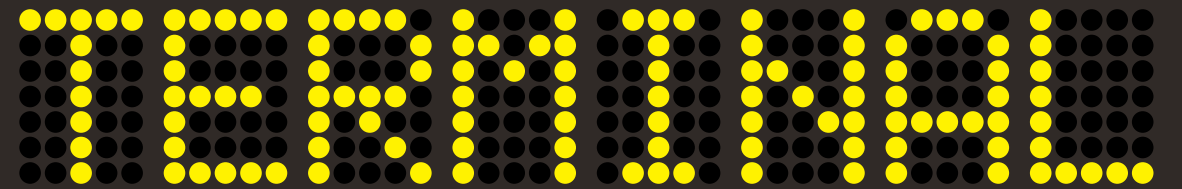




W E L C O M E



Aaron Lister





TERMINAL





Don Mueng International Airport, Bangkok
Chun photographer / Shutterstock.com

Terminal Art

Aaron Lister

Gate 1

The empty airport is one of the most haunting and defining images of our time. As the coronavirus response enforced travel bans and closed borders, images of deserted airports have come to hold a set of often wildly contradictory ideas: the fragility of human existence, the failure or success of government responses to the crisis, a model for a more-sustainable future less reliant on travel, the destruction of the aviation industry, the collapse of global capitalism. Frightening to some, to others empty airports are something to celebrate.

Even before coronavirus, the abandoned airport was a ‘disaster porn’ trope. Here, scenes from the aftermath of terror attacks that turn the terminal into a violent spectacle mesh with images of disaster-ruined airports, such as Sendai Airport buckled then engulfed by waves following the 2011 earthquake and tsunami, and Grand Bahama International Airport wrecked by Hurricane Dorian in 2019. Zombie airports dot the globe. Decommissioned for political or economic reasons and left to decay, some have been revived through the global dark-tourism and film industries—the latter fittingly repurposing them as sets for horror, action, or science-fiction movies.

As anxiety inducing as the empty airport can be, to the traveller it is preferable to a crowded one. Just days before those images of empty airports flooded news feeds, we were inundated with scenes of overcrowded ones—travellers fighting snaking queues, the clock, and each other to get home before travel restrictions kicked in. These images speak more directly to the pandemic than to the airport itself, which, for the most part, is almost always crowded. We grudgingly accept this condition in exchange for the promise of cost savings and security.

Crowded airports are more banal than empty ones. They announce business as usual with all its inherent frustrations. The aviation industry sees the crowded terminal as success, although its advertising often promises vacant spaces, with a smattering of relaxed travellers. Overcrowding is seen as a question of demand exceeding capacity, to which the answer is always expansion: the building of ever-larger terminals, runways, and planes. If and when the aviation industry recovers after this pandemic, those promos featuring empty terminals will likely be replaced with scenes of bustling ones to lure travellers back by insisting that others are on board with flying again.

Another recent event that put the crowded airport back into the news was Donald Trump's 2019 executive order imposing an immediate travel ban on several Middle Eastern countries. Familiar images of disrupted airports and distraught travellers were quickly followed by scenes of protest, as people travelled to airports to challenge the restrictions placed on the free movement of others. As academic and one-time baggage handler Christopher Schaberg argues, the #OCCUPYAIRPORTS movement started a new form of 'terminal democracy' that turns the airport into a site of protest by

mobilising its crowds and confined spaces as disruptive tools.¹ That year, demonstrations in the arrivals hall at Hong Kong International Airport shut down one of Asia's busiest transport hubs, while ongoing protests at Heathrow blocked the building of a third runway.

In Hong Kong especially, the activism was often characterised as terrorism. The media's replaying of dramatic, violent imagery of largely peaceful protestors was intended to tap into the collective image bank of terrorist attacks on terminals and the particular horror it has come to represent. Ai Weiwei's researchers were also there, documenting the entire protest movement. His Instagram feed showed a different kind of activism, focused on how the collective body of protestors swelled and engulfed the terminal. If these protests were about reclaiming the airport, the climate crisis has severed our relation to it. Aviation is a major contributor to global warming and the perfect target of efforts to address it. It represents the confluence of the global market, government regulation, big business, and individual accountability. We are told to lower our carbon footprint by buying local, taking fewer flights, staying away from the airport.

The airport has become site, symbol, and battleground for our most pressing political, ecological, and humanitarian issues. It has lost any vestige of its past glamour, and instead become paradoxically emblematic of our troubled times. Even before Covid-19, Christopher Schaberg argued that we may be in the age of 'the end of airports'.² Tell that to the people booking 'flights to nowhere' that take off and land at the same place or ordering home-delivered airplane meals.³

Battles over what the airport was, is, and might become play out in airports themselves, in policy making, the media,

and through representation. Images of dysfunctional terminals—crowded or empty, welcoming or hostile, peaceful or violent—signal a rupture in the representation of airports, and our relationship to them. Contemporary art has been an agent in this process.

Gate 2

Within and beyond the terminal, art has always been called on to represent the airport. The murals commissioned for US airports during aviation's heyday represent this pact. James Brooks's *Flight* (1942) at LaGuardia was one of a number of murals made through the New Deal's Works Progress Administration Federal Art Project of the 1930s and 1940s, just as the aviation industry was taking off and airports were being built. This art-deco-tinged celebration of aviation's glories and humanity's dream of conquering the skies starts with Icarus, and moves through Da Vinci and the Wright brothers, before landing at the ground crews of the modern airport. Seventy-one metres long and wrapping around the rotunda walls, *Flight* meets its architecture in a suggestive, expansive way that has come to characterise the often-bloated mode of airport art. This is a mural made for a time transfixed by the new possibilities and romance of air travel, when New Yorkers would pay to enter LaGuardia just to watch planes take off and land.

Art has been commissioned for airports ever since. Styles and forms have shifted over time as architects, artists, and authorities have rethought the relationship between art and the airport. *Flight* only lasted ten years before it was painted over (it was restored in the 1980s). Its initial



Demonstration against extradition bill, Terminal 1, Hong Kong International Airport, 2019.

Wpopey / Wikipedia

disappearance was linked to its perceived communist sympathies, indicating that such decisions are rarely purely aesthetic—they move with the ideologies and economics of the times. Yet, the more things change, the more they stay the same. Alexander Calder's mobile *.125* (installed at JFK International Airport in 1957) or Richard Wilson's *Slipstream* (commissioned for Heathrow in 2014) update the ideas in Brooks's mural. All three works belong to a cache of airport art that evokes the marvel of flight—in these cases by hovering above the heads of travellers, as if preparing them psychologically and physically for the experience to come.

Modern art and aviation were products of the same historical forces and served each other's needs. The modern gallery and the terminal were presented as spaces apart from the real world, promising escape from everyday reality. They often shared the same brutalist architecture to signal this liberating potential: large white walls, bright lights, expansive atrium-like spaces. This affinity coalesced in the late-twentieth-century idea of the airport as non-place—an anonymous, transitional space detached from the world, operating between nations and interpersonal relations—as defined by anthropologist Marc Augé, built by Eero Saarinen, and fictionalised by J.G. Ballard.

9/11 changed airports forever. They hunkered down in the wake of the attacks. Grand concourses and open vistas were replaced with sealed passageways and checkpoints. As journalist Alastair Gordon observed, terminals in the post-terror era became 'heavy and grounded, whereas earlier ones had been light and soaring'.⁴ New security procedures redefined travellers as potential threats. Gordon argues that anti-terrorist measures remade the airport as an

'electronically controlled environment rivalled only by maximum security prisons', pointing out that some architects were responsible for both kinds of structure.⁵ Where anonymity and freedom were once built into the romance of travel and the idea of the non-place, full disclosure and submission to security screening procedures now became prerequisites for entering the terminal. Art played a key role in this new terminal reality. Airports increased their art-commissioning programmes to help humanise what had become depressing, disorientating spaces—a charm offensive to distract and amuse travellers trapped within a security system that had turned them into objects to be processed. As a tool of that system, art was asked to carry those human values that the airport had lost—freedom, individuality, revelry—while also often assisting with wayfinding.

As airports expanded over the following years, they were reimagined as destinations rather than transport hubs—vast entertainment complexes where travellers would happily spend time and money. Along with their physical footprints, airports have expanded their art offerings. A modern-looking abstract sculpture suspended from the ceiling doesn't cut it anymore. Major airports now often run full art programmes, which may include site-specific installations, exhibitions, artist residencies, walking tours for non-passengers, education programmes, and even museums in private lounges. In some of these new 'airport-museum hybrids', security has come to the assistance of art, reversing those post-9/11 dynamics. Amsterdam Airport Schiphol has rotating exhibitions of Dutch masters from the Rijksmuseum, displayed behind glass in climate-controlled conditions. After passport control, it's the most secure place in the terminal.⁶

Many airports now work with museums on their cultural offering. The relationship makes economic sense. Airport contracts provide cultural institutions with revenue and visitation, while a substantial art presence sees increased spending in airports' retail spaces and restaurants.⁷ Brussels Airport's animated Bruegel the Elder installation of 2019 seemed to comment on the pacifying role art is also asked to play within the wellness drive of today's airports. His chaotic and violent images of peasant life seem too close to those familiar scenes of delay-induced travel rage that airport-wellness initiatives seek to assuage through art-appreciation and therapy classes, as well as therapy dogs, yoga, and meditation rooms.⁸

Another recent airport trend is towards becoming a 'gateway to local culture' rather than a 'gateway to the world'⁹—an about-face on the old aspirations of the non-place and late capitalism's dream of the global village. Chain stores and franchise restaurants have been replaced by local vendors and signage rewritten to capture local dialects and histories. Living walls of endemic plants have become a ubiquitous part of 'going green' initiatives, though few can dream of matching the four-storey rainforest in Singapore Changi Airport. The commissioning of local art and culture has ramped up alongside other community-based initiatives. At one end of this spectrum is Wellington International Airport's suspended *Lord of the Rings* prop-as-sculpture that proudly proclaim the city 'the Middle of Middle-Earth' and promote its film industry. At the other end might be two recent redevelopment projects in Aotearoa New Zealand by Māori artists that rethink the airport as a bicultural or indigenous space.

