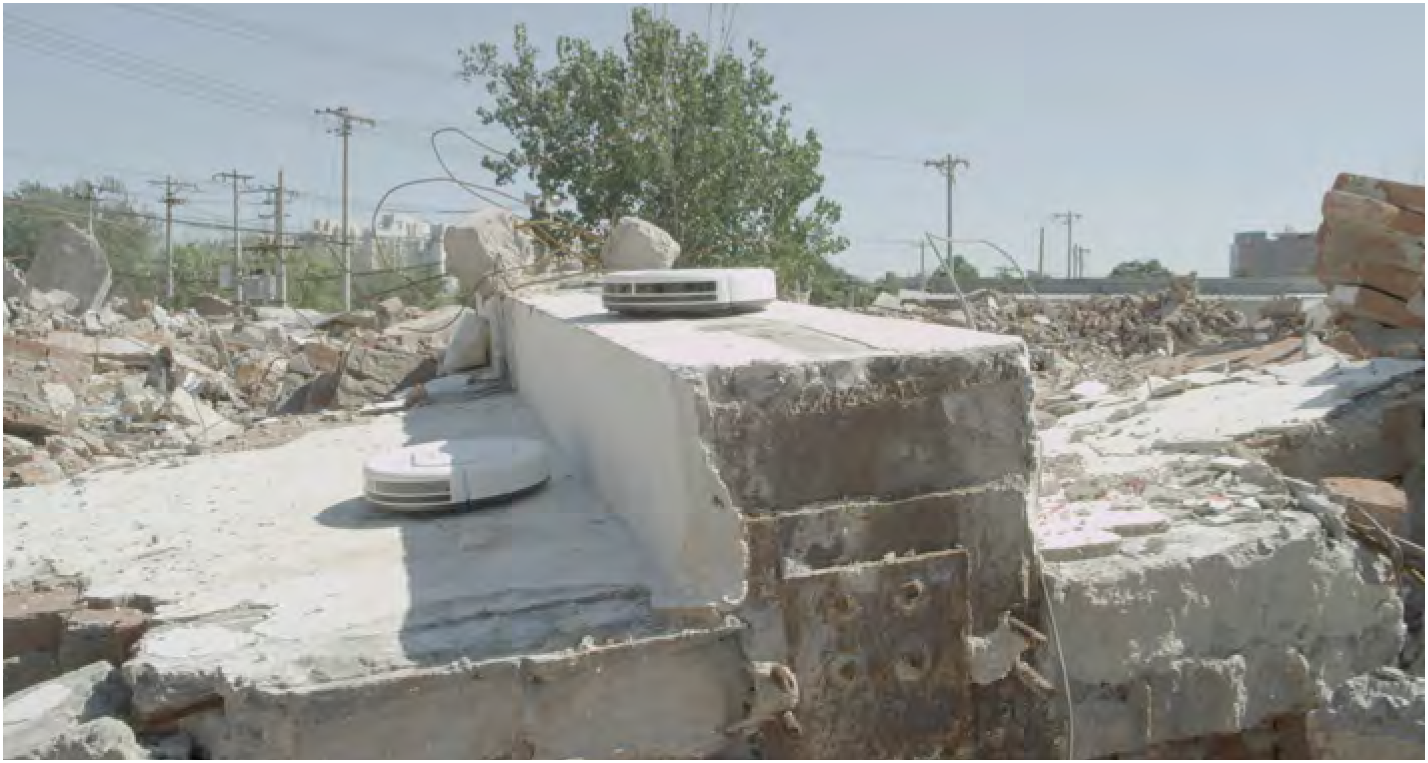
Philip Beaufoy, Pla~~ygoers' club~~, ~~London~~. Payment at the
ne guinea a column ~~has~~ been made to the writer. Three and a h
ee pounds three. Three pounds thirteen and six.

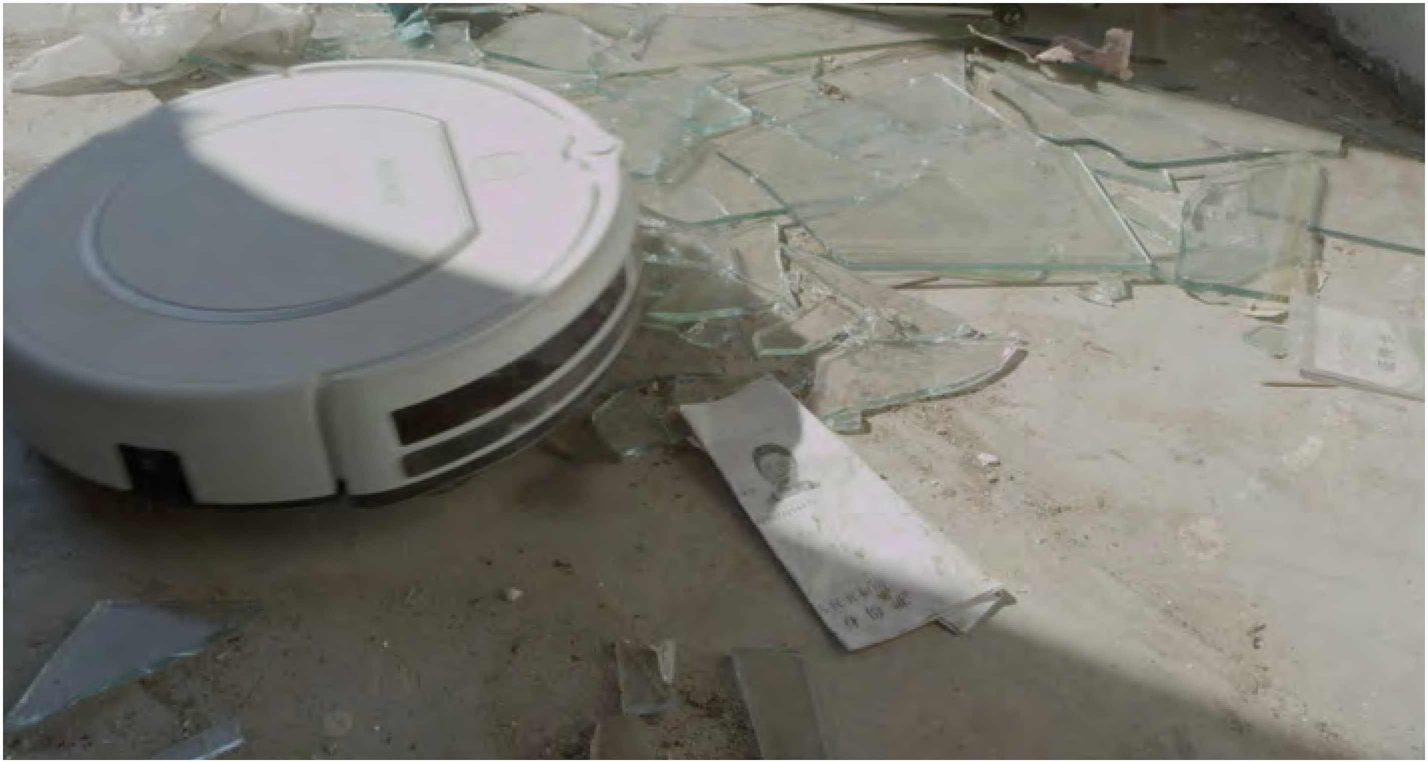
MAKARIOS III
& FINE ARTS
ΚΑΙ ΚΑΛΕΣ ΤΕΧΝΕΣ

PAGES 22–23:
'I wish I could not be traced in the archives' (Sırkıran | Secret Decipherer | Mistiko Spastis) 2013
(video stills)

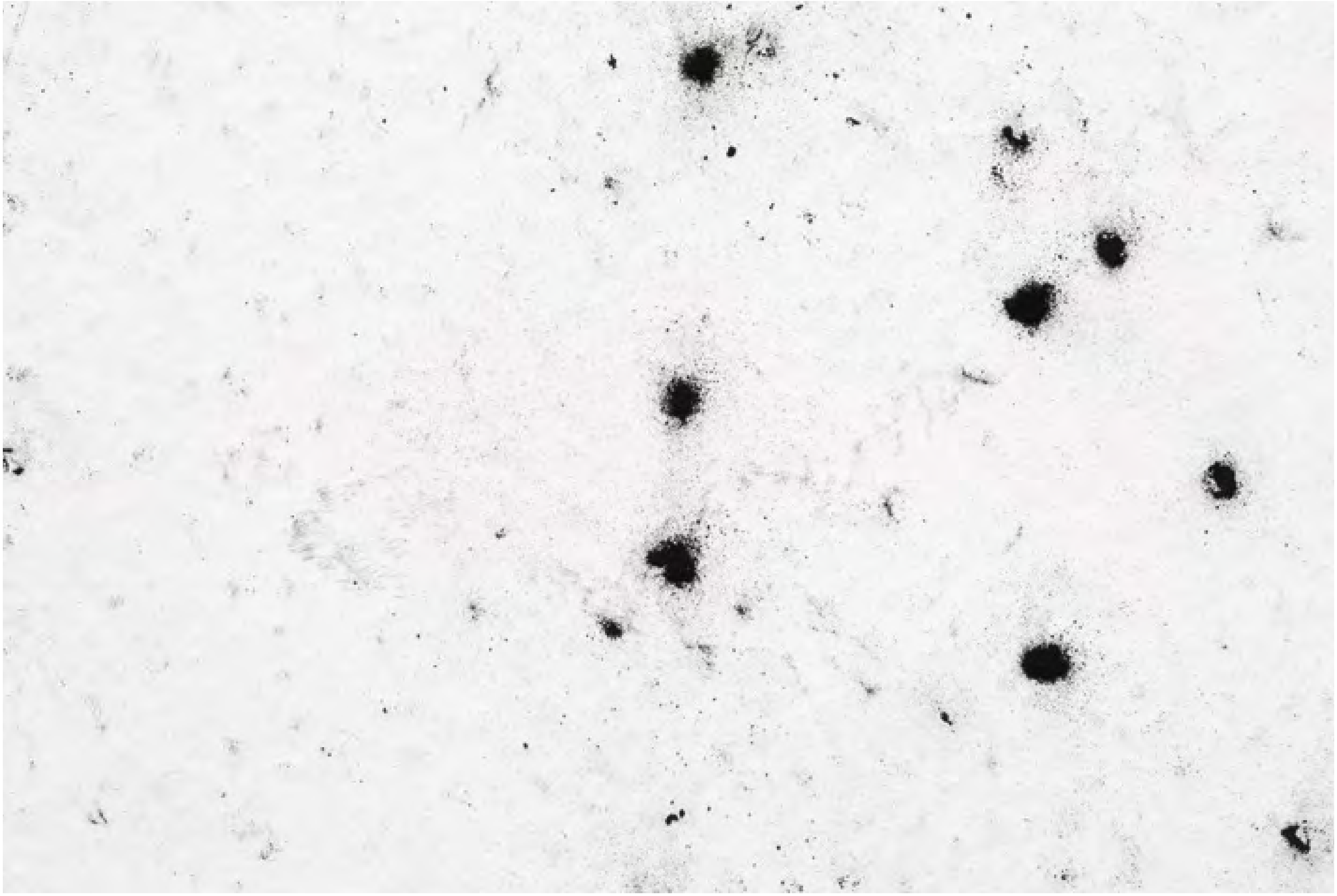
CAO FEI



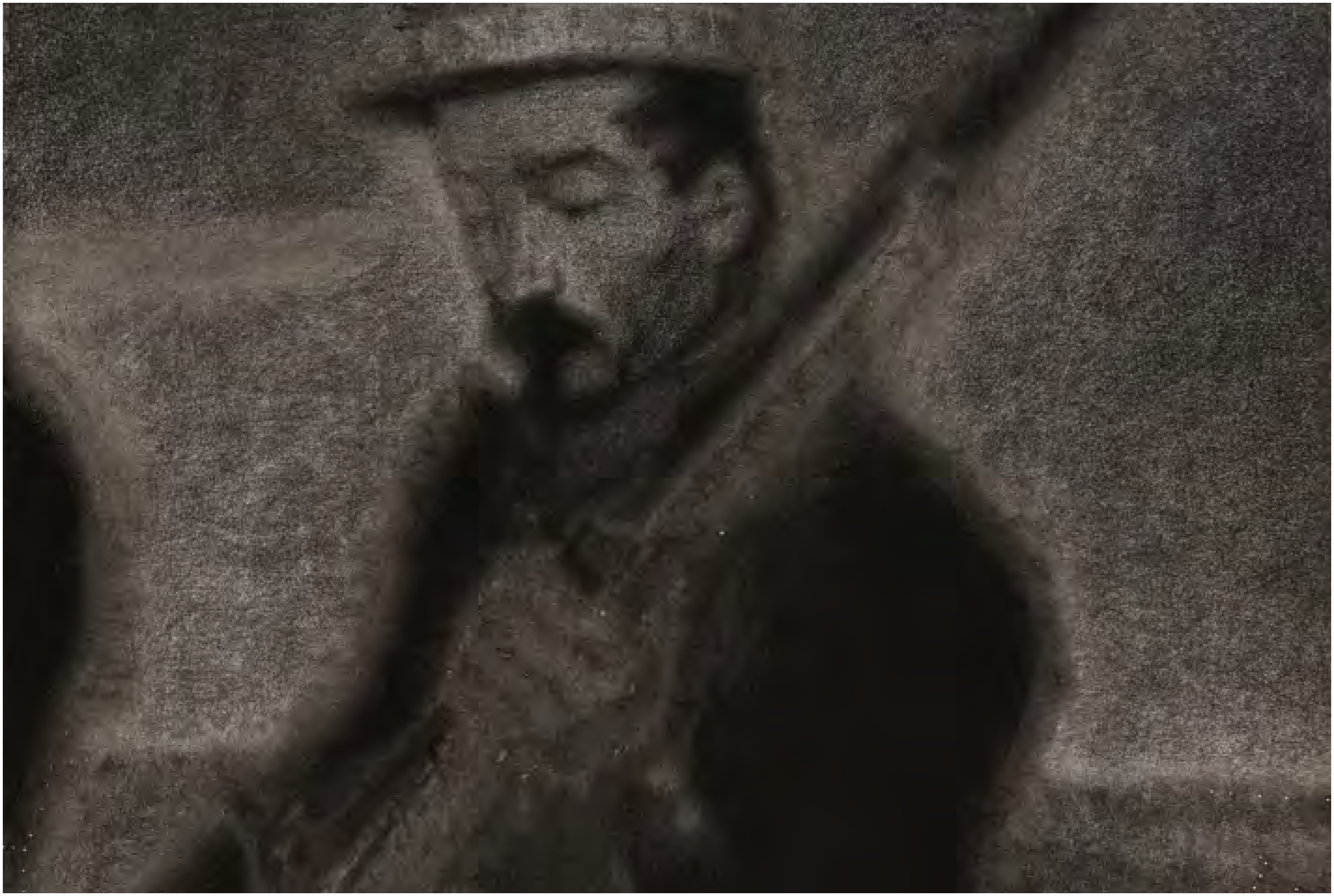
PAGES 24–29:
Rumba II: Nomad 2015 (video stills)

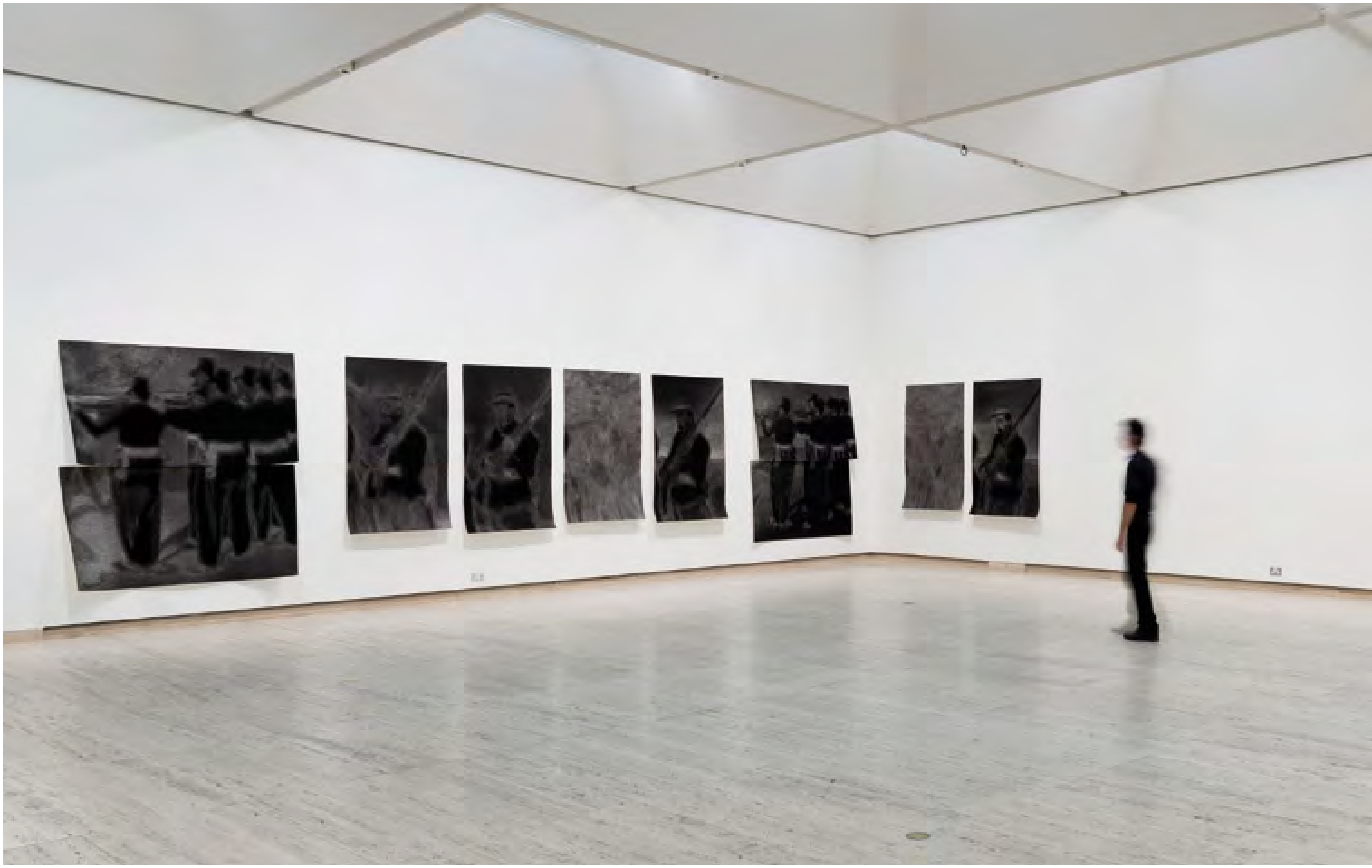


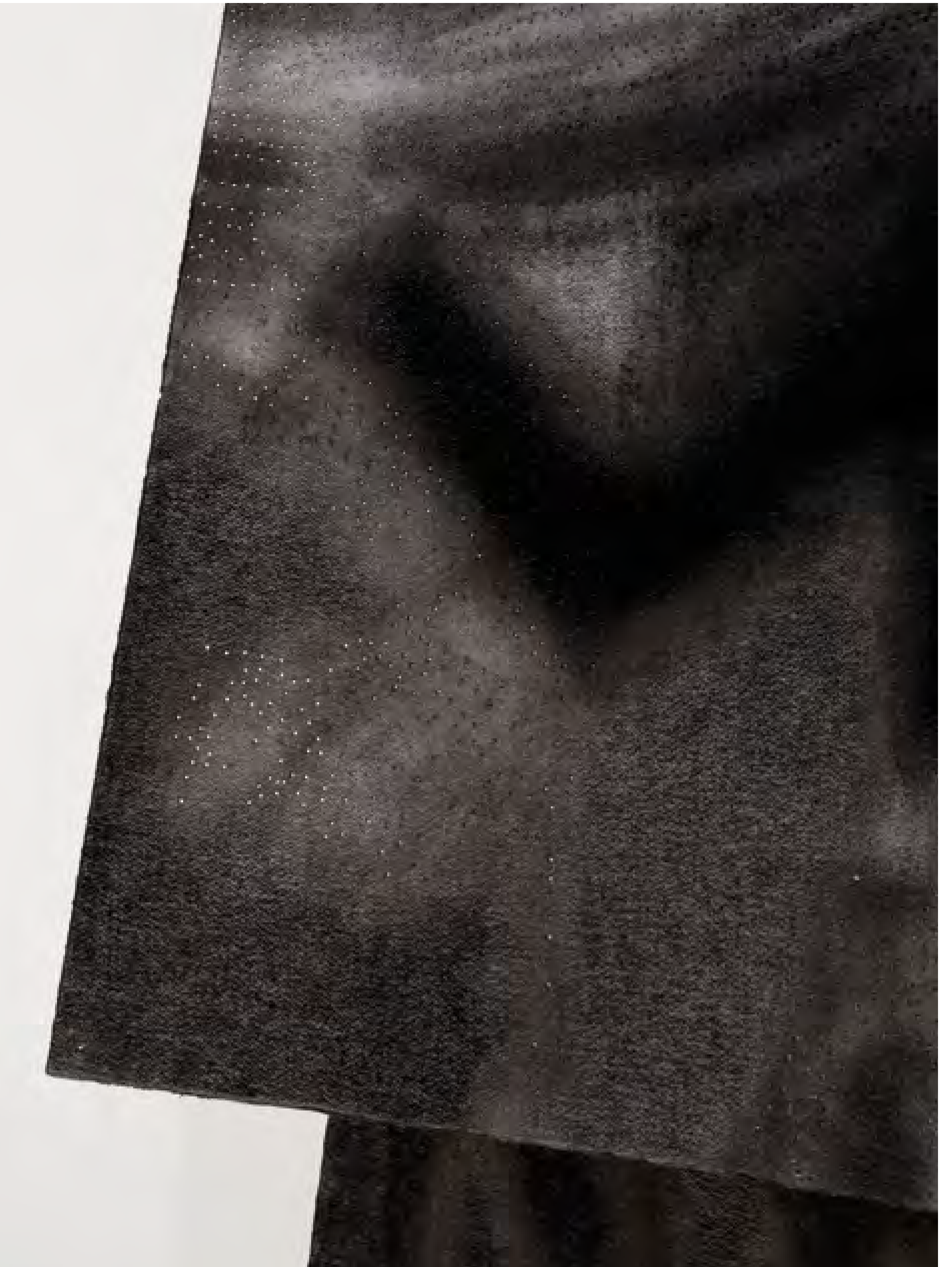
TOM NICHOLSON

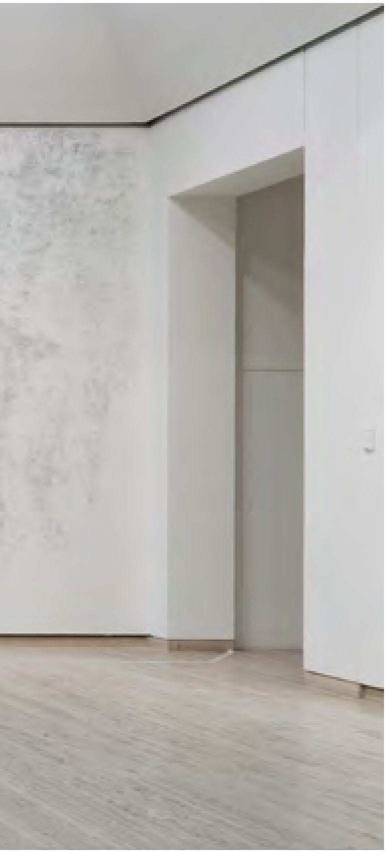


PAGES 30–35:
Cartoons for Joseph Selleny 2012–17 (details)
installation views, Art Gallery of New South Wales,
Sydney, 2014

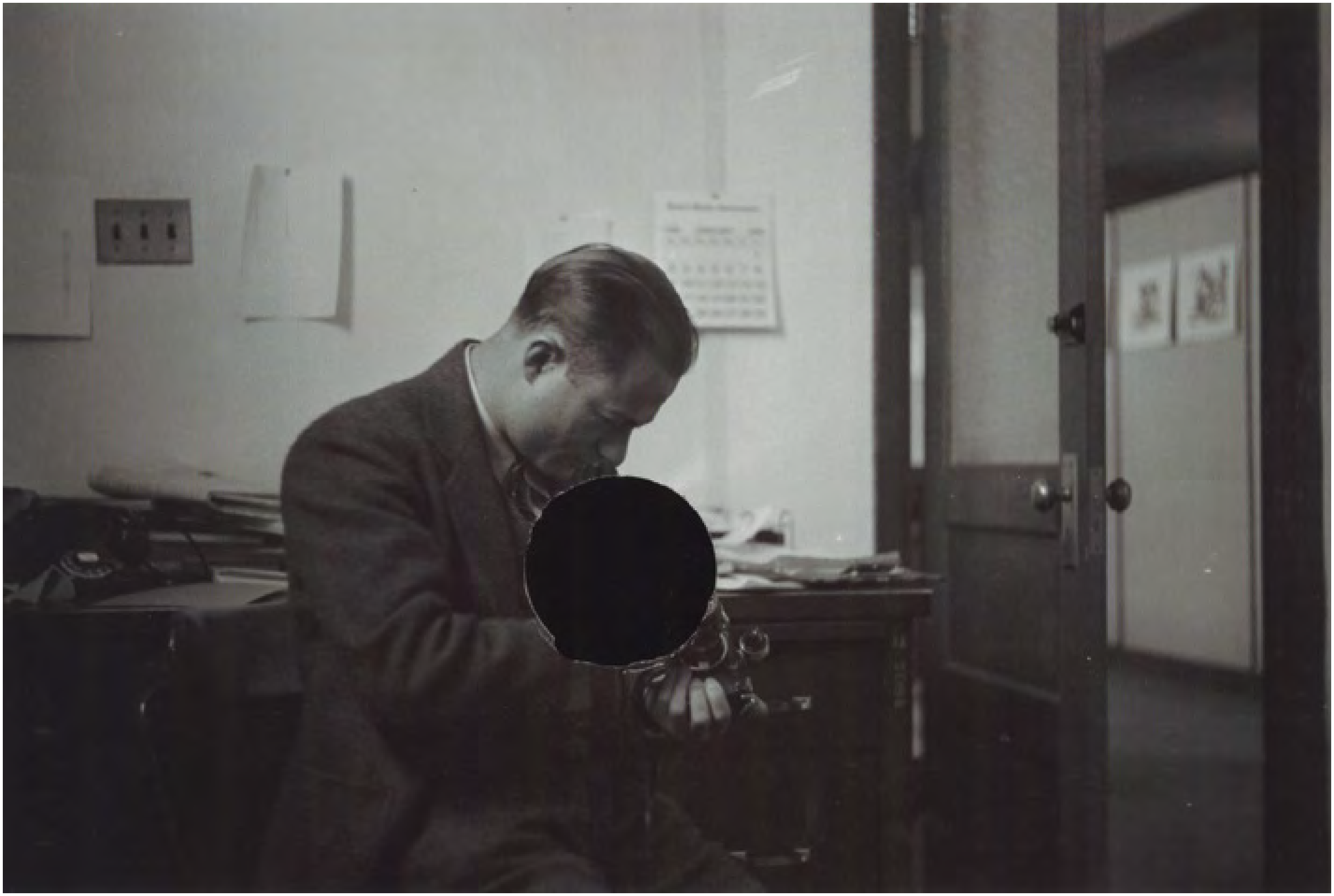




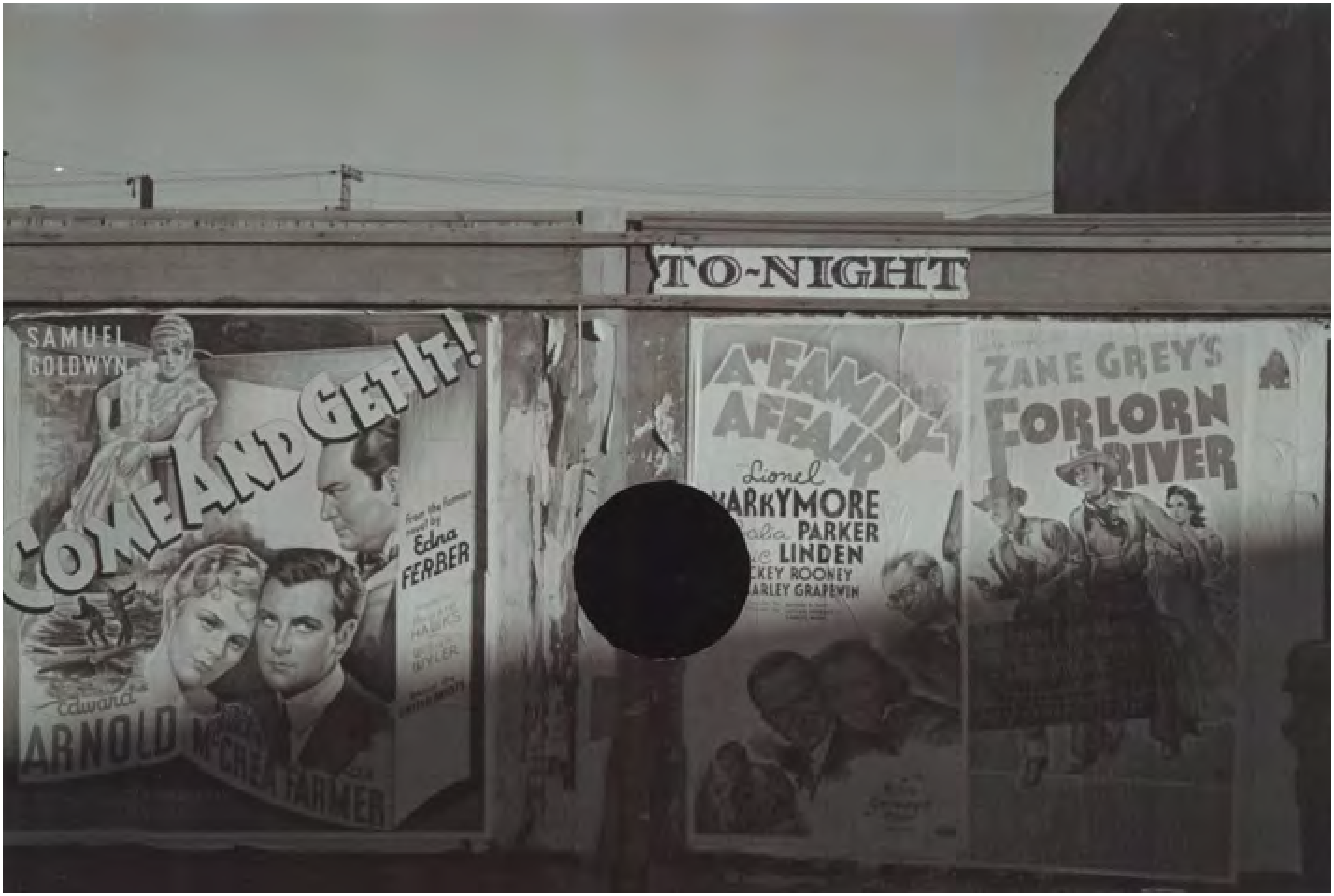




PATRICK POUND



PAGES 36–41:
Cancelled archive 2017 (details)


