

Fiona Amundsen with Joanna Macy - *Life on Earth*, 2022, Single Screen, 13:00.

Life on Earth brings together the seemingly unrelated contexts of United States Cold War era military stealth and nuclear technologies with an ancient Tibetan Buddhist prophecy. The former context focused on how to achieve an invisible military presence to enable intelligence gathering, especially in relation to the Nuclear Arms Race. Espionage activities were motivated by fear of the 'others', military technologies, nuclear weaponry and political strategy. This fear was furthered by political ideology that was communicated via State campaigns and military-produced newsreels. In direct contrast to these Cold War contexts, the 1,200 year-old prophecy speculates that wisdom and compassion are powerful forces by which to halt the destruction of our world. Working with present day and archival footage, *Life on Earth* explores these contexts to establish relationships between Cold War era paranoia, military espionage, nuclear weaponry, and ideals of humanity collectively working for the good of all people by assuming a sacred responsibility for life and living.

The film opens with the prophecy as told by 92 year-old Joanna Macy, an anti-nuclear activist, environmental activist, author, scholar of Buddhism, general systems theory, and deep ecologist. Active during the height of the Cold War era nuclear arms race, Macy developed the Nuclear Guardianship movement which explores how to be present to that which is invisible (i.e.: radiation) and to the seemingly intractable issue of human-caused devastation. Macy reflects on the prophecy and speaks of ideas around uncertainty, hyper individualism, destructive power, compassion and insight. She was recorded in her Berkeley home in 2019.

Macy's voice is accompanied by military-produced footage of nuclear weapon manufacturing, and the space race. This archival material is contrasted with present-day footage of former Cold War supersonic and stealth aircrafts, as well as flight simulation tests. The latter was produced at the NASA Armstrong Flight Centre (Edwards, California) in late 2019.

Central to the film is the role of listening. *Life on Earth* aligns with the Māori filmmaker Barry Barclay's proposition that "we might do well to further explore how to make the camera a listener"^[1]. This strategy resists focusing on what is literally visible or knowable through images. Rather, attention is directed towards an image's witnessing and consciousness raising capabilities, meaning its ability to enable listening as much as seeing. These ideas are specifically explored within the film via the moments that cut to black, where only Macy's voice is present. The black screen establishes a space for listening, meaning there is very little that can distract from the enormity of what is being said and thereby one's own acts of witnessing and connecting to the implications of how the past still informs the present. As Macy says "we realize that we are interconnected, as in a web, and that each act with pure motivation affects the entire web, bringing consequences we cannot measure or even see"^[1]. These ideas are pertinent to the

film's efforts to make sense of the ideologies—be they Cold War or present-day—that drive the world-building and world-destroying impulses of our current moment.

[1] Barclay, Barry. *Our Own Image: A Story of a Māori Filmmaker*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015.

Chia-Wei Hsu - *Drones, Frosted Bats and the Testimony of the Deceased*, 2017, Four-channel video installation, 3:40 - 8:40.

Drones, Frosted Bats and the Testimony of the Deceased is filmed at the abandoned site of Hsinchu Branch of the Sixth Japanese Naval Fuel Plant. During World War II, the fuel plant was used to produce aviation fuel with butyl alcohol developed by the Department of Industrial Fermentation at the Industrial Research Institute. As a victim of the war, the deserted buildings reveal the stories of the past with the bullet holes on the walls as the eyewitness. The bullet holes on these deserted buildings reveal atrocities of war – scars evident of their pasts. Hsu utilizes the unique mobile perspectives of a drone, using it as exposed photographic equipment and casting it as an actor anthropomorphically in the video.

Aside from the shots taken by the drone, this video also includes several different shots, for instance, a scene of frosted bats in a big chimney. Frosted bats are mostly found in the high latitudes of Japan, Korea, and North China. Yet, for unknown reasons, this northern species of frosted bats resides in the chimney of the military plant from May to July in recent years. The plant is the only place where the frosted bats can be found in Taiwan. Moreover, the video contains footages of bombers from World War II when United States allied with China to bomb Taiwan. However, this incident slowly faded as authorities shifted in the Asia-Pacific region. Hsu uses imageries of flying objects as essential elements of this video, including the original function of the fuel plant as an aviation fuel producer, drones, bats, and bombers.