New Plymouth Airport recently reopened with artist Rangi Kipa representing the



Airport Boulevard, Singapore Changi Airport.
Jansen Yang / Unsplash



Johnson Witehira, Auckland International Airport.

perspective of local hapū Puketapu, whose land the airport sits on. Kipa's art transforms the terminal into an embodiment of the story of Te Ātiawa ancestor Tamarau, who guides the traveller every step of the journey. Artist Johnson Witehira contributed to the recent expansion and redesign of Auckland International Airport's departures terminal. His role was firstly consultative—to gather the journeying stories of three mana-whenua groups who have a fraught history with the airport, especially following the desecration of wāhi tapu (sacred sites) in the construction of a new runway in the early 2000s.¹⁰ He then ensured these mana-whenua and broader bicultural narratives were embedded into the fabric of the terminal through an integrated-design approach that included carving designs into walls and seating, and stencilling them onto pillars.

Kipa and Witehira insisted on being involved from the outset in the planning and design of these facilities, countering the history of Māori art and culture being tacked on at the end of public projects as tokenistic signs of identity and engagement. Rather than stand-alone works hanging on the wall or from the ceiling, their projects are threaded through the structure of the terminal. Witehira refused to make conventional 'airport art' that travellers could walk past and ignore. Integrating his work with the terminal's structure also protects it from future redevelopments. He was conscious of the fate of Aotearoa's most famous airport mural, Ralph Hotere's *Godwit/Kuaka* (1977), that once hung in the arrivals hall of this airport, but was removed and dumped without consultation as part of a previous redevelopment. These projects are part of a new focus on the local and indigenous manifesting in airports globally. In Aotearoa, it's a case of a global trend meeting local Treaty responsibilities.

Both projects reveal the tensions that come with these new possibilities for both art and the airport. There was no place in the New Plymouth-airport redesign for an aluminium relief mural by local artist Don Driver, which had hung in the terminal for fifty years. It commemorates Charles Kingsford Smith's first passenger-carrying trans-Tasman flight in 1933. There was an outcry, although one councillor clearly overstated the case in claiming 'its fate is probably the single most pressing issue in the minds of many in the community'.¹¹ The decision to make a replica and plop it safely outside the terminal has not quelled the debate.

Gate 3

Airports have again called on art to assist in reshaping their image and operations, this time in more ethical, sustainable, and community-focused ways—even if the cracks in this allegiance are starting to show. Over recent years, a countertradition has emerged that forges a more critical relationship between art and the airport—art made *about* the airport, not for it. It is not commissioned and is mostly unsanctioned (though projects utilising the spaces or technologies of the airport require institutional support and sometimes participation). Much of it emerges from the traveller's perspective and reworks the airport's iconography while using or subverting its processes. Some artists address the airport as form or symbol, others take on the history and politics of specific airports. This is not art for the terminal, it is Terminal Art.

Brian Eno and Martha Rosler are key figures in Terminal Art. Eno's album *Ambient 1: Music for Airports* (1978) came out of his

frustration with the canned music he was subjected to in the transit lounge at Cologne Bonn Airport. His minimalist soundscape could be looped to defuse the always-anxious atmosphere of the terminal, and pointed out to airport designers that sound should always be a consideration.¹² (If the airport seems a strange place for the birth of ambient music, what about land art? Robert Smithson's monumental earthworks like *Spiral Jetty* (1970) were inspired by looking down from an airplane window while scoping a commission for Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport in 1966.) Martha Rosler's *In the Place of the Public: Airport Series* started with taking photographs of airport interiors while travelling in the 1980s. It took a decade to realise what sat behind this compulsion—the understanding 'that airports function as a microcosm or a model of the world as it is right now'.¹³ Since then, Rosler has found ways to recast the project to capture how this model has subsequently broken and shifted, especially in the wake of 9/11 and the migration crisis. Rosler often focuses on labour practices rendered invisible by the airport and ignored by travellers.

Eno and Rosler move beyond the airport as a generic non-place—towards representing it as a profoundly human and social space that is culturally and politically charged, full of drama and emotion—but they don't leave the airport behind entirely. London City Airport marked the fortieth anniversary of Eno's album by playing it for a day in 2018, while Rosler has shown her photographs in Frankfurt Airport terminal.

9/11 was the catalyst for Terminal Art, fundamentally changing the idea and reality of the airport, as well as the ways that art could intersect with it. Surrendering human agency to new systems of surveillance and

control became the pressing issue. While large sculptures and abstract murals once defined the airport as non-place, Terminal Art is dominated by photography and moving image. These are not only mediums of transit, they can also turn the airport's technologies of surveillance and documentation back against it. Hassan Elahi's ongoing project *Tracking Transience* (2003–ongoing) exemplifies the Terminal Art subgenre of sousveillance ('surveillance from below'). In 2012, he was incorrectly detained and interrogated at Detroit Metro Airport, and placed on a terrorist-watch list. Since then, he has 'assisted' authorities by using surveillance technologies to provide full disclosure of his movements, activities, and interactions, online in real time. His defiance is masked as compliance, where 'micro acts of consent become macro acts of dissent'.¹⁴

Terminal Art does not necessarily offer solutions to the airport's problems. It can be apolitical, irreverent, even satirical, revelling in the complexities and ambiguities of one of the most paradoxical spaces humanity has built for itself. Where art located in the airport tries to assuage travellers, Terminal Art is often deliberately disorientating and confounding. It also knows that contemporary art cannot take any high ground. Art's complicity with airport politics is a constant undercurrent. Elmgreen and Dragset's airport-as-exhibition at Seoul's Plateau Samsung Museum of Art (2015) came complete with boarding passes, security checks, and a baggage carousel with a lone suitcase. The artists conflated the aesthetics and politics of the airport and the gallery as symbiotic sites of power that regulate the global flow of ideas, capital, and people.

Like the aviation industry, the art world has become a target for climate-change actions. Contemporary art is a

global enterprise that necessitates travel and embraces nomadism as its modus operandi. Its people and art move around a never-ending global cycle of exhibitions and residencies—at substantial environmental cost. Terminal Art comes out of and depends on this system, while often biting the hand that feeds it. It can be part of the problem, part of the solution, neither or both—but these tensions are always close to the surface. Fischli and Weiss's once-lauded *Airport Photographs* (1987–2012)—around 1,000 images taken while they travelled the world on art business—was recently called out as a destructive cliché of art travel.¹⁵

Swiss uber-curator Hans Ulrich Obrist embodies these tensions. Once described as 'the latest patron saint of art-world travel, his reliquary a rolling suitcase', Obrist is estimated to have made over 2,000 flights in twenty years.¹⁶ He conducted meetings and did interviews and other work on the way to and from airports or in the air. His gallery visits were even described on these terms: 'Obrist was in and out remarkably quickly, like a man with a plane to catch'.¹⁷ Or, rather, he used to be like this. Now Director of London's Serpentine Galleries, Obrist recently announced that 'Ecology will be at the heart of everything we do'.¹⁸ This involves significantly reducing his own carbon emissions. Aware that he is largely responsible for popularising the belief that travel is essential for both the curator and the artist, he now opposes 'fly-in, fly-out curating'. The patron saint of art travel has clipped his own wings. He has also committed the Serpentine to 'slow programming', designed to reduce the environmental footprint of its exhibitions.

We can't all follow his new lead (as, in truth, few could afford to follow his earlier one). It takes a certain position and privilege

to make such choices, and potentially sacrifice the benefits of being part of the global art network. Travel is especially vital to the art ecosystem in Aotearoa, which is based on countering the country's crushing distance from art centres. Our most successful artists are predominately expats or frequent flyers, operating through the global art world. We celebrate historical expatriate artists like Frances Hodgkins who escaped these shores (even if she had to take the boat) and crave the international validation when Mata Aho Collective are selected for Documenta or London's Royal Academy announces a Rita Angus exhibition. Art made here needs to be part of the global discussion and can't take the train like Obrist. It's a government priority. Creative New Zealand funds artists, galleries, and events that take art from Aotearoa to the world, and, through its Te Manu Ka Tau Flying Friends programme, brings in key overseas artworld figures. Its highest-profile project is the Venice Biennale—the global art world's signature event—which we have participated in since 2001. It has featured our artists making art for the international art world (Simon Denny, whose 2015 Venice project features in this exhibition, conducted one of those inflight interviews with Obrist).

