

Artworks

The image is not nothing (Concrete Archives)

Kumanara Boogar

Walpa (Wind) Bulga (Big) Maralinga, 2008

Kumanara Boogar made a number of works about Maralinga prior to their death.

Megan Cope

Mourning for Menindee 2020

Mourning for Menindee comes as we continue to witness ongoing ecocide to one of the “Australia’s” most important river systems, The Murray Darling Basin Authority continues to fail the nation and the connecting Traditional Owners and custodians whom have lived with and protected the river systems for centuries.

Alarmed by the enormous fish kills which saw hundreds of thousands of fresh water fish species suffocate to death from the blue-green algae blooms along with the unrecorded deaths of Emu, Cope felt compelled to make mourning ceremonial wreaths with cotton flowers and fish scales whilst listening to incompetent colonial powers struggle to accept responsibility for the ecological catastrophe.

In *Uncle Bruce Shillingworth's* words:

We just came back from the big Yaama Ngunna Baaka Corroborree on the rivers: Walgett, Brewarrina, Bourke, Wilcannia, Menindee. I took a convoy of 300 people and, on the rivers, we had about 1000 at the Corroborree each night. Those on the journey spoke to our elders in those communities; they wanted to hear from those communities. They have been voiceless for the last couple of years.

Water mismanagement, corruption and corporate greed — capitalism — in this country has killed our rivers. They have killed our communities.

We've been out in those communities: health has deteriorated; our old people are now dying; our young people have a high rate of mental health problems and suicides. The people on dialysis can't get water to flush their machines. So they've got to migrate, move on to bigger towns and cities.

A lot of the First Nation people are leaving their tribal lands — lands that they've lived on for thousands and thousands of years.

How do we bring back the 50-year-old-cod?

How do we bring back the freshwater mussels?

How do we bring back the aquatic life, the ecosystem and the animals that relied on the river and the water?

They are now completely dead: they're extinct.

This has happened over the last 100 years.

Australia needs to wake up.

I'm listening tonight. There are two things I can hear: water and profit.

Why are we selling water to make profit? That's what I'm hearing.

My people on the river, that relied on those animals for their food source for thousands of years, are now dying.

This is the second wave of genocide that's happening in my community.

So, I'm going to speak for my community. I'm going to raise a voice for those that have been voiceless over the last 230 years.

That's what frustrates me and that's what is frustrating our community.

Why are our people dying young? Why are our people suffering?

Because of the greed. The taking of our water.

Where is First Nations rights to water? We have a right to fresh water!

Put the water back in the river — not just for us — but for the environment.

Transcript from ABC Q&A October 29 2019

Phil Collins

zašto ne govorim srpski (na srpskom), 2008

[why i don't speak serbian (in serbian)]

Amidst the political turmoil in Kosovo at the time of its unilateral declaration of independence from Serbia, a number of contributors, mainly Albanian — from politicians, intellectuals and public figures to ordinary people — recount in Serbo-Croat the reasons why they no longer speak the language.

During communism in Former Yugoslavia, Kosovo had bilingual administration, in Serbian and in Albanian. In 1989, after the overthrow of its constitutional position as an autonomous province, many of the rights which Albanians had previously exercised were abolished, amongst them the right to the official use and education in their native language. Throughout the subsequent crisis and Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, Serbian language came to be perceived as the language of the oppressor. Today it is largely abandoned by the majority Albanian population.

The community's fraught relationship towards its recent history and the violence of language, resonates with the wider questions of trauma, memory, identity, breakdown, and loss.

Counter to common opinion, it is much easier to face the prospect of one's own death than to imagine the death of the symbolic universe articulated in language. And this is precisely what Collins' film is

about – the irreducible corporeality and, consequently, the finitude of language. If the viewers believe there is a message for them here it could be only a brutal one: not only your body but your language too will dry to ashes and blow away. In other words: abandon your hope of surviving in language, it doesn't assure you any transcendence; forget memory too, it is as fragile – and as mortal – as the body.

– Boris Buden, *'Is There Anything Else... Apart From Bodies And Languages?'*, 2011

Trent Crawford
Newclear 2017

Newclear (2017) is a photographic series that repurposes film footage recorded during nuclear explosions. The series reflects upon the intrinsic role photography has played in the development and proliferation of atomic weapons. Using traditional darkroom methods combined with a custom-built robotic exposure device, documented detonations are exposed to light-sensitive paper to record a timeline of events. Each vertical slice of the image captures an individual frame of the source footage – tracking from left to right – to represent a pre and post-nuclear world. Unlike their source material, the resulting images pause the inevitable disintegration into catastrophe, instead reflecting humanity's current position – a point caught between peace and annihilation.

These four images focus on the destruction of buildings during the American nuclear test Apple-II (May 5, 1955). Unlike the tests that came before it, Apple-II was uniquely formulated by the American Department of Defense to produce evocative photographic footage “useful for imparting to the American public the message of Civil Defense.” Typical American-style residences and public utilities were built on the barren Nevada test site, constructing a simulation of prototypical suburban life. Inhabited by life sized mannequins resembling the American nuclear family, this mock civilisation became colloquially known as “survival town.”

Matthew Davis
Skeins, 2018-21

Skeins is an audio work comprised of two compositions that trace points of connection and stories of two sites that are integral to the development of weapons technology in Australia.

The first of these pieces is composed from recordings of wind and the movement of trees in Woomeera Cemetery made while on a site visit with the artists Lisa Radford and Yhonnie Scarce in 2018.