Susan Schuppli - *Ice Cores*, 2019, HD film, 1:06:22.

"Learning from Ice" is a multi-year research project focusing on cryospheric environments in the Canadian Arctic, Svalbard Archipelago, and the Hindu Kush Himalayas. Its aim is to explore the many different ways in which knowledge practices from ice core science and glaciology to indigenous traditions, local observations, activism, policy, and law engage with the situated material conditions of ice. It emerges out of fieldwork and research and consists of a series of documentaries, workshops and field schools. The film *Ice Cores* documents activities in the Canadian Ice Core Archive and greenhouse gas analysis at the OSU Ice Core and Quaternary Geochemistry Lab in the US as well as glacial retreat at the Athabasca Glacier in the Columbia Icefields.

Artspace Aotearoa

EX-POST

Fiona Amundsen
Susan Schuppli
Chia-Wei Hsu
4 March 2022 - 14 May 2022
artspace-aotearoa.nz

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Ex-post is the follow up and conclusion of *Ex-ante*, an exhibition that took place in November 2017, the first exhibition curated by Remco de Blaaij at Artspace Aotearoa.

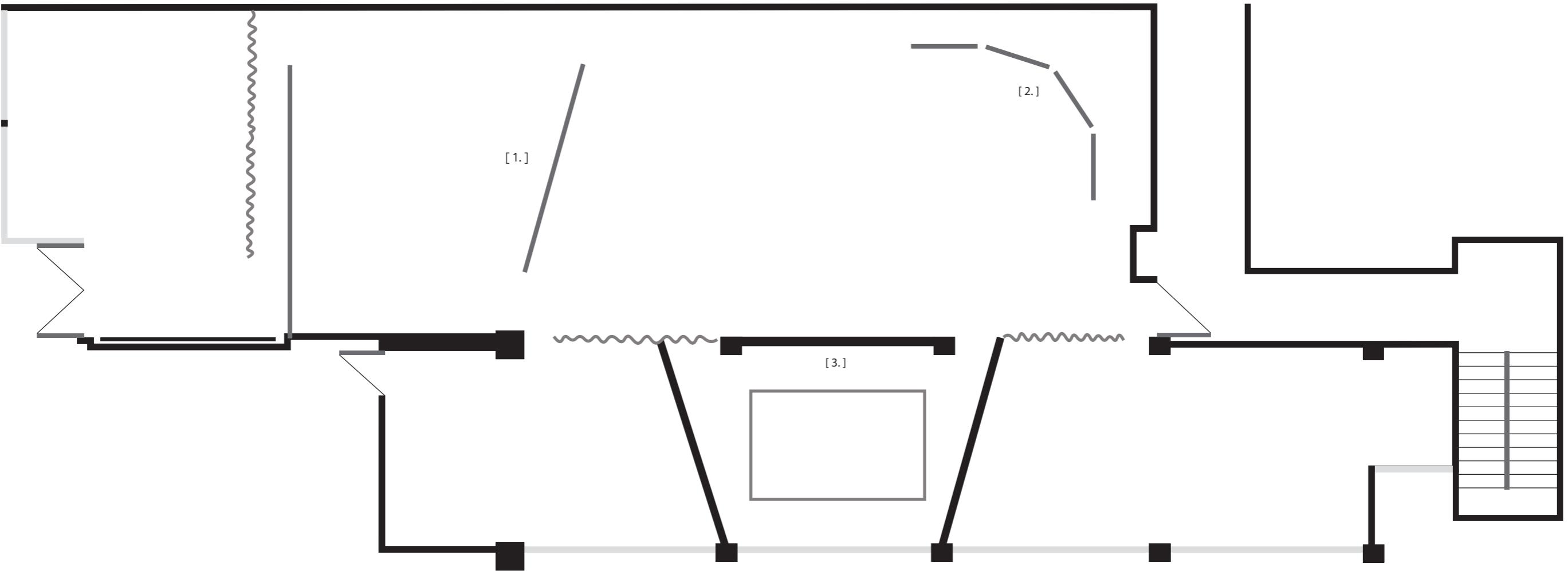
In *Ex-post*, three artists show cinematic and moving image works that help us think through both the emerging of new histories and imagine future potential. Documenting, speculating and registering are all tools to negotiate the future. The works look like they are driven by facts, data and scientific reality, but in fact, the star of the show is formed by imagination. All the three artists are linked by their focus on specific geographies in the world, specialist and sometimes fashionable equipment and their interrogation of political consequences.

