

LUCY RAVEN: *ANOTHER DULL DAY*

27.04.2022 – 14.08.2022

Opening: Tuesday 26 April 2022, 19:00

The artist and filmmaker Lucy Raven (b. 1977, Tucson) makes us look elsewhere: in order to understand our current landscape, she encourages us to look below, behind or beyond. The solo exhibition *Another Dull Day* explores the properties of extreme pressure and material state changes in the context of the Western United States of America. In the vastness of the desert, Raven scrutinizes what is usually overlooked: gravel pits, nuclear testing sites, ballistics ranges—contemporary settler industries hidden in plain sight. The exhibition features two large film installations: *Demolition of a Wall (Album 2)*, 2022, premiering at WIELS, and *Ready Mix*, 2021, recently commissioned by Dia Art Foundation in New York. These are shown alongside a new body of photographic work titled *Socorro!*, 2022.

Raven's comprehensive practice includes moving image installations, animations, sculpture and video. Her work excels in its documentary approach and attention to detail, underlining the processes of human and mechanical labour that fuel the late-capitalist economy. Presented in precisely conceived environments, her film installations possess a materialist aesthetic reminiscent of the conceptual art and experimental film of the 60s and 70s. They draw attention to how images and commodities are produced, and how our perception of both is influenced by the way they are depicted.

Demolition of a Wall (Album 2) was shot at an explosives range in Socorro, New Mexico, an area physically imprinted with the history of atomic weapons testing and hypersonic research. The film consists of a suite of short films depicting processed high speed imagery of shock waves, in which Raven observes the extreme pressure surging forth after detonating an explosive charge. This is echoed in *Socorro!*, a series of analogue shadowgrams using the “time-fractioning flash of stroboscopic technology”¹ in order to capture the shockwaves of exploded raw materials on photosensitive paper and negative film. In some instances, the force of the blast pierced the paper, revealing the physicality of the image as object.

The film *Ready Mix* observes a different materiality: that of cement, gravel and water being combined into concrete at a plant in Bellevue, Idaho. Concrete is the most ubiquitous building material on the planet, but its environmental impact is lethal: straining water supplies and extracting limited natural resources at a breakneck pace. At times, the physical accumulation of mineral aggregates overloads the limitations of the camera, blurring and flattening the image as a result. At others, closely choreographed drones following the movements of excavators and conveyor belts bring to mind military surveillance footage. The film is shown on a custom-made curved screen in CinemaScope format (2.35:1) drawing

¹ Anna Craycroft, *We Shall Study Motions of Bodies*, in Lucy Raven: *Edge of Tomorrow*, 2016, Serpentine Galleries, London; Koenig Books, London, p. 153

on the preferred aspect ratio of Western genre films. Through her lens, the mythical 'Wild West' and its enduring ideology of individualism and expansion is reimagined into a critical rendering of the landscape. In doing so, Raven turns our attention away from the horizon to a forcefield of geographic, material and historical tensions.

Curator: Helena Kritis

Project Partners

The exhibition is made in collaboration with Dia Art Foundation and is supported by Lisson Gallery (London, New York, Shanghai) and Vidi Square.

Publication

A magazine accompanying *Ready Mix*, published by Dia Art Foundation, is available for sale at the WIELS bookshop and online.

Artist Biography

Lucy Raven (b. 1977, Tucson, USA) lives and works in New York. She received a BFA in studio art and a BA in art history from the University of Arizona, Tucson, in 2000, and an MFA from Bard College's Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, in 2008.

Another Dull Day is Raven's first major solo exhibition in Belgium. Her work has been exhibited in solo presentations at Dia Chelsea, New York (2021); Serpentine Galleries, London (2016–17); Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio (2016); VOX centre de l'image contemporaine, Montreal (2015); Portikus, Frankfurt (2014); and Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2012). Select group shows include those at Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2018–19); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2013); Wexner Center for the Arts Ohio State University, Columbus (2010) and Mass MoCA, North Adams, Massachusetts (2008–09). Additionally, Raven's work was included in the 2018 Dhaka Art Summit, Bangladesh; the 2016 Montreal Biennial; and the 2012 Whitney Biennial, New York. She is included in the recently opened 2022 Whitney Biennial.

With Vic Brooks and Evan Calder Williams, she is a founding member of 13BC, a moving-image research and production collective. Raven teaches at the Cooper Union School of Art in New York. She is represented by Lisson Gallery (London, New York, Shanghai).

Press contact

WIELS

Anne-Gaëlle Solé

Annegaelle.sole@wiels.org

+32 479 95 77 40