The second draws from Melbourne's Living Museum of the West's audio archive of interviews with workers from the explosives and munitions factories that were situated in Maribyrnong in Melbourne's western suburbs. This work also includes selections of music from the museum's archives, site recordings and interviews with historians and museum workers about the history of the weapons development installations in the region as well as the museum's ongoing project to preserve and maintain access to these stories.

Pam Dimet
Maralinga 2015

eBay (Warren Paul)
Marcoc 2016
Kite 2016

Warren is an illustrator from Yalata in the far west of South Australia. His intricate line drawings depict local scenes, the landscape of Yalata viewed from the air, animals and vegetation, dreams and political viewpoints. His works have been distributed via the Ceduna Aboriginal Art Centre, and examples are exhibited at Tullawon Aboriginal Health Centre in Yalata.

In 2014 Warren embarked upon a major program of sculpting, pottery and line drawings, in an exploration of the images and impacts of the atomic bomb. He is working in collaboration with the Ceduna Aboriginal Arts Centre and the Nuclear Futures program to realise this work.

<http://nuclearfutures.org/artists/works/warren-ebay-paul/>

Day One. The Beginning of Whatever We Are in Now.
WARREN (EBAY) PAUL

<https://unlikely.net.au/issue-05/day-one>

fine print
READING CIRCLES 2021

Following conversations with the curators of *The image is not nothing (Concrete Archives)*, fine print magazine will present *READING CIRCLES*—a series of performative reading/speaking/listening sessions transliterating the ideas, research and artworks which sit in absentia to this exhibition yet have greatly influenced its formation. Utilising site, memory, body and language *READING CIRCLES* invites extended analysis and dialogue that speaks and attunes to the connections between research and artwork.

Artist Tino Seghal once stated that 'the objective of this work is to become the object of a discussion'. fine print too believes in the power of discussion and the structures of listening. *READING CIRCLES* explore the act of storytelling; the way text, language and sound inform the experience of art. With a collaborative spirit, fine print seeks to cultivate space for open dialogue around some of the key ideas in contemporary art practice. This dynamic and potent moment between an artist, an artwork, and the audience forms part of fine print's ongoing line of enquiry—can transcription illicit a new and necessary narrative around artmaking and meaning?

In two live sessions (15 & 17 April) to be held in the exhibition spaces of ACE Open audiences will witness newly commissioned responsive works based on the curators extensive research. Focussing on Sidney Nolan's painting *Central Desert: Atomic Test (1952–57)* writers will expand and experiment with story-telling through written, performative and discursive forms. fine print's second session will explore video artist, Nina Katchadourian's work *Accent Elimination (2005)* reimagined through the lens of the body, language and site. From fine print's online base, a third offering from Japanese collective, Chim^Pom will revisit their 2008 work *Hiroshima reconsidered* for a post-Fukushima, pandemic-present age.

Contributing artists include: Lur Alghurabi (SA), Dominic Guerrero (SA), Rosie Isaac (VIC), Melanie Pryor (SA), Iran Sanadzadeh (SA), and Marlee Silva (NSW).

Niki Hastings-McFall

Nuclear Rosary—White Sunday 1999

Whereas Mabia, Greeno, Gough, and Tekela-Smith reference 'stringed things' from within their culture, Niki Hastings-McFall (b. 1959, Samoan Father and English mother) refers to objects from several cultures, sometimes combining them, to comment on entangled histories in general and hers in particular. Hastings-McFall's concerns about cultural misunderstanding and loss lead her to search for ways to negotiate hybrid identity in order to reconcile the past and look to the future.

In the works *Nuclear Rosary series 1999*, *Breast plate Series 1999*, *The Coming of Light: Malie, Malie, Malie 2000*, and *FI/oral Series 2002*, she hybridises objects from the colonised and the coloniser cultures and demands a rethinking of history and art history from her Samoan culture's perspective so that she can navigate her present situation. Hastings-McFall intertwines Christian symbols, such as rosaries and

crosses, with Pacific items of adornment, such as leis and feathers, in such a way that the conceptual framework of the original objects is changed. Original encoded meanings are heightened because of the oppositional placement.

The rosary, *Nuclear Rosary, White Sunday*, is constructed of white luminous plastic flowers, separated with spacers of smaller beads made from her grandmother's Christian rosary (Figure 51). The large plastic flowers reference the lei, which in Polynesian culture symbolise welcome and honour.

Hastings-McFall comments on how the work has taken on added meaning.

She says:

At that stage I was really just looking at the construction and the similarity of the lei to the rosary. Not in terms of function, but just in terms of its form. But looking back you can say, "Well the function of the lei is to honour" and that's what you're doing when you're praying to your God, isn't it? The rosary series was in relation to my research about the effect of Christianity on the Pacific and the arrival of the missionaries. These luminous, glow-in-the-dark, plastic flowers were a metaphor for the nuclear issues which have plagued the Pacific for quite some time. I was equating the arrival of Christianity and the Western society or civilisation with a more recent, but just as devastating in some ways, use of the Pacific by various super powers to set off their nuclear bombs and use the Pacific as a dumping ground basically. I settled on the rosary form partly because it resembled the lei which I'd been working with for quite some time, but also because my father's family are all Catholic and that stretches right back to the first European to enter our family.

In Hastings-McFall's work, the rosary is no longer a symbol of shared belief, no longer a respected object but the symbol of values and codes inflicted on one culture by another. The structure as a rosary remains identifiable but it is encoded with new meanings through the title. The combination of the word 'nuclear' with 'rosary' demands that the viewer examine issues raised by that choice of words. 'White Sunday' is linked to worship and prayer and back to the rosary. For Hastings-McFall, the colour white carries the meanings from both cultures; it is the colour people wear to church and is the symbol of purity, spirituality and death.