Calls to cancel the jet-fuelled international art circuit are bound up with the idea that it enforces a global art monoculture—that the same privileged artists and galleries show the same sort of work to the same sort of people with a baggage-carousel-like regularity. But over recent years, indigenous and first-nation artists have taken centre stage within these models. Samoan–New Zealand artist Yuki Kihara is our next representative at Venice—the first Pacific artist recognised in this way. Her work is already as well-travelled and international facing as any previously

selected artist. Johnson Witihira connects his Auckland Airport project to its Vancouver counterpart, which presents itself as an indigenous space through commissioning Northwest and Pacific Coast First-Nation artists. He has passed through that airport as part of a Creative New Zealand-funded indigenous-exchange programme that flies artists and curators in and out of Aotearoa, Australia, and Canada. The 'fly-in, fly-out' mode of contemporary art serves many different artists, cultures, and needs, and the opposition between #lovinglocal and being #antiworldwide doesn't hold.

The global art system is an accelerator of climate change, though its defenders often point to more destructive industries like fashion or construction.¹⁹ Contemporary art often flirts with climate change as an interesting issue, rather than an urgent problem. This reluctance has been explained through the art world's enthrallment with the possibilities of travel,²⁰ or even because of its historical dependence on sponsorship from energy and aviation companies.²¹ In 2019, environmental activist Greta Thunberg popularised the term 'flygskam' (flight shame) and promoted the use of alternative travel options to lower carbon emissions. Brazilian artist Rubem Robierb took her message to the heart of global art-world excess (and to the US city most susceptible to the impacts of climate change). At Art Basel Miami Beach, he floated a two-tonne, ten-metre-long ice sculpture spelling out her message 'HOW DARE YOU' in a hotel pool, exemplifying the virtue-signalling side of contemporary art's engagement with climate change.

Thunberg's rise was paralleled by that of another Swedish woman with an

important message for humanity. In 2018, New York's Guggenheim Museum staged the first US exhibition dedicated to turn-of-the-twentieth-century artist-mystic Hilma af Klint. Made in secret, her paintings were kept hidden for a future time that would understand her message. They feel pressing today because their quest to address the big questions of existence through a unique fusion of artistic, spiritualist, and ecological enquiry goes beyond the grandstanding of much 'issues based' contemporary art. The world has fallen hard for af Klint. Exhibitions in Stockholm, London (curated by Obrist), and New York shattered attendance records. Others have been staged at São Paulo, Venice, Tel Aviv, and Copenhagen, with future showings lined up around the globe. The opportunity for global audiences to experience af Klint's work—as it is being rediscovered and worked out, changing art history—is unprecedented and revelatory. Yet, like all exhibitions and forms of cultural production, it comes with a significant carbon footprint. The ultimate answer to the art world's environmental problem would be to close down the global circuit of exhibitions, travel, transport, and large-scale production. But, in this case—and many others—that loss would be too great. As Kyle Chayka concludes in his essay 'Can the Art World Kick Its Addiction to Flying?', we have to accept that art-world practices accelerate climate change, that 'these issues are built into the nature of art itself', but must find ways to think how this damage can be minimised.²² Do we have to sacrifice Hilma for Greta, or vice versa? Surely we need both.

Terminal is an exhibition of international art flown into Aotearoa that tracks the ways contemporary artists have contested the image, experience, and idea of the airport. It is an exhibition with global relevance,

especially at a time of climate crisis, mass migration, and recent border closures at the hands of a deadly virus that has shut down the art world, the aviation industry, and everyday life. These issues have special relevance for a nation at the bottom of the world that trades in OEs, export goods, and ways to overcome its geographic isolation—especially with its art and culture.

The exhibition and this catalogue are divided into four zones: Arrivals, Screening, The Runway, and Departures. Some artists have made major bodies of work on airports; others have passed through the airport as part of other investigations. Some of the work was made in airports. Much of it references specific airports. Fictional and real airports collide in the exploration of the routines and politics of contemporary travel and contemporary art—what it means to live, travel, and make art in the twenty-first century. *Terminal* revels in a paradox: this is an exhibition about art and the airport made for a time that is probably witnessing the end of airports, and, perhaps, of art as we know it.

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Senior Curator Kaiwhakarite Matua
City Gallery Wellington Te Whare Toi

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ARRIVALS



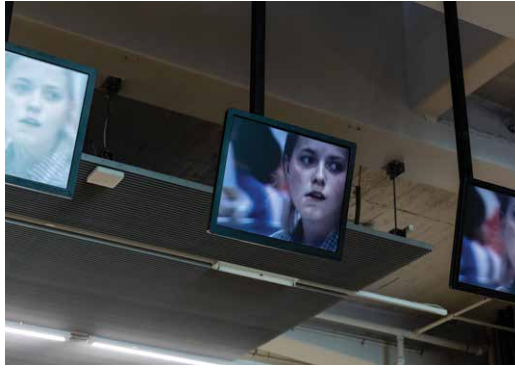
TERMINAL



Marco Brambilla

Approach 1999

video installation



Marco Brambilla's *Approach* has been called 'a love song to airport voyeurism',¹ and 'a kind of action-flick trailer'.² It turns a mundane moment of the airport experience—the thrusting of the long-haul traveller back into the world via the arrivals lounge—into a portentous rite of passage with a journey-across-the-River-Styx feel. Brambilla often explores transit between different states of being. Commissioned by New York's Standard Hotel to make a work for its elevators in 2009, he devised the vertically-scrolling video *Civilization*, which moves between visions of heaven and hell sampled and remixed from Hollywood films as the elevators move between floors.

Approach splices together footage shot over a fourteen-hour period at JFK International Airport with telephoto-lens-equipped camcorders. It captures the movements and expressions of individual travellers released by the airport's systems, but still subject to the physiological, psychological, and emotional effects of long-haul flight. While relatively diverse in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, and class, the travellers respond to this situation in choreographed unison. A glazed-over, disorientated stare gives way to a desperate search for someone or something to pull them back to the world. This is followed, a split second later, by a moment of relief when this point of contact is identified. *Approach* extracts this shared vulnerability out of the journeys of its individual subjects, the moment before they all quickly snap back to life and human relations.

The project is less humanising and documentary than it sounds. Brambilla's various manipulations of the accrued material turn this transitional moment into something metaphorical and disturbing. He focuses on the travellers' faces to emphasise the psychological dimension of this return. The

footage is slowed down and split over four monitors, with a two-second delay to further stretch out this moment and its sense of disorientation. The ambient soundtrack amps up the discord, blending the music of György Ligeti (famously used in Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, 1968) with field recordings made in JFK and Charles De Gaulle Airports. The result is less a portrait of individuals arriving at particular destinations at particular times, more an abstraction of 'the traveller' subjected to the technologies of flight and the airport, as well as to the ambitions of art.

Brambilla processes passengers at JFK as Taryn Simon does the items confiscated from them by customs agents in the same airport a decade later for her project *Contraband*. Rubbing these two projects together raises the question of what Brambilla's passengers might be carrying in their bags or pockets. Art is usually situated on *Approach*'s side of the border. Made a year later, British artist Mark Wallinger's *Threshold to the Kingdom* (2000) presents slow-motion footage of the endless flow of passengers through the international-arrivals gate at London City Airport, set to the music of Gregorio Allegri. Both videos now have a time-capsule feel, in terms of their technologies and the airport designs and traveller fashions they capture. In a more important way, both videos belong to a different moment. They were made just before 9/11's radical reshaping of the flying experience and, especially, that transitional zone between inside and outside the airport. There is something elegiac or prophetic to both Brambilla's and Wallinger's videos—in the same way that Johan Grimont's plane-hijacking film *Dial H-I-S-T-O-R-Y* (1997) seems to anticipate 9/11.

9/11 also changed the role of cameras in the airport. While security cameras have been

employed in US airports since the late 1980s, their use expanded exponentially after 9/11. JFK now proudly boasts that its 247-strong Sentry360 camera system covers every inch of the terminal and every traveller that passes through it.⁴ In 2019, Homeland Security trialled the extension of biometric and facial-recognition technologies to domestic and international gates. It was forced to abandon the programme following intense criticism over invasion of privacy.⁵ Brambilla's scanning and profiling of passengers now feels even more unsettling and prescient. In exploiting the creative possibilities of these then-nascent technologies, *Approach* sits somewhere at the start of the sousveillance tradition that subverts these tools for other ends. It aligns with recent examples of passengers turning their camera phones on airport officials, to document potential violations of their rights through the screening process.

Approach focuses on the psychology of viewer and gallery. The videos play on suspended monitors, mimicking airport-display technologies (those screens Alex Prager's characters look up towards). Roles reverse. As the viewer enters the camera-and-security-monitored gallery, their eyes alight around the space in search of points of connection—making the art-gallery experience as labyrinthian and problematic as the airport one.

1 Thad Ziolkowski, 'Marco Brambilla', *Artforum*, January 2020: 117.

2 Shonagh Adelman, 'Marco Brambilla', *Frieze*, 3 March 2000, [frieze.com/article/marco-brambilla](https://www.frieze.com/article/marco-brambilla).

3 'Total Security Completes Security Camera Installation at JFK International Airport', 2 July 2018, <https://www.asmag.com/showpost/24635.aspx>.