TO-NIGHT
SAMUEL
GOLDWYN
COME AND GET IT!
From the famous novel by
Edna
FERBER
HAWKS
WYLER
Edward
ARNOLD
McCREA
FARMER
A FAMILY AFFAIR
Lionel
ARRYMORE
PARKER
LINDEN
CKEY ROONEY
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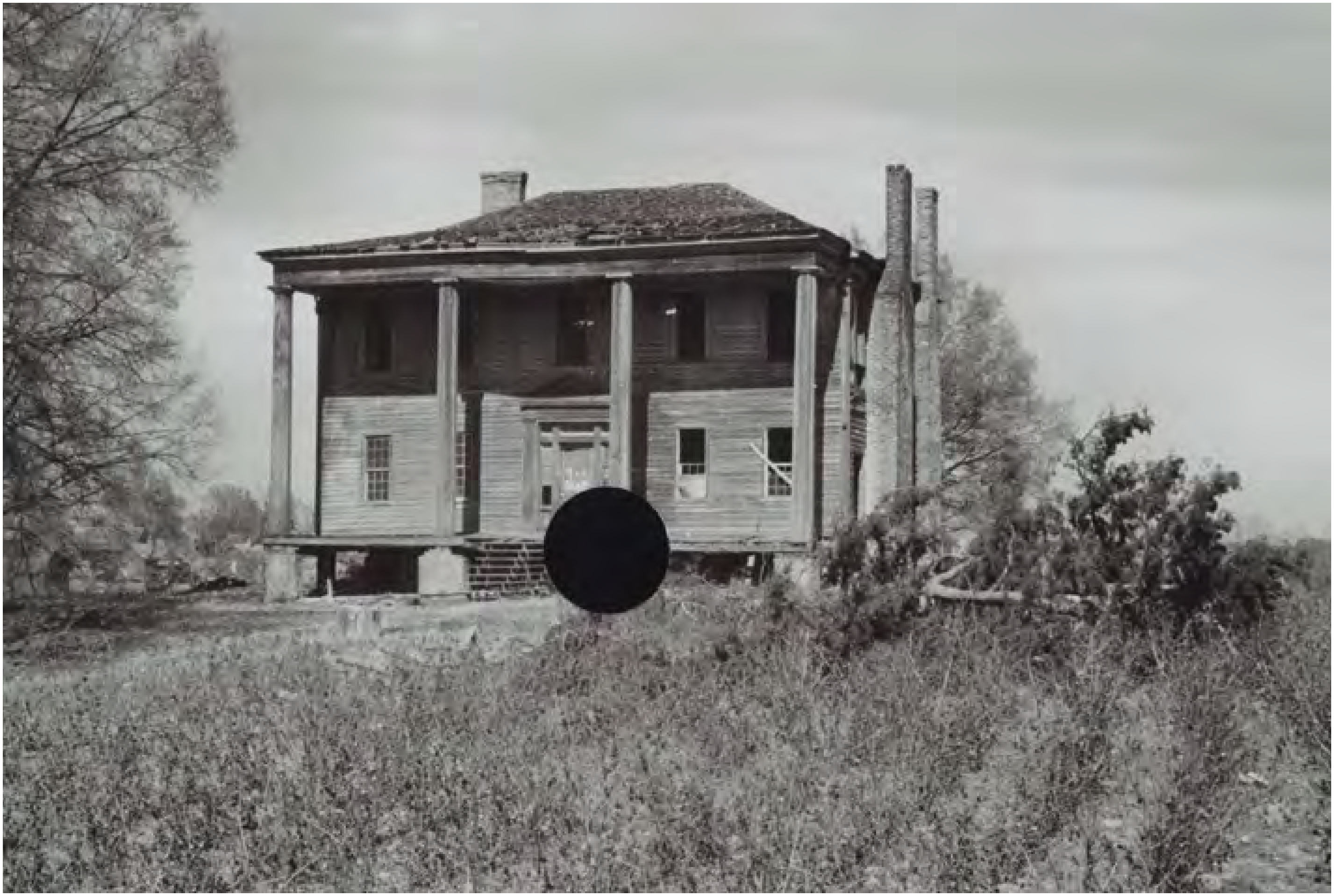
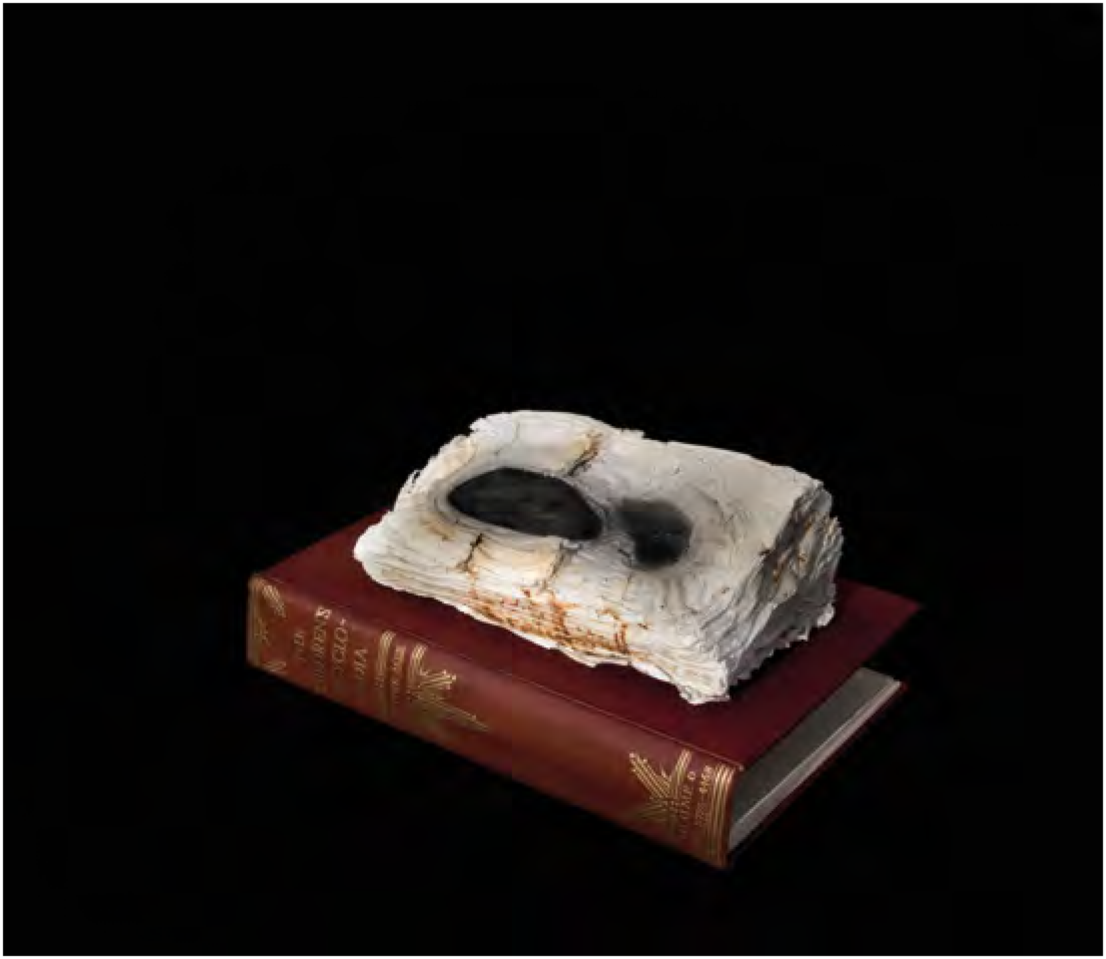
ZANE GREY'S
FORLORN
RIVER



CYRUS TANG



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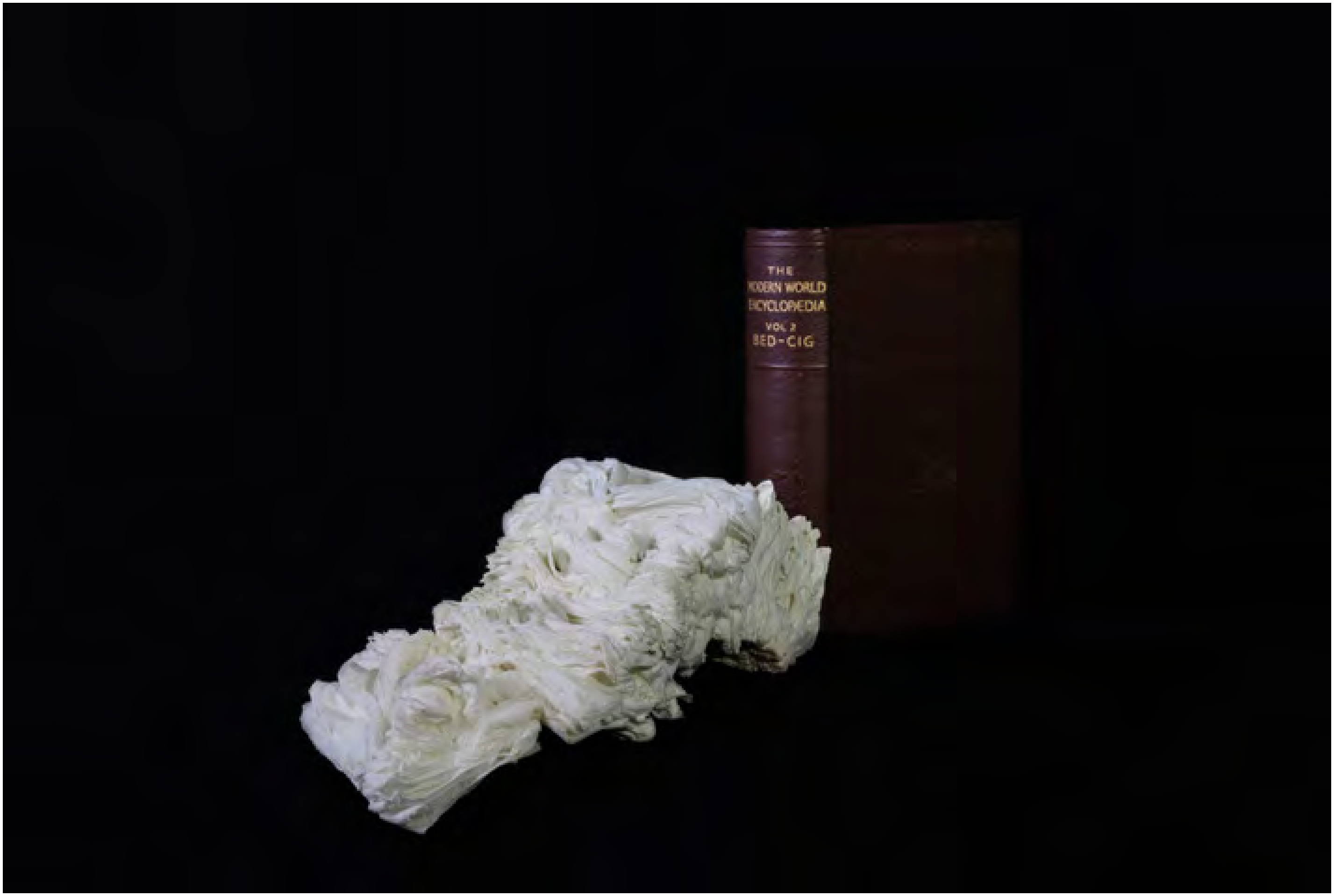
BELOW: *The Modern World Encyclopaedia Vol 2* 2017
PAGES 44–45: *3939.00s* and *4505.00s* 2016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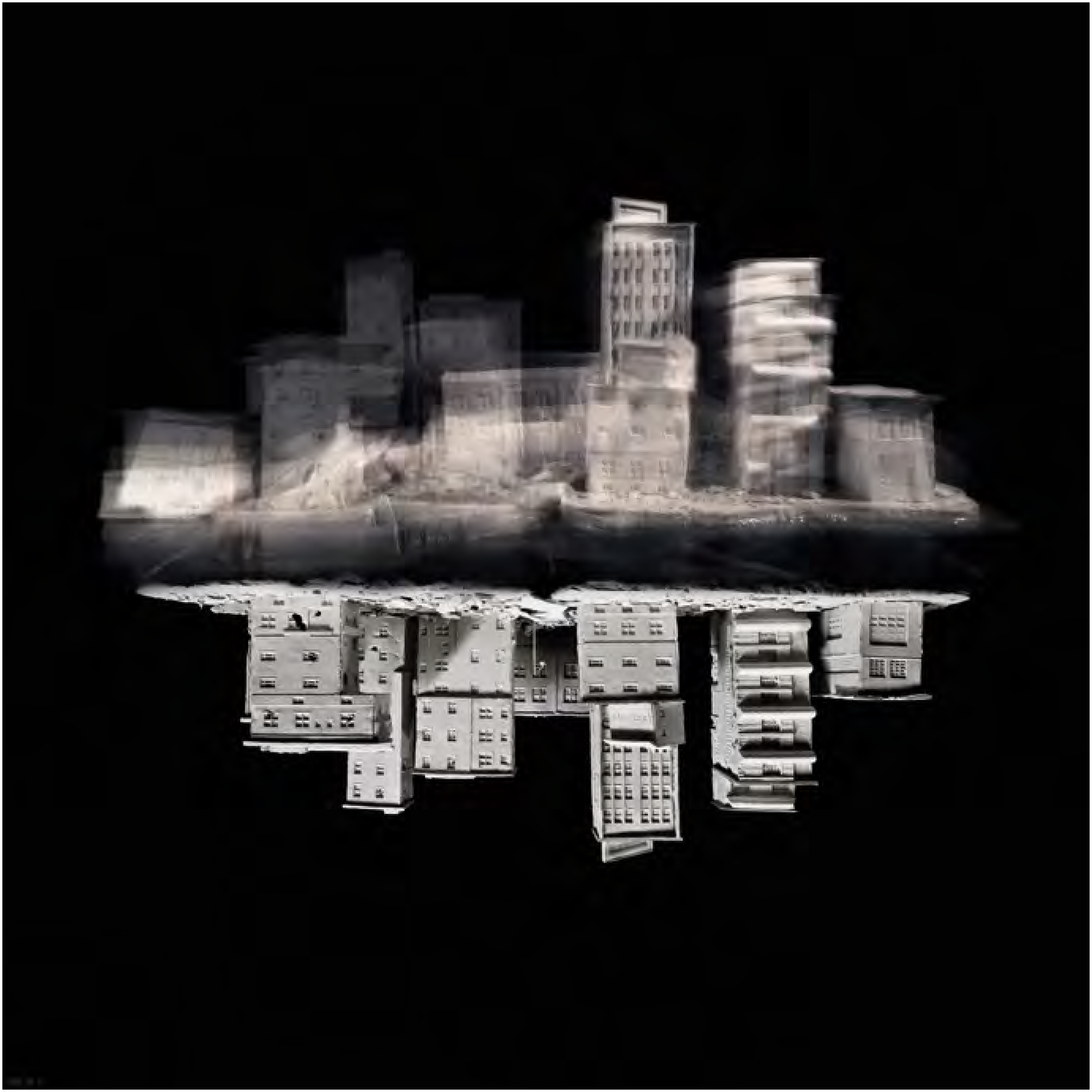

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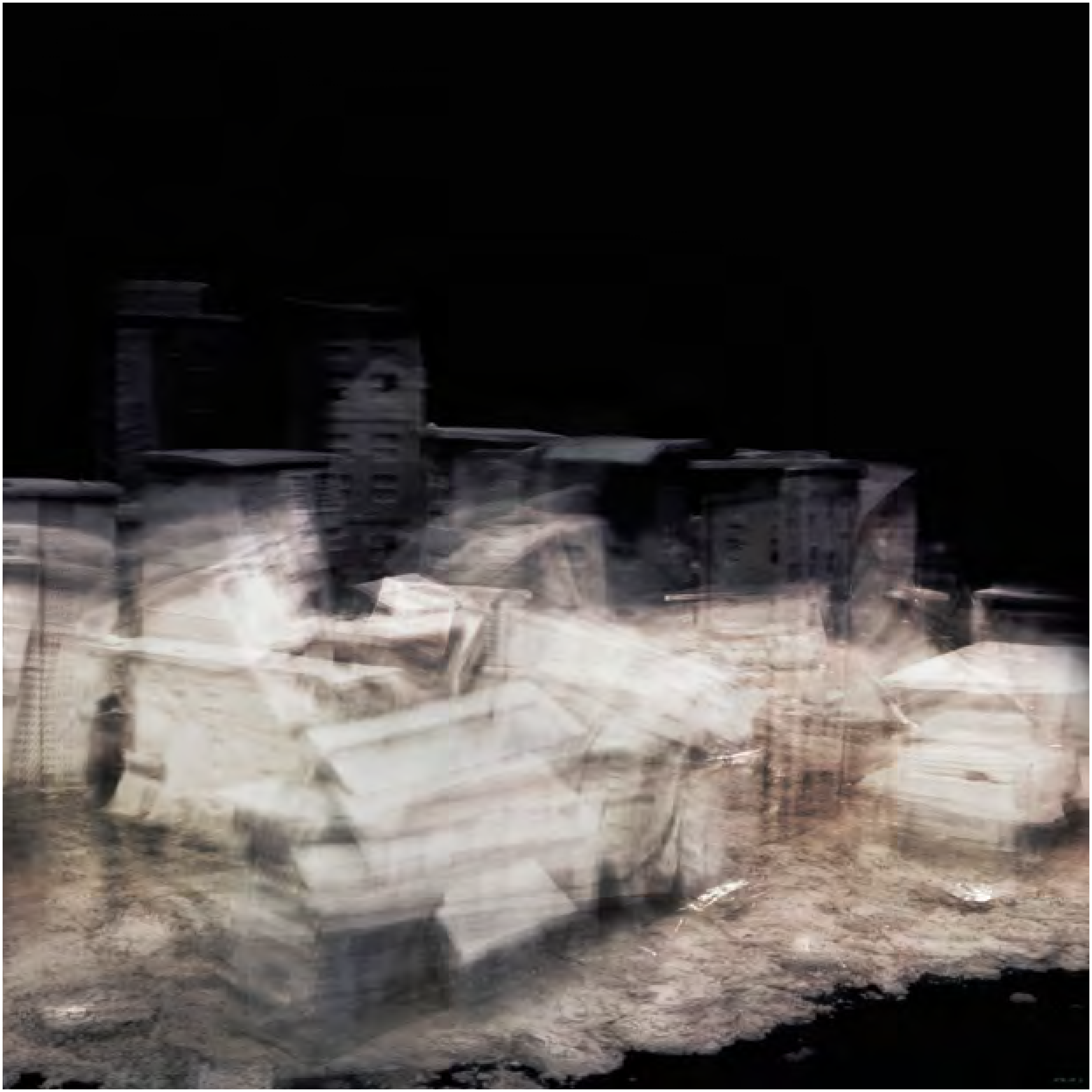
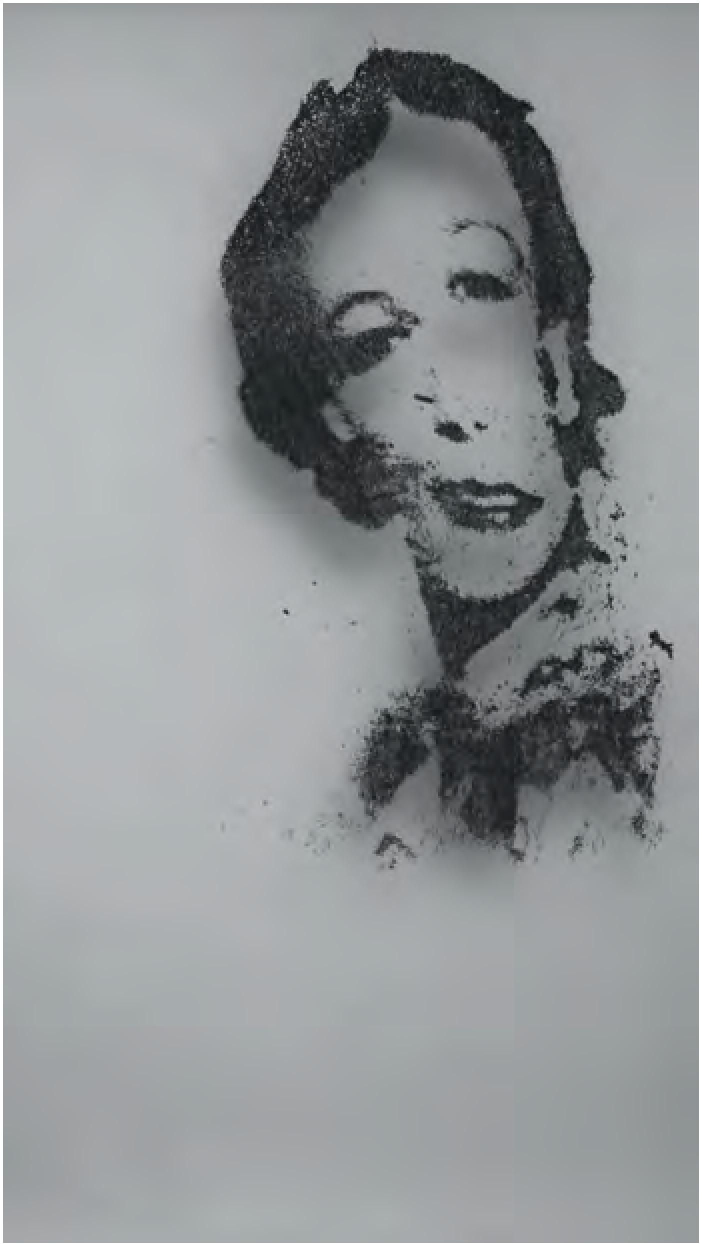
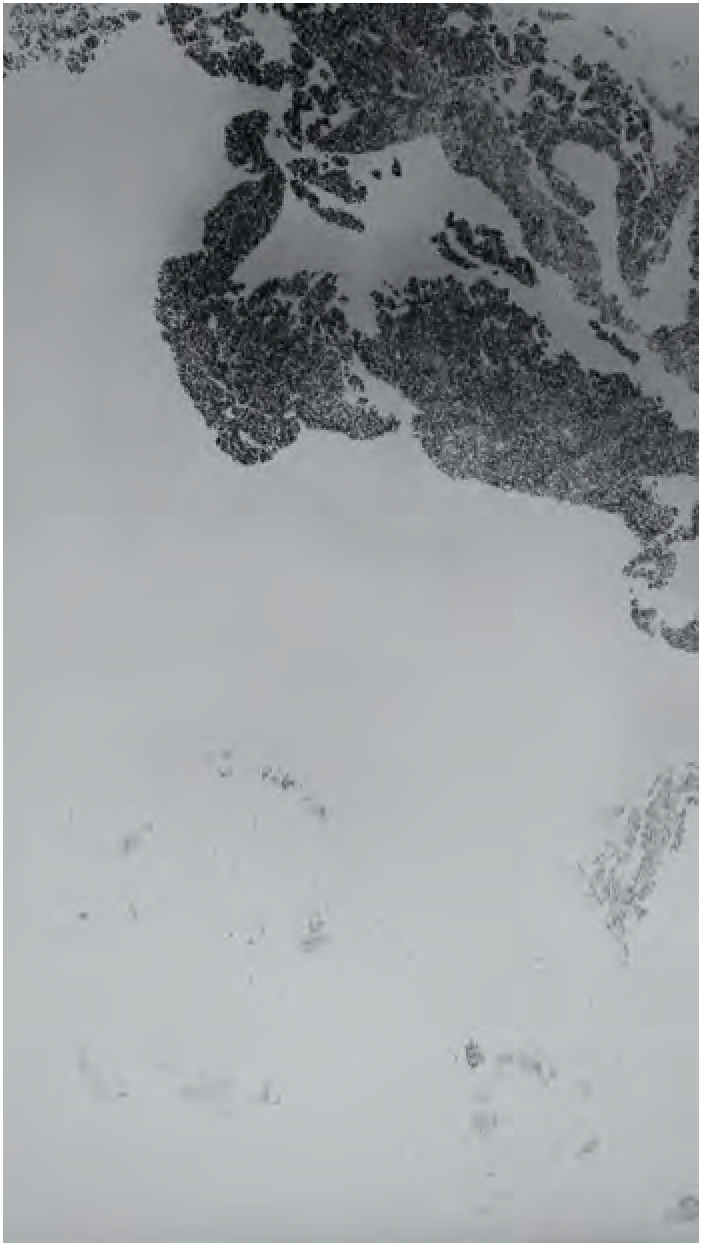
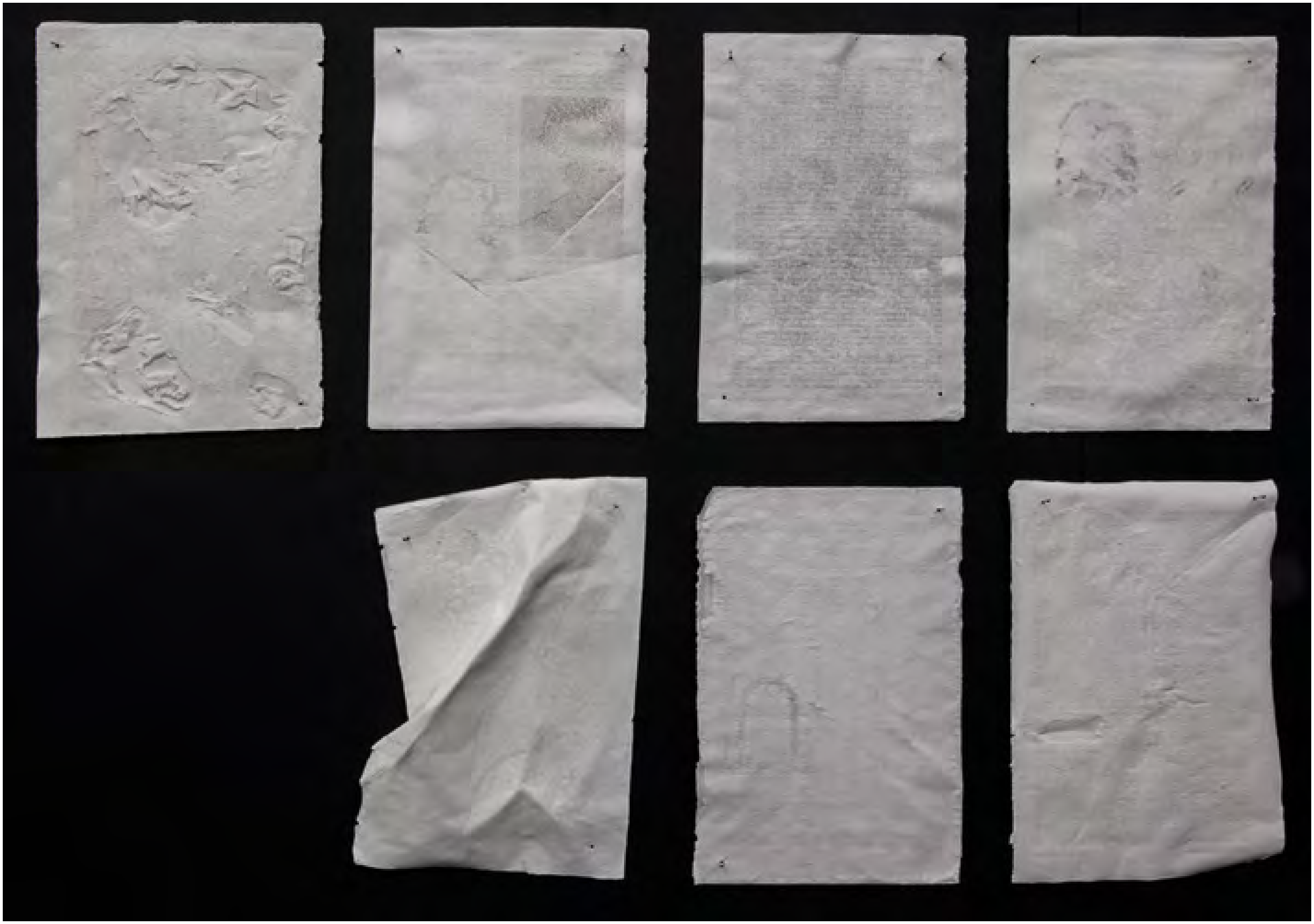


The Final Cut Off – Daisy Kwok 2016–17



The Final Cut Off – Alice Lim Kee 2016–17





ESSAYS

DIDEM ERK:
ARTIST STATEMENT

Didem Erk asks the questions 'What are the forms and possibilities of saying? How can letters and texts be acts of making? In a situation of response, someone may be the reader and the other the listener. What are the places and forms for live, confronting and face-to-face experiences in our contemporary way of living?' Taking these inquiries she has established a manner of working that deals with site responsive installations that explore what constructs our faculties of memory, language and imagination. Considering language as almost a physical place or a door that can open up to all kinds of experience, Erk investigates the space that language is, and what it holds.[1]

Using performance, video, installation and text as tools, my recent works continue my inquiry into the poetic aspects of language, memory and borders in relation to space. Through these different media, I scrutinise the possible defects and fictionalities of memory in regard to the performative aspects of the act of remembrance. The objects of memory are dressed in words when they return to our consciousness. We knit them, we make a story. Otherwise, the violence of loss is not possible to endure and memory falls into to the well of forgetting.

'I wish I could not be traced in the archives' (Sırkıran | Secret Decipherer| Mistiko Spastis) (2013) was a project which confronts Nicosia with a performative approach of reading and walking along both parts of the city, North and South. I decided to find a book which was written by a Cypriot writer about his own childhood traumas intertwined with fiction. I walked and read aloud from the book *Sırkıran | Secret Decipherer* by Gürgenç Korkmazel, in both parts of the city. I named myself as an itinerary reader, a mobile storyteller to the city about its own past that has always been repressed.

'I wish I could not be traced in archives' (Mekanım Datça Olsun | May Datça be My Resting Place) (2017) is the second piece of this ongoing performative project series. This site responsive project is realised where the dead bodies of refugees have washed up on the shore on both the Aegean and the Mediterranean sides of Datça, a small town in the south-west of Turkey. This work refers to a geographical border rather than a political one whereby a geographical transition path becomes a political act. In this work I walk along the North and South parts of Datça and read aloud from a book titled *May Datça be my resting place* by the famous Turkish poet, Can Yücel. The pathways I walk are non-places which have no specific identity. We see no people, only the sea. We hear no voices, only the wind and the waves. I don't walk from point A to point B but the total isolation and feeling of being trapped creates a link with the words of the poems that are read aloud. The poems are full of expressions and impressions written by the poet about the nature of Datça. 'Thought is made in the mouth', as Tristan Tzara states, and I repeatedly chew the pages and masticate them after reading the text. These pages are then left on the pathway as Hansel and Gretel leave bread pieces to find their way back home.

As long as I walk, I eat the memories and nothing is set still. Sunset and sunrise remind the viewer of the temporary feeling of time.

Black Thread (2016–17) is a de-composed and re-composed installation with collected secondhand books that were once censored, even burnt in Australia. To cover something sometimes makes it visible, to underline or to cross-out a word makes it legible. How does the memory relate to performativity? Pages are sewn word by word, sentence by sentence. The act obliterates the legibility but it connects the thread of writing and the thread of sewing. The needle working through the page operates an invisible violence. However this act of sewing is also a form of healing that asks the question, how is it possible to connect all the words (ideas) on the page, how to heal them?

A wall is a physical thing standing somewhere, it is very visual. Yet it also becomes a mental barrier. Walking and sewing are forms of resistance to a possible border, creating a sense of poetic freedom. Walking has various aims such as immigration, justice and being a flâneur. In my work, I represent a mental refugee, confronting a border and making it visible with the words of a book.