Although the work is too big to wear, the body is referenced by the manner in which it is hung on the gallery wall. The works are meant to be hung at a level where the majority of viewers feel as if they are wearing them as they look at them. Scale not only overwhelms

the body physically but suggests the power and influence of Christianity and the nuclear testing on the Pacific.

From: *The Referencing of Stringed Things' of Belief by Contemporary Artists* by Therese Mulford BA, BEd USask.; MAppSc UCanberra; Grad Dip Bus Prof Mgt, UTas. https://eprints.utas.edu.au/20980/13/Mulford_whole_thesis_vol_1.pdf

Rosemary Laing

one dozen considerations, Totem 1, Emu 2013
one dozen considerations, Totem 2, Emu 2013

Earlier, I had met a former sailor who was on a naval boat with the first atomic bomb test at Monte Bello. He told me of his mates on the boat who'd watched the blast from the deck and then died too young. He had gone under deck and refused to watch. He wanted to talk about it.

In October 2013, I went to Emu to mark out the 60 years since the first tests on the Australian mainland. I needed to witness for myself how it had marked the land. Around the Totems there was sluggy green glass globules where the desert sand had melted from the blast. The land hadn't recovered.

At Totem 1, I worked with an antique British flag and installed it in-view of the brutalist monument. At Totem 2, I wrote a poem – written by Thomas Keneally in 2011 for the 20th Anniversary of the Australian Republic Movement – on the degraded bottom part of the nearby sign.

To get to Emu, we drove through the Tallaringa Conservation Park. There, in almost dreadful contrast, it was heart-breakingly beautiful. As we drove through the Park – instead of the cockroach-survival-like-vegetation around the Totems – we had been surrounded by flowers. The desert had bloomed from the rare occurrence of rain. There were no flowers anywhere near the sites I photographed.

Korpys / Löffler

Refelcting Abscence 2016

Korpys / Löffler's 8mm-camera roams through New York to prominent locations such as Times Square or Wall Street and yet returns again and again to the environs of the destroyed World Trade Center. In its place today stands the World Trade Center Site Memorial, *Reflecting Absence* with its accompanying museum. The two structures recall the tragic events of 9/11 2001 and carry a high emotional charge on account of the site they occupy. Korpys / Löffler's use of image and sound in "*Reflecting Absence*"

recalls the structure of open-form poetry: brief, often motionless, unflinching film shots and the fragmented and re-constituted piece ... two feelings ... [... two feelings ...] (1992) by Helmut Friedrich Lachenmann are interwoven with elements of background sounds to form a visual-acoustic collage. The result manifests the contradictoriness of this site of memory, to which visitors go in order to satisfy their desire to relive and comprehend the abstract events of terror. At the same time, however, there is a menacing uncertainty as to what awaits them there.

From the exhibition text by Yvonne Scheja Pool at Meyer Riegger, Karlsruhe March 12-30, 2016. www.meyer-riegger.de/en/data/exhibitions/217/pool.html

Hayley Millar Baker

A Series of Unwarranted Events 2018

A Series of Unwarranted Events portrays four stories of the Gunditjmarra people that expose realities of life during the colonisation of their Country. The European invasion of western Victoria – where Gunditjmarra Country is located – was violent, with killings and massacres of Aboriginals too many to count. Stories of skulls nailed to doorways, and rivers running red, serve both as a haunting reminder of a past unforgiveable, and as witness to the strength and resilience of the Gunditjmarra – never ceasing to submission, no matter the condition or consequence.

I have heard tales told, and some things I have seen that would form as dark a page as ever you could read in the book of history – but I thank God, I have never participated in them – If I could remedy these things I would speak loudly though it would cost me all I am worth in the world, but as I cannot I will keep aloof and know nothing, and say nothing.

– Henry Howard Meyrick, Journal dated 1840–47
Untitled (The best means, of caring for, and dealing with them in the future), 2018

The Lake Condah Aboriginal Mission Station was built in 1867 under the leadership of the Church of England. The Church of England saw the mission as a means to 'civilise' the Gunditjmarra people through the compulsion of Western education and Christianity. Its occupants were subject to strict regimes such as twice-daily prayers, church services and religious studies all in the hopes of a successful assimilation. The missions' governance executed brutal policies through denying work permits to the residents, providing rations as rewards rather than a right, and operating as an institution to house stolen children.

Untitled (The theft of the White men's sheep), 2018,

The Eumeralla Wars began on Gunditjmara Country in 1834 and continued through to 1849. During this time of frontier violence, the Gunditjmara used the large expanse of volcanic hills as a base from which they would launch their attacks and revenges against the colonisers who dispossessed them. The Eumeralla Wars witnessed countless unprovoked and redundant killings upon the Gunditjmara, too often simply in the name of eliminating the Aboriginals from Colonist view.

Untitled (The theft of the White men's sheep) communicates stories of how the Gunditjmara would often capture livestock from the colonists' settlements and return to camp through rocky terrain deeming the colonisers incapable of retrieving their stock without injury.

Untitled (So he mixed arsenic with half the flour and a raging thirst was created), 2018

The Murdering Flat massacre occurred in 1840 on Wannon River killing dozens of Gunditjmara people. A hut keeper employed by the Henty brothers noticed that his monthly delivery of flour would often be the victim of theft at the hands of the local Aboriginal people. The Gunditjmara people would wait until the hut keeper left his station and rob his hut of flour. The hut keeper became frustrated by the raids so he mixed arsenic into the bags of flour.