4 Zach Whittaker, 'After Criticism, Homeland Security Drops Plans to Expand Airport Face Recognition Scans to US Citizens', *TechCrunch*, 6 December 2019, www.techcrunch.com/2019/12/05/homeland-security-drops-airport-citizens-face-scans/.

Thomas Demand

Gangway 2001

colour photograph/diasec
collection Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; gift
of John Kaldor Family Collection; donated through the
Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Programme.

*We have received a radio message from
Washington. They have asked that you
should be the first to step off the plane
so that the television cameras and
photographers can get pictures.*
—Chief Steward to Mary Quant⁶

The plane rolls in and slows to a stop, the gangway pulls up, and the door opens to reveal a waving visitor. It's the modern photo-op par excellence—one burned into the collective consciousness—probably because it says as much about the host as it does about the visitor. In Aotearoa, the most iconic examples are the images of the Beatles landing in Wellington to thousands of adoring fans in 1964, followed by returning world champions, and the odd politician or pope on a global tour. Over time, they blur into one. It's the arriving that counts.

The power that this scene holds in cultural memory banks makes it an ideal subject for German artist Thomas Demand's photographic-sculptural simulations of found images. His source images, often connected to historically loaded sites or events, are culled from the media. Demand dislodges the image from its referent through a distinctive translation process. The image is remade as a 3D, life-size model out of coloured paper and card. This model is built camera-ready; made, presented, and lit with the lens in mind. It's photographed—with a large-format camera equipped with a telescopic lens for enhanced resolution—then destroyed. The image then travels back to the world in a different, more-contingent photographic form.

While there's an uncanny, illusionistic quality to Demand's photographs, the aim is less to trick the eye than the brain. Telltale folds and creases in the paper are visible, along with the odd pencil or scuff mark. This





Pope John Paul II at Cardiff Airport, 1982.
www.british-caledonian.com

handmade quality emphasises the scene's unreality, jolting it away from any experience of the 'real', especially as associated with the documentary tradition Demand draws his source images from. His skilful, yet slightly wonky reconstructions parallel the faulty workings of memory and the ways we consume images to construct personal, collective, and political 'truths'.

We may think we know *Gangway*, but we don't really. Demand withholds any contextual information that may clue us in to his source, most notably by omitting the figure stepping off the plane. Demand prefers his work instead accrue meaning over time as stories and rumours are told about it—another form of unreliable transmission. With *Gangway*, Demand has spoken about the trope of the tarmac arrival as 'such an enigmatic image'. He continues:

It has memories of someone like Cary Grant coming into Winnipeg (Canada) or George W. Bush coming to the airport in Cairo, Egypt, and you see the shot of the plane door opening and the person comes out and raises his hand. It's such a clear shot and a beautiful and really simple thing.⁷

It has been suggested that the source image for *Gangway* may be Pope John Paul II arriving in Berlin in 1996. This controversial first papal visit to a reunified Germany would fit with Demand's focus on historically and culturally loaded events and sites connected to German history (he has reconstructed the room where the failed assassination of Hitler took place, Stasi headquarters, and Nazi filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl's archive). It would also befit the image of the 'globe trotting' John Paul II.⁸ The first pope to travel by plane, he used the power of modern technology and the media to become the most visible

pope in history. He's remembered through images of him stepping out of planes and kissing the tarmac. Strangely, one of the closest resemblances to *Gangway* is an image of John Paul II stepping out of a koru-embazoned Air New Zealand plane in Canberra, as part of a Southern Hemisphere tour in 1986. Somehow, he is always present in *Gangway*, whether he's there or not.

Demand is drawn to generic modernist sites and architectures loaded with cultural baggage, yet his works are open-ended propositions. Where other artists undercut the modernist idea of the airport as non-place, Demand has found a way to retain this mythology. Another work takes us inside the terminal. *Gate* (2004) reconstructs a security-check zone, complete with paper stanchions, X-ray baggage machine, roller trays, and examination tables. So far, so generically airport. Where *Gangway's* low perspective emphasises the absent human subject, here the overhead perspective creates a disturbing sense that we have seen this before. In this case, you almost certainly have. The photograph is a reconstruction of the security-camera footage of 9/11 hijacker Mohamed Atta passing security at Boston's Logan International Airport, about to board AA Flight 11, which he will fly into the North Tower of the World Trade Center. Demand extracts Atta from the scene, returning the world to a moment before his actions changed the course of history.

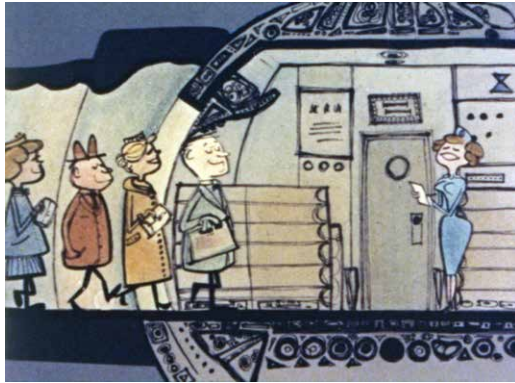
As always, Demand circles back to explore the nature of representation. His photograph is less a reconstruction of a specific scene than of a form of representation that acquired new currency through 9/11 coverage—forever changing how we see the world. The sweeping security measures after 9/11 would restrict press access to the airside of the terminal.

Now, notable travellers are more often photographed upon entering the arrivals lounge. The visitor-stepping-off-the-plane genre Demand toys with in *Gangway* has nearly disappeared as a relic of aviation, cultural, and photographic history.

- 6 Vanessa R. Schwartz, *Jet Age Aesthetics: The Glamour of Media in Motion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020), 116.
- 7 Paul Weideman, 'Immaculate Perceptions', *The Santa Fe New Mexican*, 15 February 2002: 36.
- 8 Robin Wright, 'How the Pope Flies: across Four Continents with John Paul II', *The New Yorker*, 21 September 2015, www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/how-the-pope-flies-across-four-continents-with-john-paul-ii.

Charles and Ray Eames
The Expanding Airport 1958

film
courtesy Eames Office, Los Angeles



In 1958, architect Eero Saarinen needed assistance to concisely describe a revolutionary feature of his terminal design for Dulles International Airport in Washington DC for a pitch to the Federal Aviation Authority. Charles and Ray Eames answered their friend's call by whipping up this film-as-visual-demonstration. (Whether it's art is debatable. Charles Eames always scoffed at suggestions that the studio made 'experimental films'. He famously called them 'just attempts to get across an idea'.⁹)

Saarinen had a big idea. He was building a new type of terminal for the jet age—a classic of modernist airport design. Two sets of columns running along the building's long facades are connected by a curving, wing-like roof that feels ready to take off from its foundations. The experience of the interior bothered him more. With the arrival of commercial jets and swelling passenger numbers, airports were forced into rapid expansion. Many just tacked on finger piers to accommodate additional gates and holding areas. Terminals were becoming more complicated, less enjoyable. Saarinen's solution was introducing mobile lounges. After checking in, passengers would enter a lounge that would be transported to the plane. Mobile lounges would keep the airport's footprint small and minimise passenger movement in the terminal.

The Eameses' jaunty hand-animated film sells this concept. Real and cartoon passengers are tracked on their journeys through the terminal—some on foot, some in the mobile lounge. Infographics insist that the mobile-lounge option is far superior. The real selling point is luxury. It is part cocktail lounge, part party bus, with bar, piped-in music, comfy reclining chairs, and observation deck. It was an attempt to retain the romance of flying as it was coming under

threat through shifts in the aviation industry. While presented as a means to improve the passenger experience, it looks suspiciously like an attempt to protect the sanctity of modernist airport architecture.

Mobile lounges were adopted at Dulles and a few other airports. In most cases, they were quickly abandoned or became a no-frills bus service, rather than the luxury, futuristic experience the Eameses promised. Other passenger-conveyance systems proved more effective and Saarinen couldn't have predicted the impact later security policies would have on passenger movement through the terminal. Remarkably, at Dulles, mobile lounges are still in operation. No drinks are served and the airport's problems remain. Dulles regularly appears in 'worst US airports' lists. The big complaint, though, is the failure to deliver a long-promised rail extension connecting it to Washington DC. Getting passengers to the airport is a bigger issue than moving them around inside it.

The Eameses' film looks past such issues to offer a revolutionary idea about the airport—one that eyed even-greater possibilities. Anticipating the opening of the TV show *The Jetsons*, the final scene makes a fantastic leap to a future tarmac, where rocket ships now dock. A voiceover suggests, 'There is a high probability that something like the mobile lounge will be servicing quite a few of the conveyances that are yet to come along.' We are still waiting, but perhaps not for long. Architect Peter Ruggiero, responsible for many airport redevelopments, recently floated the possibility of a return to Saarinen's core ideas—separating the plane and the terminal, getting rid of boarding gates, and using a mechanism to transport passengers to the aircraft. He is clear that this mechanism 'should not [be] a mobile lounge like at Dulles'.¹⁰ Instead, he has namechecked

Hyperloop as a possibility—the Elon Musk/SpaceX transport concept that uses sealed, low-pressure tunnels to move vehicles at high speed.

Saarinen called on the Eames Office to make another, more-enduring contribution to the modern terminal. The Eames Tandem Sling Seat—a modular, scalable system of chrome-framed, leather-or-vinyl-padded armchairs—was launched at Dulles International Airport and Chicago O'Hare International Airport in 1962. Blending aesthetic and functional needs, the Sling Seat and its imitators remain the go-to seating option in airports globally. Christopher Schaberg suggests that they 'are arguably one of the most iconic symbols of airportness'¹¹—more so than the failed mobile lounge.

9 Sarah Cowan, 'The Best for the Most for the Least', *Paris Review*, 14 June 2017, www.theparisreview.org/blog/2017/06/14/the-best-for-the-most-for-the-least/.
10 Edward Russell, 'Did Washington Dulles Get It Right with the Mobile Lounge?', *The Points Guy*, 8 March 2020, www.thepointsguy.com/news/did-washington-dulles-get-it-right-with-the-mobile-lounge/.
11 Christopher Schaberg, *The End of Airports* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 104.

Alex Prager

Crowd #7 (Bob Hope Airport) 2013

colour photograph
courtesy Alex Prager Studio and Lehmann Maupin
New York, Hong Kong, Seoul, and London

*We often refer to a golden age of air travel:
it existed somewhere after the middle of the
last century, perhaps, but definitively, it is a
time that has passed, it is no longer here.*
—Christopher Schaberg¹²

Crowd #7 (Bob Hope Airport) evokes the golden age of air travel as something we have lost but perhaps still pine for. It's part of Los Angeles artist Alex Prager's *Face in the Crowd* series. These elaborate, constructed photographs are full studio productions, utilising set design, actors, costumes, and lighting. Prager is drawn to crowds as complex sites of human interaction that reveal larger cultural questions or conditions.

The airport is the ideal laboratory for Prager's investigations into human behaviour. Here, the arrivals lounge is presented as a human zoo, fuelled by the contradictory feelings experienced in the airport: anticipation, boredom, anxiousness, confusion, excitement. This is where we arrive and depart, return to and escape from, greet and farewell others.

Prager builds a swirling melodrama out of the intersecting stories, clashing personalities, and chance encounters of travellers brought together under the announcements board. Banality and surrealism collide; small details take on momentous meanings. Passengers are defined by their choice of luggage or travel attire. There is something uncanny and disturbing in the way Prager freezes the constant movement of the traveller through the airport. Her characters are close cousins of Duane Hanson's *Traveller* (1986)—a hyperreal sculpture of a dishevelled man slumped on a suitcase on his long wait between flights. The sculpture has freaked out real travellers since being installed near the foodcourt inside Orlando International





Alex Prager

Hazelwood #2 (After Steven Siegel) 2014

colour photograph
courtesy Alex Prager Studio and Lehmann Maupin
New York, Hong Kong, Seoul, and London

Airport. The unreality of Prager's constructed scene emphasises its reality. It also has an unerringly close resemblance to the 'real' crowd scene captured by Andreas Gursky in *Düsseldorf, Flughafen I* (1985)—the companion piece to his work in *Terminal*.

Prager sucks us into her characters' stories to emphasise their estrangement from one another. Each follows their own route, but the airport is processing them as a pack. Prager taps into the airport's central paradox—its promise of individual escape is a collective delusion created and controlled by the aviation industry. The floor's chessboard pattern emphasises that the characters are being moved, rather than moving themselves. Prager shoots from an elevated position, looking down on the crowd. This perspective would seem to be from either the announcements board or the security camera—one promising escape, the other control. As in all Prager's crowd scenes, a single character stares back. Normally this grants agency. Here, she might just be checking her gate number.

The colour-saturated, timeless styling of Prager's photographs jolts them out of time and place. In this case, a specific location is invoked—Bob Hope Airport (now called Burbank Hollywood). Once LA's largest airport and the gateway to Hollywood, it was named after the famous Valley resident who jealously petitioned authorities after hearing that John Wayne had an airport named after him.¹³

Prager's photography is bound to the history, mythology, and production methods of old Hollywood. Here, she connects the 'golden ages' of film and aviation. This was the airport where aspiring film stars landed in Hollywood seeking fame and fortune (Prager's photographs are full of such 'starlets', often accompanied by planes flying

overhead). For a long time, it was thought that the final moments of *Casablanca* (1942)—the most famous airport-in-movie scene—was shot at Bob Hope. It was later revealed that—like Prager's photograph—it was made on a Hollywood sound stage. Film critic Richard Alleman laments the fact that 'They don't make airports like this any longer—just as they don't make films like *Casablanca*. "Here's looking at you, kid."¹⁴ Films continued to be shot at Burbank, including *Top Gun* (1986) and *The Bling Ring* (2013).

Bob Hope Airport represents the faded glories of aviation's past, but Prager's photographs belong to the present. As art writer Alissa Guzman puts it, they have a 'historical nonchalance' that represents 'an aesthetic plight that is uniquely 21st century'.¹⁵ She shares this aesthetic with LA filmmaker Quentin Tarantino, whose film *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* (2019) similarly channels the mythologies and styles of old Hollywood. Set in the final moments of the industry's golden age, it features a key airport scene. Faded TV star Rick Dalton and Italian actress Francesca Capucci land at LAX, trailed by bag wrangler Cliff Booth. They pass the airport's iconic coloured-tile mural, which has appeared in many films and TV shows, such as *The Graduate* (1967), *Jackie Brown* (1997), and *Mad Men* (2007–15). Accompanied by the Rolling Stones' refrain 'Baby, baby, baby, you are out of time', they could be walking straight into or out of Prager's photograph.

¹² Christopher Schaberg, *The End of Airports* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 15.

¹³ Richard Alleman, *Hollywood: The Movie Lover's Guide: The Ultimate Insider Tour of Movie LA* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2013), 421.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 423.

¹⁵ Alissa Guzman, 'Living or Being Seen in Alex Prager's Sun-Soaked Psyche', *Hyperallergic*, 28 January 2014, www.hyperallergic.com/105416/living-or-being-seen-in-alex-pragers-sun-soaked-psyche/.

SCREENING



Ed Atkins

Safe Conduct 2016

video installation
collection Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney;
Mervyn Horton Bequest Fund and German Foundation
Tour, 2018.

A gross-out parody of airport instructional videos, *Safe Conduct* loops—violently, ominously, purposefully. Playing out across three video walls, it tracks a man slowly and torturously submitting to airport-security protocols in order to be designated a safe traveller, to be granted safe conduct. He empties the contents of his bag, his brain, and his body into trays. They are fed into the X-ray scanner, which demands to know everything—from his darkest fantasies to the contents of yesterday's lunch. Mumbling mantras to himself, the man peels away and surrenders layers of his skin, his internal organs, severed head, and any illusion that he exists as a sovereign body. He is a walking embodiment of psychologist Paul Ekman's idea of the human body as a 'leaky container' ready to divulge its secrets to authorities—a concept at the heart of the modern surveillance apparatus that is the post-9/11 airport. We become witness to a technological evisceration by a machine built to process bodies and freedoms, in order—we have to believe—to protect them.

As the cycle, with its *Bolero* soundtrack, nosily nears its absurd climax, we glimpse our battered traveller, having passed through security, seated on the plane. He buckles in with a belt made of tiny arms ('please help yourself before assisting others') and glances through the window and the screen with a look of pure horror, betraying his acceptance that this torturous process will start again at the other end of the journey, and each and every time he travels. Soon, after he adopts the foetal/brace position, the video restarts its strange loop, signalled by the siren call of the beeps and whirs of the airport soundscape.

Technological purgatory is Ed Atkins's subject and also his medium. His computer-generated films satirise the dehumanising



effects of our technological society on concepts of self and the body—especially the privileged white-male subject. Our traveller is a CGI model purchased from a software company, customised using facial-recognition and performance-capture technologies that let Atkins map his own features and movements upon it. The traveller, then, is a digital surrogate for Atkins, and the work a kind of mediated performance. He also becomes a surrogate for all travellers, a projection of collective fears and anxieties. Atkins treats him like a digital voodoo doll. He pricks and prods him to ensure that those looking up at this oppressive installation of screens and beams—which curator Justin Paton called ‘a high-tech torture rack’²—suffer with and through him.

At LAX, Mark Bradford’s *Bell Tower* (2014) employs a similar sense of sculptural oppression to upset the very passage that Atkins’s video charts—from the inside. Part jumbotron, part medieval bell tower, this hulking, multisided sculpture hovers above the TSA screening area. Bradford uses art to transport his audience out of this treacherous experience; Atkins to trap his within it. Atkins’s airport folds back onto the gallery space. Galleries, after all, present themselves as another form of ‘safe space’, while similarly putting visitors through the wringer. Ironically, *Safe Conduct* is the only work in *Terminal* with a ‘content may disturb’ disclaimer. It has been identified by invisible authorities as a potential threat to the ‘safe conduct’ of the visitor passing through the exhibition.

This specific surrogate—and others like him—is familiar from Atkins’s back catalogue. It is less usual to encounter them in a real-world setting, especially one as clearly defined as this computer-generated airport (albeit one that’s eerily vacated, as much

Café Müller as Heathrow). Atkins’s surrogates normally find themselves ‘trapped’ within the flat limbo space of the virtual world. *Safe Conduct* is part of Atkins’s recent push into three-dimensional settings, here achieved by blurring the airport and virtual environment as supposed ‘non-places’ existing apart from real-world rules and expectations.