Drawing from different eras and areas, what surfaces in the works are arguments to look differently at our histories, and listen to them more carefully before we conclude what's coming next.

'Ex-post', as well 'ex-ante', are both terms used in global financial business in which one is predicting before events ('ex-ante') and predicting outcomes of those events ('ex-post'). Both however are fairly unimaginative and incomplete, as even in an 'ex-post' reality one would have many facts available (because the events have now happened) but one is still speculating.

When imagining a new international landscape from any professional or personal viewpoint, we can be assured that much of the world has generated tools that can help re-navigating it, not the least because of an ongoing pandemic for the last two years. We have witnessed a resurgence of controversial world leaders, together with the rise of climate awareness (not to be confused with acting on it) and the emergence of global disconnectedness as air travel came to a grinding halt.

Now, this moment in time needs a promising horizon that can 'build back better', or even a radical shift in the systems that have got us here in the first place. Before we do that however, *Ex-post* argues that we (re)connect to recent specific histories through the eyes of three diverse artists.



List of Works

1. Fiona Amundsen with Joanna Macy - *Life on Earth*, 2022, Single Channel, 13:00.

2. Chia-Wei Hsu - *Drones, Frosted Bats and the Testimony of the Deceased*, 2017, Four-channel video installation, 3:40 - 8:40, 2017.

飛行器、霜毛蝠、逝者證言》
四頻道錄像裝置, 3分40秒至8分40秒, 2017年

製作團隊
聲音演出: 生実 慧、井上達夫、大庭裕介、島 崇

製作經理: 田中沙季

空拍機團隊: 紅隼影像製作工作室
空拍機操作員: 何文欽、何文杉
空拍機助理: 陳彥昇

攝影組: 宏達數位影業
攝影: 白杰立
攝影大助: 黃孝強
攝影二助: 黃舜鴻
攝影二助: 蕭世豪

燈光組: 東馨文化事業
燈光師: 劉議友
燈光助理: 林耿力
燈光助理: 曾翊愷
現場錄音: 馮志銘

場務助理: 莊立豪
旁白錄音: 藤口諒太
後期混音: 馮志銘
後期影像: 時間軸影像製作公司
數位調光: 姚良奇
程式設計: 鄭先喻
中文翻譯: 黃耀進
英文翻譯: 櫻井司、遠東譯像

拍攝協力:
新竹市文化局

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資料影像提供:

視群傳播事業有限公司

Production Team

Voice appearances: Satoshi Ikuzane, Tatsuo Inoue, Yusuke Ooba, Takashi Shima
Production manager: Saki Tanaka
Drone team: Akfly
Drone operator: Janson HO, Vinson HO
Drone assistant: Sam Chen
Camera team: Taipei Di Cinema
Cinematographer: Jie-Li BAI
1st Assistant Cinematographer: Xiao-Qiang HUANG
2nd Assistant Cinematographer: Shun Hong HUANG
2nd Assistant Cinematographer: Shih-Hao HSIAO
Gaffer team: DEEWATCH CULTURE CO., LTD
Gaffer: Yi-You LIU
Best Boy Electrician: Steven LIN
Best Boy Electrician: Yi-Kai ZENG
Location Audio Mixer: Chih-Ming FENG
Best Boy Grip: Chuanh-Li HAO
Voice-over record: Ryota Fujiguchi
Sound Mixer: Chih-Ming FENG
Post production: Time line studio

Colorist: Theo YAO
Program designer: Hsien-Yu CHENG
Chinese translator: Yaochin HUANG
English translator: Tsukasa Sakurai, Far East Translation Service & Video Production Co., Ltd
Filming cooperation:
Cultural Affairs Bureau, Hsinchu City

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Shutterstock

3. Susan Schuppli - *Ice Cores*, 2019, HD film, 1:06:22.