Untitled (So he mixed arsenic with half the flour and a raging thirst was created) tells the story of the dozens of lost lives of the Gunditjmara people that had been poisoned making flour cakes down by Wannon River. The arsenic created an extreme thirst forcing them to rush down to the river where they drowned from the effects of the arsenic poisoning.

Sanja Pahoki

A postcard from Jasenovac 2021

Baka rubs her eyes 2021

In 2019 my mother gave me a box that contained some memorabilia about my grandfather. My grandfather had been shot while trying to escape the concentration camp at Jasenovac, just days before liberation at the end of the second world war. In this box were 2 postcards. One was posing as a standard touristy postcard of the Jasenovac memorial – the brutalist monument was shown against sunny blue skies. What caught my eye was this strange image of a blond-haired child in the centre of the postcard, dressed in an all-white – white short-sleeve top, white shorts and white socks – kind of like the uniform worn by the two lead characters in Michel Haneke's film, *Funny Games* (1997). The child in the Jasenovac

landscape has their arms awkwardly stretched out in front of them and it looks like they're showing someone they have nothing in their hands. It's hard not to think of another reference, Diane Arbus's *Child with Toy Hand Grenade in Central Park* (1962). Except the Jasenovac child is empty handed. The other postcard was a plain card from my grandfather to my grandmother asking her to send packages containing bread, beans, lard, etc.

Ashley Perry

Reformation 2019-21

Reformation was produced looking at the histories of the Convict Causeway, Privy Pit and Convict Barracks historical sites on Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island) Queensland. These sites are believed to have been made partly over and from the materials of local fish traps of the Yoolooburrabee (Quandamooka peoples). *Reformation* offers a number of iterations imagining the past and future of this site produced from found materials and interpretations.

Nina Sanadze

Apotheosis 2021

Apotheosis is an iteration of *100 Years After and 30 Years On*, an installation originally presented at the 3rd Tbilisi Triennial, in Georgia. It is constructed from the surviving studio archive of a prominent soviet monumental sculptor, Valentin Topuridze (1907-1980), whose public sculptures were torn down in 1989 with the fall of the Soviet regime.

Displaced, disembodied, de-contextualised and piled together like corpses, the sculptural archive forms a different kind of monument, a memorial. The unexpected interactions between individual sculptures create random, evocative and dramatic compositions. Once monumental and victorious, they now appear fragile and insignificant, alluding to the impermanence of every political era and ideology. The installation re-materialises and re-examines an erased visual history, its unorthodox and seemingly violent arrangement prompting us to consider its ongoing sociological value.

Mareike Bernien and Kerstin Schroedinger

Rainbow's Gravity 2014

Recollections from Our Chromatic Memory: Rainbow's Gravity.

MB (Mareike Bernien): For a long time, the working title of our film, *Rainbow's Gravity*, was "Chromatic Memory." It took as a starting point the fact that our own memories, imaginations, and representations

of National Socialism were mainly black and white, a mode of remembering conveyed to us in various documentaries about that era—feature films and archival material, like grainy newsreels. Although film and photo material in color existed already at the beginning of the 1930s in Germany, memories of National Socialism have largely been characterized by the absence of color.[1] The unavailability of color images of National Socialism can be read as a symptom of the post-Nazi generations. They were raised with a documentary-style distance from the past, in which their familial memories were tinted just as monochromatically black and white as the images of the Holocaust and National Socialism shown on TV. Black and white created political distance from National Socialism for the post-generations, offering a kind of closure to an epoch thereby safely sealed off deep in a monochromatic past.[2]

KS (Kerstin Schroedinger): Agfacolor Neu was developed in the mid-30s in the laboratories of the Agfa company. Its production began in the Agfa film factory in Wolfen [in Germany] in 1936. Agfacolor Neu is named as one of the first subtractive single-strip (monopack) film stocks worldwide. The development of such a single-strip color film resulted from the demand for a film stock that was cheaper and less materially wasteful than its US competitor, Technicolor.[3] The Agfa material promised easier handling, suitable even for amateur use and outdoor shoots, and the first experiments in motion-picture film were made at the Summer Olympics in Berlin in 1936.[4]

MB: For our film project *Rainbow's Gravity*, we spent time in the spring of 2013 doing research in the color film collection of the Berlin Bundesfilmarchiv [Federal Film Archive]. Our research about film colors, and Agfacolor films between 1935 and 1945 specifically, quickly became a grueling undertaking at the viewing screens. “Cultural,” industrial, and educational films, various documentary material from Nazi propaganda companies, and several color feature films from the era wandered across our monitors. We saw panzers in the sunshine, children with blond braids. [Production company] UFA actor and dancer Marika Röck reappeared again and again as if in one never-ending dance.

KS: So-called “Colourful monthly newsreels”[5] showed a portrait of youth activities before the war. We saw Hitler Youth boys training as flight controllers. Uniformed BDM [Bund Deutscher Mädel, “Band of German Maidens”] girls dance and thereby their bodies morph into ornamental structures.