Animated airport instructional videos provided Atkins with a cue to re-render this dynamic. As animations, they mask the airport’s physical and psychological effects by situating the experience outside the real world and physical bodies. The truth, he argues, is too terrifying to acknowledge:

If you actually had a live action version ... there is something too obvious about the violence that people have to go through, or the stress, the anxiety, the paranoia ... but if you have a cartoon funny guy removing his watch and putting it in a thing the suspension of disbelief, the illusion of the whole thing is able to continue.³

Charles and Ray Eames pioneered this strategy in their animated film *The Expanding Airport*, putting a utopian spin on the terminal as a friendly, human space. Yet, like the Tandem Sling Seats they also made for the terminals of the jet age, their film serves the airport rather than the human body. Those seats look modern and sleek, yet are designed for discomfort, denying any possibility of sleep—just one thing our weary traveller in *Safe Conduct* so desperately needs.

Safe Conduct fights back by grotesquely and gratuitously pushing the real-world implications of the seemingly innocuous instructional animation video. A more-recent Atkins series, *Ninth Freedom* (2020)—which has been shown with *Safe Conduct*—inserts

disarming foley soundtracks into real inflight safety animations. In both works, Atkins ‘speaks of the reality ... [by] push[ing] through its representation’.⁴ This approach lets *Safe Conduct* play up the abject horror of the security check as the purgatory of our age.

Another loop the work returns to is the meeting of the technologies of surveillance and art. Atkins uses the same facial-recognition and digital-mapping technologies as airport surveillance systems to monitor and profile passengers. His surrogate parallels the virtual ‘data doubles’ airports create of the travellers they process. (Covid-19-responsive thermal scanning and temperature checks have now added to these data flows. A failed test could be due to non-viral conditions, such as cancer treatment or urinary-tract infections—more bodily secrets that need to be disclosed to the security apparatus to protect the collective body.⁵) Atkins pushes the bizarre, horrific elements of this work without ever severing its connection to the real-world experience and brutality of the security check. As Toke Lykkeberg observes, this is one of Ed Atkins’s most absurd works, but also one of his most realistic.⁶

Safe Conduct is not defeatist. We suffer along with the traveller, yet there is something triumphant in his confrontation with the security apparatus. As Atkins says: ‘I survive it, mock it, make work out of it ... to be able to reconstitute yourself afterwards is the prerogative of animation and the massively lucky traveller.’⁷ The same applies to the lucky viewers, who are granted some form of safe conduct through the work. Until, that is, the next time they line up for the security check and *Bolero* starts playing in the back of their heads.



- 1 Leeron Tur-Kaspa, ‘SAATA: Surveilling Art at the Airport’, master’s thesis, Dutch Art Institute, Art Praxis and Graduate School, Art EZ University of the Arts, Arnhem, 2019: 11.
- 2 Justin Paton, ‘Ed Atkins: Unsafe Conduct’, *Look*, September–October 2019: 53.
- 3 ‘Safe Conduct: Ed Atkins in the X-Room’, National Gallery of Denmark, 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=yY17qZLMUcg&ab_channel=SMK%E2%80%93StatensMuseumforKunst.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Natasha Frost, ‘Airport Surveillance Is about to Reach a Whole New Level of Ridiculousness’, *Slate*, 15 June 2020, www.slate.com/technology/2020/06/flying-airports-coronavirus-surveillance.html.
- 6 Toke Lykkeberg, ‘Hollywood Structuralism in a Collapsed Age’, *Kunstkrikk*, 23 March 2016, www.unstkritikk.com/hollywood-structuralism-in-a-collapsed-age/.
- 7 Ibid.

Walead Beshty

Transparency [Positive (Fujichrome RDPIII Provia 100F Em. No. 064-821) December 19, 2018–January 6, 2019 LAX/EWR/FCO FCO/EWR/LAX; Negative (Kodak Portra 400NC Em. No. 1101) December 19, 2018–January 6, 2019 LAX/EWR/FCO FCO/EWR/LAX; Positive (Fujichrome RDPIII Provia 100F Em. No. 064-821) May 11–July 9, 2019 LAX/IAD/FCO NAP/GVA GVA/NCE NCE/NAP NAP/ZRH ZRH/FCO/NAP NAP/LGW LHR/LAX; Negative (Kodak Portra 400NC Em. No. 1101) May 11–July 9, 2019 LAX/IAD/FCO NAP/GVA GVA/NCE NCE/NAP NAP/ZRH ZRH/FCO/NAP NAP/LGW LHR/LAX; Positive (Fujichrome RDPIII Provia 100F Em. No. 064-821) August 29–September 9, 2019 LAX/ORD/BRU CRL/TSF VCE/FCO/LAX; Negative (Kodak Portra 400NC Em. No. 1101) August 29–September 9, 2019 LAX/ORD/BRU CRL/TSF VCE/FCO/LAX; Positive (Fujichrome RDPIII Provia 100F Em. No. 064-821) October 10–26, 2019 LAX/EWR EWR/LAX; Negative (Kodak Portra 400NC Em. No. 1121) October 10–26, 2019 LAX/EWR EWR/LAX; Positive (Fujichrome RDPIII Provia 100F Em. No. 064-821) November 20–22, 2019 LAX/EWR EWR/LAX; Negative (Kodak Portra 400NC Em. No. 1121) November 20–22, 2019 LAX/EWR EWR/LAX] 2019

archival inkjet prints
Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Walead Beshty had a jet-fuelled 2019. The year started in Italy, with an exhibition in Naples. He was in Italy again in May, en route to Geneva for a solo exhibition at Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, while taking in Brussels and London. He returned to Brussels for an exhibition in September, and attended the Venice Biennale, before returning to Los Angeles via Chicago. A month later, he had an exhibition at Petzel Gallery in New York, and he made that return trip again in November. These are just the exhibitions he travelled for. We know about these movements through the 2019 iteration of his *Transparencies* project (cross-referenced against his CV). It consists of ten parts, each made during transit. Whenever he travels, Beshty leaves unexposed 4×5 film in his checked baggage to be exposed by the X-ray beam of the baggage scanner. The *Transparencies* are presented in year-long increments. Each indexes the amount of travel he undertook that year, and is titled according to the airport codes and dates of travel.

These photographs are produced by the X-ray machine via the global contemporary-art world. Both are treated as readymades. In one sense, the photographs are not about Beshty as artist (he sets the parameters but is not responsible for their production or look). In another, they are all about Beshty as artist (mapping his travels, where his audiences and galleries are located, when opportunities spiked or levelled out).

The idea developed out of an airport experience. In 2006, Beshty was working on his *Travel Pictures*—photographs of an abandoned Iraqi diplomatic office in Berlin. On his journey from Los Angeles, the film was corrupted after accidentally passing through several X-ray machines. This damage registered as light bands, colour

flares, and fogged areas. The photographed site and the photographic damage fused, transforming the project. Both were embraced as material traces of the politics of travel and border control, specifically connected to the Iraq War, which led to the closure of the office and increased airport-surveillance systems.

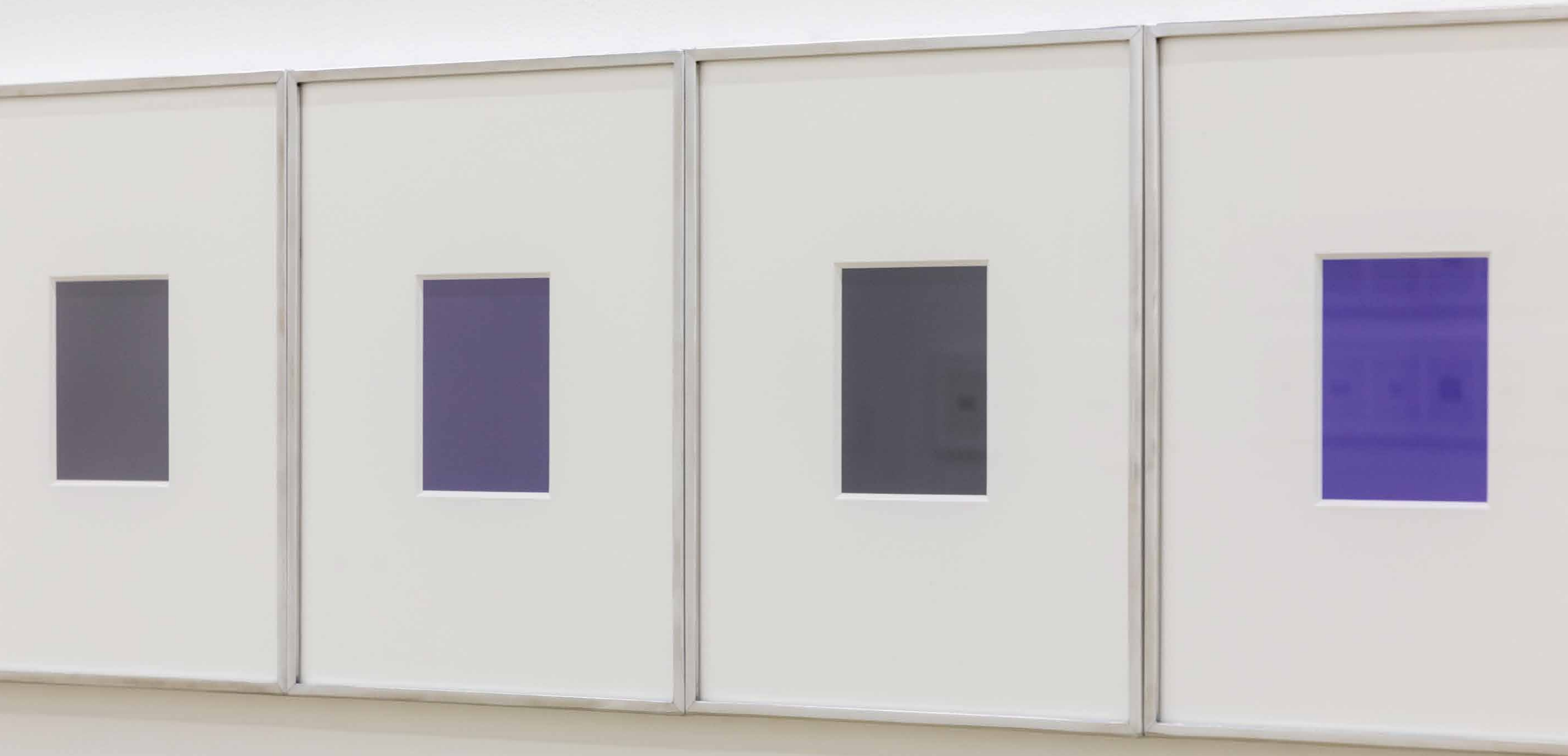
Beshty started using this surveillance system as a generator rather than a destroyer of art, handing over the making of the work to the X-ray scanner. The colour washes in his *Transparencies* may appear abstract, but they are concrete expressions of invisible surveillance technologies. The photographs are 'transparent'—emptied of pictorial content and any sense of underlying theme, metaphor, or symbolism. They reveal only the conditions, logics, and systems of their own production. They are not images of the world, but objects that pass through it, as and when the artist does. They come out of accident and chance, and find agency and freedom in the subversion of technologies engineered to order and control. In ceding art to the machine, Beshty perversely reveals the agency we can find in systems that purport to control us.

