

Works

- 1

Chia-Wei Hsu, *Huai Mo Village*, one-channel video installation, 08:20, 2012
- 2

Fiona Amundsen, *Like a Body Without Skin, To Each Other/Way of Life*, HD Video, 26:58, 2016
- 3

Seamus Harahan, *Cold Open*. DVPal, sound, 13:28, 2014
- 4

Susan Schuppli, *Trace Evidence*, HD video, colour with 4-channel sound, 53:00, 2016
- 5

Susan Schuppli, *Can the sun lie?*, HD video, colour with stereo sound, 12:52, 2014
- 6

Tanya Busse and Emilija Škarnulytė, *Hollow Earth*, HD video, 08:15, 2013

Film running order:	
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	03:15

Ex-ante

October 27 - December 22, 2017

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

Public programme

Saturday November 18, 3pm  
Screening event

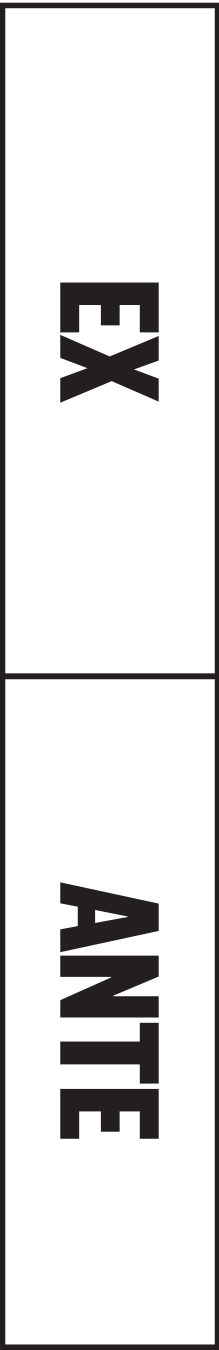
Saturday November 25, 2pm  
Open reading group

Wednesday November 29, 6pm  
Artist talk with Fiona Amundsen and Chia-Wei Hsu

Saturday December 2, 2pm  
Open reading group

Thursday December 14, 6pm  
Open reading group

Further information will be posted on the Artspace website



# EX

Utilising observation, forensic, and analytical strategies, the work of six artists offer cinematic approaches to capturing community-based realities. Through their exhibition, and a series of reading groups and events, *Ex-ante* is interested in tying stories and storytelling from the Canadian North, Northern Europe, the Asia-Pacific region, and Aotearoa.

Publicly asking how these works negotiate conflicts of nature, law, politics, and materials, this exhibition suggests that inabilities to respond to and to produce ‘truth’ belong also to the domain of image-making.

New regimes of images find their way into our courtrooms, at first adding an unusual break into the perceived truth of law. The image’s performative tactic can give form to the identity of stories from communities that might otherwise not surface into public knowledge. Stripped of its observational power, the image loses clear connection to a single reality.

These are some of the attitudes employed to signal a shifting need for the undermining of the historical event, its claim to the truth, and the position from which it is told. How is the image and imagination involved in this? Can we speak before our turn? How to offer a reality before the event?

The works begin by revealing residues of the Cold War in South-east Asia where Taiwanese artist **CHIA-WEI HSU** has been visiting, documenting, and performing with the inhabitants of Huai Mo village in North Thailand. While following the residents of this border community, a dense history of anti-communist warfare, individual spy stories, drug trafficking, and intergenerational identity politics emerges. The work offers an insight into a visible and floating community negotiating multiple realities at once over many years. Hsu is not only trying to document this complex story, but by building a stage on which these narratives can literally be performed, the artist attempts to comprehend a history through both observational and performative analytical approaches.