MB: These were mostly positive images of daily life

under Nazi rule, or kitschy feature and fantasy films that carried the viewer into other times and worlds. As fantasy films, melodramas, “culture films,” or vacation films, these color images participated in the construction of a national ensemble in which the so-called “natural colors” of the images served as a kind of refuge. Free of social antagonisms and historicity, an image of the homeland was designed in which each color appeared to have its natural place.[6]

KS: If you watch hours of this material, as we've done in these visits to the German Federal Film Archives and other archives, the dullness and triteness of the footage's colors leave their imprints on your memory. But not because of the rather boring contents of an alleged normality or even because of the studied visual absence of any form of violation or aggression. Instead, you recognize a sort of rigidity and harshness. Everything looks regulated and conformist. No one was walking; all were marching in unison.

MB: So it appears to be a fundamental paradox: despite Agfacolor film advertising itself as the first German natural film color to depict “true-to-life” reality, its mimetic and reality-giving functions were used to show a nearly fully fictionalized image of a self-contained world.[7] The promise of “true-to-nature colors” and more realistic portrayals of the world seemed to have flipped and changed into its opposite.

KS: Color could then also take on the character of a coating whose purpose was to amalgamate society with a fiction of a “whole.” Chemical colors perform precisely this kind of reified image of the human, and in so doing they reproduce a mechanically functional image of society: the *Volkskörper*[8] in color. However, this fiction was materialized. It did not remain merely fictional. The physical manifestations of the colors on the film stock do exist. But at the same time these films somehow projected a futuristic picture—a science fiction, one might say—into the present of their time, thereby taking part in the formation of this very present. One could see how the Nazified body should look, how it should move, how it should become part of the national body in color.

MB: Indeed, National Socialist ideology influenced not only the content of the images, but they were also deeply embedded in the materiality of the Agfacolor palette. While the concealing and reconciling functions of ideology are legible in the semiotic levels of color film, even more explicit clues about the ideological orientation of color film are visible on the material level.

KS: The industrial color film production at the Agfa factories was part of a massive German chemical industry conglomerate formed in 1925 and named

IG Farben, which literally translates as “community of interests of dye industries”—IG Color. At the time, the merger made it one of the most powerful trusts worldwide. It contained such a variety of companies and product lines that they could own and control almost all of the production lines involved in the manufacture and distribution of their goods—for example, commercials for plastic products could be filmed on Agfacolor film stock. During the Nazi period the conglomerate played a major part in Germany’s policy of rearmament and in the exactions that were imposed on occupied countries.[9] IG Farben was profoundly involved in the carrying out of mass killings by the Nazi regime. The company built and ran the Buna factory in Auschwitz and exploited thousands of slave laborers in all subindustries, as well as at Agfa. Degesch, a sub-company of IG Farben, produced the nerve gas Zyklon B, which was used in the gas chambers of the extermination camps.[10] The Agfa factory in Wolfen produced all sorts of war-related products, such as synthetic silk for use in gas masks, backpacks, and parachutes. This line of goods was the backbone of the Agfa company’s contribution to war production.[11] From 1943 on, Agfa forced women from the Ravensbrück concentration camp to work in their synthetic fiber factory.[12]

The workers were contained in the darkness of the production line. The work in the film factory did not gain visibility except in the trivial sense that the film stock was produced and used. Color film production, considered as part of IG Farben’s war production, fulfilled its duty on the home front.

MB: So, what becomes visible in these color pictures produced in the Agfa factory and what is it that we don’t see?

In our film, we chase another specific brand of red. This red carries the tone of the swastika flag, which shows up on an Agfacolor test picture from 1935, taken in the early phases of Agfacolor Neu’s development. The test picture shows two women standing next to a color board and a swastika flag.[13] Technicians used such test pictures to adjust the color range to white skin tones when assessing and experimenting with the color preferences and visual appearances of emulsion layers on the film stock. In addition to the white skin tone, it is the red of the Nazi flag that is imputed with utter significance. Its red color value was reproduced in all the color pictures to come, colorfast and without error. As an invisible reference, the red color code reproduced and re-materialized itself through all the Agfa images that followed. As we claim in our film, the Agfacolor color palette was calibrated on the red of the flag, so

to speak. It is a red that dominates other reds as their benchmark: the red of poppy flowers, the red scarves upon the heads of dancing members of the Nazi Youth, and the kitschy rose at the end of Veit Harlan’s film *Opfergang* (1944). The color palette of 1935 impacted all these pictures and, through them, traveled through time. Thus, the same red appeared on the Soviet flag planted on the Reichstag by a triumphant Red Army soldier in the film *The Fall of Berlin* (1950), which was shot on Agfacolor film stock surrendered to the Soviet Union by the Germans as a form of reparation payment. The times change, but the film stock remains the same. It is used again and carries its ideological and material orientations within itself, as if a chronic remnant were embedded in the color film stock.

KS: This test picture lays out a fascist aesthetics and language that would soon spread through all the categories of footage that now form the archive of color films. Such an aesthetic is established through the tone of the colors, the repetitive use of the same signal colors—red, white, black—that together make up the Nazi flag. The color palette provides the vocabulary of film jargon: the red standard comes to measure all other tones against itself. This color jargon established the way that Nazi ideology looked and the way that it looks to us today. Their synthetic character seemed to promise implicitly an everlasting imprint. These colors would not fade. And thus the material projected into the future a thousand-year-long Reich in color.

Color—as an active part of the dissemination of Nazi ideology—had never been a neutral coproduct of the time, but had in addition its part in the activation and redistribution of what Adorno had identified as the jargon of authenticity;[14] a sort of coating of reality that served to reduce its complexity. What we see is color as a jargon. Too bright, too yellow, too brown. Obscuring the facts on the one hand, distracting from the everyday on the other. Overly cinematic and anti-cinematic at the same time: the national project color film.