Didem Erk

Didem Erk lives and works in Istanbul, Turkey. Erk studied in the Visual Arts and Visual Communication Design department at the Sabancı University, Istanbul, graduating with a Master's degree in 2012. Using performance, video, installation and text, her work has been exhibited in numerous exhibitions both in Turkey and abroad.

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1 Theodor Ringborg, 'Didem Erk' in Liz Erçevik Amado (ed.), *Mom, am I barbarian? – 13th Istanbul Biennial Guide*, Istanbul: Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts and Yapı Kredi Publications, 2013, p. 355.

CAO FEI: *RUMBA II: NOMAD*

The issue of urbanisation is always present in the scene of contemporary Chinese art, from Zhang Dali's famous photography series *Dialogue* (1995-1998) and Wang Jinsong's *One Hundred Signs of the Demolition* (1999) in the 1990s, to the films made by the sixth-generation directors, including those directed by Jia Zhangke that represent the declining world of small Chinese towns (*Unknown Pleasures*, 2002), and the independent documentaries that pay attention to the violence inherent to the rapid process of urbanisation (Fan Jian's *My Land*, 2015). These multifaceted images are witnesses to the social and personal crises brought by China's rapid economic development and ever-deepening capitalisation.

Taking up a traditional and critical position, most of the works about urbanisation do not praise the accelerationist passion that has emerged ever since the Chinese economic reform. Instead, they adopt a skeptical and reflective attitude, which is manifested in the abundant images of ruins. On the one hand, the ruined plays the role of evidence, pointing out the inequality and exploitation caused by demolition, that is, `urban demolition under the name of rapid urbanization became a disguised game of wealth transfer, authority versus rights, and the administrative power of the powerful interest groups versus the property owners' insecurity'.[1] On the other hand, it suggests an anti-spectacle strategy, which attempts to compete with the increasingly flourishing, modernised, and ordered urban landscape.

However, Cao Fei's single-channel video *Rumba II: Nomad* (2015) differs from the practices mentioned above. In fact, the film was shot on the remains of the artist's former studio, and it features the daily status of Beijing as a metropolis: albeit an uncertain one that fluctuates ceaselessly between demolition and rebirth. The site where the film was shot used to be an ideal space for artists' studios, since it is close to the 798 Art Zone. Besides, the fact that it was situated at the margin of a city – which was a mixture of residential and industrial areas – kept its rent low for a long time. Before it was demolished, this urban village was typical of an urban-rural fringe area, where artists, migrant workers, and even fowls cohabited. It functions like an organically formed shelter, maintaining special dynamics and vitality, and, at the same time, disrupting the effectiveness of city planning. However, when the real estate economy becomes the pillar industry of the country, this sort of area happens to be a region where the government and developers are interested in investing. The fast process of gentrification changes and expands the border of the city dramatically, and the urban village is swallowed and soon transformed into the home of the new middle class. Skyscrapers in the background of the film often catch our attention, and construct a *Folding Beijing-ish*[2] spatial structure: the city is blocked by ruins, like a floating palace in the air, oppressed but distanced, which reflects the opposition and distinction between the city and the ruins.

The handheld shots in the beginning of the film seem to simulate the steps of a visitor, who weaves his way through the inside and outside of the ruins, searching with his emotional gaze, for a sense of that-has-been *(Ça a été)* in the traces of life. It feels like the film is capturing the leftovers that survived the demolition and the people still living here, in order to give this place a second life. Meanwhile, other cinematic travelling and panning implies strong plastic tendencies, and what lies behind this stylisation is a certain *fictional* intention — the artist attempts to reshape the ruins into a unique and promising existence. The tempo of the film reminds us of the artist's early work *San Yuan Li* (2003) made in collaboration with Ou Ning, in which the urban space cuts from static shot to sudden close-up and quick motion. Accordingly, the video keeps a distance from the reality, which no longer adheres to the observing perspective in a general sociological sense, but becomes a visual method of the artist to construct the new world's specific materiality and temporality, like Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin – Die Sinfonie der Großstadt* (1927).

The works of Cao Fei's and Ruttmann's also share another feature. The protagonists of *Berlin – Die Sinfonie der Großstadt* are those machines which represent modern civilisation, including cars, trains, trams, electrical appliances, and rapidly operated industrial systems, while the human beings act to the rhythm connecting these machines. Similarly, the key roles of *Rumba II: Nomad* are again machines—a troop of domestic vacuum cleaning robots. These beetle-like AI products could be regarded as not only alien and unknown intruders, but also *dancers* performing a nomadic rumba. Obviously, they perform the function of exploring rather than cleaning: the robots curiously search on the surface of the ruins, trying hard to adapt themselves to the complex environments, without any malevolence. They are united with the workers, large excavators, children playing games, and fowls in the ruins, building up a new 'ruin community', and finally become new citizens of this discarded land.

Cao Fei has a consistent preference for dystopian sci-fi narratives when fabricating her apocalyptic allegories. The domestic vacuum cleaning robots are similar to the zombies in *Haze and Fog* (2013), which do not completely express depression towards the end of humanity, but use post-human absurdity to break through our stereotyped mechanism of perceiving the reality. Her sensibility, which is highly attuned to popular culture and everyday life, always allows the artist to mobilise the most active things of the greatest communication value in her time. Even those merely virtual existences (such as the microcosm in *China Tracy* or *La Town*) could be transformed into an active reconfiguration of the reality. At the same time, Cao Fei refuses to preach critical practice which is popular in contemporary art, or according to Latour's critique of critical thinking, she does not try to 'add fresh ruins to fields of ruins'.[3] The questioning and rethinking in *Rumba II: Nomad* is not limited to traditional political resistance, since the artist hopes to realise an alternative ideology by introducing the non-human: low-tech AI, extensive labour, ever-changing urban space, and the invisible hand of economic power. They are assembled in an artistic way, stimulating new affect, which invokes the viewer to imagine a different contemporary world.

Ultimately, Cao Fei returns to a humanist position. At the end of the video, a lunatic plays the saxophone and achieves a poetic moment, when the whole world seems to be peaceful and the human re-claims his sovereignty over the land. It could be considered as an appeal for a restart rather than a kind of escape or self-exile, and it is full of entrancing pre-apocalypse romance, even though it is presented in an incredible form.

Yang Beichen

Dr Yang Beichen graduated from Université Paris X and Beijing Film Academy successively. He currently works as the senior editor of artforum.com.cn and is a lecturer at the Department of Dramatic Literature at the Central Academy of Drama, China. Yang Beichen's doctoral dissertation titled 'Film as Archive' will be published soon.

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[1] Danlin Yu, Chuanglin Fang, *China's New Urbanization: Developmental Paths, Blueprints and Patterns*, Berlin: Springer, 2016, p. 17.

[2] *Folding Beijing* is a science fiction novel by the Chinese writer Hao Jingfang. An English translation by Ken Liu which was published in 2015 in *Uncanny Magazine* (http://uncannymagazine.com/article/folding-beijing-2/) won the 2016 Hugo Award for Best Novelette. The story is set in a futuristic Beijing, within the 6th Ring Road where the city is divided by three classes physically, sharing the same earth surface in each 48 hour cycle.

[3] Bruno Latour, 'Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern', *Critical Inquiry* 30, Winter 2004, p. 225.

TOM NICHOLSON:
OF PUNCTURES AND BLURS

Tom Nicholson tells us stories from the past. In this instance, his story begins by telling us that he has seen three boomerangs and a number of drawings of Aboriginal men and women from the Illawarra region in Viennese museums. How the hell did they get there? Let's work our way around the world to see how these objects and people are connected by colonialism's dual thrust, comprising of one huge forceful and violent compulsion and the lesser but still significant drive of curious disposition.

Landlocked Austria had once been the colonial power that conquered Venice. With this prize came a maritime power. Emperor Maximilian commissioned a ship called the Novara to circumnavigate the world. Amongst the crew was a gifted artist called Joseph Selleny. The Novara, even before it left the boatyards in the Arsenale, was entangled in an anti-imperial struggle and was briefly re-named Italia. The revolt that was led by Manin was quashed. Maximilian also set out to be ruler of Mexico. However, this ended in a popular revolt and his execution, with the chillingly cool depiction of his execution by firing squad famously captured by Manet.

Nicholson tells stories but not in the way that an historian restages history. It is more speculative. However, the stories he tells are not like those composed by a fiction writer. His story is a hybrid of speculative realism: it is based on reality and an imagination highly attuned to the jagged legacies of the past, with a special focus on those who have been silenced, violated and marginalised by the victors of history. Hence, he is a storyteller who cares for the family of listeners and receivers. In this case, it seems to me, that the letters he has written are addressed to the descendants of the protagonists of this encounter between the crew from the Novara and the people of Illawarra. History and desire do not move in a straight line. What was taken should be returned.

The contemporary custodians of cultural objects and anatomical remains, that were taken with such flagrant disregard to the rights of the Aboriginal people, are caught in the ambivalent nets of ownership and repatriation. For so long these institutions have slumbered, perhaps oblivious of what was in their archives. And then comes an artist to remind them of their legacy, and for them to squirm as they discover that a kind of negligence has compounded the original pounding, and with even the best intentions of resurrection and interpretation, there is, one hopes, a recognition that the violence of the past cannot be repaired. Similarly, even other aspects, like the sublime images of a temperate rainforest in the Illawarra that were innocently impressed into the consciousness of Selleny, have a habit of coming back. As was the case when this image, that had become deeply entwined into the viral spirals of the artist's memory, and then fused with the shock of losing his patron and friend Maximilian, suddenly burst up at the end of his life, and featured as the haunted final landscape that he paints in the year he collapses in mental anguish. The artist on this trail becomes like a grave-digger in reverse.

Nicholson shows us how things were made in the past. He does this through a circumambient mode of research; he not only goes to see for himself the lay of the land, he talks to the people who were involved in the events, he examines the objects that have been captured, classified and stored in museums, and where there are discrepancies, doubts and dissemblances, he probes and pushes until the authorities give answers or admit the gaps in their knowledge. The materials for making images also matter a great deal. The use of charcoal is not fortuitous. It is a nod to drawing in the history of art and the disaggregating forces of colonial aesthetics. The utensil not only crumbles as the artist presses with it to leave a trace, but the ephemeral image will only resist the elements of wind and water if another surface is fixed upon it. To make the images in this project he deployed the Renaissance method of the cartoon, whereby a large sheet of paper, *cartone*, is pricked with tiny holes, and then the ground up charcoal, which is wrapped up in cheesecloth, is pounded onto this, so that as the first surface is effaced, the layer beneath receives a new outline, while at the same time the resulting image appears to have been formed without any trace of a line. It is both a subtle and violent means of rendering a figure. When Leonardo and Michelangelo used this technique it served to bring forth the anatomical qualities of the human body. It was a method that highlighted both the muscular rationalism of the Renaissance and gave the impression of the ethereal qualities of a body that has not entirely left its spirit behind.

However, in the images that are brought to us in this project, the relationship between the carbon and the *cartone* is reversed and the resulting figure is both more immersed in the charred atmosphere, and the propulsive force with which the image was flung into being is more dominant. The early forms of the cartoon provided a contemplative ambience, in this instance, the cartoon is a method and metaphor for violent disposition and the figure in flight.

Nikos Papastergiadis

Nikos Papastergiadis is Professor at the School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne, and Director of the Research Unit in Public Cultures. His recent publications include 'Ambient Screens' (2016) and 'Modernity Cosmopolitanism and Culture' (2012) and he is the author of numerous essays which have been translated into over a dozen languages and appeared in major catalogues such as the Sydney, Liverpool, Istanbul, Gwanju, Taipei, Lyon and Thessaloniki Biennales.

PATRICK POUND: *CANCELLED ARCHIVE*

We look back
a black moon, passing
troubled times, of change
then, now

Patrick Pound's *Cancelled archive* (2017) presents a long row of files. Open. Each displaying a single image. Views from rural America in the Great Depression of the 1930s. All are drawn from the archives of agencies established under Franklin D. Roosevelt to alleviate suffering and address the root cause of these events: the Resettlement Administration (RA) 1935-37 then the Farm Security Administration (FSA) 1937–42. Whilst now available digitally, these images are still held in very similar files in the Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

'You put a constraint on something and the world sneaks in', says Patrick Pound, of this project. It is an idea that comes up again and again in different ways across his practice. The chosen constraint here is his focus on the images marked out as 'cancelled'. Using a hole punch, the FSA Information Division head Roy Stryker would weed out the negatives, sifting through the larger volume to refine a selection of images to be printed and distributed to the media. Central to his role, the aim of shaping public debate and support for the work being undertaken. Free market, or big government, a familiar debate. Imagine Stryker at his desk with hole punch poised in hand. Truth or propaganda, real news or not, reportage or art? There are more interesting details beneath such dichotomies, but these ideas shape the larger conversation.

The FSA archive is now viewed as a national treasure, its most iconic images as expressive of the human dimension of this period of change, rupture and turmoil. This powerful body of imagery was created through an unlikely conjunction between the state and a small group of talented and enabled individuals. Trained as an economist, Stryker brought an unusual mix of skills to bridge the media and political landscapes. He understood the power of images and engaged a group of eleven photographers including Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange and Jack Delano. His photographers travelled the country, they were well briefed and funded. They were given freedom, as well as creative constraints of their own: including shooting scripts on particular themes. Stryker's 'Notes from American Habit' were circulated to all photographers and offer a revealing list of 'words', 'ideas' and 'themes'. 'Mint julep' is followed by 'the need for overstatement', 'corner drug store', 'ice cream'.

Over nine years a quarter of a million images were produced – 77,000 separate images printed for distribution to the press. Many of these, such as Dorothea Lange's *Migrant mother* (1936), looking out to an uncertain future with her children huddled against her, still move us deeply today.

Over thirty percent of all the photographs taken were circulated. Strkyer's use of the hole punch on material now viewed as sacrosanct is, as is his name, striking. But it also makes evident the nature of the task he was involved in: a plea to engage the public, to show the human experience of tenant farmers, the rural poor and the displaced, and later to show the impact of government funded assistance programs. The cancelled negatives stand as a remnant of the interface between good intentions and the political system. The holes in these images are startling, they were never meant to be seen, but marked as they are they make clear the deeper systems that lie behind them. Pound has long been interested in the history and function of the archive. Perhaps most of all, the archive as an expression of the mind – our personal efforts to bridge order and disorder, as well as the archive as a portrait of society – the systems through which we work together, amplify capacity and make decisions, and traces of darker deeds and narratives also. The archive is like a rich subconscious, always ready with more, reflecting both what is held within, and the larger world today. A memory bank beyond any one individual, forever re-purposable, yet also wired according to the codes and contexts of its making.

And so, the thirty 'scarred' images selected by Patrick Pound come to us from the interior depths of this information enterprise. De-selected by Stryker, and then re-selected by Pound. We see here the moments at the edge of the moment. Perhaps when the subject has turned away, or we are unsure where to focus our attention. A young boy passes holding a can of water, his stride is determined, the hills behind are bare. His loose trousers are ragged at the knee. But this is not an image of desperation. He looks as if he might be humming to himself, intent upon his walk, his load, his task. Perhaps in this moment he was happy. What came before this on the roll, we wonder. And after?

We see a once grand homestead in ruin, window panes and shingles missing, the tree in the foreground fallen, cropped rows withered and weed-ridden. Did the topsoil lift and blow here? It is not all quite dust. Why was this image selected to bear the black moon of Stryker's punch? Or an image of one of the photographers cleaning his camera, head bent, office behind. Film posters pasted to a hoarding fence, selling dreams. A woman glimpsed as she gazes through a partially open door. A boy leaning to pick turnips in dry soil. Some done, much to go.

Do we view such a vast collection of material as propaganda, communication, or the basis for a deeper truth? Spin or a more profound analysis? Veracity and trust were as much an issue then as now. There are other parallels also between both periods: global financial instability, the collapse and bailout of major banks; major shifts in the structure of rural communities and mass movement towards the cities. Let us hope the parallels end here. Stryker's FSA unit was dismantled-repurposed with the outbreak of the Second World War.

Pound writes 'the black discs that are the remnants of the hole punch float across the images as if in a sequence forming a passing black moon'. We look out to the moon from earth, it is one body amongst many. Near and far. Circling, regulating flux: wax and wane, the pull of the tides, repetition and variation. A mirror to our reflections, peephole to things we may or may not want to see. Eyes to the world. These black moons.

Geraldine Kirrihi Barlow

Geraldine Kirrihi Barlow is Curatorial Manager, International Art at the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, QAGOMA. For 'GOMA turns 10' she curated 'Sugar Spin: You, me, art and everything' and later this year 'Gerhard Richter: The Life of Images'. In 2012, in her previous role at Monash University Museum of Art | MUMA, she worked with Patrick Pound on the exhibition 'Liquid Archive', exhibiting his Museum of Air.

CYRUS TANG'S MERCIFUL VISION

In the last days of 2016, the eleventh of the eleventh to be precise, Aaron Sorkin, the mastermind behind *The West Wing*, wrote a letter to his fifteen year old daughter, Roxy, about the catastrophic times we are facing – of the annihilation of liberalist values with a populist, far-right ascendency, and how only now can we fight for the finest hours to one day return.

How appropriate it is that Cyrus Tang's recent exhibition *All Our Yesterdays* opened that day, as indeed, I feel her work is a clear indication of what has yet to be done, from all of us and in our own ways, for the return of our finest hours.

The first work of Tang's I saw was at 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney in 2012. The installation, *Momentary Gleam*, a richly poetic and personal piece, was constructed out of 89 metres of human hair, dipped in borax that crystallised slowly into a most delicate and fragile structure. Like memory, the structure hovered within the space with majestic presence, but precariously, almost cognisant of its own impending dissolution.

Half a decade later, she has presented to us several series of wonderful meditations on memory and annihilation – or what I like to refer to as the merciful vision of Cyrus Tang.

In these sharing days of Tumblr and memes, and within the pitiless distraction of violent capitalism, it is indeed refreshing to see these touching, existential works – what struck me and inspired me was the work's singularity of vision – a vision and a dare to stare at the end-game; the end-game of the dissolution and annihilation of the subject and thus meaning.

Tang's work stares down the barrel of annihilation, but it is a meditation, a meditative transformation through temperature and time, that all we mortals are subject to. Unlike other artists who attempt similar plights, her projects are not a narcissistic meditation – often a narcissism that fetishises darkly the violence of that annihilation. They are works, rather, that remind us, in all possible sympathy, of the unavoidable unfolding of that annihilation in all our lives. Mercifully we are reminded that even with that fading of sense and memory, those moments are infinitely meaningful.

(We have not forgotten in recent times, those apocalyptic fires that took our dearest friends away, in this cherished valley that this very Museum sits in).

The Final Cut Off speaks of two charismatic, yet relatively unknown, Chinese-Australian women: Alice Lim Kee and Daisy Kwok. No less than first generation half 'skips' from Australia, they relocated to Shanghai, making their mark in the 1920s and 1930s, with Alice becoming the first woman radio announcer and an occasional actress, whilst Daisy established the first East-West couture there. However, a jubilant Shanghai modernity was then consumed by war and revolution, and so their lives were soon drastically changed, with Alice suddenly transformed into a vanishing refugee and Daisy, a re-educated proletarian pig farmer. Both women never really returned to Australia – a final cut off. And to show this, Tang ingeniously devised a way of silk screening ash onto water – and the images screened are their dazzling modern visages, their youthful physiognomies. How the moving water, and thus time, deforms and reforms. Their images are deformed, and at the same time, reformed as ash floating on water. It is as if Tang is showing a ritual for living, and like all rituals the event requires a material presence to show its unsayable meaning.

There are also books, in particular, *The Modern World Encyclopaedia* and *Children's Encyclopedia* that have been cremated by Tang. When we think of the cremation of books, our minds no doubt go to the time when the German Student Union in 1933, destroyed thousands of volumes in front of Bebelplatz, Berlin. These herds of thugs did so by hiding their true intent of censorship, whilst also perverting the notion of ritual cleansing by fire. A masterpiece of memorial-sculpture by Micha Ullman is now installed in the *platz*, it is a small glass window through which we can peer underground, where a room with pristine white empty shelves silently mourns this loss. Whilst Ullman asks us to rekindle this sense of absence, Tang's cremated modern encyclopedic texts compel us to confront with our own eyes, not necessarily the sense of an absence, but the destruction of knowledge itself. A children's encyclopedia has always been a mythological anchor of truth, knowledge and wisdom for any child living in modernity. The vanishing of this anchor, this faith, is thus a vanishing of a world – perhaps being replaced by the cynicism, brutality, distraction and techno ecstasy of smartphone apps, 'alternative facts', and a continuousness with no past or present. Yet the very fact that the object cremated is present implicates us within the process of an annihilation. Dying lived.

Someone once philosophically said:

Death is not an event in life, when one dies, the whole world stops.

But we can also say, there are those moments just prior to death, those end-game moments where one's life flashes before your very eyes, moments just prior to the cessation of meaning – they are moments that great teachings, like Buddhism, hope to prepare and guide us towards. I see in Tang's work, a wonderful demonstration of this. Her work reminds us of the fragility of precious memories, as opposed to the chronic fear and fetishised violence of annihilation in which the media, news, our social apparatus, and even avant-gardism in art (as the writer Virilio claims), is implicated. Her work is a reminder of the fragility of meaning and memory which, by doing so through slowness and infinite attention to detail, guards us against the pitiless march to destruction violent late capitalism has brought us to. Thus, here we may very likely see emanating from Cyrus Tang's works, a rare beckoning, a crack where the light comes in, and with that, our finest hours' return.

John Young

John Young is an artist who lives and works in Melbourne. Since his first exhibition in 1979, Young has had more than 60 solo exhibitions and over 160 group exhibitions. In 2005-06, a survey exhibition was held at TarraWarra Museum of Art. In 2013 a second survey exhibition, 'The Bridge and the Fruit Tree', covering works from 2000-2012 was exhibited in February-March 2013 at Drill Hall Gallery, Canberra.

BIOGRAPHIES

DIDEM ERK

Born 1986, Istanbul, Turkey.
Lives and works in Istanbul, Turkey.

Using performance, video, installation and text as tools, Didem Erk's recent works continue her inquiry into the poetic aspects of language, memory and borders in relation to space. Through these different media, she scrutinises the possible defects and fictionalities of memory in regard to the performative aspects of the act of remembrance.

Recent group exhibitions have included *Blow Up: Kavunu Gördüm*, SALT Galata, Istanbul, 2017; *House of Wisdom*, Dzialdov, Berlin, Germany, 2017; *Are You Still Alive? - Voices of Conscience at a Time of Silencing*, Steirische Kultur Initiative, Graz, Austria, 2017; *Imago Mundi – Mediterranean Routes*, Cantieri Cultural Alla Zisa – ZAC – ZISA Zona Arti Contemporanee, Palermo, Italy, 2017; *Stay with me*, Belvedere Museum- 21er Haus, Vienna, 2016; *A Throw of the Dice Will Never Abolish Chance*, Pilot, Istanbul, 2016; *Stay with me*, De Kijkdoos Project Space, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2016; *Through the Barricades*, Fabbrica Del Vapore, Milan, Italy, 2015; and *Stay with me*, Studienzentrum für Künstlerpublikationen, Bremen, Germany, 2015.

Erk's first solo exhibition at x-ist gallery, Istanbul will be held between 7 September – 14 October, 2017.

www.didemerk.com

CAO FEI

Born 1978, Guangzhou, China.
Lives and works in Beijing, China.

Cao Fei is one of the most innovative young Chinese artists to have emerged on the international scene. Currently living in Beijing, she mixes social commentary, popular aesthetics, references to Surrealism, and documentary conventions in her films and installations. Her works reflect on the rapid and chaotic changes that are occurring in Chinese society today.

Cao's works were showcased at a number of international biennales and triennales, including Shanghai Biennale, Moscow Biennale, Taipei Biennale, the 15th & 17th Biennale of Sydney, Istanbul Biennale, Yokohama Triennale, and the 50th, 52nd & 56th Venice Biennale. She also exhibited her works and projects at Serpentine Gallery and Tate Modern in London; New Museum, Guggenheim Museum, and MoMA in New York; Fondation Louis Vuitton, Palais de Tokyo, and Centre Pompidou in Paris.

Cao's recent projects include her first retrospective at MoMA PS1 and BMW Art Car #18.

She was a nominee for the Future Generation Art Prize 2010 and the finalist of Hugo Boss Prize 2010. She received the Chinese Contemporary Art Award (CCAA) Best Young Artist Award in 2006 and Best Artist Award in 2016. She was also the recipient of Piedra de Sal Award at Cuenca Biennale in 2016.

She is represented by Vitamin Creative Space.

www.caofei.com

TOM NICHOLSON

Born 1973, Melbourne, Australia.
Lives and works in Melbourne, Australia.

Tom Nicholson often works with historical material and the visual languages of politics. He is trained in drawing, a medium which he has used to meditate on photography, painting and monumental forms in collective imaginaries. Nicholson has also used drawing more indirectly, as a way to think the relationships between public actions and their traces, between propositions and monuments, and between writing and images. He has made a number of works engaging aspects of Australia's colonial history, using combinations of drawings, monumental forms, and posters, often articulating these histories in relation to the histories of other places.

Nicholson's recent work has been shown in the multi-faceted solo exhibition *"I was born in Indonesia"* at the Ian Potter Museum of Art, Melbourne and later in 2017 at Bozar, Brussels; *The National*, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney; *Before and after origins*: Jerusalem Show VIII, part of the 2016 Qalandiya International; *The Great Strike*, Carriageworks, Sydney; *Antipodes: Cut apart*, MAA, Cambridge, UK, 2016; and *Frontier imaginaries*, IMA and QUT Art Museum, Brisbane and at Gudang Sarinah, Jakarta, 2016.

He is represented by Milani Gallery, Brisbane and is a part-time lecturer in Drawing at MADA, Monash University, Melbourne.

www.tomn.net

PATRICK POUND

Born 1962, Hamilton, New Zealand;
arrived in Australia 1989.
Lives and works in Melbourne, Australia.

Patrick Pound is a Melbourne-based artist and Senior Lecturer in Art at Deakin University. His work treats the world as if it were a puzzle to be solved. His work also constantly tests the limits of found photographs, and of sets of collected things, to hold ideas. Several years ago he began putting together collections of found things that, despite their differences, might be found to hold a single idea, assembling these collections into little (so-called) museums.

In 2017 the National Gallery of Victoria staged *The Great Exhibition*, a major survey of Pound's collection-based works, including interventions with the collections of the NGV across the entire ground floor of The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia. Pound has also been included in numerous group exhibitions including *The Photograph and Australia*, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney, 2015; *Melbourne Now*, NGV, Melbourne, 2014; 13th *Dong Gang International Photo Festival*, Korea, 2014; *The Small Infinite*, John Hansard Gallery, UK, 2014; *Inside Running*, Fremantle Arts Centre 2013; *Liquid Archive*, Monash University Museum of Art 2012; *Present Tense*, National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, 2010; and *Photographer Unknown*, Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne, 2009.

He is represented by Station, Melbourne, Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington and Melanie Roger Gallery, Auckland.

CYRUS TANG

Born 1969, Hong Kong, China;
arrived in Australia 2003.
Lives and works in Melbourne, Australia.

Cyrus Tang is a multi-disciplinary artist whose practice centres on sentiments of nostalgia, disappearance and longing. Her work examines the paradox of reconstructing ephemeral mental images and sensations in permanent materials.

Her work has been shown throughout Australia and internationally including Finland, South Korea, Singapore, Japan, France, Shanghai and Sweden. Recent solo exhibitions include *All Our Yesterdays*, Nicholas Projects, Melbourne, 2016; *Lacrimae Rerum*, Artereal, Sydney and ARC ONE Gallery, Melbourne, 2016; and *All That Is Solid…*, Artereal, Sydney, 2014. Selected group exhibitions include *Closing the Distance*, Bundoora Homestead Art Centre, Melbourne, 2017; *Fictitious Realities*, Bayside Arts and Culture Centre, Melbourne, 2017; *Modernity's End: Half the Sky - Two Australians in China*, Incinerator Art Space, Sydney; *It's subjective…*, Willoughby Visual Arts Biennial Street Screen, ACP, Sydney, 2015; ATTA Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand, 2014; *Modern Ruin*, Substation, Melbourne, 2013; *Phantom Limb*, UTS Gallery, Sydney, 2013; *Mapping Memory*, Incinerator Art Space, Sydney, 2013; National Art studio, Seoul, South Korea, 2013; Watagata Arts Festival, Busan, South Korea, 2012; and Gyeonggi International CeraMIX Biennale, South Korea, 2011.