The *Transparencies* align with Beshty's *FedEx* pieces—glass boxes shipped to order for exhibitions, and displayed in the exact condition they arrived, alongside the standard FedEx boxes they travelled in. Both projects use the international circulation of objects as a mechanism to produce work. It is movement within this system that generates the works' appearance, meaning, and worth (smashed glass boxes and exposed film are, in a sense, more successful than undamaged ones). These objects pass through many hands and technologies, becoming art only after they leave the studio and the artist's control. Beshty reveals the

conditions for all art that operates within the art system.

The *Transparencies* project embraces its inevitable obsolescence. While the start and end points of each iteration are structured by the calendar, the larger project will stop when changes to the conditions of production it depends on make it impossible to continue. When this work was prepared and crated for *Terminal*, the most likely project-ending scenario would probably have been the discontinuation of the photographic film it uses or technology upgrades at the border. But this has changed with Covid-19. The project is now more likely to be impacted by the recalibration of the aviation and art industries in response to the pandemic. There will be changes to how we fly and to the once-lauded globalised art network that the *Transparencies* have always problematised, while parasitically participating in. Each iteration anticipates the next. The difference between the 2019 and 2020 iterations may be the most telling yet.

The iteration sent over for *Terminal* has been directly impacted by these changes, in ways that link it to the *FedEx* works. At the time of writing—one week after the exhibition's originally scheduled opening—the photographs still sit in secure storage at the Auckland branch of the international art courier Global Specialised Services. They cleared customs but were bumped as a non-essential transport item. Their journey to *Terminal* was halted, as was the Air New Zealand LAX-AKL flight they arrived on (which has always been a gateway for New Zealand art to the world). According to the parameters of the project, they just continue to accrue meaning.



Taryn Simon

from *Contraband* 2010

Animal Medication (Counterfeit)

BB Guns and BBS (Illegal)

Cuban Cigars (Prohibited)

Erectile Dysfunction Medication, Cialis, and Viagra (Counterfeit)

Fat (Prohibited)

Handbags, Louis Vuitton (Counterfeit)

Hash (Illegal), Heroin (Illegal), Peyote (Illegal),

Psychedelic Mushrooms (Illegal)

Leaves (Prohibited)

Movies (Pirated)

Sausages (Prohibited)

Yam (Prohibited)

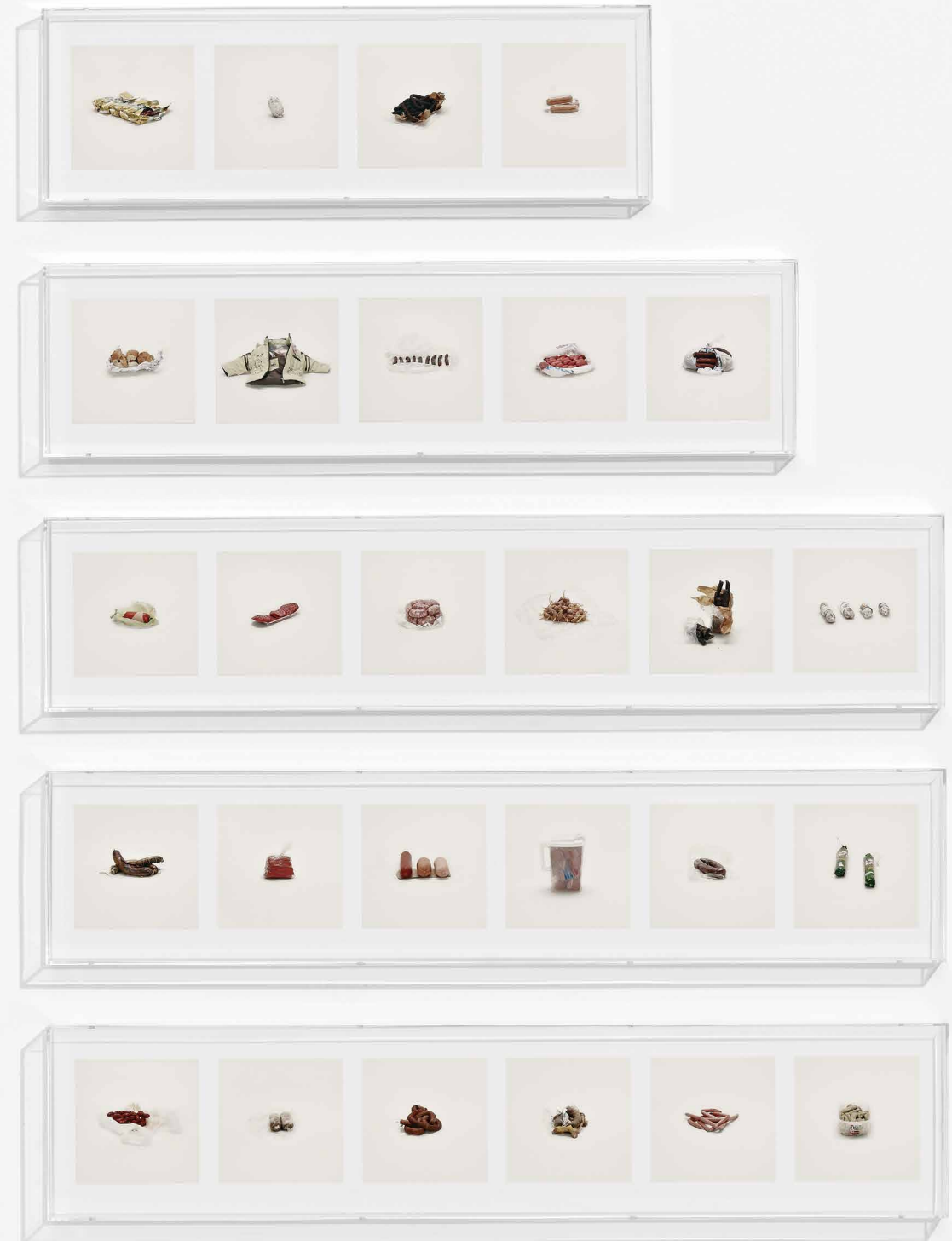
archival inkjet prints in plexiglass boxes

Gagosian Gallery, New York

An American Index of the Hidden and Unfamiliar (2007) enters the white noise of the restricted spaces of post-9/11 America. Working through various government, state, and industry officials, Taryn Simon accessed and photographed the great unseen apparatus of contemporary American power. She took us to places hidden in plain sight that shape public discourse and politics: weapons-development-and-testing sites, a nuclear-storage facility, a corpse-strewn forensic-anthropology research lab. Another image festers with decay. Resembling an old-master still life, it shows an abundance of organic matter dumped on a stainless-steel table in a clinical institutional space. A disturbing mask-like pig's head sits atop the pile of fruit, plant matter, and meat. Taken inside the contraband room at JFK, the photograph shows all the organic material seized by customs staff from incoming passengers over a twenty-four-hour period. It's a grotesque contemporary tableaux set in the carefully guarded space between the US and other countries—the byproduct of policies designed to shield citizens from invasive pests and from their own 'exotic' tastes and desires.