MB: On June 3, 2013, our film team travelled to Wolfen, a small town south of Berlin, to visit the former Im factory there and shoot scenes for our film *Rainbow’s Gravity*. Around this time, rivers across central Europe were flooding, including the Mulde and Leine, which inundated the areas around the chemical park in Wolfen-Bitterfeld. Bitterfeld had to be evacuated, so our film shoot took place against a curious backdrop: the entire city was empty, the sun shone, and only a few stray guests were to be found in the film museum. The overflowing water created the illusion of being alone in this place, but also brought

with its deluge a serious threat: that underground reservoirs of contaminated waste and layers of chemical deposits in the soil would be brought to the surface by the floodwaters. On the third day of shooting, the tap water already tasted unpleasantly bitter. We constantly heard sirens. Film colors are, in the material sense, poison.

KS: The Agfa film factory in Wolfen is referred to as the birthplace of single-strip, monopack color film. Throughout its history, from 1909 until it closed production in 1994, the Agfa factory in Wolfen had been a workplace for mainly female workers. The workers there were involved in so-called unskilled labor that didn't demand great physical strength. Of course, this was a deliberate misapprehension, since the work, which took place in almost complete darkness, and involved significant exposure to toxic chemicals, was surely physically demanding and exhausting. "Operating perforating machines, operating selection machines, packing up; everything needed swift woman hands. . . . They had to have an incredible finger dexterity, yes, and I do not know if men could have done it as well." [15] Film stock production takes place in the dark. The work itself remains invisible and in the hands of women. Drawing on Roberts (2012), "factory work has been systematically expunged from cinema," [16] and Nazi cinema was no exception to this, although work obviously played a distinct role within the Nazi propaganda apparatus.

MB: In our film, we entered the dark rooms of the former factory in which color emulsion layers for film were produced. As we built up the lighting for our film shoot in the former factory, which had been converted into a film museum in 1993, there were hardly any visitors around. The former production rooms were empty and cold, the machines eggshell white. We turned the lights out. In the darkness, only the small green lights that had once oriented the workers in the dark were visible. It takes a very long time for the eye to adjust to the darkness, the outlines and shadows of the machines surfacing from the black. In such a state, the hands become eyes. Unlike the eyes, the camera never adjusts to the dark. It only sees the green lights; everything else is black. The camera feels its way along from green lamp to lamp in order to orient itself. This feeling out, and turning, which reminds one so much of being inside a darkened cinema, became the organizing principle of the film. Working with and in darkness means replacing the visual sense with touch. Orientation and reorientation within history then become physical acts. But feeling in the dark also poses

dangers, for instance, of not seeing enough or losing one's sense of perspective, losing sight of the "bigger picture." This means running the risk of losing one's safe distance, but at the same time of giving oneself over to a process of perceiving and navigating one's entanglements in a history which continues to resonate into the present.

Film brings its material interior to the external surface. Yet at the same time, the performers bring the color pictures produced on Agfacolor film stock during the Nazi period back from the outside world into the dark rooms of the factory, projecting them onto the now-defunct machinery. Various spaces collapse into one another: the space of film production becomes the screen of a cinema, while the black box of the cinema becomes the dark room of film production.

KS: We brought the films back to where they came from, the darkness of the production line. We reprojected into a museum that was itself haunted by the past. We projected into the dark space of the production line that which was shot on the film stock, aiming to create a sort of feedback loop that would lead to a steady white noise.

In *Rainbow's Gravity*, we show extracts of film footage that the audience might already know. They might have seen it in feature films and TV documentaries from the 1990s. [17] There is no new or unseen material to discover. In our film on film we rather wanted to reveal the structure of a collective archival gaze. We tried to deconstruct and fragmentize this gaze that also aims to glue together a social if not national body by means of a collective process of memorization. The footage seemed to work against us. It invited us to repeat the formal and aesthetic language of Nazi films. We had to break it apart and at the same time show the dynamics of such repetition.

MB: In our research, we examined every image by proceeding archaeologically, reconstructing their historical contexts and modes of production. The reading again(st) and tearing apart becomes an act of intervening. We edited the footage before we projected it onto the factory walls. We dismembered the images, cut and enlarged them; we reappropriated them. We colored and discolored them, froze the images and turned them into stills. We sorted them according to color and sifted out shots of marching legs, red tones, or blue sky, for instance. We attempted to expose the ideological grammar of the Agfa color palette, no longer looking at what was portrayed in these color schemes but how it was portrayed. At the same time, we wanted to restage the historical context of the images, by

bringing them back to the site of their production.

KS: Such a practice to use archival footage involves a coming to terms with our own personal hopes and insecurities and as well our own biographies. An archive fever was not as easy to apply to the footage that we were looking at, since the desire to actually see all this Nazi world in color, is obviously unpleasant to look at.^[18] On the contrary, any desire toward the archives were bound to an intellectual and objectivized approach. We were willing to confront ourselves with our emotional and biographical involvements, we thought to have no other way to make ourselves vulnerable in the process, yet to break through the cycles of representation.

We synthesized film sequences out of single frames. Single frames became like molecules; we were the chemists that create new substances. Being contaminated, we began to infect others. We tainted the fascist utopian concept of a purity of substances; contaminated the fascist idea of a pure national body. We couldn't show pure visual registrations of color on film. We could only show what already had a history of being shown before. You can see contaminated images; you see the digitized scratches and tram lines. You see our bodies in the impossible attempt to escape being drenched in red, green, and blue. Too bright, too vivid. Colors burn the eyes.