She is represented by
ARC ONE Gallery, Melbourne.

www.tangcyrus.com

LIST OF WORKS

DIDEM ERK

'I wish I could not be traced in the archives' (Sırkıran I Secret Decipherer I Mistiko Spastis) 2013
performance and site-specific video installation, two channel full HD video
20:03 and 15:37 min
Photo: Didem Erk and Özgür Demirci
Editing: Didem Erk and Özgür Demirci
Camera: Özgür Demirci
Translation: Melis Bilgin

'I wish I could not be traced in the archives' (Mekanım Datça Olsun | May Datça Be My Resting Place) 2017
performance and site-specific video installation, two channel full HD video
19:04 and 16:39 min
Photo: Bahadır Cihangir Genç
Editing: Didem Erk and Bahadır Cihangir Genç
Camera: Bahadır Cihangir Genç
Translation: Melis Bilgin

Black Thread 2016-17
installation, sewn books, wooden table, wooden chair, light
dimensions variable

All works courtesy the artist and x-ist gallery, Istanbul

The production of new works by Didem Erk has been supported by SAHA, Turkey

CAO FEI

Rumba II: Nomad 2015
video, 14:16 min
Sound by Dickson Dee

Rumba 01 & 02 2016-17
installation, cleaning robots

All works courtesy the artist and Vitamin Creative Space

TOM NICHOLSON

Cartoons for Joseph Selleny 2012–17
12 cartoons, charcoal drawings perforated and pounced with cheesecloth bags full of ground charcoal; wall drawing created through pouncing with cheesecloth full of ground charcoal, dimensions variable; off-set printed artist's book to take away
Artist's book design: Brad Haylock

Courtesy the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

PATRICK POUND

Cancelled archive 2017
found photographs (from FSA negatives held in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.)
dimensions variable

Courtesy the artist, Station, Melbourne,
Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney,
Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington and
Melanie Roger Gallery, Auckland

CYRUS TANG

Lacrimae Rerum series 2016

3939.00s
archival giclee print, 90 x 90 cm

4505.00s
archival giclee print, 100 x 100 cm

4740.00s
archival giclee print, 90 x 90 cm

7196.00s
archival giclee print, 90 x 90 cm

7403.00s
archival giclee print, 90 x 90 cm

8002.00s
archival giclee print, 90 x 90 cm

12374.00s
archival giclee print, 90 x 90cm

The Children's Encyclopedia Vol 6 2016
cremated book ashes, book cover
21 x 21 x 29 cm

The Children's Encyclopedia Vol 9 2016
cremated book ashes, book cover
21 x 21 x 29 cm

The Final Cut Off – Alice Lim Kee 2016–17
video projection on traditional
Chinese rice paper scroll
8:05 min

The Final Cut Off – Daisy Kwok 2016–17
video projection on traditional
Chinese rice paper scroll
8:05 min

All Our Yesterdays 2017
porcelain painted on pages from
*The New International
Illustrated Encyclopaedia*
dimensions variable

*The Modern World
Encyclopaedia Vol 1–8* 2017
cremated book ashes, book cover
dimensions variable

All works courtesy the artist and
ARC ONE Gallery, Melbourne

IMAGE CREDITS

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PHOTO CREDITS

p. 6, pp. 18–19: Bahadır Cihangir Genç;
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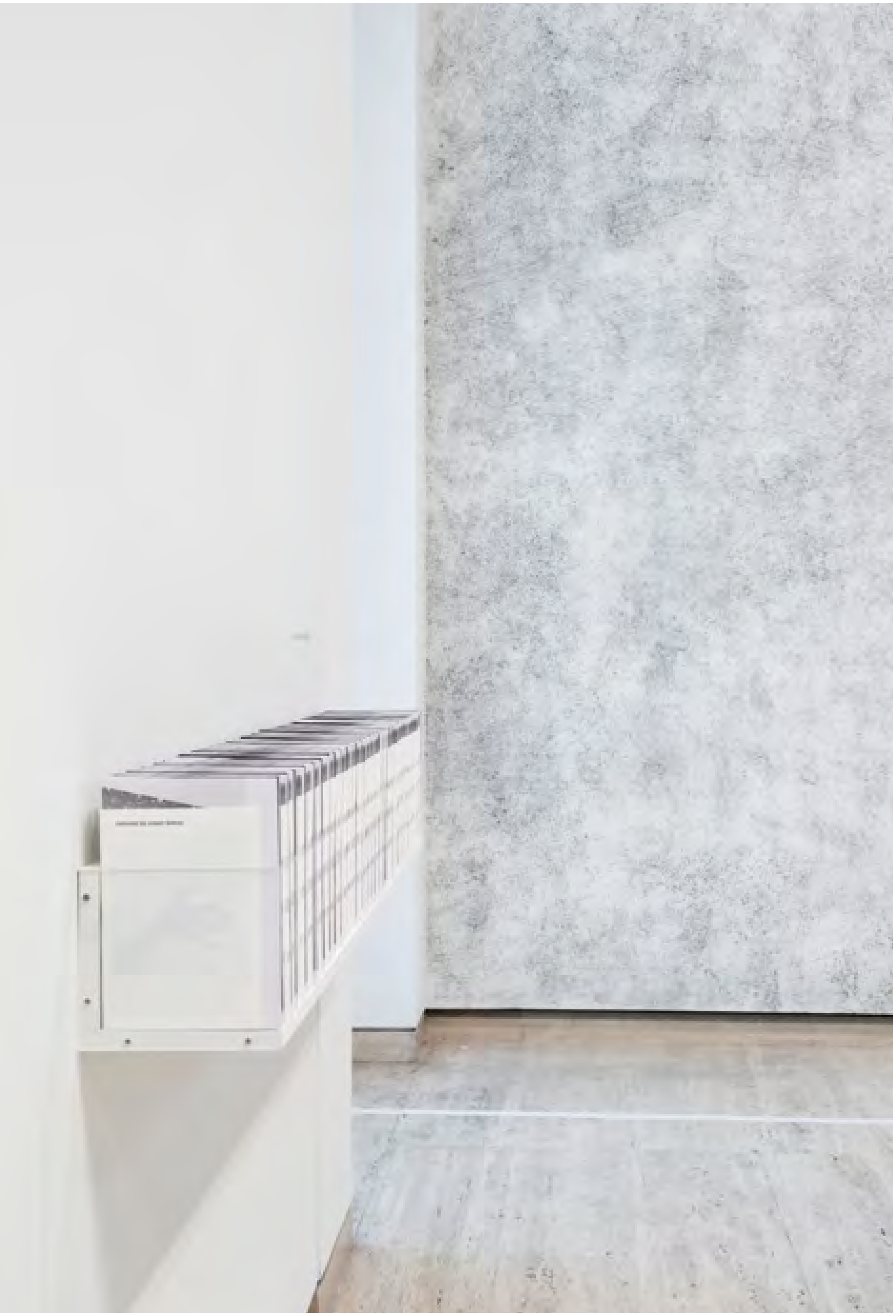

Tom Nicholson

Cartoons for Joseph Selleny 2012–17 (detail) installation view, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2014

INTERNATIONAL 2017

TARRAWARRA
MUSEUM
OF ART

THE TANGIBLE TRACE

INTERNATIONAL 2019
TARRAWARRA
MUSEUM
OF ART

THE TANGIBLE TRACE

CURATED BY VICTORIA LYNN

FRANCIS ALŸS — CARLOS CAPELÁN
SIMRYN GILL — SHILPA GUPTA — HIWA K
SANGEETA SANDRASEGAR

INTERNATIONAL 2019
TARRAWARRA
MUSEUM
OF ART

THE TANGIBLE TRACE

CURATED BY VICTORIA LYNN

8 JUNE – 1 SEPTEMBER 2019

TarraWarra Museum of Art
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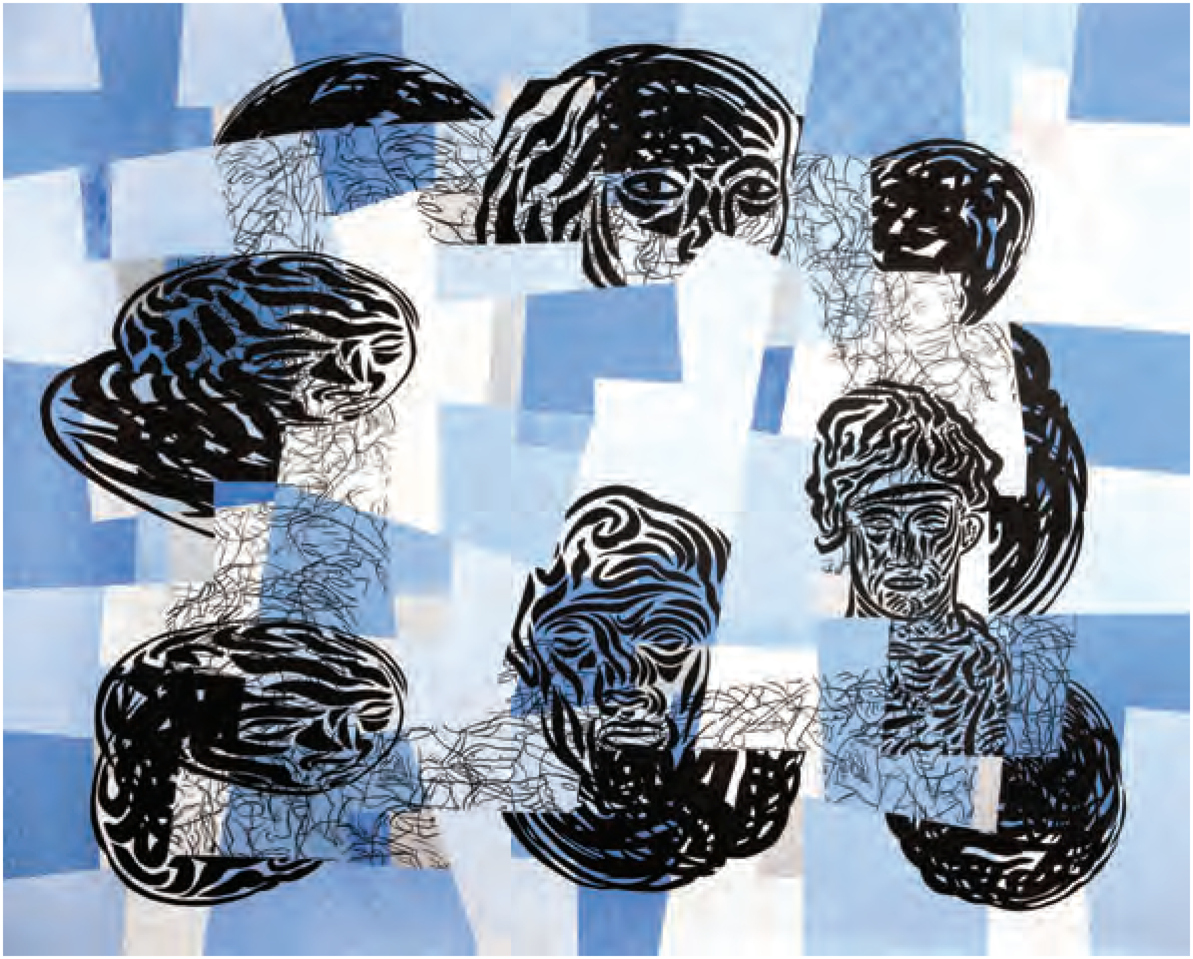
Carlos Capelán
A Drop of Water 2018



_FOREWORD

Since its establishment in 2013, the TarraWarra International series has supported a number of Australian artists, including Janet Laurence, Louise Weaver, Tom Nicholson, Patrick Pound and Cyrus Tang, to exhibit their work in a global context by presenting it alongside leading contemporary artists from abroad including Allora & Calzadilla, Didem Erk, Cao Fei, and Lin Tianmiao. Each of these exhibitions has uniquely identified and meaningfully considered significant developments in contemporary art practice—from the interrelationship between the animate and inanimate, to the experience of temporality, to imaginative responses to the archive. The International's strength lies in its rigorous curatorial research, reception of new ideas, commissioning of new works, high exposure for exhibiting artists, and for providing a publicly accessible context for seeing major work by leading Australian and international artists. Previous TarraWarra International exhibitions include: *Animate/Inanimate* (2013), *Pierre Huyghe* (2015) and *All that is solid …* (2017).

This exhibition includes the works of Francis Alÿs (Belgium/Mexico), Carlos Capelán (Uruguay/Sweden), Simryn Gill (Singapore/Malaysia/Australia), Shilpa Gupta (India), Hiwa K (Iraq/Germany) and Sangeeta Sandrasegar (Australia), including newly commissioned works by the artists Capelán, Gupta and Sandrasegar.

The artists in this exhibition have each responded to a given set of sensations, situations and locations in the world, creating and observing tangible traces that reverberate with impressions of both past and present. In their artworks, the trace is both a residue of an absent situation, and also part of the formation of a new memory or action. The artworks in *The Tangible Trace* express the notion that the world can be seen, felt, and experienced through the metaphor of trace.

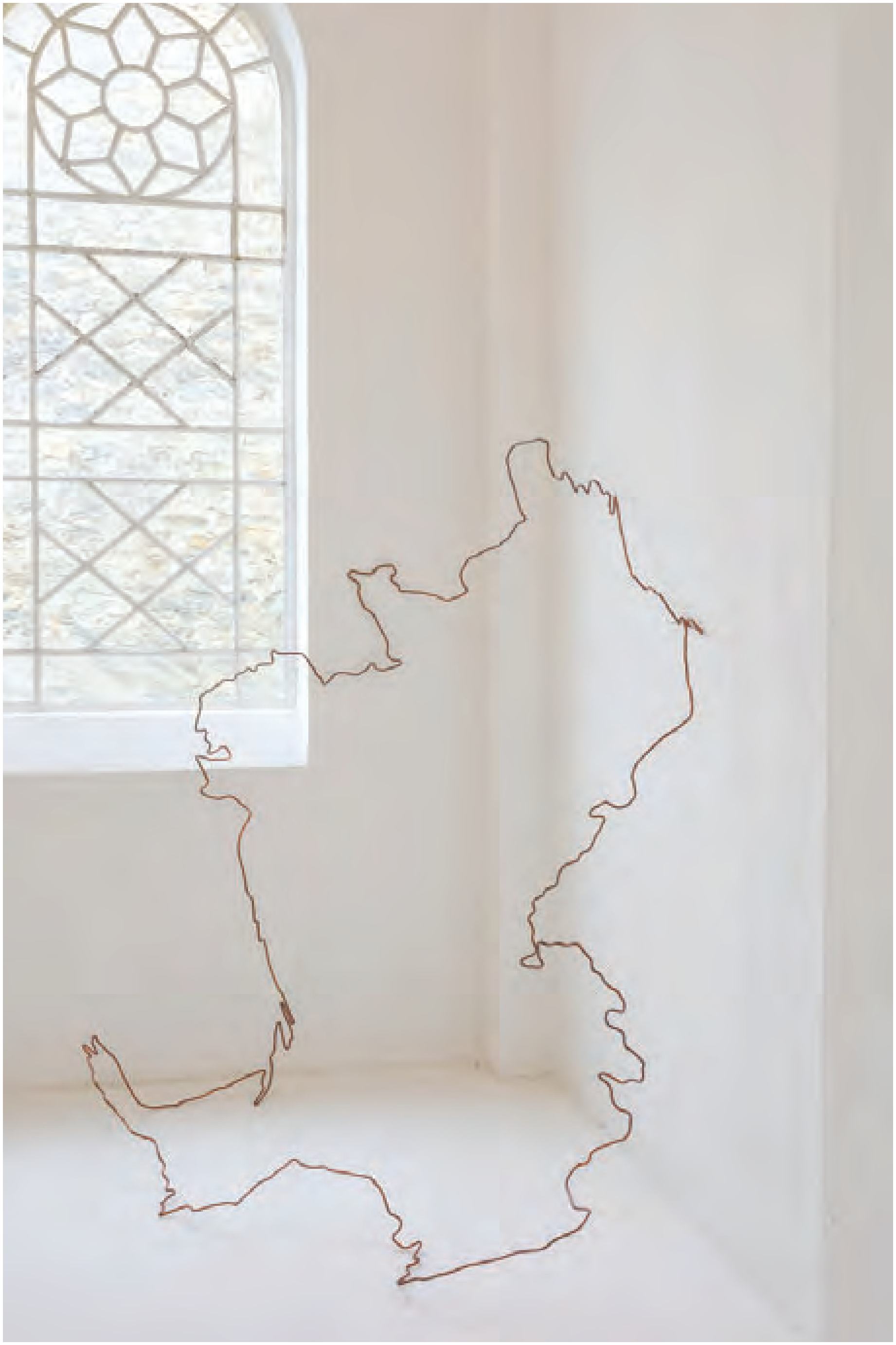
I wish to acknowledge and thank the artists for their generous participation in this exhibition. I am also grateful to the writers, Carlos Capelán and Annika Capelán, Naomi Cass, Julie Ewington, Cuauhtémoc Medina, Chaitanya Sambrani, and Aneta Szylak for their remarkable insights into the works by each of the participating artists.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to the galleries who have supported the loan of works for this exhibition: David Zwirner; KOW, Berlin; and Tracy Williams Ltd., New York. We also acknowledge the work of Maco Sánchez Blanco, Studio Manager, Francis Alÿs Studio, and Czetan Patil from the studio of Shilpa Gupta.

The Museum acknowledges our inaugural foundation supporter, the Besen Family Foundation; the TarraWarra Museum of Art Foundation; our major sponsors: Arnold Bloch Leibler Lawyers and Advisers; Probuild; Deloitte Private; and Chubb Insurance Australia; our major partners: Paoli Smith Creative; IAS Fine Art Logistics; and RACV Club; and our education program supporters: the Ullmer Family Foundation; Harry the Hirer; Scanlon Foundation; Fox Family Foundation; Escala Partners; Eva & Les Erdi Humanitarian Charitable Foundation; Bennelong Foundation; AON; Credit Suisse; and Bruce Keebaugh.

I extend my gratitude to the dedicated volunteers and staff of the Museum: Elisabeth Alexander, Mim Armour, Tony Dutton, Anthony Fitzpatrick, Annemarie Kohn, Michelle Mountain, Steph Tesoriero and Heather Saleeba. I also thank Joanne Morice for her research assistance, and Tara McDowell and Jan Bryant for their input. Finally my sincere thanks to Eva Besen AO and Marc Besen AC, our founding patrons, and our Board members, for their continued support of the Museum and its engaging exhibition program.

Victoria Lynn
Director



Shilpa Gupta
Map Tracing #5 - FR 2017
355.5 x 394.5 cm
copper pipe

_THE TANGIBLE TRACE

The idea for this exhibition developed from a conversation with the artist Sangeeta Sandrasegar. We have long wanted to work together and we have often discussed the meaning and metaphor of the shadow, a primary element in her oeuvre. In thinking about the shadow, one inevitably recalls Pliny's claim that the origin of painting lay in the story of Kora, daughter of the potter Butades of Sicyon, who made an outline of a shadow cast on the wall by her departing lover.[1] A second myth that is often cited in relation to the shadow is Plato's 'Allegory of the Cave', where he describes the shadows experienced by prisoners in a cave.[2] Victor Stoichita argues that while Pliny sees the shadow as 'the other of the same', for Plato the shadow is 'the same in a state of double'.[3] From these classical beginnings, the idea of representation is seen to be something other than mimetic: there is a difference between the origin and its representation. In the hands of an artist such as Sandrasegar, the shadow is elevated in importance so that its 'otherness' or 'doubling' are transformed into the primary place of metaphor. While her shadows may appear intangible, their presence is tangible. They seem material, physical, and even tactile.

While Sandrasegar and I were in conversation over a period of two years, I was working on the art of the Australian modernist Joy Hester, and came across the following phrase in one of her extraordinary poems: 'the tangible shadow'. I immediately thought of Sandrasegar's work and then wondered if there might be another word we can use to honour the presence of these palpable and lingering shadows. A trace, in its most basic form, is a mark or imprint made by a person or thing. To trace is to draw a line, make an outline, to ponder, to investigate, to map out. Indeed, Pliny's account is as much about the act of tracing as it is about the shadow. The shadow of the lover's profile on the wall engenders both the action and residue of trace.

This exhibition, *The Tangible Trace*, evolves from this cluster of concepts—tangibility, the shadow or imprint as a metaphor for the 'other', the 'double', and the trace. Francis Alÿs, Carlos Capelán, Simryn Gill, Shilpa Gupta, Hiwa K and Sangeeta Sandrasegar explore the concept of trace through tangible fragments—natural materials, pressings, mappings, markings, journeys and gestures. The artworks in *The Tangible Trace* use the metaphor of the trace to invoke sensations that can be seen, felt, experienced and even touched in our real environments. The trace is both an absent presence and a present absence and evokes the complex ways in which the artists engage with the world around them. For each of them, place and situation are entangled. They apprehend their surroundings as a living body of knowledge, tracing and retracing their more often than not oblique relationship with it. In their artworks, the trace is both a residue of an absent or past situation, and also part of the formation of a new memory or action.

In his *Natural History*, Pliny claims that while the geographic location of the first painting is uncertain, 'all agree that it began with tracing an outline around a man's shadow and consequently that pictures were originally done in this way'.[4] He goes on to cite the aforementioned myth of Butades, a potter from Sicyon, who modelled the first portraits from clay. Butades pressed clay onto his daughter's drawing of her lover's profile and made a relief. As Hagi Kenaan has shown, Pliny's recall of the birth of painting is more about the 'act' of painting, than about painting as an object:

> Butades draws the first line as she finds herself in and responds to an unresolved tension intrinsic to the human condition. This is the tension between the character of the world as a domain of meaningful things which we want and love and care about and the character of the world as a place in which we inevitably also find ourselves separated and cut off from, forsaken by the things and people we care about and love.[5]

And further:

> Her act is not an attempt to replace absence with a new form of presence but, on the contrary, it reflects an attempt to create a new place for her self in between the opposite poles of absence and presence.[6]

To trace, then, is arguably to not simply see the world, but to reflect upon it, to find a place for oneself between its absence and its presence. It is an action of uncovering and unfolding. It is also an action of being in the world. Kenaan's observations allow the term trace a wider metaphorical horizon: 'Butades's act reveals the depth of the visual … his is the possibility of not merely seeing the world, but of seeing the world as that which is seen'.[7] As is outlined below, the artists in this exhibition are engaged in this action of placing themselves between the 'opposite poles of absence and presence'.

The term trace is also often associated with the archive: specifically an archaeological collection of objects or traces from the past. In his analysis of the differences between the term archive, and the term trace, Gavin Lucas suggests that conventionally the concept of memory has been understood in terms of mental testimony on the one hand, and material trace on the other.[8] Historians have conventionally looked at written documents, while archaeologists have looked at material traces. Documents and photographs are seen as evidence of an event, while material traces are seen as evidence of a solid entity, such as an ancient monument. In order to question this separation of terms, he draws on the concept of the palimpsest, a manuscript that has had the previous text washed away, but nevertheless bears signs of the original text under the new text. Using the palimpsest as a metaphor, Lucas suggests that both archival documents and material traces have a temporal life cycle. Moreover, he argues that:

> The notion that a trace can be defined as a material memory highlights the importance of how the past is preserved in, or is contemporary with the present … An imprint on a block of wax or a footprint in the sand is not a sign of an event (even though that is how one can see either of them); they are actual physical remnants of the event itself, of someone writing or of an animal walking across the desert.[9]

Most importantly, for Lucas, is the temporal nature of these traces, the fact that they exist both in the past and in the present. Rather than see the palimpsest as a product of inscription and erasure, he suggests that it is 'more fruitful to see it as a process of de-organizing and reorganizing of matter'.[10] Following on from this argument we can understand the trace to be a product of an assemblage of events and material objects that has re-materialised over time and is not easily reversed. Through his analysis, we can see that when the artists in this exhibition engage with the trace, they do so with the knowledge that a trace exists in both the past and the present. A trace re-materialises over time; it is temporal.

In his analysis of how memory works, Sigmund Freud drew on the analogy of the 'mystic writing pad', a tool that was readily available in the 1920s. Not unlike today's 'magic slate', the pad was made of three layers. The bottom layer was made of resin or wax, the middle layer was a wax sheet, and the top layer was transparent. When one writes on the top layer it is erased by lifting the celluloid sheet, but the imprint is retained on the lower layers. This palimpsest represented for Freud the layers of perception, short-term memory and permanent trace that occur in our memory system. Memory acquires resilient traces while also receiving new imprints. Memory is an active intersection of traces.

In his analysis of Freud's 'Mystic Writing Pad', Jacques Derrida proposes that there is not a simple relationship between a trace and its origin. In Freud's texts on the memory-trace, the unconscious follows a pathway of traces, and a system of deferrals. Derrida extends the analogy to apply to language itself. Language operates through a series of traces. He comments: 'we must be several in order to write, and even to "perceive"'.[11] Seeking to liberate the concept of trace from the idea of its presence, he instead focuses on the fact that it 'is constituted by the threat or anguish of its irremediable disappearance, of the disappearance of its disappearance'.[12] Derrida's deconstructionist project seeks to break down a direct link between a written word and its meaning. Instead, according to Derrida, the written word inherently suggests the absence of a presence, a trace. Language is complex, meanings of words do not have a simple origin, and instead, there are differences between meanings, deferrals of meaning, which he terms *'différance'*. Each word has within it the traces of other words. If everything is a trace, then nothing can be universalised, but also, if everything is subject to its absence, through its not being there, there is always a slippage of meaning. While Derrida's project is far more complex than these brief comments indicate, it does point to the complexity of the concept of trace from a philosophical point of view, a complexity that is embraced by the artists in this exhibition. Their works play with a rich array of metaphors that arise from the trace's ability to defer meaning over time. The shuttling that is inherent in the trace, between presence and absence, is the space of their creativity. Therefore, the material 'remains' that they work with resist representing a singular impression of the world around them.

As we have seen above, the trace can be understood as an action of being in the world; it can be a product of the assemblage of materials and events that re-materialise; and it can be an analogy for the ways in which language constantly defers meaning. There is a performative nature to these qualities of trace. Rather than being a signifier of disappearance or death, the trace comes to be an action, performed, resituated, re-assembled in a place between absence and presence. There are echoes at play, resonances between traces within individual works, and also between them.

The series of tall narrow windows along a passageway in the Museum is the site for Melbourne-based Sangeeta Sandrasegar's work, *What falls from view*, 2019. Through this view are Indigenous, settler and immigrant stories embedded in how the land has been interpreted, shaped and cultivated. Sandrasegar covers the windows with five panels comprising a layer of Indian khadi cotton over-hung with silk organza; hand-dyed with indigo and Australian native cherry, the combined materials create an overlay of colours and texture. Each panel covers the window, so that the view is obscured, and instead, the winter sun illuminates and casts an abstract shadow into the space, providing its own natural shifts through the work. While the fabric, touched by the light of the sun, is tangible, it offers an understanding of 'what falls from view', what is absent, what lies beyond the trace. We look at a void in the centre of each panel, where the window is situated. Rather than gaze beyond the window frame, we are forced to recollect the view, through the shifting intensities of light that appear in the fabric and the lingering shadows that fall across the passageway. The work is accompanied by a musical piece by Australian composer Ross Edwards, entitled *Symphony No. 1 'Da Pacem Domine'* (1991), a sombre work that has been described as 'more like an extended chant over a pulsing drone note, interrupted by occasional bursts of sunlight into its sorrowing darkness'.[13] The combination of references to Indian and Australian dyes, in the company of Edwards's composition that mixes Buddhist influences with traces of the Lord's Prayer, not only gestures towards the Tarrawarra Monastery, which lies beyond the view, adjacent to the TarraWarra Museum property, but also to the ways in which a trace can be fed through processes of (re)location and (dis)location. In this installation the trace reverberates both materially and sonically.

Domino Theory, 2014, is a series of vitrines and objects created by Port Dickson/Sydney-based artist Simryn Gill. Created in 2015, this is the first occasion that this major work has been seen in Australia. Domino theory was a belief held from the 1950s through to the 1980s that if one country came under the impact of Communism, others around it would soon follow. Based on the notion of fear it was one of the main reasons why powerful nations, such as America, would have a military presence in smaller nations. Dominoes is also an ancient game of numbers and chance, first mentioned during the Song Dynasty in China, in which one rectangular black piece with white dots is joined to another that matches it in order to form a line. These blocks can also be lined up on their edges so that they 'fall', much like the countries infected by Communism would, one by one.

Gill is a collector who roams and finds objects and substances that have been worn by time, broken down and weathered. Inside each of Gill's vitrines are bits and pieces of clay and stone found on the beach in Port Dickson, Malaysia.

Some of these natural forms are the size of a breadcrumb and would normally be absorbed by the ebb and flow of the sea, specifically the Strait of Malacca, a busy shipping route. These small forms would be weathered as much by water as they are by the leaking elements of global trade. In addition, the vitrines include a number of cube-like forms which the artist has created from soil that she found in and around termite mounds in Port Dickson. These cubes vary in colour depending on what the termites had brought to their nest, be it industrial or natural materials.

Arranged in sequences, questions arise as to what is a trace and what is an object? What comprises residue and what is made anew? How are each of these fragments related to one another, and does one impact the other? These objects do not line up precisely, nor do they 'fall into line' like a domino. Each of these fragments represents a trace of its original yet unknown condition, but is also part of a larger artist's collection, co-belonging, as it were, in a new assemblage that speaks to the survival of minute yet tangible substances. Moreover, Gill's vitrines recall an archaeological record, or archive, yet the pieces are unidentified, and arranged at the will of the artist. As such, her archive misbehaves, does not follow the 'law' of the archive, and instead invokes what Doreen Mende refers to as 'the undutiful daughter's concept of archival metabolism'.[14] The metamorphosis of these forms is imprecise, their temporality is not measured and the objects speak to a different set of principles from the patriarchal nature of the archive—abject, unidentified, unpredictable.

A Malaysian hotel in ruin is the source of a second body of work by Gill entitled *Passing Through*, 2017-ongoing. The series began with photographs the artist made of areas in the bathrooms of a once luxury resort—small crevices under the sinks or the walls from which the copper piping has been taken. What is left is a cavity, a trace, around which Gill inked the square bathroom tiles in bright colours. She then made monotypes from these inked tiles, so that the cavity is transformed into an irregular, white shadow as it were—a negative space in the image corresponding to the negative space in the wall. In a similar fashion, the artist covered large areas of the hotel's former tiled dance floor with ink to produce another series of monotypes. For this exhibition, Gill will pair a selection of these mosaic patterned coloured prints with photographs of the remains of the now less than accommodating building. In this way, the artist's ongoing revisitation of this site in transition 'passes through' various iterations, media and metamorphoses. Like a series of echoes, these traces reverberate in the space of the exhibition with resonances of both past and present, never quite settling, but rather being part of a circuit of impressions.

Hiwa K's video *Pre-Image (Blind as the Mother Tongue)*, 2017, charts the artist's journey through the streets of Athens, a city that he had walked through some twenty-five years prior when he arrived in Europe by foot from Kurdish Iraq eventually to find refuge in Germany. The artist has constructed an object comprised of motorbike mirrors attached to a long stick that he balances on his nose as he walks. Inevitably, his stride is interrupted, and his awareness is only of what is immediately below him as he gazes up at the mirrors. This vertical gaze creates a series of traces and fragments of his situation and his location and does not allow for the horizontality or panopticon viewpoint that a citizen might have. It is instead an anxious gaze, a journey fraught with a set of what the artist terms 'pre-images'. Hiwa K retraces his original journey, but does so by creating a new set of images that become a mobile assemblage of fragments. We see him traverse the varied locations of Athens—the port, the centre—as he struggles to navigate and find his way. These 'pre-images' are a composite of appearance and disappearance.

Rebecca Schneider has discussed the notion that the performance artist's body 'becomes a kind of archive and host to a collective memory':

> This body, given to performance, is arguably engaged with disappearance chiasmatically – not only disappearing but resiliently eruptive, remaining through performance like so many ghosts at the door marked 'disappeared'. In this sense performance itself becomes itself through messy and eruptive reappearance, challenging, via the performative trace, any neat antinomy between appearance and disappearance, or presence and absence.[15]

As Hiwa K walks the streets of Athens, his own body no doubt transmits his memories of his previous journeys, not as an original of this trace, but rather as part of the assemblage of seen and forgotten objects and encounters. One journey becomes part of another.

Carlos Capelán's paintings are also motivated by an oblique view of the world. These works depict the outlines of a figure, both as portraits and as a bodily form, against a patchwork of abstract squares and rectangles that have, in turn, been inspired by analytical cubism and geometric abstraction. These figures are like spectral images, and their multiple gazes are both towards the viewer and into an undefined distance. They are like ghosts or echoes from the past. Indeed, he has referred to the faces in his work as 'stuttering portraits'. An enduring image in Capelán's oeuvre is the anamorphic appearance, so that only an alternative perspective onto the picture can bring it back into proportion. This oblique perspective has roots in Capelán's own experience of exile from Uruguay in 1973 (a country that he now continues to spend time in). The figure of the exile is often portrayed askew and here the figure is returning that gaze with multiple images.

Tattooed with broad brushstrokes, the faces that stare directly at us have hollow eye sockets. The faces with eyes avert their gaze, looking out beyond our location in the space. The heads have no body and tumble and turn in the midst of intersecting geometric planes. There is also a recurring image of a headless body sheltering itself from an unknown threat. Capelán's new paintings are layered in the most complex of ways, so that the picture plane is anything but flat as the jostle of abstract planes and figurative traces intersect across the canvas. These lines and traces are entangled, decentred, and fragmented. They seem to both dematerialise and rematerialise before our eyes. We can't help but think of the tides of people on the move, particularly in an image such as *Extended Family (Arrival)*, 2019.

Entitled *Implosion*, this series of paintings may be seen as a metaphor for the contemporary experience of complexity. Modernism is imploding here, and by implication so too is the modernist art museum, as the figurative traces give rise to decolonial perspectives. The artist is present in many of these works, as a self-portrait, particularly in the work *Map of the World (Thursday)*, 2018, a painting on paper in which the self-portrait is comprised of abstract geometric shapes and colours. Maps of the world have been determined by colonial power and so too have the institutions of art. In *Self-Portrait as a Museum*, 2019, the artist's own portraits are presented as paintings on a wall of geometric abstract patterns. Flipping the modernist idea of the autonomy of the artwork and allowing the other to speak as self-authorising agent, Capelán's tangible traces reinforce a new position where the colonial subject is speaking back. The averted gaze comes to be a non-representational representation of the 'other'.

