

Jacky Connolly

*Scenes from Subnature and the Mineral Kingdom*

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Jacky Connolly's *The Mineral Kingdom (Dark Green)* emerges as a future world bereft of humans: an abandoned, post-industrial landscape locked in perpetual winter, where a mineral consciousness becomes dominant—as rock formations, as ice crystals. The work explores photography's evolution into the post-photographic era and the inherent ambiguity of images.

Beneath this frozen surface lies another place, accessed through a well that leads underground: a zone below nature, populated with memories of Earth's past iterations. Unlike the Mineral Kingdom, images of humans and animals persist, inhabiting a celestial valley where depths connect mysteriously to sky. This subnatural realm draws specifically on 1990s and early 2000s ephemera—the kinds of fragments and textures that built the early Internet and marked the emergence of digital photography. Our photographic technology—both intentionally composed and automatically recorded—has generated an uncanny, doubled reality. There's a latent horror in this condition: the world becomes a *standing-reserve* for image-making, as fewer and fewer aspects of life on Earth remain concealed from the activity of picturing.

Fragmentary images associated with a lost friend find new life through algorithmic reanimation. In this way, the work excavates invisible and buried dimensions of experience—the haunted substrata of early digital life, shaped in part by personal loss and bodily rupture. It imagines an image-sentient world, one that pictures itself from below. A digitized fragment from a 1990s *I Spy* book becomes a portal into this strange new reality. A fibrous dark green permeates, like phosphenes or closed-eye visions, forming a connective tissue between disparate visual memories. The figure of the vulture appears throughout as a psychopomp or a familiar—moving between earth and sky, descending into the underworld of dead images and digesting them into something new. The toy-like vulture that feeds on the dead also becomes a creatrix, coaxing images into strange new configurations. Echoes of Freud's reading of Leonardo da Vinci drift through this buried image-realm: the child's memory of a vulture, the doubled mother, and the hidden bird embedded in the folds of a painting. Here, ruins become a futuristic force: memory flickering forward into vision.

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Jacky Connolly is an artist and filmmaker who lives and works in the Hudson Valley. Some recent exhibitions and screenings include: Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2022), MMCA, Seoul (2023), Brunette Coleman, London (2023), and Oberhausen International Short Film Festival (2023). From 2021 - 2023 she was in residence at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam.