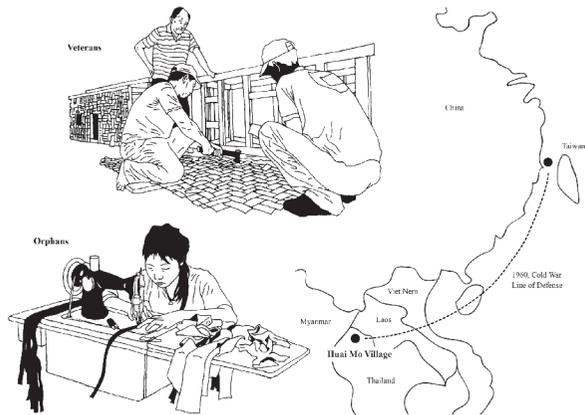


# Chia-Wei Hsu *Huai Mo Village*



<b>EX</b>	<b>ANTE</b>
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October 27 - December 22, 2017

Fiona Amundsen, Tanya Busse and Emilija Škarnulytė, Seamus Harahan, Chia-Wei Hsu, Susan Schuppli

*Huai Mo Village*  
one-channel video installation  
8:20 seconds  
2012

*Huai Mo Village* relates the story of remnant troops on the border regions of Thailand and Burma who face the intersection of multiple cultural identities and an unrecognised identity. People who live under the spectre of history end up producing an ambiguity absent in ordinary people. Hsu's project focuses on the Huai Mo Tzu Chiang House in Chiang Rai, Thailand, which shelters a generation of orphans owning close relationships to the region's complex history. In 1949, the Chinese civil war broke out. The defeat of the KMT (Kuomintang of China) resulted in the perilous retreat of an army, originally belonging to the Nationalist government, from Yunnan to Myanmar, with only 2,000 among 20 million soldiers reaching the destination in the end. However, Myanmar and the Soviet Union accused the troop for having "invaded" their territory, whereupon the United Nations later arranged for the troop to settle at the Golden Triangle at the Thai-Myanmar border and Chiang Rai, Mae Salong by making a pact with the Thai government. Due to pressure from the United Nations, Chinese military leader Chiang Kai-shek instructed the troop to retreat to Taiwan, but in truth ordered them to retreat only on the surface,

but factually remain undercover. In semblance, the troop seemed to have disbanded, but in secret they remained in a state of combat preparing for their counterattack. The Lost Army consisted mainly of soldiers from Yunnan, yet obeyed their given commands and stayed despite their longing for home. Their actions, however, were like declarations to the world that the "local soldiers" will no longer intervene, and have severed all ties with the government of the Republic of China.

In 1970, in order to sustain themselves in foreign lands and to exchange for the right to abode, the lost troop answered the request of the Thai military in assisting their expedition against the Thai communists, which then determined their prolonged stay as mercenaries in northern Thailand. Later on, they were also involved in battles against Burma communists in 1978 and Miao communists in 1981. During this period, many people grew poppies to increase their incomes for a better domestic life, or assisted drug dealers to traffic drugs from Myanmar. The drug production in this region used to account for 80% of the global supply, determining its status as the international drug trade center at the time. The orphanage at Huai Mo Village houses 68 children; most of their parents were sentenced to death for drug trade or had died during drug-related disputes.

In the video, the director of the orphanage (who was once an intelligence officer) points out the historical origins and changes. The artist's customary style is extended in this work—the people telling the stories, the people hearing the stories, the crew made up of orphans, with the artist standing furthest back, observing it all.

**Chia-Wei Hsu** is interested in the forgotten histories of the Cold War in Asia. His works develop a keen sensitivity that weaves together reality and illusion, history and the present, by building events outside of the lens and by linking formal history with people and places. Hsu constructs mythical narratives that linger between fiction and reality. He maintains a critical attitude toward filming, and strives to bring art into locations other than museums.

Hsu's artworks have been selected for inclusion in the Insights Sector and Film Sector at Art Basel Hong Kong in 2015 and 2016 respectively. In 2015, he had a solo exhibition at the Van Abbemuseum in the Netherlands. In 2013, he was invited to present his works in La Biennale di Venezia for the Taiwan Pavilion. In the same year he was a finalist for the Hugo Boss Asia Art Award. His artworks had been presented in many exhibitions in museums, biennials and film festivals, such as Jeu De Paume, The 39th International Film Festival Rotterdam, 2012 Liverpool Biennial, 2012 Taipei Biennial, The 8th Taiwan International Documentary Film Festival, and Rencontres Internationales Paris/Berlin/Madrid, and screened at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin, and Reina Sofia National Museum in Madrid.

For more information about this work and the exhibition's accompanying public programme, visit [www.artspace.org.nz](http://www.artspace.org.nz)



Fiona Amundsen  
*Like a Body  
Without Skin  
To Each Other /  
Way of Life*

**EX**

**ANTE**

October 27 - December 22, 2017

Fiona Amundsen, Tanya Busse and Emilija  
Škarnulytė, Seamus Harahan, Chia-Wei  
Hsu, Susan Schuppli

*Like a Body Without Skin*  
*To Each Other/Way of Life*  
HD Video  
26:58sec  
2016

In the early 1980s German artists Hilla and Bernd Becher, as part of their on going documentation of declining industries, extensively photographed American blast furnaces and other steel related industries. In particular, they described the blast furnace as being “like a body without skin. Its insides are visible from the outside; organs, arteries and skeleton creates its form”.<sup>1</sup> Four decades earlier, these enormous steel manufacturing industries were mobilised into a united nationalist front producing everything from planes to bombs when America declared war on Japan, post the 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbour.

*Like a Body Without Skin* brings together archival imagery with present-day filming of a former blast furnace in Pittsburgh into the video work *To Each Other/Way of Life*. Voice recordings of Ebina Kayoko, a Japanese woman who was a child during WWII and Ben Kuroki, who was the only American of Japanese descent to fight aerial combat in the Asia Pacific Theatre of WWII, accompany this footage. The former describes the affects of the 1945 incendiary bombing of Tokyo while the latter describes the internal moral dilemmas of participating in this incendiary bombing of Tokyo, the war veteran’s ancestral homeland.

*To Each Other References* an American produced WWII propaganda film that celebrated steel manufacturing as a form of patriotic duty. Positioned alongside present-day footage showing the remnants of a blast furnace, this archival footage of wartime steel mills provides a twofold sense of mobility through the material movement qualities of film itself, but also via matter (the material properties of steel) that is set into motion. An interweaving of historical connections and remnant narratives to these divergent spaces starts to emerge, despite what is literally visible within these different filming modalities. This in turn raises ideological questions regarding what it means to activate a historical event, in this case the Tokyo Air Raids, but also surrounding less visible contexts of politics, labour, capital, and racism which ‘fuelled’ the war machine itself, be it Imperial America or Japan. These ideas of motion visible, invisible and ideological are further positioned by Ebina’s voiceover, which provides a personalised account of the firebombing, its embodied remnants as well as the lack of official memorialisation of this event, raising questions concerning the violence, past and present that bodies endure.

By focusing on these ‘counter-histories’ *To Each Other/Way of Life* considers what it might mean, along with how, to make sense of such narratives now. How to become present to this history, to what it holds, to what it can teach of the ways the residues of historical acts hide within the present. This work critiques the dominance of Western-centric war stories in order to perform an act of decolonisation.

Fiona Amundsen’s practice focuses on paradigmatic socio-cultural histories and narratives associated with how the Asia Pacific Theatre (WWII) is officially memorialized across parts of Asia and the Pacific. She’s interested in what is left out of official narratives and memorialization, and has explored this by bringing together declassified archival imagery with her own present-day photographing/filming, as well as witness testimonies that expand how imaging is comprehended, both as feeling and signification. Her impulse to work with this very specific history connects to the question of who gets the right to remember, along with what it means to remember ethically, and what this might look like.

Her recent projects have focused on the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park (*The First City in History*) 2010, the 1941 Japanese initiated Pearl Harbour attack (*Operation Magic*) 2013, Yasukuni Shrine and the ancestry based plight of Japanese American Ben Kuroki (*Imperial Body*) 2014, the American initiated Battle of Okinawa (*Violent Wind of Steel*) 2014, the Japanese occupation of Singapore and its relationship to the Indian National Army (*Imperial Double Take*) 2015, and the firebombing of Tokyo and America’s steel manufacturing industries (*Like a Body Without Skin*) 2015/16 and the 1944 Cowra breakout that involved just over 1,000 Japanese POWs escaping from an Australian Camp. In 2015 she published a book, also titled *The Imperial Body*, with Split/Fountain.

For more information about this work and the exhibition’s accompanying public programme, 1. Becher, Hilla and Bernd, *Blast Furnaces*, [www.warinspace.org.nz](http://www.warinspace.org.nz).

*Cold Open* film running order (current) [13:24]

John B Keane talks about drink, 2010 [02.22]

Murder Inc. 2010 [01'00]

Brendan's Test, 2010 [01.40]

Dors dors Petit Bebe, 2010 [00.32]

Blue Eyes, 2010 [01.47]

Il Tramonto, 2012 [01.14]

A Ógánaigh An Chúil Chraobhaigh, 2010 [02.59]

Gulag Archipelago, 2012 [01.10]

Intro Bee-ing/ Sequential Spectrum, 2014 [00:40]

Shiny Wet Stones, 2016[3.15]

# Seamus Harahan *Cold Open*

**EX**

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Fiona Amundsen, Tanya Busse and Emilija  
Škarnulytė, Seamus Harahan, Chia-Wei  
Hsu, Susan Schuppli

*Cold Open*  
DVPal, sound  
13:28 secs  
2014

*“They look through... they look through a glass. And while the glass and lens might be the right strength, the distortion lies in the brain behind the lens... and that is what they’ll see.”* John B Keane

Belfast-based Seamus Harahan’s films set up elements of a narrative, only to confound them, a documentary approach which negates the structure of documentary.

*Cold Open* is nine plus chronological sequences from a larger series in progress, filmed over a year in the environs of Queen Mary’s Park, once the most heavily surveilled park in western Europe. Notable are the points of view characteristic of Harahan’s style: the camera points either upwards or looks down. When his lens is pointing up, it is usually at a feature of the sky or nature, with a sense of freedom from the anxiety which accompanies his CCTV-like scrutiny of youngsters in slightly menacing gatherings. The opening sequence of this short film has a couple discuss the husband’s drinking habits and public image, with a morning scene of rain-soaked branches. The mood is easy-going. Later, a group of young teen boys are observed play-acting violence towards each other, or perhaps not play-acting. The music varies between traditional

gaelic and rock. In the final sequence, a group of youngsters is gathered around a pram. The novelty here is the presence of teenage women, perhaps including a young mother. The film ends with Harahan widening the view to place this group of youngsters in their surroundings, which look alarmingly like the middle of a busy road. Once again Harahan, though not unsympathetic to his anonymous subjects, places them in the viewer’s mind as possible outcasts within their society and definitely alienated from the viewer’s own. And, if for Federico Fellini, the sea is the recurring feature which is a promise of catharsis from the malaise of urban society, for Harahan it is the distant sky.

Courtesy of Gimpel Fish Gallery

As the latest sequence, *Ex-ante* shows *Shiny Wet Stones*, made in 2016. Music is by Irish songwriter Robyn G. Shiels.

#### Practice statement from the artist

The content of the films tend to be a consequence of the where I am and occasionally, where I place myself. Much of my work engages quite directly with place. My only initial strategy is to forget and film the social and cultural environment. I work primarily with video and sound, and aim to maintain an open and intuitive experimental process to the initial cultural, social and experiential fragments that inform the films. I am interested in film-making that “is” about looking, recording before thought, the visual consequence of an absent minded gaze in response to the world; locating yourself, locating others – mapping emotional and intellectual spaces, being part of the moving mass; The accumulation of meanings in the dislocation of the familiar, where narratives recede in the minutiae of gesture and sound. The work takes the form of experimental documentary; films of found activity; referencing the point where inner and outer realities intersect. The individual film titles usually acknowledge the soundtracked music. Installation is a central part of the practice, to continue the open element of chance occurrences and to create an environment that is sympathetic to the content of the film, the context and the viewing demands. To bring the filmed space into the gallery space, a further suggestion. TV, monitor, projection, back projection. I will look for appropriate means and furnishing in the city/place the work is showing, on the streets, markets. No museum benches. Films are looped, sometimes with pause, and if there is more than one work in the space, they alternate in sync. I like to work with a certain amount of natural light and to visually reference with the outside. This means blackout spaces are rarely used. The space is usually full or part painted to mute the light and make the walls recede. The sound is usually simple stereo, full, sometimes physical sound. Some works have specific speaker installs. The equipment for display and cabling are usually left sculpturally visible, the means unhidden. No plinths, no headphones. As stated, the films tend to be unplanned, it is difficult to fit the framework of most film funding applications. The films are all made with no budget. Free film making.

10/05/15

For more information about this work and the exhibition’s accompanying public programme, visit [www.artspace.org.nz](http://www.artspace.org.nz)



Tanya Busse and  
Emilija Škarnulytė  
*Hollow Earth*

**EX**

**ANTE**

October 27 - December 22, 2017

Fiona Amundsen, Tanya Busse and Emilija  
Škarnulytė, Seamus Harahan, Chia-Wei  
Hsu, Susan Schuppli

*Hollow Earth*

HD video

8:15 secs

2013

Hollow Earth is the result of a friendship and collaboration between Emilija Škarnulytė (LT) and Tanya Busse (CAN/NO), that spanned many months and is still ongoing. The project is, more than anything, a platform that takes on different presentations given the context.

*The whole process started when we were working towards a project for Festspillene i Nord Norge in 2013. At the time, we were both MA students in the thematic program Capitalism, Sustainability and Art, which as a program emphasized an engagement with regional politics and how they intersect with global flows and systems. We were also both interested in pursuing the topic of the geo-political north, particularly the new mappings that are currently being made due to resource extraction and the monumental effects it has on the landscape as we know it. So we set out to visit active sites in Kiruna (LKAB), Karasjok (Store Norske Gull), Kirkenes (Northern Iron Limited), Svalbard (Store Norske Gull) and Barentsburg (Arktikugol), which are all featured in the film.*

*Aesthetically, we had been talking about the frame through which the northern landscape has been visually constructed: as a symbol of national romanticism, the arctic frontier, untamed*

*wilderness, polar expedition, tourist destination, and now, as a highly contested geopolitical territory at the forefront of resource and climate change debates. We combined historical archive footage, research material and landscape shots, in an attempt to create a visual meditation on the changing image of the north, now presented as a site where violence, desire, greed, and emotions are all played out.*

*The film is edited to emphasize the process of drilling through layers of geo-strata. So as you'll see, it starts by showing aerial perspectives, followed by surface mining and subterranean depths. The soundtrack is composed by the Tromsø-based group Animals (Simon Daniel Tegnander and Ørjan Amundsen) and includes field recordings and samples that make up an audio-landscape of dream-trance-contemplation and crystals.*

**Tanya Busse** is an artist who works predominantly with installation art, photography and print. Through these materials she explores notions of visibility in relation to deep time, invisible architecture and larger systems of power. Her work deals with contested sites of landscapes and communities, and what transpires among and between them and their visual representations. Busse holds an MA in Capitalism, Sustainability and Art from the Art Academy in Tromsø, and a BFA from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax. She has exhibited internationally and is currently the co-director of Smalls Gallery and Mondo Books.

**Emilija Škarnulytė** is a visual artist and filmmaker based in Tromsø, Berlin and Vilnius. Her films look into the cross sections of invisible structures, deep time, geotraumas, identity and geological ungrounding processes. Škarnulytė holds a BA from the Brera Academy of Fine Arts in Milan, Italy, and an MA from Tromsø Academy of Contemporary Art, Norway. Her films have been screened at the 15th International Venice Architecture Biennale (2016); SIART Bolivia International Art Biennial (2016); International Film Festival Rotterdam (Netherlands, 2015); Manifesta 10 (Russia, 2014), 31st Sao Paulo Biennial (2014); Pompidou Film Festival Hors Pistes (France, 2014) and International Short Film Festival Oberhausen (Germany, 2013) among others.

For more information about this work and the exhibition's accompanying public programme, visit [www.artspace.org.nz](http://www.artspace.org.nz)



Susan Schuppli  
*Trace Evidence*  
*Can the sun lie?*

<b>EX</b>	<b>ANTE</b>
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Škarnulytė, Seamus Harahan, Chia-Wei  
Hsu, Susan Schuppli

### *Trace Evidence*

HD video, colour with 4-channel sound

53 mins

2016

The *Trace Evidence* video trilogy explores the geological, meteorological, and hydrological appearance of nuclear evidence secreted within the molecular arrangement of matter. It focuses upon three events: the unearthing of ancient nuclear reactors at the uranium mine site in Oklo, Gabon in 1972, the discovery of Chernobyl's airborne contaminates at the Forsmark power plant in Sweden in April 1986, and the 7,600 kilometre five year journey of Caesium-137 from Fukushima-Daiichi through the waters of the Pacific Ocean to the west coast of Vancouver Island.

Within environmental justice work, establishing the incontrovertible relationship between cause and effect has proven a difficult legal challenge. The spatial dispersal of contaminants and temporal latency of their material and biological effects, which may take years, even decades to emerge, has allowed global climate-change actors and states to operate with virtual impunity. But the nuclear isn't like other complex, non-linear events. Despite its radical and covert nature, the unique signature and behaviour of radioactive isotopes allows its lethal traces to be tracked directly back to their source, re-connecting the evidential links that planetary phenomena have seemingly torn apart.

*Trace Evidence* is realised by Schuppli with a soundscape created by Philippe Ciompi.

*Trace Evidence* premiered at Bildmuseet, Umea Sweden September 2016 within the context of the *Perpetual Uncertainty* exhibition curated by Ele Carpenter.

### *Can the sun lie?*

HD video, colour with stereo sound

12:52 secs

2014

“Can the sun lie?” asked a US court in 1886 when reflecting upon the probative value of new forms of technical evidence, specifically photographs and film. This now historic question was conceptually reanimated when indigenous people in the Canadian north made the public claim that the Arctic sun is setting many kilometres further west—an assertion since corroborated by scientists studying the changing optics of polar ice due to thermal inversions and global warming. The video sets out to explore the emergence of a new visual regime brought about by climate change as well as the dispute between lay knowledge and scientific expertise that subsequently arose at COP15 with regards to this solar dispute. In the Canadian Arctic the sun is setting many kilometers further west along the horizon and the stars are no longer where they should be. Sunlight is behaving differently in this part of the world as the warming Arctic air causes temperature inversions and throws the setting sun off kilter. The longstanding dispute between lay knowledge and scientific expertise is forcefully reanimated by current climate change debates, particularly with respect to indigenous storytelling traditions. This is a reordering of expertise and its claims to truth that turn on the evidence proffered by nature itself.

**Susan Schuppli** is an artist and researcher based in London, whose work examines material evidence from war and conflict to environmental disasters. Current work explores the ways in which toxic ecologies from nuclear accidents and oil spills to the dark snow of the arctic are producing an “extreme image” archive of material wrongs. Her work looks at the ways in which non-human witnesses, such as materials and objects, enter into public discourse and testify to historical events, especially those involving political violence, ethnic conflict, and war crimes, assuming many different modes of communication from legal analysis and public advocacy to theoretical reflection and creative exploration. Her current research and artistic production expands these investigations to examine how environmental systems and the transformations brought about by global warming are also recording new forms of injustice and violence; creating, in effect, a planetary archive of material evidence.

Creative projects have been exhibited throughout Europe, Asia, Canada, and the US. Recent projects include *Atmospheric Feedback Loops*, a Vertical Cinema commission for Sonic Acts, Amsterdam. Forthcoming exhibitions include Ural Biennale, Moscow Biennale, Bonniers Kunsthall, Stockholm, and SculptureCenter, Queens. She has published widely within the context of media and politics and is author of the forthcoming book, *Material Witness* (MIT Press, Autumn release 2018), which is also the subject of an experimental documentary. She is Reader and co-Director of the Centre for Research Architecture, Goldsmiths. Previously she was an Associate Professor in visual/media arts in Canada. Schuppli received her PhD from Goldsmiths and participated in the Whitney Independent Study Program after completing her MFA at the University of California San Diego. Recipient of ICP Infinity Award 2016.

For more information about this work and the exhibition's accompanying public programme, visit [www.artspace.org.nz](http://www.artspace.org.nz)