Shilpa Gupta has created a map of Australia as part of her ongoing series of *Map Tracings*. The outline of Australia is made with copper tubing that has been rubbed and treated, and the piece is then folded so that its proportions and shape differ from the image that we are used to seeing in Australia. It hangs partially on the floor and on the wall, almost collapsing. Gupta invites us to consider the role of the border as a boundary, the space in which we live and travel from and to, but also as the nation-state, the place of power. Moreover, as Chaitanya Sambrani indicates in this catalogue, the map of Australia invites consideration of the tortuous history of Australia's treatment of its First Peoples and indeed, the myth of terra nullius. This boundary has also provided the terms by which our country accepts immigrants and refugees. As such Gupta's collapsing map no longer holds the nation state intact, but instead posits a porous relationship between inside and outside.

Map Tracing #7 – AU, 2019 is presented in combination with a new floor work engraved with the phrase 'The markings we have made on this land have increased the distance so much' in English, Hindi, Arabic and Chinese. Again there is the suggestion of the colonial encounter: the 'marks' made on the land have the effect of increasing the gap between First Peoples and their invaders. Broken and fragmented, pieces of this work can be taken away by visitors, so that by the end of the exhibition, there is only a trace of the original form. As these traces are carried into the lives of other people, so too are the varied combinations of language and marking, suggesting a transcultural understanding of the world. The phrase also invokes the idea of map-making itself, the marking out of land, and the measuring of distance, but injects into this process an emotional tenor of longing. This emotional component of the movement of peoples and belonging is something that cannot be mapped nor bound by any border. Michel de Certeau asserts, 'surveys of routes miss what was: the act itself of passing by' and suggests that map-making, and geographical systems, cause 'a way of being in the world to be forgotten'.[16] Gupta, by contrast, puts into action the practice of being in the world through the literal embrace of the trace.

In the video installation *Paradox of Praxis 5: Sometimes we dream as we live & sometimes we live as we dream, Ciudad Juárez, México,* 2013, made in collaboration with Julien Devaux, Rafael Ortega, Alejandro Morales, and Félix Blume, Francis Alÿs is seen kicking an enflamed soccer ball through the streets of Ciudad Juárez at night. Ciudad Juárez is a border town city which provides the most common routes from North and Central Mexico into the USA. Once identified as the most dangerous city in the world, Ciudad Juárez, while still in the throes of crime, is also now becoming more industrialised, with many global companies basing their manufacturing there. Within the context of this volatile and tormented city, Alÿs introduces his characteristic act of 'play'. Illuminated only by the light of the fire, we glimpse details of facades, the underbelly of the freeway, shadowy figures in corners, the faint sounds of the city at night, and we wonder at how he does not catch on fire during these tricky manoeuvres. At times, Alÿs is propelled by the soccer ball's route as much as he, too, drives it through the streets. It is a collaborative performance, where the trace of this route becomes a bodily and perceptual memory that illuminates the city's restless energy and imploding violence. In conversation with Russell Ferguson about similar works made in Mexico City, the artist comments:

> Because of the immense amount of material produced on a daily basis by a huge city … it is very difficult to justify the act of adding another piece of matter to that already saturated environment. My reaction was to insert a story into the city rather than an object. It was my way of affecting a place at the very precise moment of its history, even just for an instant. If the story is right, if it hits a nerve, it can propagate like a rumour. Stories can pass through a place without the need to settle. They have a life of their own.[17]

To travel through these streets at night is to also absorb the temper of the city—the sounds, temperature and peripheral activities—into the body as traces. This passage through the city and the aphorism that accompanies it—'sometimes we dream as we live & sometimes we live as we dream'—echoes within our own bodies as we leave the Museum into an environment that is in stark contrast to Ciudad Juárez. Yet, as we depart the Museum via the corridor of fabric panels and lingering shadows by Sangeeta Sandresegar, we experience not the veil of night, but the tangible light of day touching the coloured fabric in a gesture that also brings together situation and trace into an aesthetic collaboration.

The artists in this exhibition have each responded to a given set of sensations, situations and locations in the world, creating and observing tangible traces that reverberate with impressions of both past and present. The artworks in *The Tangible Trace* express the notion that the world can be seen, felt, and experienced through the metaphor of trace. These works consider the implications of (re)location and (dis)location of objects and people, without forming an originary perspective. Rather, the artworks participate in processes of de-materialisation and re-materialisation of these traces, in space, and over time, embracing the continual deferral of meaning that comes about through non-sequential and non-linear assemblages. The gap between these trace fragments is a fertile space for analogy and metaphor. These spaces and intervals between the images, works, objects and fragments,

Sangeeta Sandrasegar
What falls from view 2019
work in progress

manifest the condition of the trace: being both present and absent at the same time. Material, situated and responsive, the tangible traces created by the artists co-belong in this exhibition. A single artwork is not subsumed by another, rather, they echo one another. Art is seen as something that is not cut off from life, but connected to multiple and changing histories, places, events and situations. This exhibition suggests that it is through the metaphor of the trace—as both noun and verb—that art connects with the question of what it means to belong in our turbulent and shifting world.

Victoria Lynn

1 Pliny, *Natural History, XXXV*, trans. H. Rackman, Cambridge, MA, and London: Loeb Classical Library, 1952.

2 Plato, Book VII *The Republic of Plato*, ed. Ernest Rhys, London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co Inc, 1937, pp. 207-237.

3 Victor I. Stoichita, *A Short History of the Shadow*, London: Reaktion Books, 1997, p. 27.

4 Pliny, *Natural History, XXXV*, trans. H. Rackman, Cambridge, MA, and London: Loeb Classical Library, 1952, p. 15.

5 Hagi Kenaan, 'Tracing Shadows: Reflections on the Origins of Painting' in *Pictorial Languages and Their Meanings: Liber Amicorum in Honor of Nurith Kenaan-Kedar*, eds. C. Versar and G. Fishof, Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Publishing, 2006, p. 23. URL: https://www.tau.ac.il/~kenaan/tracing.pdf, accessed 8 April 2019.

6 Kenaan, p. 23.

7 Kenaan, p. 26.

8 Gavin Lucas, 'Time and the archaeological archive', *Rethinking History*, vol. 14, no. 3, 2010, pp. 343–359, DOI: 10.1080/13642529.2010.482789

9 Lucas, p. 350.

10 Lucas, p. 354.

11 Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978, p. 226.

12 Derrida, p. 229.

13 Author not attributed, 'Ross Edwards: Symphony no. 1 "Da Pacem Domine" (1991)', 14 December 2018, URL: https://www.abc.net.au/classic/read-and-watch/classic-australia/ross-edwards-symphony-no-1-1991/10619828, accessed 22 April 2019.

14 Doreen Mende, 'The Undutiful Daughter's Concept of Archival Metabolism', *e-flux journal*, no. 93, September 2018. URL: https://www.e-flux.com/journal/93/215339/the-undutiful-daughter-s-concept-of-archival-metabolism/, accessed 24 April 2019.

15 Rebecca Schneider, 'Performance Remains', *Performance Research*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2001, p. 103.

16 I am grateful for the comparison with Michel de Certeau that is made by Christine Vial Kayser, 'Shilpa Gupta: Art Beyond Borders', *InVisible Culture: An Electronic Journal for Visual Culture*, issue 25 & 26, pp. 12–15. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984, p. 97.

17 'Russell Ferguson in conversation with Francis Alÿs', *Francis Alÿs*, London: Phaidon, 2017, p. 26.

_ARTISTS

_FRANCIS ALŸS

PAGES 18–23:

Paradox of Praxis 5: Sometimes we dream as we live & sometimes we live as we dream, Ciudad Juárez, México 2013 (video stills)

La Rubia
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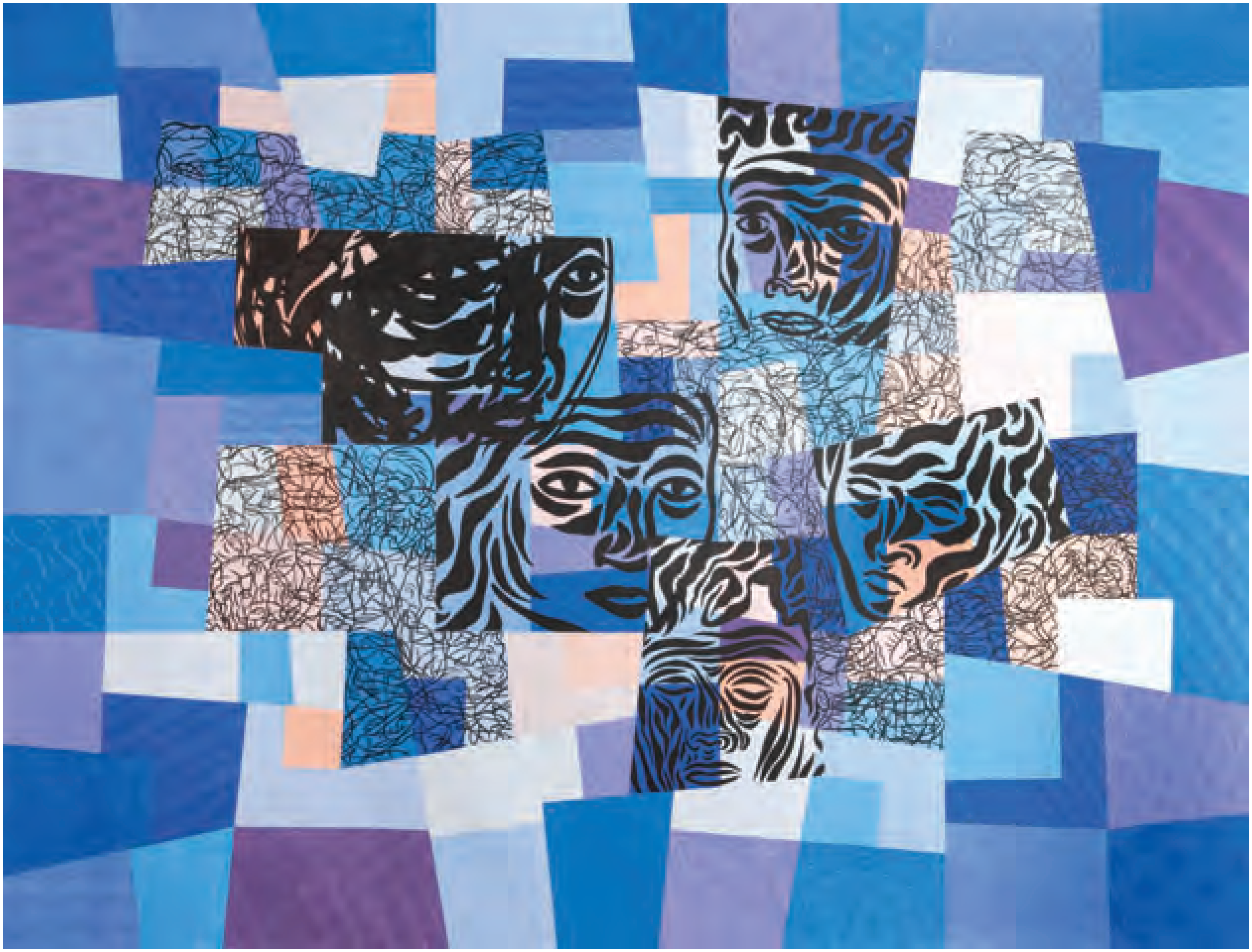
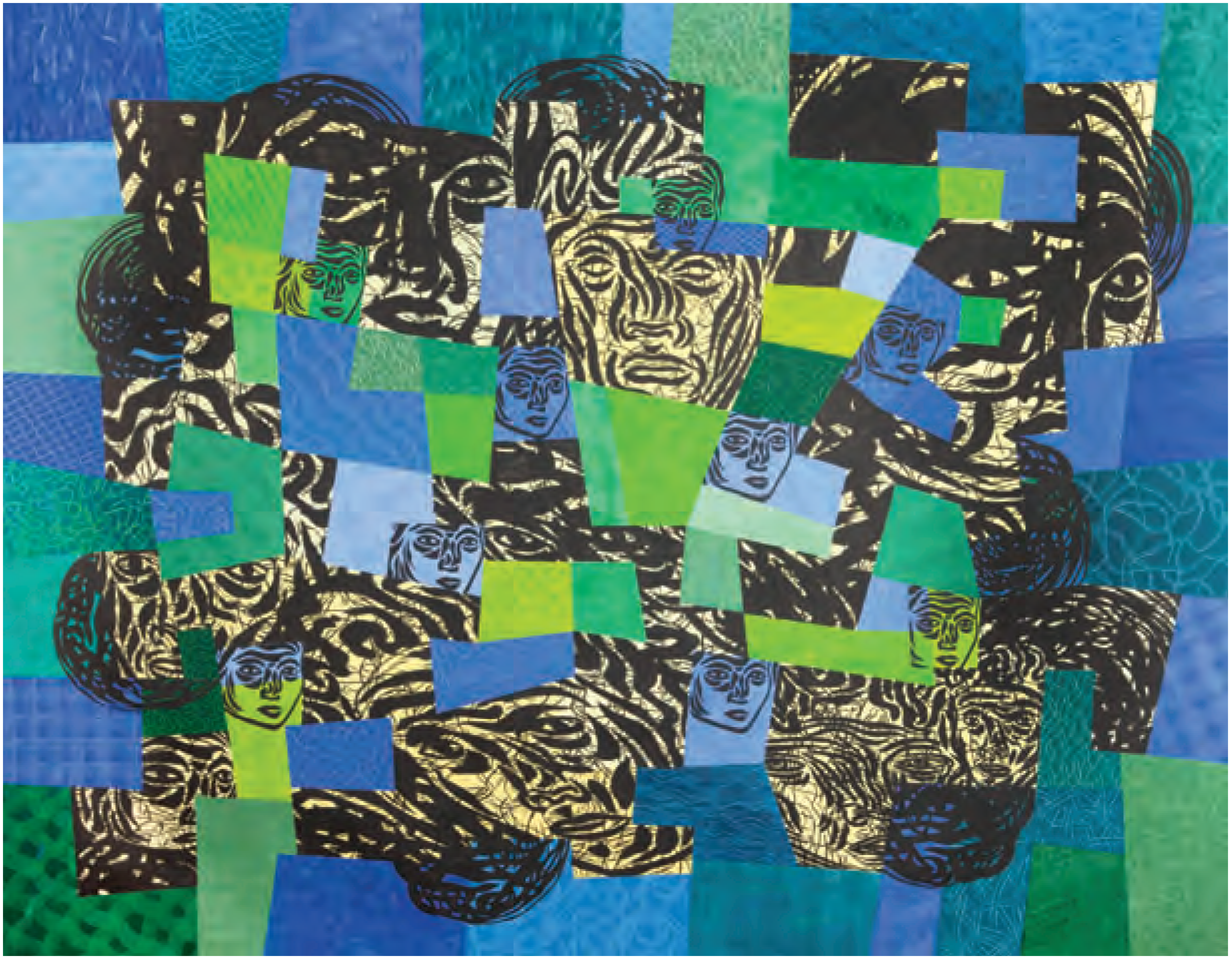
La Rubia

_CARLOS CAPELÁN

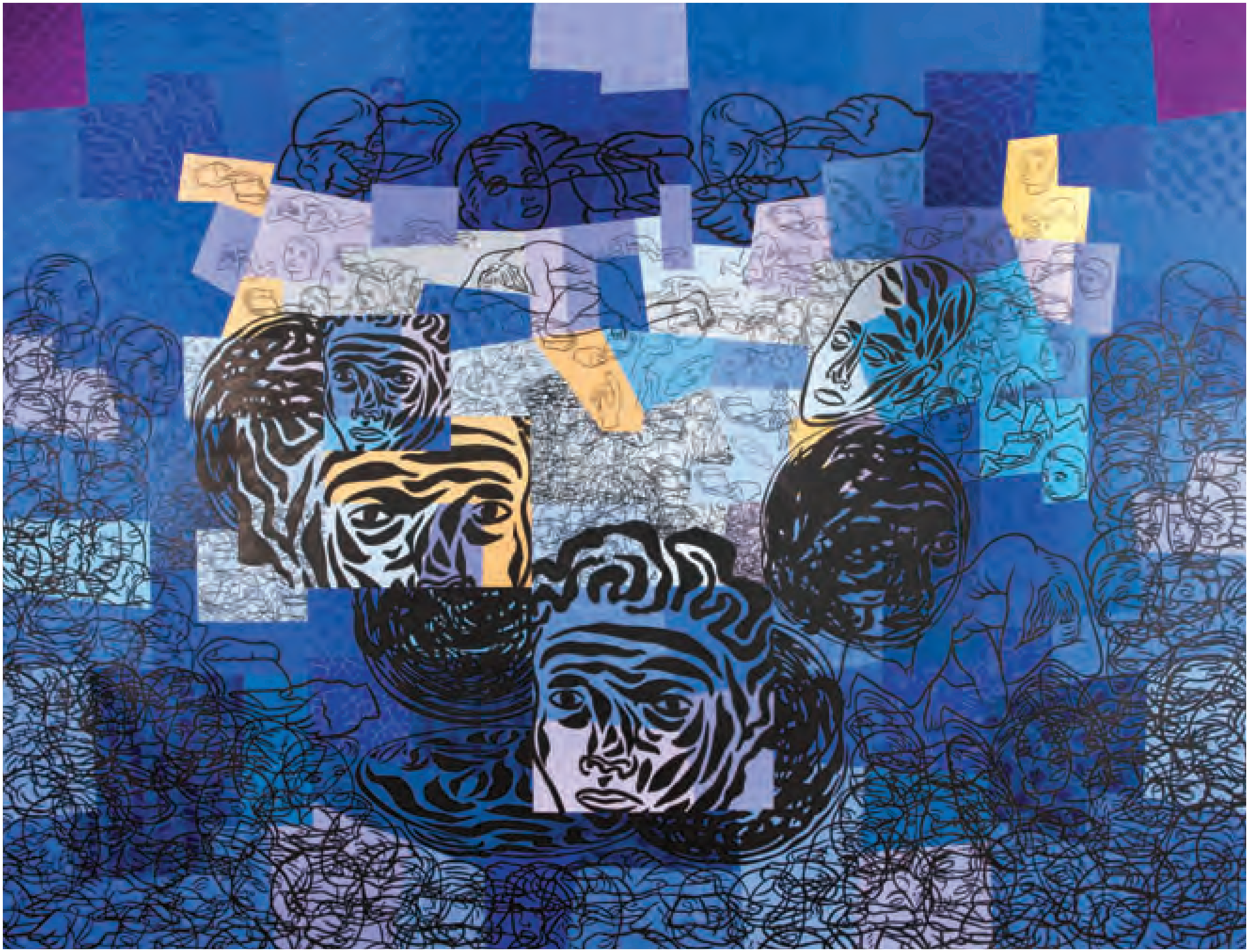


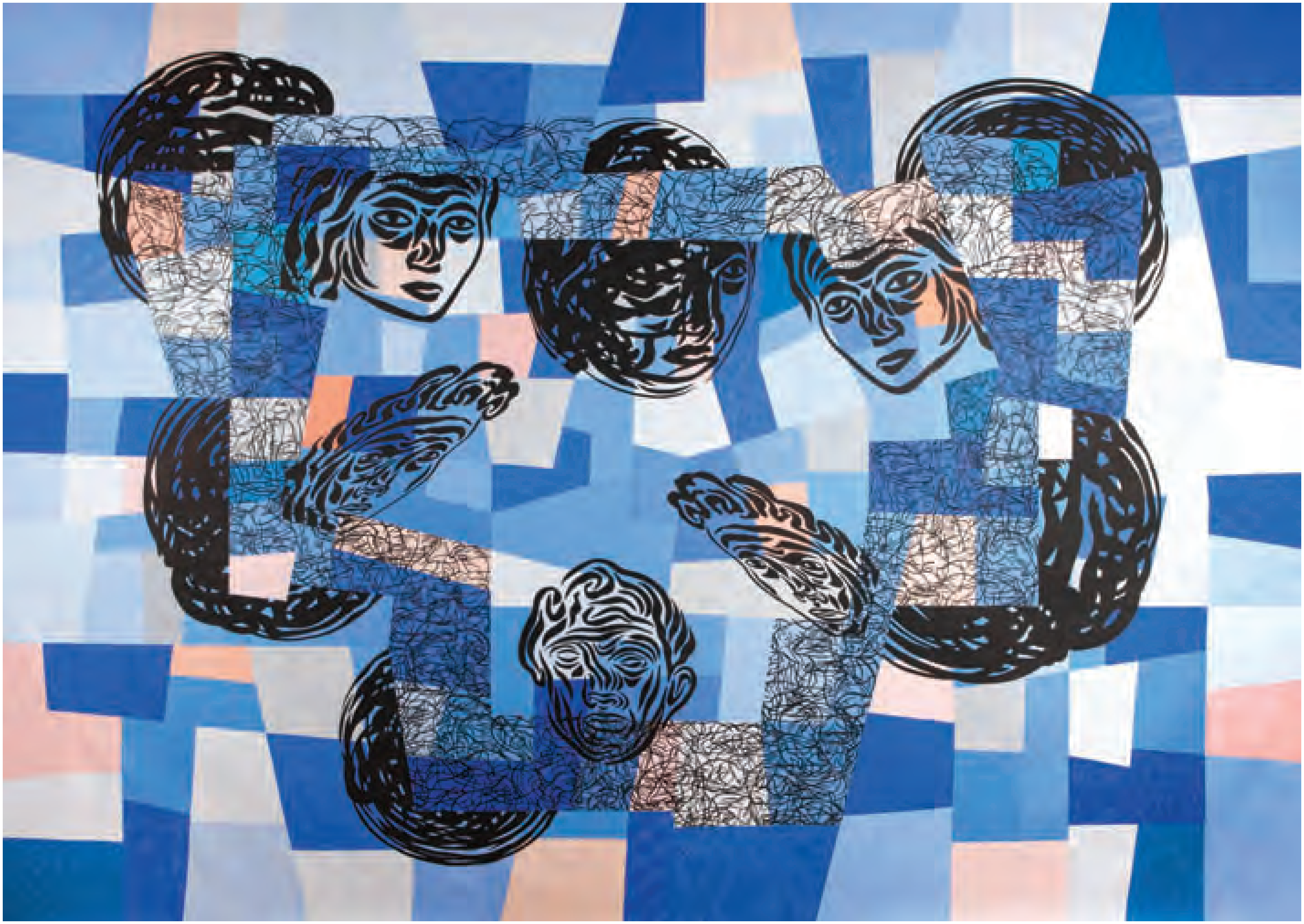
Extended Family (Arrival) 2019
OPPOSITE: *Completely Solid Object (Living Room)* 2019



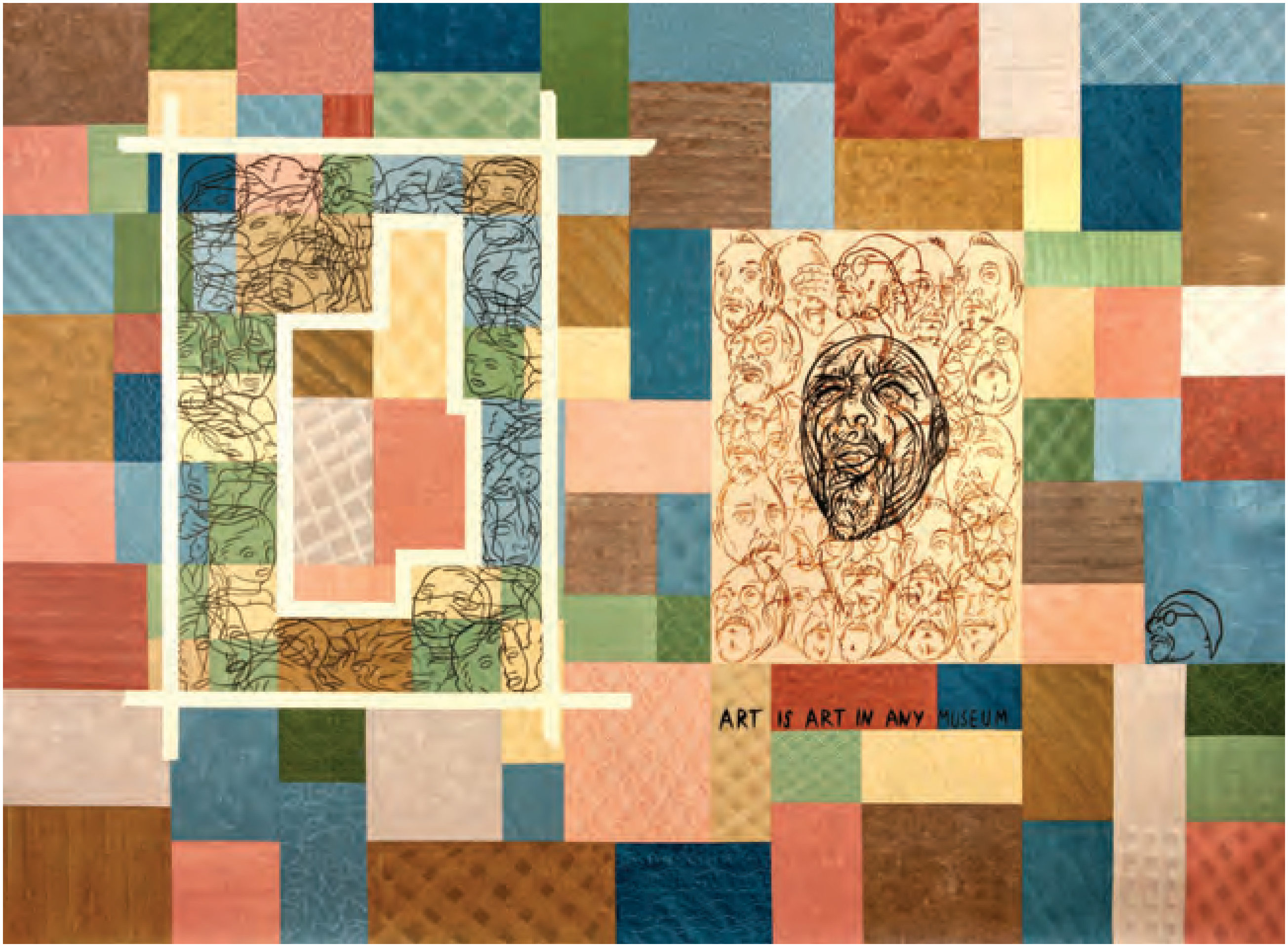
Fling (Implosion) 2019

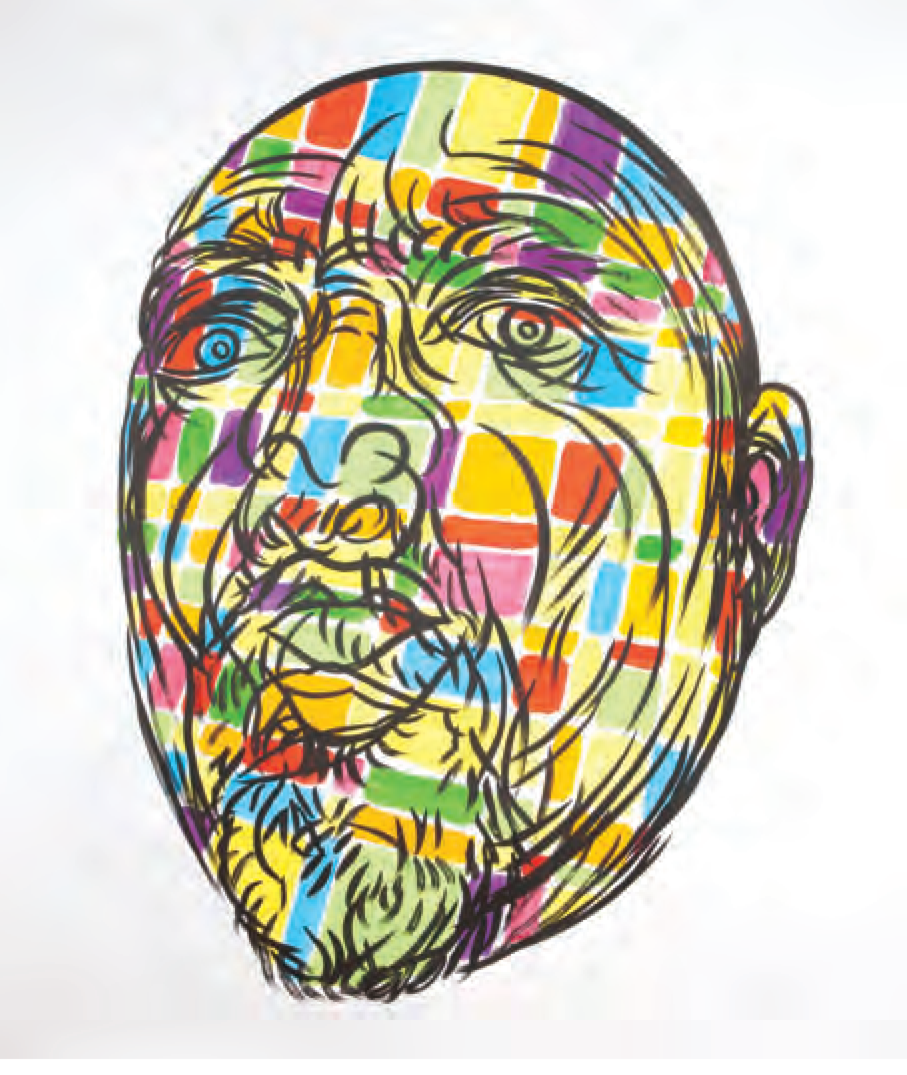
OPPOSITE: *I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate (External Love)* 2019