**SUSAN SCHUPPLI** shows two experimental documentaries examining a series of media artefacts that have emerged out of conditions of conflict and violence. With each work the artist is interested in bringing into focus the micro-politics of materials that are present in or moving through natural systems; the mysterious migration of the setting sun, and nuclear contamination flowing through ecosystems. Both videos explore material evidence resulting from industrial and extravist activities that have had a devastating impact upon local environments and which have resulted in the production of new forms of contemporary violence and harm. These are directly entangled with the histories of colonial violence within indigenous communities in Canada—the primary setting for each video. Schuppli calls these forms of evidence ‘material witnesses’. The artistic image is used to bring different truth-telling regimes into contestation by highlighting how legal and techno-scientific processes are challenged by the material ‘truths’ encoded in nature itself.

Norwegian/Lithuanian duo **TANYA BUSSE** and **EMILIJA ŠKARNULYTĖ** present a film scanning a Northern landscape of radical changes; changes put in place in order to extract from nature, and which image a story of ‘now’. In documenting often violent acts towards the landscape, Busse and Škarnulytė argue that we need to reconsider these places in their processed state, but also their pristine nature in the popular imaginary as equally important in forming our understanding of ecological debates. A site where the earth is constantly punctured, the North captures our imagination as a place where new maps and ecological frontiers are drawn out.

**FIONA AMUNDSEN**’s work brings to life the seemingly historical nature of Second World War conflict in the Asia-Pacific. Stepping beyond the linear memory of this historical ‘event’, Amundsen undermines what a site, a nation, and a material, can be and produce. Material and nonmaterial realities come together via the imaginative documentations of Ben Kuroki a Japanese-American WWII veteran, as well as a Pittsburgh steel factory, connecting human and nonhuman agents through conflict. Amundsen’s work unties imperial history from a single site of imagination into an unresolved event that works to question the reality of the Asia-Pacific region, including Amundsen’s home Aotearoa.

Capturing the moment just before the event, **SEAMUS HARAHA**n’s films are often seen as ‘documents of truth’, footage of real life situations captured by the artist who happened to be in the right place at the right time. But here the artist actively participates in the meaning of the event, by showing, dissecting and transforming it. Harahan’s is not a staged, prepared form of art, it is instead a microcosm, part of a larger routine that is yet to be understood. He explains his practice by ‘having no other choice than to relate to humanity’, since we are simply ‘part of it’. Harahan does not choose locations, material or subjects by artistic intent, this ‘content’ is his immediate reality. There is no choice to this kind of material and no way to avoid one’s relation to if and when we see it or, for Harahan, film it. The places of his filming are often contested and highly regulated. Belfast’s Queen Mary’s Park is a park that once was the most surveilled public spaces in Western Europe, in a time that also saw observation coming to our television screens as ‘reality-TV’.

*Ex-ante* focuses on the role of images in our world, arguing that we need not speak to truth —either ‘post’ or ‘pre’—nor the image perform it. Instead, the exhibition advocates for the imaginative and speculative role of the image when it is set to work on the present. It tries to understand how we might be complicit in the production of our own realities, truths, or futures. How not to forecast, but to see, before the event?

# ANTE



Chia-Wei Hsu, *Huai Mo Village*, one-channel video installation, 08:20, 2012



Chia-Wei Hsu, *Huai Mo Village*, one-channel video installation, 08:20, 2012



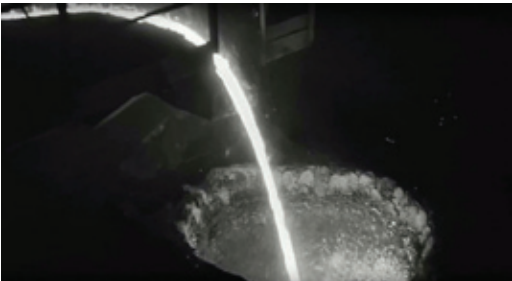
Susan Schuppli, *Can the sun lie?*, HD video, colour with stereo sound, 12:52, 2014



Susan Schuppli, *Trace Evidence*, HD video, colour with 4-channel sound, 53:00, 2016



Tanya Busse and Emilija Škarnulytė, *Hollow Earth*, HD video, 08:15, 2013



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