

Introduction

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Mounting Indigenous deaths in custody and serial asylum seeker deaths at the border and in detention prisons are all systemically generated by transnational iterations of the racial state and its diverse non-state actors—including transport, surveillance and security companies. It was this unfolding necropolitical crisis that prompted the development of the Deathscapes project. In an attempt to identify the patterns of racial violence deployed by the state and its operatives, the project developed the analytic of the deathscape as what succinctly captures all of the relations of power that lethally impact on the lives of targeted racialised groups.

This special issue of *Art and Documentation*, published in two parts, emerges from the generous invitation from Marina Gržinić for Deathscapes to speak to its afterlives, that is, to the new embodiments and contestatory vectors that continue to be animated in the wake of the formal cessation of the project in 2020.

Across the two special issues, a range of work powerfully transposes the analytic of the deathscape to new international locations and subjects: they include colonial Nairobi, occupied Kashmir, political violence and memory in Chile and

the complex systems of relations between Ethiopia, its Black diaspora and the white Australian settler state. In keeping with the way in which Deathscapes mobilised a heterogeneity of genres, media and languages, the contributions to these two special issues encompass a celebratory mix of images, interviews, testimony, poems and reflections.

What emerges from the contributions of these two special issues are powerful voices that expose various modalities of racialised state violence, indict its operatives and, crucially, that also work to transmute it through creative acts that bear witness to the fact that the dead, in the loving hands of the friends and allies that survive their passing, continue to be animated in inspiring afterlives—as is so eloquently evidenced by Jan Turner and Albertina Viegas’ “Continuous Being—The Artworks of Mr Ward.” The painful death in state custody of Mr Ward was the very first case study explored by the Deathscapes project and we are honoured and moved to be able to include this expanded exploration of his “continuous life,” written by two of his old friends and allies with the approval of his family, as part of the Afterlives project.

In one of the poems that concludes Part 2 of this “Afterlives” special issue, “Under the Oldest

Tree,” Yirga Gelaw Woldeyes invokes his Ethiopian grandmother who reminds him to ask his elders to plant him under the oldest tree—where “you will grow roots and seeds.” In the shadow of the now-elderly tree of Deathscapes, these two special issues bear witness to unexpected seeds that have struck deep roots and are generating new and impassioned forms of future-oriented justice.

Works Cited

Bui, Michelle, Dean Chan, Suvendrini Perera, Joseph Pugliese and Charandev Singh. 2017. *The Road: Passage Through the Deathscape. Deathscapes: Mapping Race and Violence in Settler States*, 2017. <https://webarchive.nla.gov.au/awa/20201103065140/http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/173410/20201103-1648/www.deathscapes.org/case-studies/the-road-passage-through-the-deathscape/index.html>.

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