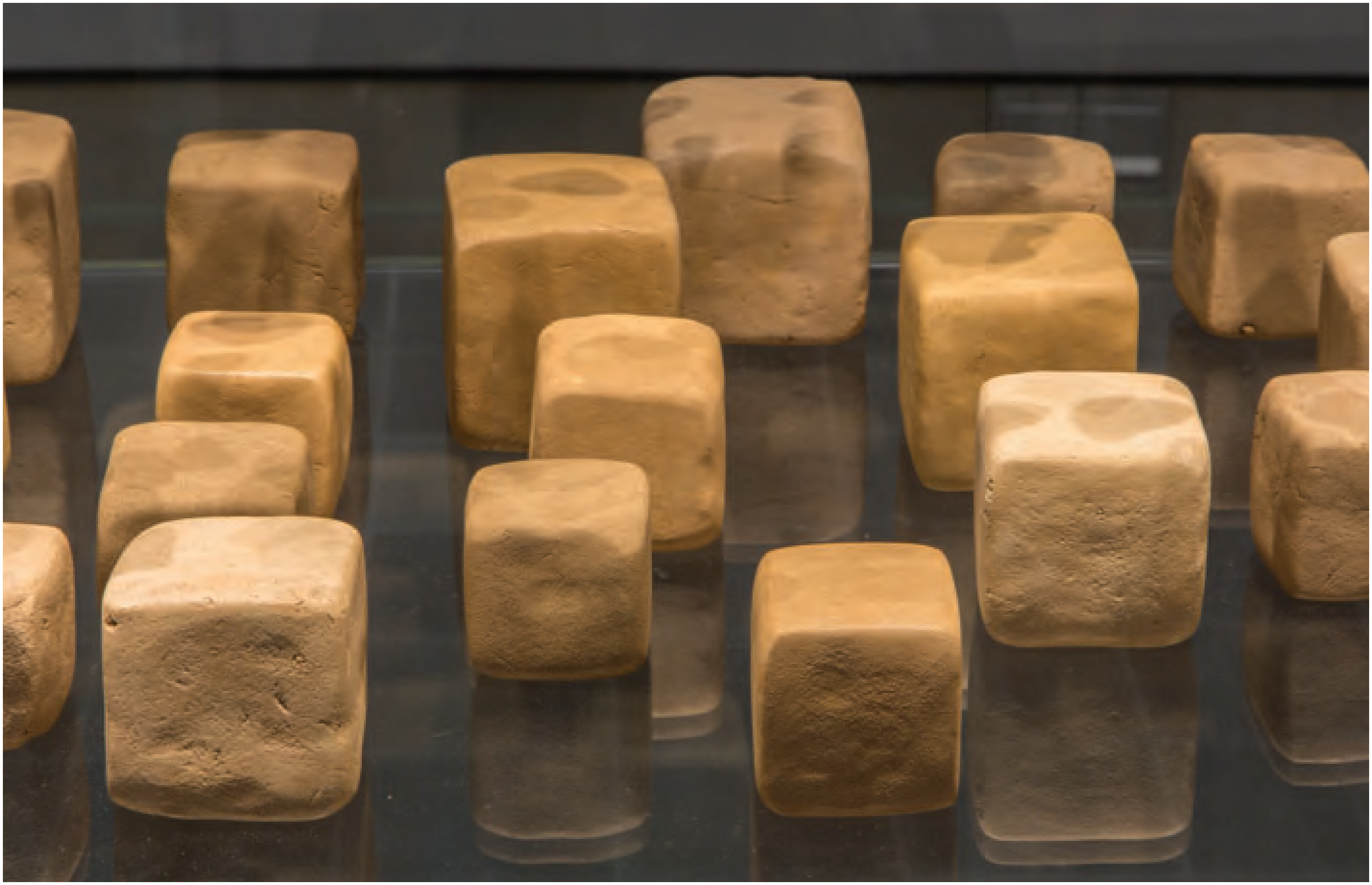
Self Portrait as a Museum 2019
OPPOSITE: *Map of the World (Thursday)* 2018


ART IS ART IN ANY MUSEUM

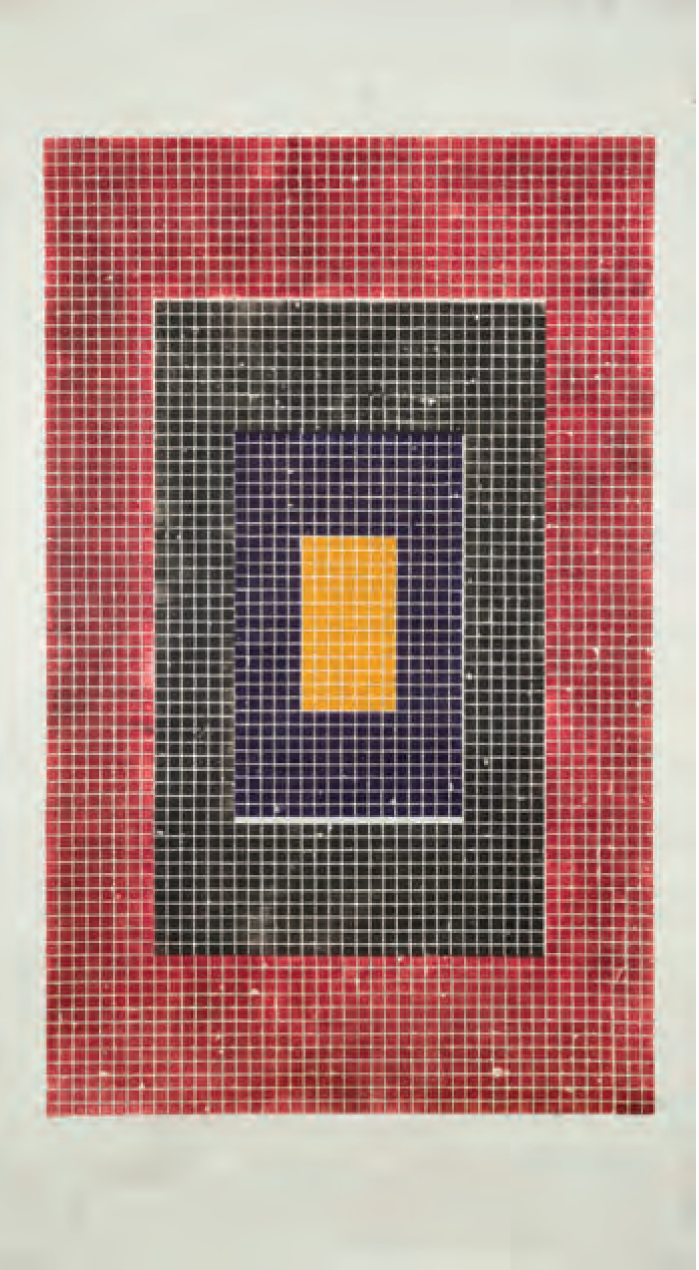


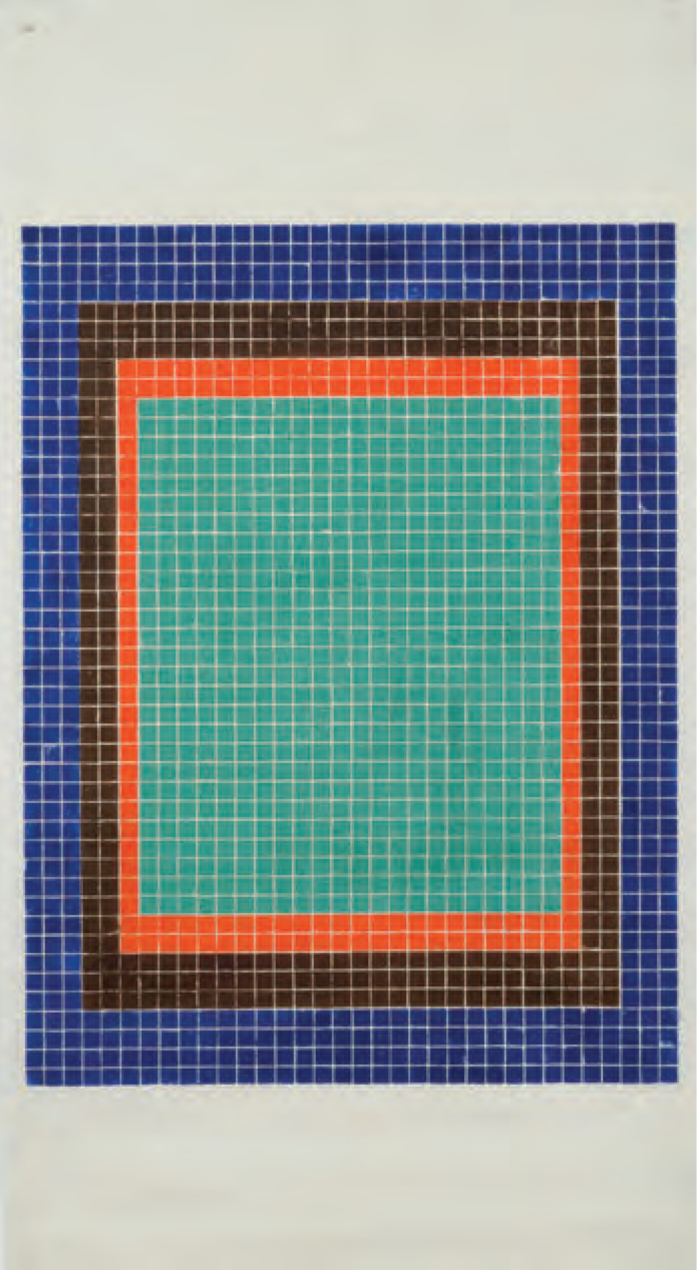
_SIMRYN GILL

Domino Theory 2014 (details)



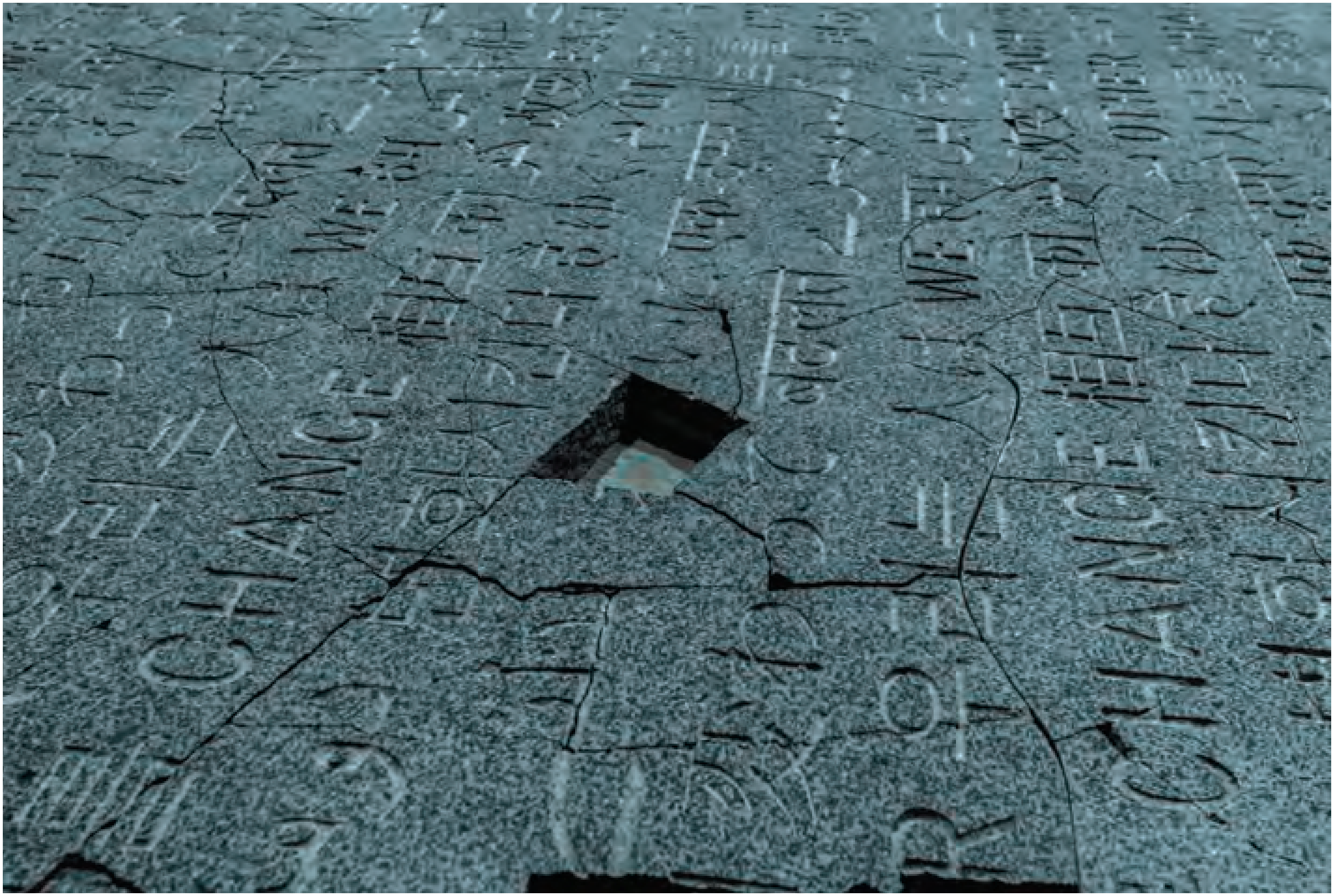
PAGES 32–35:
Passing Through 2017–ongoing

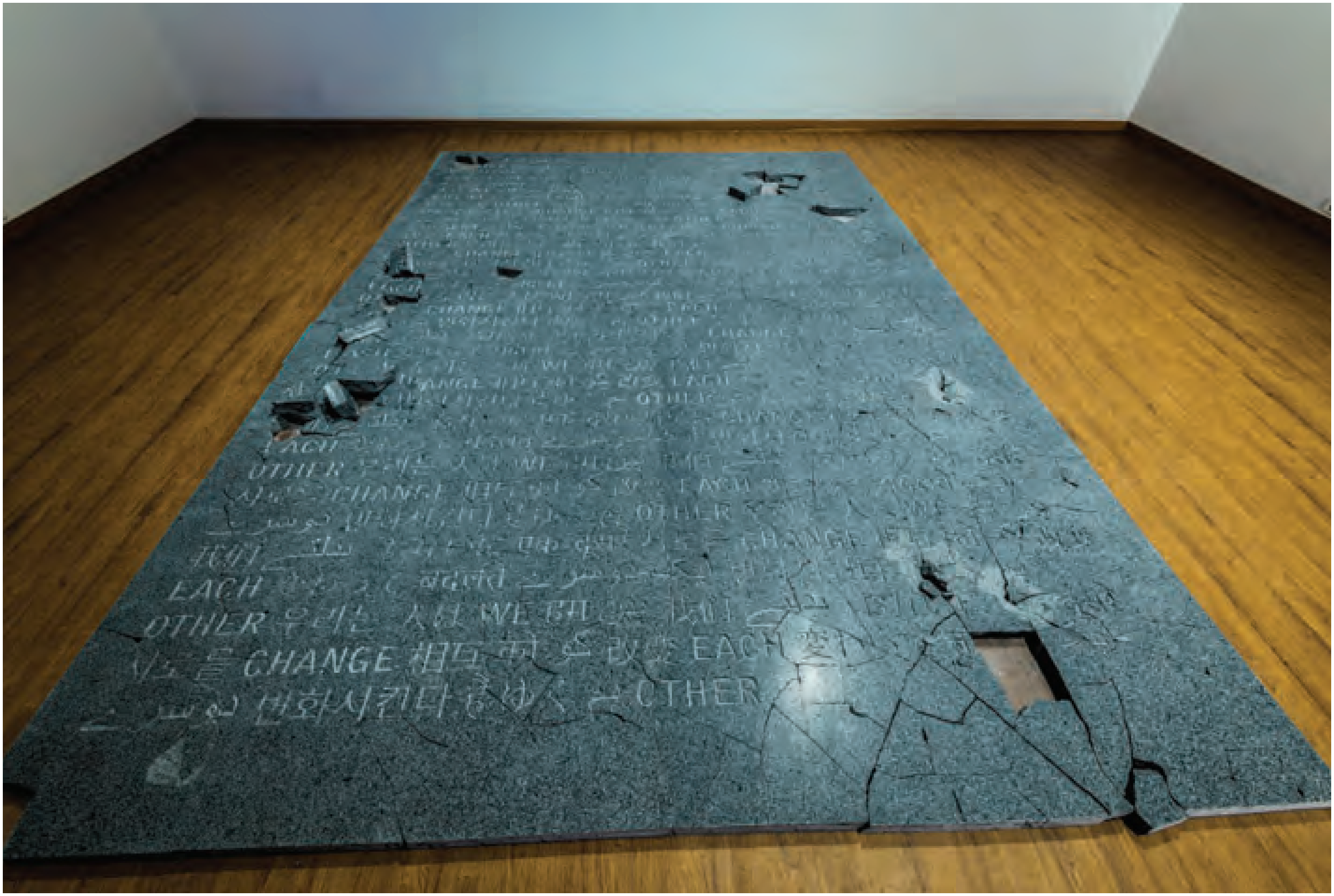




_SHILPA GUPTA

PAGES 36–39:
We change each other 2017
420 x 280 cm
engraving on stone, interactive installation




EACH
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OTHER 우리는 WE
CHANGE 相互
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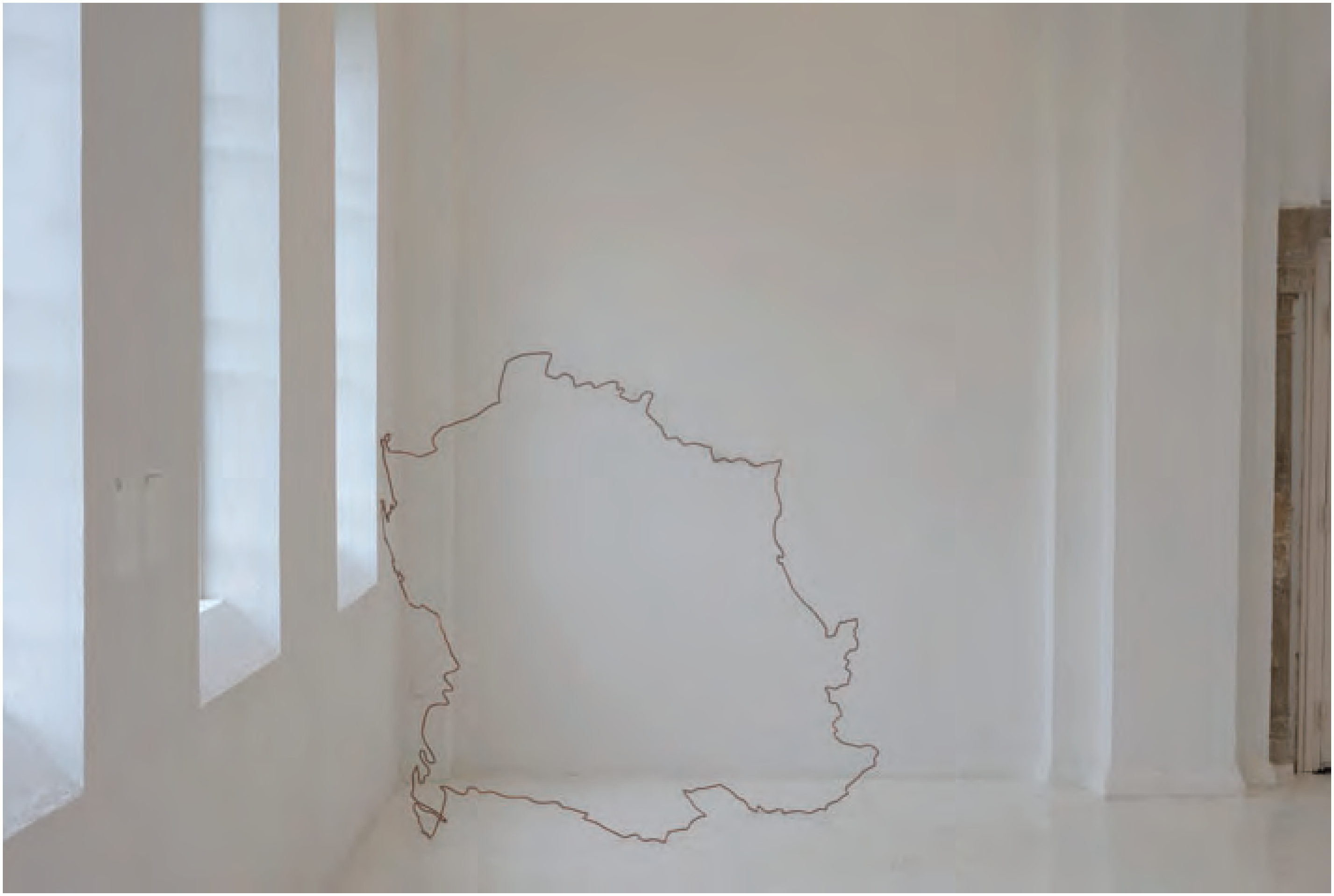
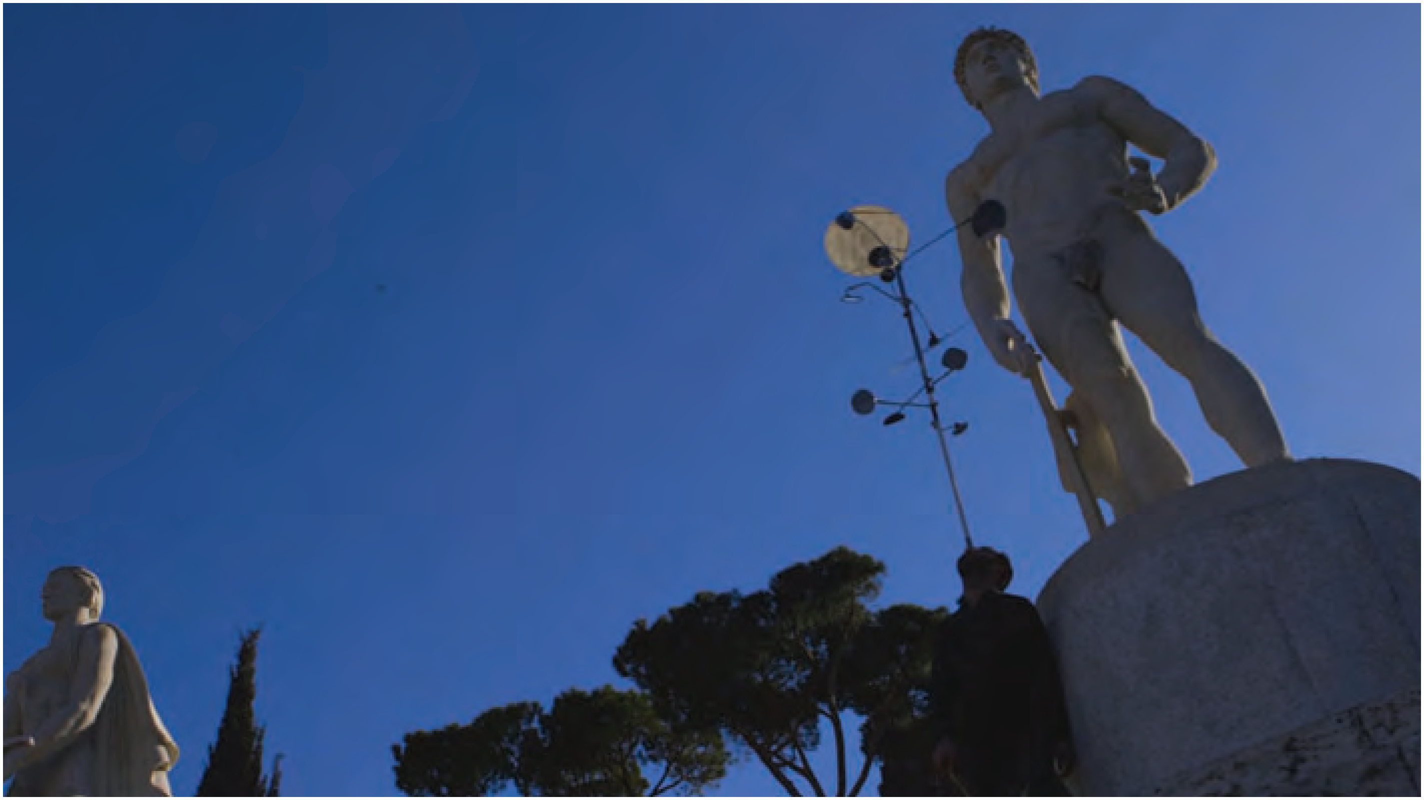
변화시킨다
OTHER

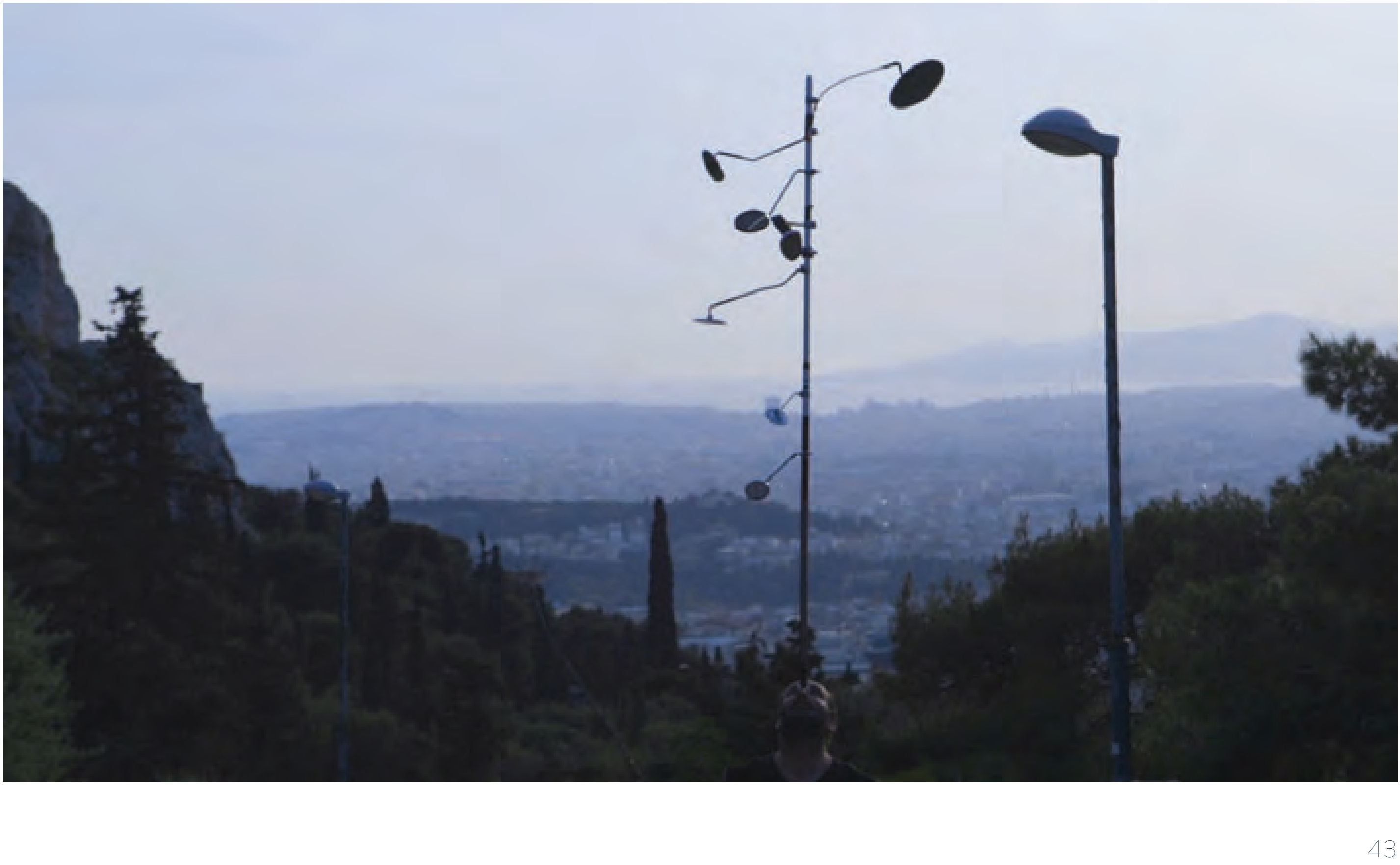
BELOW AND OPPOSITE:
Map Tracing #5 - FR 2017
355.5 x 394.5 cm
copper pipe

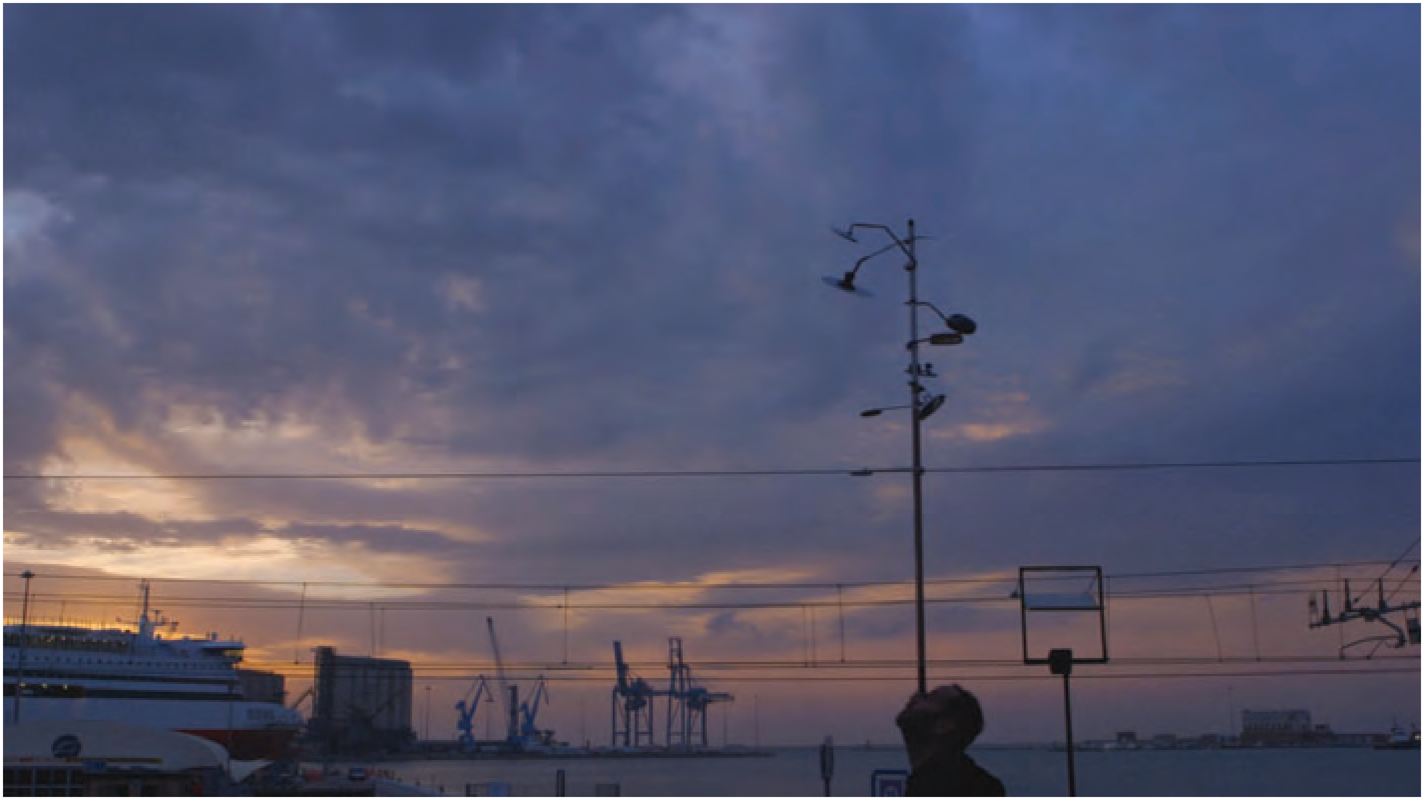


_HIWA K



PAGES 42–47:
Pre-Image (Blind as the Mother Tongue) 2017
(video stills)

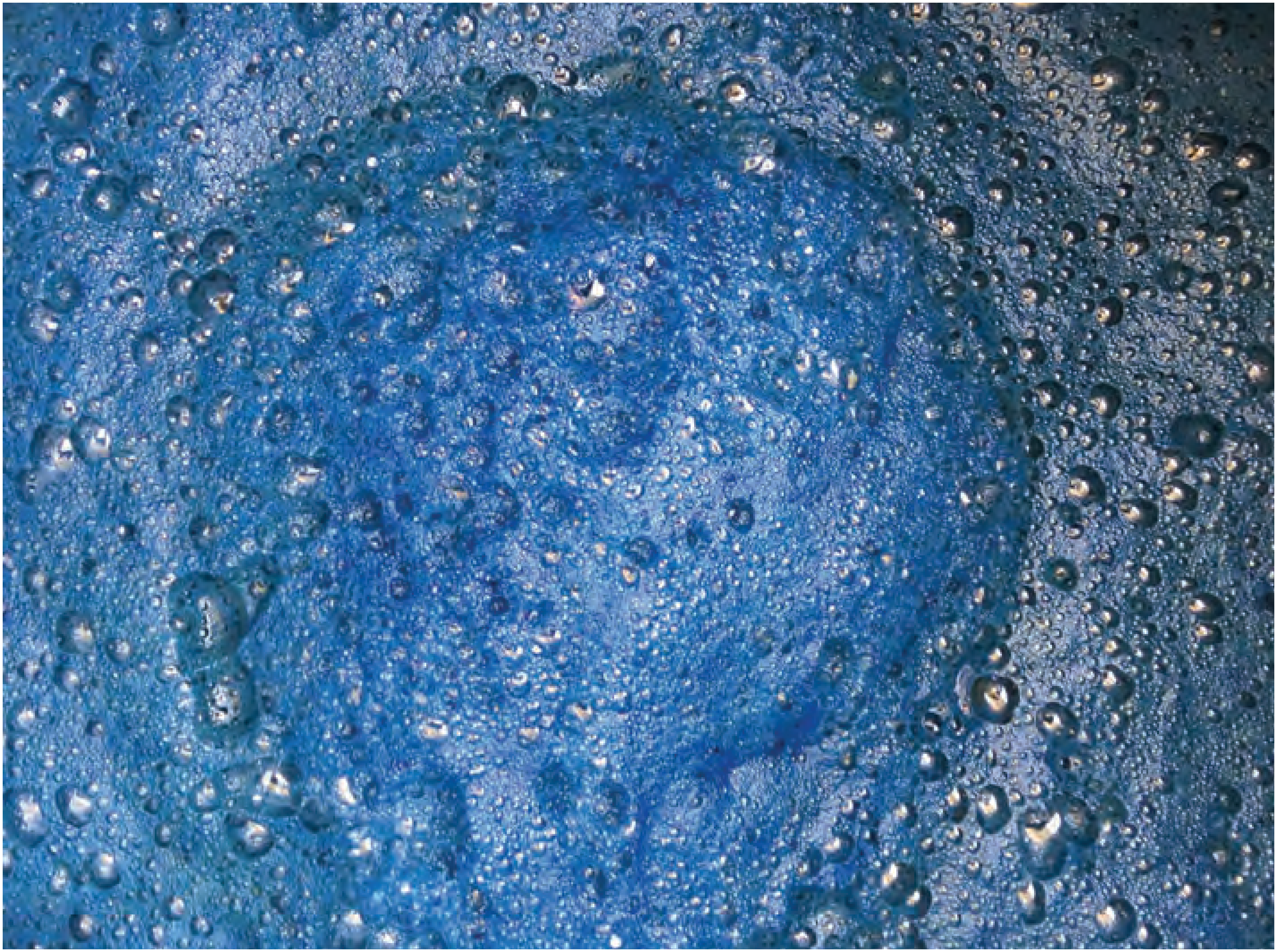


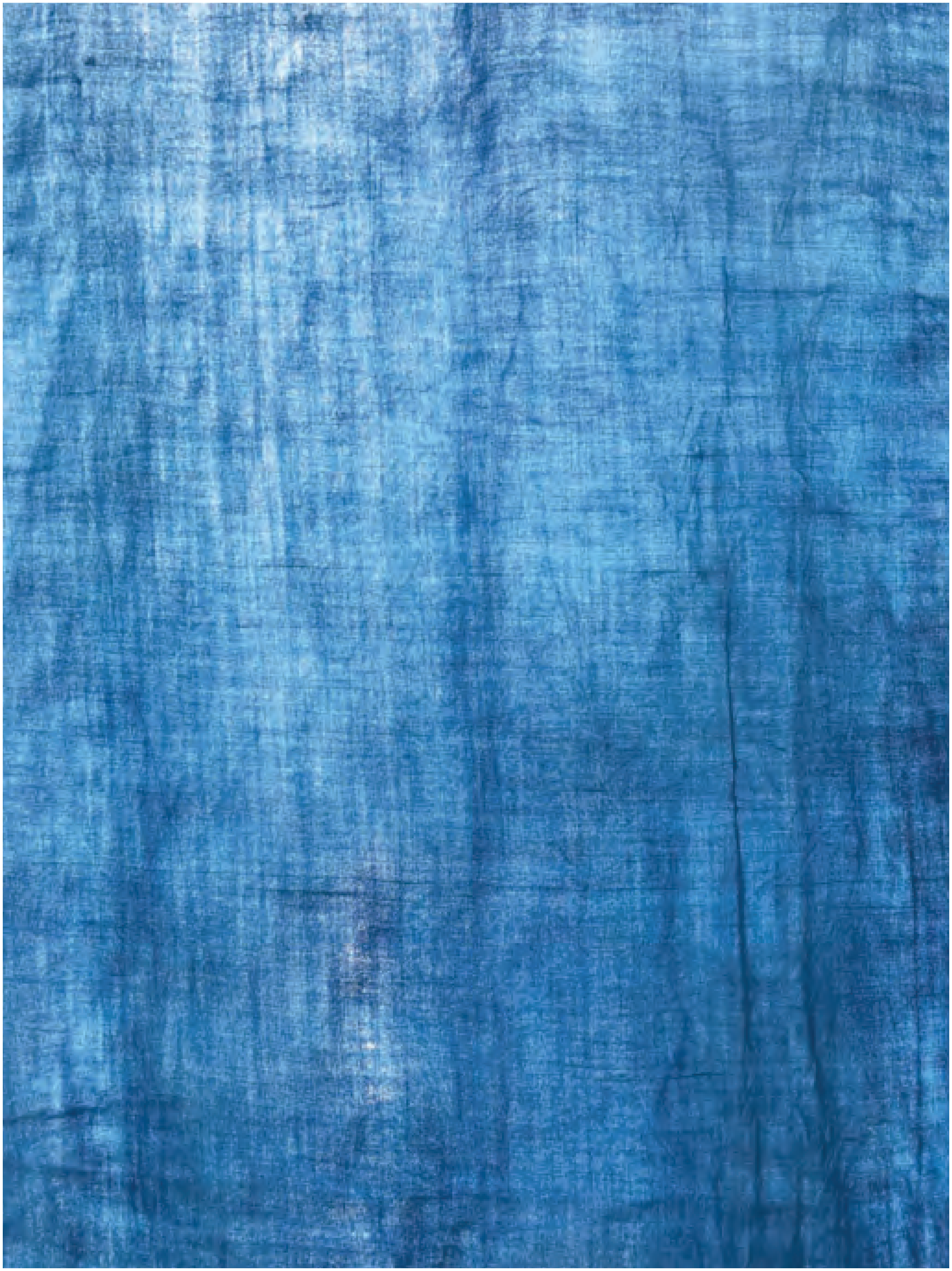


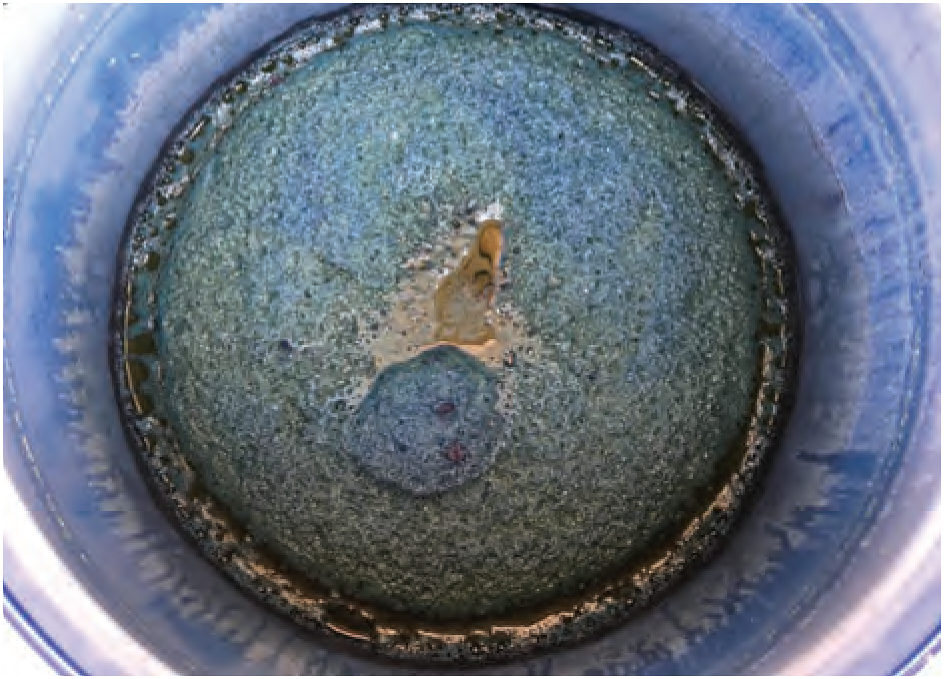
_SANGEETA SANDRASEGAR

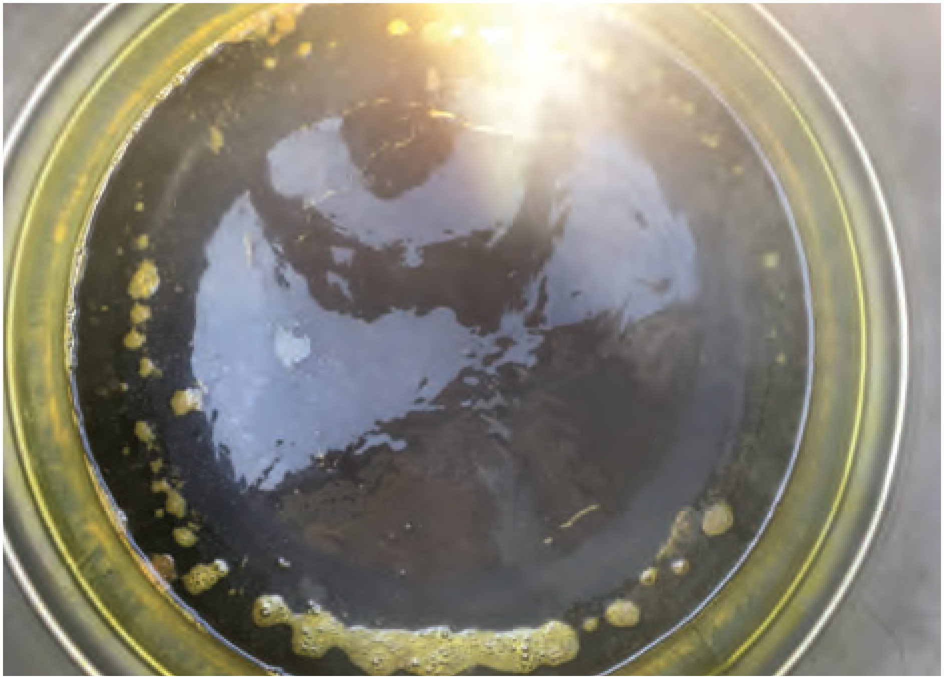
Its feet were tied with a silken thread of my own hands weaving 2010
8 panels: each 150 x 100 cm approx.
nylon organza, cotton thread, glass beads
Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney
Purchased with funds provided by the Coe and Mordant families
and Bernard Shafer in memory of Anna Shafer, 2010

PAGES 50–53:
What falls from view 2019
work in progress









_FRANCIS ALŸS: A POETRY OF FIRE

At the outset of the 21st century the most populated city on the Mexican-US border, Ciudad Juárez, in the Mexican State of Chihuahua, made the news as one of the most deadly locations in the world. Feminicides and violence towards women in general escalated in the 1990s, followed by a sudden growth in homicide rates between 2007 and 2010 related to the dispute between competing drug cartels, along with the militarisation strategy of containment adopted by the Mexican Government from 2007, in the so called `war on drugs'. In 2010, the crisis reach its peak with more than three thousand people dead in the drug wars, turning Juárez into the most violent city on earth.[1] Daily life and business activity was seriously affected, and more than two hundred thousand people (one in every six inhabitants) left the city, fleeing from violence, to the neighboring cities in the state of Texas in the USA. As a result, more than one hundred thousand houses were left empty by 2010.[2] Despite the fact that violence receded in the next years and some economic recovery took place, the situation of the city has never been stabilised. As in the majority of cases in Mexico, most of those crimes are not prosecuted, particularly, according to the press, the more than 1700 feminicides which have been committed in Ciudad Juárez in the last 25 years.[3]

Recently, throughout 2018 and 2019, signs of a new surge of violence have been populating the headlines and, according to polls, a third of the inhabitants of the city have thought about emigrating during the last year.[4]

This is the dark background against which Francis Alÿs devised two symbolic interventions in 2013. One of them was a direct commentary on the way the exodus of inhabitants had left behind an array of ghost neighborhoods where houses had even been stripped of doors and windows as if in a war zone. Alÿs filmed a group of children to playing to `shoot' each other with mirrors reflecting sunlight amidst these ruins—this work was to be integrated in a long term series revolving around different children's games around the world. The second work was, instead, a walk performed by the artist himself. In *Paradox of Praxis 5: Sometimes we dream as we live & sometimes we live as we dream, Ciudad Juárez, México*, 2013, Alÿs wanders the desolated streets of downtown Ciudad Juárez kicking a burning soccer ball.[5] Like previous walks by Alÿs, the video that documents the action gives both a glimpse of the conditions of the environs of the city at night, and serves as a fable that comments on the specific situation—introducing an urban myth to a place already full of ghosts and images.

Alÿs included this work as part of a series that he had been developing since 2016, when he pushed a block of ice though the streets of Mexico City's downtown, trying to produce a fitting commentary on the conditions of living in his host country. *Paradox of Praxis I* carried a subtitle —`Sometimes Making Something Leads to Nothing.'— that worked as a conceptual script of the action, specifying the logic of a way of living that could not adjust to the western demands of economic efficiency. The script of *Paradox of Praxis 5* was, instead, an attempt to specify the role of art and fantasy in relation to a moment of social collapse. In that regard, Alÿs found inspiration in the same way that Orhan Pamuk reflects on a poet's ability to live catastrophic times `as if they were a dream' while staying `partially blind' to the actual events.[6] To a great extent, Alÿs's intention in this walk was to reflect on the despair of a historical moment when `ethics and aesthetics of evil' prevailed[7], making it impossible to attest to the realities of horror as if it were just fiction. Such was the scale of social disintegration that violence had brought on Ciudad Juárez, that it was difficult to imagine how art could both sidestep reproducing the pure sensationalism of the tabloid press and `bring about an alternative way of thinking'.[8]

And yet, the work by Alÿs seems to suggest that, even in times of confusion and despair, there is a need to produce a form of poetic engagement with the situation, no matter how abstract and symbolic this may be.

Cuauhtémoc Medina

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1 Pablo del Llano, `Ciudad Juárez, Paz entre cadáveres', *El País*, Madrid, 7 December 2013. URL: https://elpais.com/internacional/2013/12/06/actualidad/1386331573_929940.html

2 Carlos coria, `Más de 200 mil personas abandonan la frontera de Chihuahua por violencia', *Excelsior*, 19 April 2012. URL: https://www.excelsior.com.mx/2012/04/19/nacional/827949

3 `En 25 años van 1,779 feminicidios en Ciudad Juárez', *El Heraldo de Mëxico*, Febrero 15, 2018. URL: https://heraldodemexico.com.mx/estados/en-25-anos-van-1775-feminicidios-en-ciudad-juarez/

4 `La violencia en Ciudad Juárez alimenta el temor a un estallido como el que ya se sufrió en 2010', *Sin embargo*, 1 August 2018, https://www.sinembargo.mx/10-08-2018/3455199

5 Unbeknownst to the artist, Indonesian kids play with a fireball soaked in kerosene named Sepak Bola Api (see: Joel Harvey, `Sepak bola Api: Playing Football with Fire', in *the Versed*, 22 September 2017. URL: https://www.theversed.com/72529/sepak-bola-api-playing-football-with-fire/#.ptuGWf8Fqn

6 In his published notes, Alÿs transcribes the following quote attributed to Pamuk: `The question was: when a catastrophe is occurring in the world, to what extent can the poet partially stay blind. The poet capable of such abstraction can only live the events as if they were a dream. There lies all the difficulty of the poet's task'. (Francis Alÿs, *Ciudad Juárez projects*, London: Francis Alÿs & David Zwirner Books, 2016, p. 22. I have not been able to identify the exact location of Pamuk´s quote in his books.

7 Ibid., p. 6.

8 Ibid., p. 26.

_*IMPLOSION*
A CONVERSATION

Annika Capelán Köhler (ACK): I just read an interesting interview between some scholars in the social sciences who, among other things, talk about our times as a 'strange moment' when *change* is generally thought of as necessary, even urgent, while also often considered impossible, and at the same time unavoidable. In the same breath, they mention the notion of 'explosion'—explosion of hegemonic powers and of big historical narratives. You, instead, have entitled your series of paintings *Implosion*. Do you connect your work to ideas about change?

Carlos Capelán (CC): It's true that in our times, dynamic notions like explosion, expansion, and movement, are frequently used to describe changes. At the same time, when structural changes tend to be *inward* collapses, we get the sensation that an implosion follows other rhythms which we sometimes perceive as almost mute. Let's say that rather than wanting to comment on ideas of change, I am interested in the correlations of both these dynamics (implosion/explosion) as narratives, while making an emphasis on implosion.

ACK: So what does the dynamic of implosion do for, in and to your work?

CC: I have during many years used a combination of objects, installations, actions, performances, texts, etc. in my work. In this particular series of paintings, the idea of implosion allows me to examine the structure of implosion and I can do it slowly, almost silently. Implosion suggests non-linear relations, that are also abstract and complex, and which do not seem to be very visible. When I began to consider these ideas I arrived at the question of whether it is possible to deal with complexity by using only a few tools from easel painting.

Allow me to quickly expose the formal procedures by which the works are structured: the space of the canvas is subdivided into diverse geometrical areas avoiding a centric perspective; some areas are precise while others seem arbitrary; the colour seems to be moving in one direction and the drawing in another; the textures of the background surface resemble textiles; the figuration appears as a floating signifier in two ways: one 'expressionist' or 'personal', and another 'naturalist'—both with variations in scales, rhythms and repetitions, while the self-portrait emerges as space and fragmentation, or as mere collection. The paintings point towards diverse moments and instances of the implosion. In one of them implosion and explosion occur simultaneously.

The intention is not to explain, nor to descant or suggest coherent conclusions but, like I said, rather to propose the compexity of a gaze through simple gestures. In a way, it might eventually point towards the difference between technique and technology.

ACK: Hmm ... I see that you look for an understanding of complexity, then, not as something that is inherent in the tools but that comes with their use. There are several points in what you say that I could pull into my own research and also link them to ongoing debates in social anthropology. For one, there is a longstanding interest in 'messy methods', meaning more or less that as the world is non-coherent, to try to describe it as coherent is actually to mess it up further. There is something which inhabits the space between coherence and non-coherence. But to study *that*, is less about grasping and representing a predefined order or structure and more about shaping, giving form, generating versions, variations or—actually—more or less tangible traces.

CC: I wouldn't say that the methods used in the arts are `messy' (although I think that the Art World in general is a messy business). But, I do acknowledge that the adjective `messy' appears appropriate for describing some of the rigid coherences of certain academic methods. In any case, for a coherence with and within the project which I have at hand here at the TarraWarra Museum of Art, the process and its results need to respond to that which I understand is of primary interest: the traces of an implosion. And yes, frankly speaking—and this is something that also seems to occur in academic agreements—it is simply another exercise of representation. By the way, what anthropological tools would you use to represent implosion?

ACK: I am not sure I would try to represent implosion in my work. I might use it as a tool for thinking and working. Of course, representation is a theme that has been much discussed in anthropology. When we think representations as social facts—facts that act upon the world—what we might actually be doing as researchers is to re-present—to make present again. Then it's all about giving form to versions. That, I have done in my work, not in terms of implosion, but rather as quasi-centripetal (centre-seeking) movements. Often, when we think of implosion we think of failure and collapse, but I sense that you have a more constructive attitude towards it, no?

Lund, Sweden
April 2019

_SIMRYN GILL: ON THE VERGE

Prior to taking up photography, Simryn Gill made eloquent and ephemeral sculptural incursions into the landscape. With determination and focus, she cut single lines of printed text, sentences from cook books, theoretical texts and novels and placed them discretely onto branches, tree trunks and vines. Like another layer of nature, Gill wove language into botany—so attuned to the forms was she—they almost seemed like reasonable additions, even improvements. Happily, birds, insects and rain carried off her embellishments. Wanting to contain these installations before they fell prey to nature, Gill reached out to photography for its ability to hold the moment; and black and white film for its ability to hold down time through extremely long exposures. In this series *Forest*, 1996–1998, Gill chose not just any landscape—not the popular manicured tropical gardens of Singapore where she was living—but the marginal, unkempt spaces where nothing in particular was planted, where nature arose and reclaimed the verge.

Gill is drawn to places of change and decay, in the way that plants in the tropics quickly invade and transform abandoned buildings and the way that termites, animals and old men strip out what is valuable, such as copper, taps and sheets of glass. Over many years Gill returns to sites around her family home in Port Dickson, Malaysia, building knowledge through photographs, rubbings and monotype prints.

Gill's installation consists in four ways of gathering the world, each progressing in complexity and experimentation, commencing with her most elemental way of making art: scouring the beach and collecting. With a similar lightness of touch, but incrementally removed from physical collecting, Gill photographs the corridors and architraves of a dilapidated building. Thirdly, with increasing bodily engagement on her hands and knees, Gill inks large sections of mosaic tiles from the dance floor of the same abandoned hotel, to make large 4-colour monotype prints. In her sculptural works, there is an escalation of complexity and experimentation: she searches the landscape around her family home for termite mounds. Through a disciplined and curious process Gill transforms their leavings into imperfect geometric forms. In each of these four processes, from gathering through to sculpture, Gill makes a quiet but determined enquiry of the world around the question—what it is to be human alongside nature.

While there is something child-like in going for long walks and collecting treasures (something she did into adulthood with her father, an amateur photographer), Gill invents rules to systematise her collecting. For example, here she has collected all objects found on the beach, in the class of bricks misshaped over time and in various ways, through rolling on the ocean floor. It is as if comfort can be found in applying a classification to debris littering the ocean and beach.

Without any utility now, these wistful objects have lost their entitlement to the platonic form of the brick. The wondrous variety of their soft earth tones is determined by the clays of their place of origin. Gill arranges them in an intuitive fashion in immaculate pink-toned teak vitrines—not unlike a natural history museum—but without the underlying armature of science. Alongside the bricks and in a similar variety of earth colours, are clusters of cubes fashioned with soil extracted from termite mounds. The subject of these vitrines could be the cycle economy, where the original purpose of human and insect endeavour has been replaced by the curious purpose of art making.

In the tropics, beneath the ground is a parallel universe of termites constantly undermining the human structures perched above. Not even the relentless tropical rain destroys termite mounds. Something in their saliva binds with wood pulp and grains of sand to render their architecture almost invincible: the mounds often outlive the colonies that built them. Above ground, termites provoke hysterical outbursts from the community, tempered only by application of DDT to roots, stumps and the foundations of buildings.

Often drawn to insects in her work, Gill has used termite soil in other series. She harvests the soil from mounds, which is then ground, sifted and washed. Here, the clay is formed into imprecise cubes with exposed thumb and fingerprints. Experimental in its gathering and manual in their making, their outcome as cubes is strangely contradictory.

On the walls Gill has paired photographs and monotype prints, each taken from a derelict hotel located on the beach in the south of Malaysia. She remembers that the hotel had a rather prurient, risqué air as the playground of the hip English-speaking set in the 1970s. It was abandoned a decade later following failed property speculation.

The photographs are a skilled and passive form of collecting and the monotypes, also a form of collecting, are an exacting physical engagement with the site. Both prints and photographs excite a desire for order, repetition and control. What is oppressively uniform and dull in hotel corridors becomes thrillingly evocative of one point perspective against the playful possibilities of dilapidation, uneven light and encroaching nature.

The prints look three dimensional due to the happy misregistration of hand printing four colours. Her selection of colour is partly determined by the inks available yet her combinations look unfamiliar. Gill's paring of closely toned muted colours with contrasting closely toned bright colours is strident and probably also influenced by childhood memories of annual shopping trips to Kuala Lumpur for fabrics, and more recent observations recorded in hundreds of iPhone photographs of how people curate the colour they wear. Colour combinations are something one feels is right or wrong, even if it is culturally determined.

Recently Gill mentioned to me that her highly competent mother, possibly frustrated with home duties, would, as part of a range of self-imposed civic duties, tame the verges in Port Dickson by planting gardens.[1] In a related but different exercise, Gill brings the verge from the landscape into the gallery.

Naomi Cass

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[1] I thank Simryn Gill for two long conversations about this work, on April 2 and 29, 2019.

_SHILPA GUPTA: POETRY AT THE BORDERLINES

Since the beginning of her professional career at the end of the twentieth century, Shilpa Gupta has insistently probed the mechanisms of control that underlie the everyday behaviours of human collectives. As her work suggests, these mechanisms pervade all aspects of personal and political activity in the hyper-mediatised contemporary. They are embodied in subtle and personal forms such as words of endearment, declarations of emotional affinity and articles of faith, and in more politically overt manifestations including national credos, legislative instruments and the coercive apparatus of state and corporate actors. Gently yet tenaciously, Gupta's work reveals that these mechanisms have been infused into our behaviours to the extent of complete naturalisation. In many instances, we have been conditioned to accept them as self-evidently true; we have ceased to marvel at their extraordinary influence or shrink from the violence they portend.

Several times since 2005, Gupta's work has revisited the theme of borders and their implications on human behaviour. These works gesture towards a historical continuum stretching from the age of colonial empires, through struggles of independence and Cold War polarisation, and on to the current situation where many parts of the world are under the spell of toxic nationalisms fuelled by orchestrated insecurity. They remind us that the seemingly continuous lines on maps that define belonging are mere abstractions of relatively recent origin, and that the variously coloured blocks denoting national domains on the globe often have little congruence with lived histories as little as a century ago. Gupta's border-based works also speak of the tentative and provisional nature of many boundary lines, subject as they are to processes of reimagination, claims and counter-claims and struggles for recognition.

Two major developments in contemporary visual practice have important resonances in Gupta's work. She has been attentive to the 'linguistic turn' in contemporary art, where the written word is made to traverse commonplace signification to engage in an excavation of symbolic orders, where innocuous statements are shown to underpin entrenched attitudes. Bordering on poetry and song, Gupta has presented various pronouncements issued to the world at large: engraved on pieces of soap or of artificial stone, printed on plastic tape, assembled in split-flap displays, or etched across weary skies in neon. These aphoristic statements such as the one presented here, are Gupta's free-verse eulogies to the contemporary world, dirges for a stillborn prospect of respect, connection and community. The second 'turn' visible in Gupta's art is the cartographic one. Here she is one of a constellation of artists who have probed the limits of planar or three-dimensional abstractions of four-dimensional lived experience: among others, Gupta's Indian contemporaries N.S. Harsha and Jitish Kallat, as well as artists elsewhere in Asia including Qiu Anxiong (China), Yanagi Yukinori (Japan) and Rudi Mantofani (Indonesia), have all sustained a critical interest in maps, flags and national symbols, using manipulations of these forms to interrogate seeming certitudes around belonging, and passionate espousals of patriotism and nationalist sentiment. Gupta's *Map Tracings*, 'bent' outline maps of metal tubing twisted to form three-dimensional linear sculptures, render the familiar outlines of nation-states into peculiar forms, using shadow and illusion across architectural space to produce an oscillation between 'correct' and 'incorrect' detail, between recognition and perplexity. Her *Map Tracing #7 – AU*, 2019 exhibited here is especially poignant in that it uses a map of Australia, a settler colony, where questions of nationhood, sovereignty and belonging are especially cruelled by the history of occupation and dispossession visited on Indigenous populations since the end of the eighteenth century.

As Daniel Boyd's 2005 painting *Treasure Island* demonstrates, the nature of colonial survey, mapping and occupation leading to the present-day administrative division of this island-continent elides the complex history of language groups and land-stewardship preceding colonisation.[1] What then does it mean for an artist from postcolonial Bombay/Mumbai, India, to engage with cartographic manipulation of a land whose original inhabitants continue to struggle against deeply entrenched disadvantage and prejudice?

Perhaps *Map Tracing #7 – AU* resonates in a way quite distinct to similar works Gupta has executed in France or the Netherlands. In the present instance, axial torsion gestures towards the literally warped and tortuous relations of belonging on (and *belonging to*) the land in contemporary Australia.

Another of Gupta's preoccupations has to do with shared spaces of humanity that are in need of constant reiteration and defence. Whether in her home country with its history of politically engineered sectarian violence, or elsewhere in the world where religious, racial and linguistic differences have been amplified into flashpoints, Gupta's work issues gentle reminders of what fundamentally unites us as humans.[2] Using a diverse vocabulary that originates in conceptual art and continues into post-object sculpture, Gupta probes the limits of what art experience can be, often producing work whose very destiny is dematerialisation and disappearance.

Engraved into slabs of artificial stone that is then shattered into hundreds of fist-sized fragments, the simple sentence—rendered in English, Hindi, Arabic and Chinese—reads, 'The markings we have made on this land have increased the distance so much.' Visitors are invited to take a piece home with them. Over the period of the exhibition, the work will disperse in its fragmentation.[3] There is a melancholy beauty to the process of this work's disappearance: the polished museum floor left behind can scarcely hide the enduring sense of communities divided, of fence-lines and political boundaries premised on ownership of the land and its resources and reinforced through legislative apparatus that continue to amplify distancing. The quiet voice of Gupta's disappearing work seeks to leave behind echoes that resonate in the poisonous environment of sectarian and nationalist aggression, the global refugee crisis, and in First Nations' struggles for recognition in Australia and elsewhere.

Chaitanya Sambrani

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[1] Born in Cairns, Queensland and educated in Canberra, Boyd is a descendant of the Kudjla/Gangalu/Kuku Yalanji/Jagara/Wangerriburra and Bandjalung peoples. His *Treasure Island* is based on David R. Horton's *Map of Aboriginal Australia* documenting over 300 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language groups at the end of the eighteenth century. The painting can be seen at https://artsearch.nga.gov.au/detail.cfm?irn=149628 (last accessed 15 April 2019).

[2] Previous works of this nature include a similar stone-engraved work exhibited in Korea in 2017 and the seaside installations *I live under your sky too* (2004 and 2013), and *We change each other* (Carter Road, Mumbai, 2013 and 2018), with the phrase repeated in English, Hindi and Urdu neon words that lit up one after another, facing the Arabian Sea. Several of Gupta's light-based works can be seen at https://shilpagupta.com/pages/series/07lightseries_outdoor.htm (last accessed 15 April 2019).

[3] Gupta has used this strategy of dispersion/distribution in the past, notably in her 2008-09 work *Threat*, where that word was embossed into cakes of bathing soap assembled in a large cuboid on the gallery floor. The 'threat' disappeared gradually as visitors took a cake of soap home (and it would disappear again if each cake of soap was put to its intended use).

_AGAINST REPRESENTATION: HIWA K'S *PRE-IMAGE (BLIND AS THE MOTHER TONGUE)*

Pre-Image: Blind as the Mother Tongue, 2017, is one of the central works for understanding Hiwa K's practice, his artistic stance, and his concept of image and its reflection. Representations are never fixed nor definitive for the artist but are rather a by-product of a certain process or spontaneous reaction. The artist tells through the film, the story of his dangerous pedestrian journey from his native Iraqi Kurdistan, across countries and seas, with illegal border crossings and his eventual arrival to continental Europe. The narrative constructs his persona—a myth of a nomadic artist—and builds with stories and confessions, only to be then flipped and questioned. The peregrination, with the company of other refugees and their smugglers, was the route from the unbearable to the unknown. From the already seen to the yet unseen. From his relationship with his mother and family, to this chosen singularity. He walked and walked, and walked, seeing death, experiencing sleep deprivation, cold and hunger. He tried to escape his country a number of times and it was finally achieved, but somewhat never completed. One can say that his overall oeuvre relates to this wobbling, uncertain condition, of arriving rather than settling, as if the difficult decision to lose people and leave places has never been compensated by any form of gain. The work reveals both facts and affects, tracing the process of losing the bonds with loved ones and a sense of grounding. He navigates not only in actual spaces, but also between their imagery and already existing ways of seeing and interpreting.

In making this film, Hiwa walked again a part of his original path, equipped with a self-made navigation tool comprised of a number of mirrors attached to a pole. His coming, his arriving, is made out of what he sees in the mirrors. In this way, the artist does not see the world, but its reflections, unavoidably fragmented and momentary. Reflected image is for him a tool to navigate in diverse cultural contexts without being immersed in them. For this reason he does not belong anywhere and does not identify himself either with where he came from or where he has arrived. It is rather a mere series of discontinuous interactions between what he came with and his ever changing cultural surroundings. In this work, similar to other films he has made before, we are watching documentation of a performance rather than a film itself. In a sense, these mesmerising images of his walk let us only see him and not see what he sees. His experience is impossible to represent and is untranslatable.

War is the very origin and bonding material of Hiwa K's art, because it is war that forced him to undertake his drastic journey on foot to Europe, full of dramatic shifts. The artist leads us from prisons and shelters, through ruins of bombarded cities, to Europe, with all its material heritage and problematics of the public space. Equipped with the tools that made him the person known today as Hiwa K, his unique artistic tactics are based on creating form using the practices and materials of everyday life, childhood memories, his upbringing, and family anecdotes. His oeuvre—a combination of autobiographical elements with things he overhears and fictional stories—sheds a new light on matters such as refugees trying to function in another culture, as well as the geopolitical conditions of human existence. Knowledge and multisensory experiences come together in these arresting, multi-layered messages.

Since his departure from Iraqi Kurdistan, Hiwa K has been immersed in the processes of a never-completed arrival in countries, institutions and infrastructures. All this, however, cannot be transformed into the home that has been lost. For this reason, he refuses to settle down because there is nowhere that would give him the same sense of grounding. By this, I do not mean the lack of a permanent address, but the overwhelming sense of being uprooted, which we can read in his short stories and the narratives included in his works. It is his own artistic vocabulary, a web woven from fragments of life: mobility, music, cooking, memories and emotions connected to stories, situations and objects. His family home and country of origin are his archive and the source of these vernacular forms. Hiwa K has taken his not-belonging as a potential opportunity. The complex language he has developed throughout the past decade is neither that of the West nor the East.

In his practice, Hiwa K sketches fault lines, discontinuities and unexpected forms between the poetic and the political. Deeply interested in geopolitics and the economy that shaped his own condition as a refugee and, eventually, the citizen of a country other than his own, he has chosen to address political matters indirectly or, as he says, to point at them not with the index finger but with a pinkie instead. Driven by doubt rather than by certainty, Hiwa K works by taking risks with situations, materials and infrastructures. He sends himself—an *artist* (a function, a role, a figure)—to complete various tasks. Stories or situations remembered, give form to the visual aspects of this practice. Jokes and word play help to create a different cognitive space that goes beyond conventional ways of thinking. Clear in his artistic ideas, he is at the same time constantly questioning his own position as ‘a refugee’ or ‘an artist’ while escaping definitions and categorisations.

Through his practice, Hiwa K is reinventing the visual vocabulary of contemporary art by employing informal, unruled cognition—rather than using a structurally disciplined approach—which pushes us away from conventional ways of thinking, whether it be geopolitics, economy, materiality, war, or politics. These traits make Hiwa K someone who, also for me personally, puts our expectations and assumptions into question; who revises our convictions about what art is, how it is made and what makes it important.

Aneta Szyłak

_SANGEETA SANDRASEGAR: *WHAT FALLS FROM VIEW*

At first glance, the Vista Walk seems empty. From the Museum entrance you look down its length to the large window at the other end, and through to the vineyards outside. Then you register luminous blue-green bars on the walls and floor, and their origin in fabrics hanging over five tall windows. Sangeeta Sandrasegar's *What falls from view*, 2019, screens the beautiful view and filters the light that marks the passage of days. This is a gentle, but deliberate, intervention. Deceptively simple. Sandrasegar describes it as 'a disruption of space and the viewer's position'.[1] To what end?

First, an accounting of the elements of this ephemeral interpolation. The long translucent scrims illuminating the Vista Walk comprise two overlaid fabrics, each hand-dyed by the artist: the first is silk organza, transparent, faintly rustling, a luxury fabric used for women's evening dresses and embroidery; the second is Indian cotton khadi, the hand-spun and hand-woven village cloth made famous by Mahatma Ghandi as a symbolic but also practical resistance to British Imperial rule. Organza is transparent, khadi is opaque. And their visual differences, cultural as well as physical, are crucial to *What falls from view*.[2]

Next the colours. The glorious rich blue is Indigo (*Indigofera tinctoria*) from India (from which it derives its name), but also Central and South America, which for millennia was one of the most commercially valuable of all plant dyes. Indigo's distinctive blue was eventually supplanted in commercial use by the German development of aniline dyes in the nineteenth century, and by IG Farben's synthetic blue in 1904, but it remains valued today, especially in India and Japan. Coincidentally, and as a sign of indigo's significance, it was on behalf of Bihari indigo workers that Ghandi first engaged in political action against British colonial rule in 1917.[3]

The bright yellow that partners Sandrasegar's indigo derives from the Australian native cherry (*Exocarpos cuppressiformis*), endemic in the eastern regions of the continent, and known by many names. In the Woiwurrung language of the Wurundjeri people, the traditional custodians of the land on which the Museum is located, it is known as *bali*, which seems a likely source for the common names ballart or cherry ballart. The tree was documented by the earliest European colonisers and was noted then for its many uses by Australian Aboriginal people: the sweet fruit for eating, the wood for implements such as spearthrowers.[4] Sandrasegar's use of *bali* as a dye is an innovation, however, driven by desire to speak to the ruling colours of the Yarra Valley—blue for the sky, yellow for the fields—and, with the mixing of the two, every variant of green offering. As the artist describes, the views through each window are thereby transformed into 'abstract landscapes of that countryside'.[5]

Sandrasegar has several heartlands—Malaysia, India, London perhaps, lately Berlin—but Australia remains her homeland. And the Yarra Valley as it happens, is the long-time home of her mother's family who were originally orchardists in the district; this is also a place to which her father has on occasion retreated. But while we may see indigo as the motif of the artist's Indian heritage, and the yellow as marking this particular Australian location, these mixtures of colour have implications beyond individual families and their narratives. *What falls from view* not only continues Sandrasegar's research into Indian and Australian cultural motifs and markers, and her longstanding work with transferrals and translations, but it is also the beginning of a new cycle of works, under the general heading 'Colour is colonial', which explores how colour has played out across countries, trading networks, cultures, families, and affects.

Sandrasegar's is a material practice: it takes stuff seriously. Hence the exploration of mixed marriages between the khadi and organza, indigo and *bali*, paired in different combinations. These minglings and matchings of colour and light in *What falls from view* recapitulate first the making of the dyestuffs, then the fluxes of colour that produced the final tints. On site in the Museum, as in the bubbling dye-pots, every moment is distinct, different, momentary: the changing angles of the light falling through the scrims, the shifting colours as the sun moves across the Museum from east to west, the slight movements of the fabric as one passes by. There is an additional site-specific element: the thrumming contemplative timbre of Australian Ross Edwards's *Symphony no. 1, Da Pacem Domine*, composed in 1991, and first encountered serendipitously by Sandrasegar driving back to Melbourne from TarraWarra.[6] With this music the entire Vista Walk becomes a resonant vessel for a moving meditation: it amplifies and extends the necessary ephemerality of this work. All is in flux; all is in transition; nothing is fixed.

Sandrasegar's title for the work, *What falls from view*, tells us she knows that this work is short-lived, that it may drop away from consciousness, that there are always gaps in our vision; here, indeed, she has deliberately obscured the landscape outside from our view. In addressing the fugitive and ephemeral nature of experience, most acutely that of conquered or marginalised cultures, Sandrasegar joins a century-long riff: W. B. Yeats's much-quoted line 'Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold', from his 1919 poem 'The Second Coming', which was reprised in the title of the Nigerian author Chinua Achebe's 1958 novel, and which also recurs in accounts of the work of the distinguished Australian Indigenous writer Alexis Wright.[7] As the artist observes, '[t]o think about those places where interpretation and imagination fail allows for and/or embraces difference, illegibility, strangeness and trace'.[8]

Seen this way, *What falls from view* becomes a membrane through which light (and life) is filtered, caught for a moment. There are many layers, physical and cultural: glass, two kinds of fabric, particular colours and their histories, the Vista Walk itself, which shelters the interior of the Museum from bright light outside; and the entire Museum, which selects experiences and ideas, is a permeable vessel, constantly searching for, and filtering, what is outside, bringing it inside for consideration. Will memory retain its impression of this short-lived luminosity? For a time. For as long as we hold onto it. Even if it does finally fall from view, still once it was here, in this place, and may leave a trace.

Julie Ewington

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1 See Sangeeta Sandrasegar, original project notes, 2018.

2 The khadi was sourced in Kolkata, associated with fine hand-spun cotton for millennia. Khadi continues to be made in India, is rising in popularity, and is a significant income-earner for poor families. Sandrasegar previously used organza in *Its feet were tied with a silken thread of my own hands weaving* (2010, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia collection, Sydney).

3 For Ghandi and indigo workers, see URL: https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/indian-peasants-champaran-campaign-rights-1917, last accessed 4 May 2019. For a wide-ranging meditation on indigo, see Michael Taussig, *What Colour is the Sacred?*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009, chapter 19, 'Redeeming Indigo', pp. 141-158.

4 According to 'The Seasonal Calendar of the Wurundjeri People' by Senior Wurundjeri Elder Aunty Joy Murphy Wandin, the *bali* (cherry ballart) fruits in *Gunyang* (Kangaroo apple season), in December. Information supplied by Anthony Fitzpatrick, TarraWarra Museum of Art, April 2019. See the earliest published references to the plant in J. H. Maiden, *The useful native plants of Australia: Including Tasmania*, Sydney: Turner and Henderson, 1889, though this does not mention using it for dyeing. See also 'Aboriginal plants in the grounds of Monash University: A Guide', Monash University, School of Biological Sciences, 2010, p. 7. URL: https://www.monash.edu/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/542119/Guide-to-the-Aboriginal-Garden-Clayton-Campus.pdf, last accessed 4 May 2019.

5 Sangeeta Sandrasegar, email to author, 13 March 2019.

6 Ross Edwards's *Symphony no. 1, Da Pacem Domine*, was composed in 1991, first performed in August 1992 in Perth by the West Australian Symphony Orchestra. See URL: http://www.rossedwards.com/symphony-no-1-da-pacem-domine-1991/, last accessed 21 April 2019.

7 See Alison Ravenscroft, 'What falls from view? On re-reading Alexis Wright's *Plains of promise', Australian Literary Studies*, December 2010, vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 70-74. See also her *The Post-colonial Eye: White Australian desire and the visual field of race*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2012, especially chapter 3. *Plains of Promise*, Wright's debut novel, was published in 1997.

8 Sangeeta Sandrasegar, original project notes, 2018.

_LIST OF WORKS

**FRANCIS ALŸS
IN COLLABORATION WITH
JULIEN DEVAUX, RAFAEL ORTEGA,
ALEJANDRO MORALES AND
FÉLIX BLUME**

*Paradox of Praxis 5: Sometimes we dream
as we live & sometimes we live as we dream
Ciudad Juárez, México* 2013
video, colour, sound
video duration 00:07:49
dimensions vary with installation
Courtesy of the artist and David Zwirner

CARLOS CAPELÁN

A Drop of Water 2018
from the *Implosion* series
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
132 x 168 cm

Map of the World (Thursday) 2018
from the *Implosion* series
synthetic polymer paint on paper
180 x 150 cm

Completely Solid Object (Living Room) 2019
from the *Implosion* series
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
132 x 179 cm

Extended Family (Arrival) 2019
from the *Implosion* series
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
132 x 168 cm

Fling (Implosion) 2019
from the *Implosion* series
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
200 x 265 cm

*I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate
(External Love)* 2019
from the *Implosion* series
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
200 x 290 cm

Self Portrait as a Museum 2019
from the *Implosion* series
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
147 x 202 cm

All works courtesy of the artist

SIMRYN GILL

Domino Theory 2014
9 wooden and glass vitrines, cubes made
from termite clays, collected brick and
tiles from the sea
dimensions variable

Passing Through 2017–ongoing
monotype prints and c-type photographs
each approximately 195 x 105 cm

All works courtesy of the artist;
Jhaveri Contemporary, Mumbai;
Tracy Williams Ltd, New York and
Utopia Art, Sydney

SHILPA GUPTA

Map Tracing #7 – AU 2019
copper pipe
183 x 183 cm

*The markings we have made on this land
have increased the distance so much* 2019
engraving on concrete, interactive installation
420 x 280 x 5 cm

All works courtesy of the artist and
GALLERIA CONTINUA, San Gimignano,
Beijing, Les Moulins, Habana

HIWA K

Pre-Image (Blind as the Mother Tongue) 2017
single-channel HD video, 16:9, colour,
sound (with English language)
video duration 00:17:40
ed. 5 + 2AP
Coproduced by Open-Vizor, Abbas Nokhesteh
Courtesy of the artist and KOW, Berlin

SANGEETA SANDRASEGAR

What falls from view 2019
hand-dyed khadi and silk
5 panels: each approximately 520 x 90 cm
dye studio: Heather Thomas
sound component: *Symphony No. 1 'Da Pacem
Domine'* (1991), composed by Ross Edwards
(APRA), published by BMG AM Pty Ltd.
Performed by the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra
conducted by Richard Mills, Adelaide Town Hall,
2002. Sound recording by ABC Classics.

Courtesy of the artist

All measurements are height before width before depth.

_BIOGRAPHIES

FRANCIS ALŸS

Born in 1959 in Antwerp, Belgium, Francis Alÿs originally trained as an architect. He moved to Mexico City in 1986, where he continues to live and work, and it was the confrontation with issues of urbanisation and social unrest in his new country of adoption that inspired his decision to become a visual artist.

In 2017, the artist unveiled new work at the Iraqi Pavilion at the 57th Venice Biennale, resulting from his trips to the country. In 2015, a major solo museum exhibition, *A Story of Negotiation*, opened at the Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City. The show travelled to the Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (MALBA) - Fundación Costantini, Buenos Aires; Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de la Habana, Havana; and Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. In 2014, Alÿs's video *REEL-UNREEL*, which was produced in 2012 for documenta 13, was presented at Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Donna Regina Napoli, Naples, and travelled to the Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw. Alÿs's work was also the subject of a major survey from 2010 to 2011, *A Story of Deception*, which was on view at Tate Modern, London; Wiels Centre d'Art Contemporain, Brussels; and The Museum of Modern Art, New York and MoMA PS1, Long Island City, New York.

The artist's work was also featured in solo exhibitions at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami; Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai, both 2018; Secession, Vienna, 2016; Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo (travelled to the Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art), both 2013; Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, 2010; The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, 2008; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, 2007; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC, 2006; and Portikus, Frankfurt, 2006.

Francis Alÿs is represented by David Zwirner.

CARLOS CAPELÁN

Born in 1948 in Montevideo, Uruguay, Carlos Capelán is a resident of different places at the same time (Sweden, Costa Rica, Norway, Santiago de Compostela or Montevideo), with long, regular stays in diverse countries. Capelán belongs to what has been denominated `post-conceptualist artists', working with idea structures and insisting on the material and formal diversity of their approaches. His work operates from the language of representation and tends to allude to category systems and identitary questions, whether they are cultural, social or, even, of the artist himself and `his' art.

Capelán has participated, among others, in the biennials of Gwangju, South Korea; Johannesburg, South Africa; SITE Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA; Auckland, New Zealand; São Paulo and MERCOSUR, Brazil; Bienal del Barro, Venezuela; Bienal de Arte Paiz, Guatemala; and Venice, Italy. He has been awarded the prize of the Third Havana Biennial and the Guggenheim Fellowship, among others. From 2000–2006 he was a Professor at the Art Academy in Bergen, Norway.

Among those who have written on his work are Gerardo Mosquera, Thomas McEvilley, Paulo Herkenhof, Ticio escobar, Virginia Pérez-Ratton, Carla Stellweg, Catherine David, Fernando Castro Flórez, Sune Nordgren, Jonathan Friedman, Nikos Papastergiadis, Octavio Zaya and Gavin Jantjes.

SIMRYN GILL

Simryn Gill was born in Singapore in 1959 and currently lives and works in Sydney. Her working methods include making collections, photographing, drawing, writing, making and modifying objects. She works with simple materials, often collected from her vicinity or generally available. Her processes can be similarly direct and ordinary. Her works often combine subtle crafting and repetitive labour.

Selected recent solo exhibitions have been held at Jhaveri Contemporary, Mumbai, India, 2019; Kohta, Helsinki, Finland, 2018; Lund Konsthall, Sweden, 2017; Tracy Williams Ltd, New York, USA, 2015; NTU Centre for Contemporary Art, Singapore, 2015; and in 2013 she presented *Here art grows on trees* for the Australian Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale, Italy.

She has participated in many group exhibitions, including *Modern Nature*, Drawing Room, London, UK, 2019; *Home is a Foreign Place: Recent Acquisitions in Context*, The Met Breuer: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA; Dhaka Art Summit, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 2018; 21st Biennale of Sydney, Australia, 2018; *Minimalism: Space. Light. Object.*, National Gallery Singapore, Singapore, 2018; *A Temporary Futures Institute*, M HKA, Antwerp, Belgium, 2017; *The documentary take*, Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne, Australia, 2016; *Storylines: Contemporary Art at the Guggenheim*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA, 2015; *Apparitions: Frottages and Rubbings from 1860 to Now*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, USA, 2015; documenta (13), 2012; and documenta (12), 2007, both Kassel, Germany.

Simryn Gill is represented by Jhaveri Contemporary, Mumbai; Tracy Williams Ltd, New York; and Utopia Art, Sydney.

SHILPA GUPTA

Shilpa Gupta was born in 1976 in Mumbai, India where she currently lives and works. She studied sculpture at the Sir J. J. School of Fine Arts from 1992 to 1997. Her media ranges across manipulated found objects, photography, video, interactive computer-based installation, and performance. Gupta's work engages with the defining power of social and psychological borders on public life. Her work makes visible the aporias and incommensurabilities in the emerging national public sphere in India, which include gender and class barriers, religious differences, the power of repressive state apparatuses, and the seductions of social homogeneity and deceptive ideas of public consensus enabled by emerging mediascapes.

Recent solo exhibitions have been held at Voorlinden Museum and Gardens, Wassenaar, Netherlands, 2018; Kiosk, Ghent, Belgium; Bielefelder Kunstverein, Bielefeld, Germany; and La synagogue de Delme contemporary art center, Delme, France, 2017; and in 2015, she presented a solo project at *My East is Your West*, a two person show with Rashid Rana, at Palazzo Benzon, The Gujral Foundation, Venice.

Gupta's work has been shown in leading international institutions and museums such as the Tate Modern and Serpentine Galleries in London; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy; Daimler Contemporary, Berlin; Mori Museum, Tokyo; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and New Museum in New York; Chicago Cultural Center; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark; and Devi Art Foundation, New Delhi.

Gupta has participated in the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, Kochi, India, 2018; NGV Triennial, Melbourne, Australia, 2017; Gothenburg International Biennial for Contemporary Art, Sweden, 2017; the 8th Berlin Biennale, Germany, 2014; Sharjah Biennial 11, United Arab Emirates, 2013; The New Museum Triennial, New York, USA, 2009; 10th Biennale de Lyon, France, 2009; the 7th Gwangju Biennale, South Korea, 2008; Yokohama Triennale, Japan, 2008; Liverpool Biennale `06 curated by Gerardo Mosquera; and biennales at Auckland, Seoul, Havana, Sydney, Echigo-Tsumari and Shanghai. In 2019, she will participate in the 58th Venice Biennale curated by Ralph Rugoff.

Shilpa Gupta is represented by GALLERIA CONTINUA, San Gimignano, Beijing, Les Moulins, Habana.

HIWA K

Hiwa K was born in Kurdistan-Northern Iraq in 1975. His informal studies in his home town of Sulaymaniyah were focused on European literature and philosophy, learnt from available books translated into Arabic. After moving to Europe in 2002, Hiwa K studied music as a pupil of the Flamenco master Paco Peña in Rotterdam, and subsequently settled in Germany.

His works escape normative aesthetics but give a possibility of another vibration to vernacular forms, oral histories, modes of encounter and political situations. The repository of his references consists of stories told by family members and friends, found situations as well as everyday forms that are the products of pragmatics and necessity. He continuously critiques the art education system and the professionalisation of art practice, as well as the myth of the individual artist. Many of his works have a strong collective and participatory dimension, and express the concept of obtaining knowledge from everyday experience rather than doctrine.

Hiwa K has participated in various group shows including documenta 14, Kassel/Athens, 2017; the 56th Venice Biennale, Venice, 2015; Edgware Road Project, Serpentine Gallery, London, 2012; La Triennale, Intense Proximity, Paris, 2012; and Manifesta 7, Trentino–South Tyrol, Italy, 2008. A selection of recent solo shows include the New Museum, New York, USA, 2018; S.M.A.K., Ghent, Belgium, 2018; Kunstverein Hannover, Germany, 2018; and KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, 2017. Upcoming solo shows will be held at Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw, Poland and at the Van Every/Smith Galleries in North Carolina, USA. In 2016 he received the Arnold Bode Prize and the Schering Stiftung Art Award. His Chicago Boys project is continuously hosted by international institutions.

Hiwa K is represented by KOW, Berlin.

SANGEETA SANDRASEGAR

Sangeeta Sandrasegar was born in 1977 in Brisbane to Malaysian and Australian parents, and she spent her childhood growing up between both countries. In 1987 her family settled in Melbourne where she currently lives and works. Sandrasegar works from a research-based practice, building narratives in works that explore postcolonial and hybridity theory, her life in Australia and the relationship between migrant communities and homelands. Sandrasegar’s practice has consistently engaged with shadow as a formal and symbolic motif in developing these themes. The artist manipulates shadow in all forms to create images and effects that are ephemeral and powerful. Sandrasegar’s diverse application of the silhouette gives a voice to the identities of people caught on the margins of society. These fluctuating shadows and ephemeral visual effects subtly address the ambiguous status of individuals caught in complex social structures. Sandrasegar’s representation of contemporary narratives considers the beauty and brutality of the contemporary world. She weaves together theory and artistic motifs inspired by various cultures and her work demonstrates that political statements can be made within the realm of visual poetics.

Sangeeta Sandrasegar has exhibited professionally in national exhibitions of emerging art at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; the Australian Centre of Contemporary Art, Melbourne; and the Gallery of Modern Art, Queensland; in addition to major international exhibitions and biennials in New Zealand, Korea, India and the USA.

Sandrasegar has been the recipient of grants for research and production of new works and undertaken residencies in Italy, London, Spain, France, India, Malaysia and Japan. Sandrasegar has been the recipient of research grants and residencies in France, Italy, London, Spain, India, Malaysia and Japan. The artist has completed commissions for the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney; The Besen Collection, Melbourne; The Australian Tapestry Workshop, Melbourne; and the Australian War Memorial, Canberra.

_CONTRIBUTORS

Naomi Cass is a curator and writer, currently, Director, Castlemaine Art Museum Revival. Previously she was Director, Centre for Contemporary Photography, Fitzroy where she curated the work of Simryn Gill on several occasions. She is currently co-curating the exhibition *Capital*, for the Ballarat International Foto Biennale in 2019.

Julie Ewington is an independent writer, curator and broadcaster based in Sydney. From 1997–2014 she worked at Queensland Art Gallery|Gallery of Modern Art. Recent projects include *The Sculpture of Bronwyn Oliver* for TarraWarra Museum of Art, 2017, and *The Housing Question* for Penrith Regional Gallery and Lewers Bequest, 2019.

Annika Capelán Köhler is a postdoc researcher in Social Anthropology. She received her PhD at Lund University in 2017 and has done extended ethnographic research, among other things, on artistic practices in South and Central America, and in Europe.

Victoria Lynn is Director, TarraWarra Museum of Art and author of over 80 catalogue essays and three books. She has curated major exhibitions over her 30 year career, including previous TarraWarra Internationals *All that is solid…*, 2017; with Amelia Barikin, *Pierre Huyghe*, 2015; and *Animate/Inanimate*, 2013; the Adelaide Festival's Adelaide International 2010 and 2012; *The Trickster*, South Korea, 2010; and 3rd Auckland Triennial, New Zealand, 2007.

Cuauhtémoc Medina is an art critic, curator and historian. He is currently Head Curator at MUAC museum (Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo) at the National University (UNAM) in Mexico City. In 2012, Medina was Head Curator of the *Manifesta 9* Biennial in Genk, Belgium, titled *The Deep of the Modern* and in 2019 he was Chief Curator of the 12th Shanghai Biennale: *Proregress*. He also received the Walter Hopps Award for Curatorial Achievement of the Menil Foundation in 2013.

Chaitanya Sambrani is an art historian and curator specialising in modernist and contemporary art in Asia. He is based at the Australian National University, Canberra.

Aneta Szyłak is a curator, writer and institution maker, recently responsible for NOMUS – New Art Museum in Gdansk to be open in 2020. She has worked collaboratively with Hiwa K since 2005 and recently curated his exhibition *Hiwa K: Highly Unlikely but Not Impossible* in Zachęta – National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, Poland.

IMAGE CREDITS

Front cover, p. 16, pp. 50–53, p. 71: Courtesy the artist; **endpapers, pp. 30–35:** Courtesy of the artist; Jhaveri Contemporary, Mumbai; Tracy Williams Ltd, New York; and Utopia Art, Sydney; **p. 6, pp. 24-29:** Courtesy of the artist; **p. 8, pp. 40–41, back cover:** Courtesy of the artist and GALLERIA CONTINUA, San Gimignano, Beijing, Les Moulins, Habana; **pp. 18–23:** © Francis Alÿs. Courtesy of the artist and David Zwirner; **pp. 36–39:** Courtesy of the artist and Jeju Biennale, 2017; **pp. 42–47:** Courtesy of the artist and KOW, Berlin; **p. 49:** Courtesy of the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney.

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p. 35: Chin Kok Puah;
pp. 36–39: Jeju Biennale.

FRONT COVER and OPPOSITE:

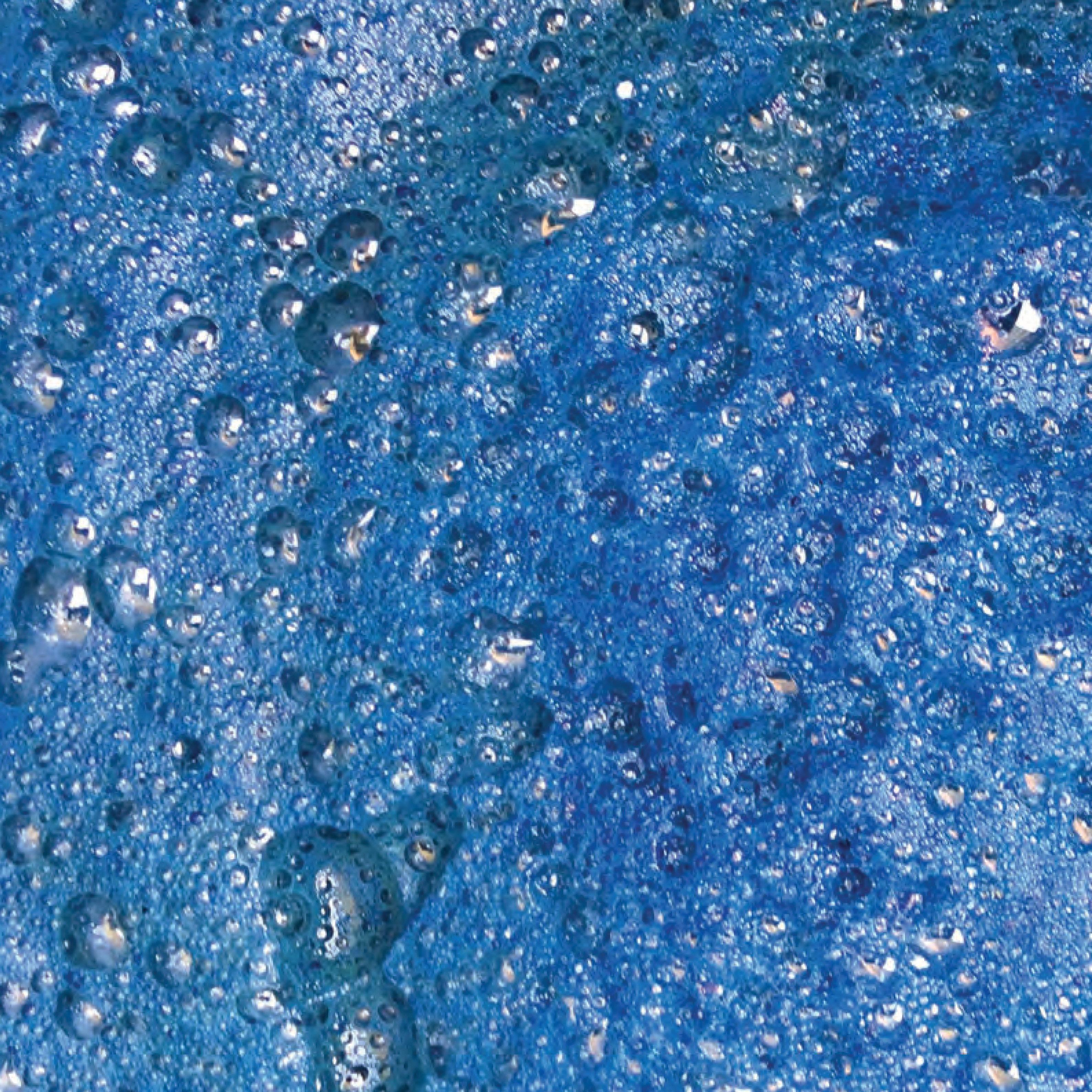
Sangeeta Sandrasegar
What falls from view 2019
work in progress

ENDPAPERS:

Simryn Gill
Domino Theory 2014 (detail)

Sangeeta Sandrasegar
What falls from view 2019
work in progress

BACK COVER:
Shilpa Gupta
Map Tracing #5 - FR 2017 (detail)



INTERNATIONAL 2019

TARRAWARRA
MUSEUM
OF ART