MB: At the end of our film, the protagonists articulate a desire for "unreconcilable color," a "reddish blue" or "violet yellow." This would be neither a black-and-white nor a color image. Rather, this desire can be understood as our search for a state of non-reconciliation with the past, which thinks of the history of National Socialism as something that will never be "closed" or "finished." Color has a mediating function in this process, as the film attempts to show the past neither in the black-and-white colors that hold the past at a distance from our colored present, nor in a colorfulness that purports to bring one closer to history and reconstruct it, as was the case with many color film compilations addressing National Socialism in the 1990s. Rather, in *Rainbow's Gravity*, we wanted to show and understand how the past shines through the present in and through color.

Maybe unreconciled color has no specific texture in itself but could be considered as a practice or an attitude toward history. It would not coat history as an enclosed fact but try to infiltrate its orifices. Always willing to contaminate the very present with the past and thereby insisting on the view toward its continuities and connections. We might not find the unreconciled

color as traces on the celluloid of the Agfa color images, but rather as a chemical left over and "material witness"[19] in the soil around the factory. This calls us to gravitate toward and listen to the contaminated.

KS: Color coproduces an insolubility and also non-reconciliation by seeping into the ground and into bodies as chemicality, as a toxic substance. Film colors contaminate bodies, leaving them intoxicated. A collective memory contaminated with color indicates a will to live in a state of resistance to reconciliation: a collective memory that is not afraid of color, a color consciousness that doesn't want to control people or occupy space. By these means, and in opposition to a chromophobic narrative that places cleanliness and whiteness above the dirty and the colorful, a color-contaminated history is told. There is no cleansed ideal of history anymore; instead we stand in the middle of a colored mess of everything that ever happened. The contradictions remain unsolved. And yet, they have to remain unsolved. We still have to be affected by the colors and the feelings of closeness and distance they create in us.

This text was compiled with excerpts from Chromapolitics—On the Material, Historical, and Political Dimensions of Color in Film by Mareike Bernien (2015, PhD thesis, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna) and Film Matters—Historical and Material Considerations of Color, Movement, and Sound in Film by Kerstin Schroedinger (2016, PhD thesis, University of Westminster London).

NOTES

This effect is described by many other authors; see, for example, Boris Schafgans, "Hitler als Hitler. Eine Archivfigur im Zeitalter von Histotainment und Reality-TV," in *Hitler darstellen. Zur Entwicklung und Bedeutung einer filmischen Figur*, eds. Rainer Rother and Karin Herbst-Meßlinger (Munich, 2008), 64–85.

The widely held assumption that National Socialism was only documented in black-and-white was shaken by the reemergence of a number of color images, sometimes digitally remastered in the 1990s. For possible explanations for this resurfacing of color pictures, see Rolf Sachsse, "Die Kolorierung der Zeitgeschichte. Der Zweite Weltkrieg in neuen Medienfarben," in *Bilderwelten des Wissens, Kunsthistorisches Jahrbuch Band 4.1*, ed. Vera Dünkel (Berlin, 2006), 53 ff.

See Erhard Finger, "Zum Geburtstag der deutschen Farbkinoфильms," *Die Filmfabrik Wolfen: Aus der Geschichte* 11 (2001), 13.

See Gert Koshof, *Color—Die Farben des Films* (Berlin, 1988), 89.

Bunte Monatsberichte, 1937, 16mm, 130m, 16 mins., color,

sound, Archive signature: 19623.

See Esther Leslie, *Synthetic Worlds: Nature, Art and the Chemical Industry* (London, 2005), 191.

See also Schafgans 2008, 69ff.

Volkkörper—"people's body"—is Nazi terminology for describing the racial corpus of the German people. The term is central to Nazi ideology, giving an antisemitic, anti-marxist, racist definition of who belongs to such body and who does not.

See Janis Schmelzer in Janis Schmelzer and Eberhard Stein, *Geschichte des VEB Filmfabrik Wolfen* (Berlin, 1969), 61f. Schmelzer writes that already in 1937 the Agfa factory applied to become a "Nationalsozialistischer Musterbetrieb" (National Socialist flagship factory).

See Leslie 2005, 186.

See Schmelzer 1969, 61ff.

On which, see Schmelzer 1969, 80.

This test picture is also mentioned by Rolf Sachsse: "Never before was an emblem [the flag] of this size and compositional importance so clearly emphasized on an industrial test picture as it was here" [author's translation], in Rolf Sachsse, *Die Erziehung zum Wegsehen. Fotografie im NS-Staat* (Hamburg, 2003), 150.

Theodor W. Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity* (Evanston, IL, 1973).

Ingrid Edner, former doctor in charge at the ORWO ("Original Wolfen") film factory. Interview in a TV documentary, *Original Wolfen Die Geschichte einer Filmfabrik*, dir. by Anna Schmidt and Dirk Schneider, *Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk* 2011. In 1964 the factory and products were renamed ORWO to distinguish the Socialist GDR factory from the West German company Agfa. Note that this quote is from a woman who worked there in the 1960s up to the early 1990s and not during the Nazi period.

John Roberts, "The Missing Factory," *Mute*, July 11, 2012, <http://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/missing-factory>.

See, for example, *Das dritte Reich in Farbe* (1998, Spiegel TV Reportage), *Die "Braunen" in Farbe: Die Kriegsjahre 1939–1945* (2007, Polar Film), and *Welche Farbe hat der Krieg?* (1995, Spiegel TV Dokumentation).

See Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago, 1998). We borrowed the term archive fever from Derrida in order to emphasize an (artistic) approach to archival practices, which may be driven by an urge for revelation.

Material witness is a term used by Susan Schuppli. In "Material Malfeasance: Trace Evidence of Violence in Three Image-Acts," Schuppli speaks of a material witness, when images themselves become "objects of historical forces"; see *Photoworks* 17 (2012), 28.

Jelena Talecki

Leader 2013

Leader II 2020

I have always been attracted to pervasive, signpost images embedded in collective memory and national identity. Yet, what interests me the most is the way these shared images are similarly recognised as being uniquely ours- private even. Tito's portrait was such an image: greeting now ex-Yugoslavs from the walls of classrooms, offices and homes, it was a part of our everyday lives. Civil war and the end of Yugoslavia may have exorcised Tito from our walls, but the image remained: against the red-brown background persists a proud face of a leader, looking forward. Apart from being inseparable from notions of before and after; utopia and dystopia, failure of unity, nationalism and suffering that is still unfolding on the territory of a country once known as Yugoslavia, this image also attached itself to our sense of who we are and what we believe in as individuals. Paintings *Leader* (2013) and *Leader II* (2020) draw from this junction of collective and personal contained in the leader's image.

First work, *Leader* (2013), was an attempt to employ painting after Tito's photographic portrait as a nostalgic act. Making a part of the State Art series (commissioned by Australian Centre for Contemporary Art for NEW14 curated by Kyla McFarlane), it was initially imagined as a genuine, official and conservative state portrait. After completing it, it became clear to me that (disappointingly) I cannot wallow in the YU/ utopian nostalgia I was hoping to 're-live' through painting. Sickly yellow spots defaced the portrait marking an end to longing for my life and country before the war.

Leader II (2020) was imagined as an opportunity to revisit and reconsider the first painting and its failure as a means of re-living the past. Moreover, I hoped to discover if how I understood practice of painting after images of historical significance changed in these 7 years marked by increasingly conflicting global sentiments towards the role and the importance of political figures. This has proved itself to be a difficult task as I was met with an unexpected resistance to the image and how I perceived it. As a result, a final obstruction took place: feeling as if somebody has turned off the lights, I left the painting in the dark. What remains are the almost undistinguishable traces of Tito's portrait, not unlike the fragments of a bad dream we cannot wait to forget in our waking hours.

Unbound Collective

Sovereign Acts | REFUSE 2018

Sovereign Acts | In the Wake 2019

Purple Flowers and *Dust* honours legacies of un-ending relationality through histories of activism, resilience and protest, and the active reconnection and repatriation of old stories lost, found and re-imagined. These stories shape and rupture our skin as Country, through colonial archives and beating hearts. Our bodies layered with landscape, records and memory – we wear it all to shine a light on anti-nuclear activism in South Australia and the ongoing relevance of the Irati Wanti, Leave the Poison campaign led by the Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta (senior Aboriginal women from Coober Pedy, South Australia) from the late 1990s to the early 2000s.

This is an old love story about radio-active dust and ideas that refuses to settle, the refusal to accept desecration through uranium mining, the transport of waste and uranium oxide concentrate through lands/ rivers/seas, and the ongoing struggle against a waste dump on Aboriginal lands. We honour all First Nations and Pacific communities who fight to protect country and black lives.

This is our call and response responsibility to protect Country and refuse the old fixed-imaginings of State. We are indebted to the wisdom, strength and love of our ancestors and activists such as the Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta. We sing, write and project our fallout-stories against this larger epic backdrop to our collective-collected lives, and we continue to talk straight out.

Judy Watson

bomb drawing 1995

I made six little bomb drawings in 1995 when I had a Moet et Chandon residency in France. They were among the first works I made in Hautvilliers, in the Champagne region. At the time I was feeling appalled by France's decision to conduct nuclear tests in the Pacific. While these small bomb drawings only numbered six, France's plan had been to conduct nine nuclear tests. I like to pretend that I held them back from completing that number by my visualisations of only six tests. My ink drawings are phallic, I think of them as small boys.

I did make some other drawings of bombs on paper and also other works on canvas. The canvas works were: 'pacific vessel', (referencing a canoe as seen from beneath the water with oars out, (like a creature in

defence mode) and that Pacifique means peace.

'the water boiled and turned white' (referencing the actual look of one of the tests at Muroroa Atoll. I saw a bit of coverage on television and what I read in newspapers over there. 'the confetti of empire' this title came from a description by French politician Giscard D'Estang who was talking about the outflung French territories in the Pacific.

I did a show some of my bomb works on paper in an exhibition at Boomerang Gallery in Boomstraat, Amsterdam in 1995. The exhibition was of work by Australian artists.

The small bomb drawings are ink on paper.

Appalled was a mild description of how I felt about the French nuclear tests. It was so much more.

- *Email from the artist.*

Judy Watson

the witness tree 2018

On the next visit I made rubbings of some of the trees and ground on the memorial site using charcoal and earth from the site. There is an indelible memory within this place which I wanted to convey within the works on canvas and back in my studio in Brisbane. I overlaid these ground pieces with the maps of the perpetrators journey to Myall Creek and the journey of Sgt Denny Day to bring them to justice. I took lengths of muslin and wound them around several of the trees. It felt like covering a deep wound within the psyche of the trees, a reparative gesture on my part. Then Greg attached microphones to the trees, listening to the sounds deep within them.

It felt like covering a deep wound within the psyche of the trees, a reparative gesture on my part.

From: <http://thewitnesstree.com.au/>