Realising that the potential of this site remained untapped, Simon returned to JFK to make *Contraband* in 2009. This project would take different form. Simon and her team spent an entire working week at the airport. They worked around the clock with border-control authorities to open up the project to the airport's rhythm, its labour practices, and the ceaseless flow of objects and people across borders. *Contraband* is a collection of photographs of all 1,075 items seized at JFK's Customs and Border Inspection Site and US Postal Service International Mail Facility over the designated period.

Sausages (Prohibited)
from *Contraband* 2010



Where the photograph from the earlier series was elaborately staged and aestheticised, these images are more forensic and mechanical. Each seizure was photographed. From the illicit (heroin) to the mundane (a ham-and-cheese sandwich), each was treated uniformly. It was arranged to reveal its contents and any packaging it may have been transported in, then photographed against a neutral grey background. The production-line aesthetic emulates the 'painful repetition' of objects that relentlessly pass through the security X-ray machine at any given time.⁸

Simon indexes, rather than editorialises or moralises. The contraband is arranged alphabetically (from alcohol to the sleeping pill Zolpidem), in small or large groups depending on the volume of items seized (a single yam was confiscated, while there were forty seizures of khat—a chewable African plant-based stimulant). The accompanying index classifies each item according to data provided by customs and border-protection agents: its country of origin (if known), the code it violates, and the reasons for its seizure.

Contraband parasitically folds border-control's operations into its own. Simon describes it as a portrait of desire and an endurance performance—referring to acquiring the necessary permissions as well as its epic execution.⁹ These photographs come from deep within the contraband room and the apparatus of the airport. *Contraband's* deadpan, classificatory approach also opens onto issues related to the geopolitics of border control, giving visual form to the international traffic in counterfeit goods and to post-9/11 economies of global movement and exchange. Simon began the project expecting to photograph drugs and guns.



The volume of seized counterfeit goods came as a surprise—revealing border control's role in protecting brand identity and global capitalism, as well as primary industries.¹⁰

Simon's mugshots of shadowy items tap into photography as an agent of authoritarian control. The human subject is absent, yet implied. The photographs become surrogate portraits of the passengers who transported the contraband across the border—whose motives and punishments remain unknown. Two 'accidentally seized' immigration applications sit amongst the contraband. Along with the index's tracing the items' geographic origins (predominately Africa, South America, and Asia), these documents link the migration of items to the migration of people caught within this system, while suggesting levels of cultural clash and prejudice that are upheld by law and enforced at the border.

While *Contraband's* deadpan style apes the tone of officialdom, its idiosyncratic sculptural arrangements feel aligned to the passengers' intricate means of concealment (cold meats pressed inside a child's jacket, a counterfeit Louis Vuitton handbag 'disguised' within a generic-brand one). Simon seems as drawn to these acts of inventive subterfuge as to the processes and systems set up to detect them. Seen in this way, the disguised bag can stand in for *Contraband* as a critical project that conceals itself as a complicit, even documentary one. It works both sides of the security line. *Contraband* begs us to imagine its shadow collection—all the illicit items that passed through border control undetected over that period. Noting passenger-survey findings that eighty percent of contraband makes its way into the US, art historian Claire Courtney Payne

suggests that a 'cynical reading' might see Simon's project less as a victory for border control than 'an articulation of 1,075 ways the economy or people of the United States might come under attack'.¹¹

Where *An American Index* made visible hidden internal systems and structures within the US, *Contraband* looks to what—and by extension who—the country strives to keep outside its borders. Both projects operate as X-rays of the national psyche and interests. Simon has pointed out the final irony of the project, which connects to the idea of the counterfeit.¹² Like all of those fake Louis Vuitton handbags, a photograph is a copy. Simon, then, makes copies of copies that were pulled out of circulation and destroyed as threats to the economic system. Her photographic copies were granted safe passage out of the contraband room and into the US. From there they were able to freely participate in the international art economy—which emerges as another of those shadowy global forces and regulatory systems navigated by *Contraband* and all of Simon's work.

8 Hans Ulrich Obrist, 'Ever Airport: Notes on Taryn Simon's *Contraband*', *Taryn Simon: Contraband* (Göttingen: Hatje Cantz, 2015), 7.

9 Ibid.

10 'Blow-Up: Brian De Palma and Taryn Simon in Conversation', *Artforum*, Summer 2012: 3.

11 Claire Courtney Payne, 'Knowledge Organization as Critique: Postcolonial Positions in Taryn Simon's *Contraband*', master's thesis, University of North Carolina, 2019: 14.

Simon Denny

Marciana Library/Marco Polo Airport Overlay Proposal Diagram 3 2015

silkscreen on plastic

Jim Barr and Mary Barr Loan Collection,
Dunedin Public Art Gallery

In 2013, Edward Snowden spent forty days living in the transit lounge of Moscow's Sheremetyevo Alexander S. Pushkin International Airport. Indicted under the Espionage Act for leaking classified National Security Agency documents that exposed the existence of an unlawful global-surveillance system, Snowden landed in Russia to find his passport cancelled. Unable to either enter or leave the country, he was stuck in the transit lounge while his application for temporary asylum was processed.

Simon Denny's project *Secret Power*, which analysed global surveillance and espionage culture via the Snowden leaks, was Aotearoa New Zealand's official presentation at the 2015 Venice Biennale. It would play out over two sites. The main part was staged at the historic Marciana Library on Piazzetta San Marco—a humanist centre of power, knowledge, and learning. It holds rare texts from antiquity and maps from the Age of Exploration. The second site, at first, sounds far less revelatory. Denny was the first artist in the history of the Biennale to stage a project inside Marco Polo Airport—the gateway for most international travellers to Venice. (Thanks to his *Transparencies* project, we know that Walead Beshty passed through and made work there in 2019.) Airports are the most visible apparatus of the global-surveillance complex that for the most part is invisible—at least until the Snowden leaks. One of the most high-profile leaks exposed how Canada's electronic spy agency had illegally harvested metadata from the wireless devices of unsuspecting travellers via airport free-WiFi hotspots, which continued for a week after they left the terminal. This was a trial operation for a new passenger-tracking system undertaken with the NSA—one that is now probably 'fully operational'.¹³ The level of surveillance that passengers knowingly accept at the airport in exchange for safe travel is just the tip of the iceberg.

Denny collapsed these two spaces and their systems of information gathering and sharing into one another, linking old-world and new-world forms of power, control, and world building. A series of modified-computer-server-racks-as-vitrines were installed in the Library. They featured materials related to the Snowden files and the visual culture of surveillance. Here, this material sat alongside the Library's famous collection of maps and globes—documents of the renaissance world being charted, routed, and controlled. Denny made a contemporary addendum to the Library's iconic 'golden staircase' built to symbolise ascension through levels of knowledge. Visitors now had to enter the Library up the stairs and through new sliding plexiglass doors of the contemporary security check—symbolising a very different form of passage through the world. The Library's painted ceiling was photographed, printed on adhesive vinyl, and applied to the floor of the airport, stretching from the border-control zone into the baggage hall, crossing the carefully protected borders between Schengen and non-Schengen spaces (subject to European and international law respectively). Denny treated both the Library and the Airport as sites of power that regulate the flow of people, data, and individual and collective freedoms across borders.¹⁴

Denny was drawing out connections already hidden in plain sight. The airport was built in 2002 as 'a union of tradition and technology'.¹⁵ It takes architectural cues from the historic city, offers vistas of its skyline, and is named after the famous thirteenth-century Venetian merchant and explorer Marco Polo. His opening of international trade routes initiated an era of globalisation and expansion, where the world was reorganised by centralised forces we might now call 'intelligence'. This airport looked forwards





as well as backwards. The first European airport built after 9/11, it was an early adopter of the advanced data-management and communication-security systems that US authorities insisted become mandatory. Architects Studio Architetto Mar described its high resolution video-surveillance and facial-recognition technologies as 'an avant-garde security system'¹⁶

Denny's act of 'space/time collision'¹⁷ makes this ultra-contemporary airport part of a much older system of power and control, while the historic library becomes a default site of contemporary geopolitical images and ideologies. He exposes the way that both sites are 'charged with information'.¹⁸ The project performs one of globalisation's greatest tricks against itself, collapsing time and space to reveal the covert workings and effects of surveillance capitalism.

Secret Power drew attention to the role of artists in these systems. Titian, Fra Mauro, Studio Architetto Mar, and, especially, mysterious former NSA Creative Director David Darchicourt were all implicated. Darchicourt oversaw the NSA's internal communications and was a key creator of the visual culture of surveillance. He presided over the entire project as the embodiment of a particular form of contemporary knowledge—like the ancient philosophers depicted on the walls of the Library. He even unwittingly contributed to *Secret Power* in the form of a garish map of New Zealand commissioned by Denny.

Denny's reframing NSA internal documents as art echoes Taryn Simon's photographing the CIA's modern-art collection as an expression of political ideology in *An American Index* (for which she also photographed the New Jersey landing site of the Transatlantic submarine cable that enables mass surveillance). Both projects

address the airport, reveal secret systems and structures, and test the role art can play in support of or in opposition to them. Denny's project was endorsed and funded by the New Zealand government, while exposing the country's role in the Five Eyes spying alliance.

Responding to *Secret Power*, Darchicourt was able to laugh off the irony of an artist gathering and spreading his information without consent. What the *Guardian* termed 'reverse-espionage'¹⁹, he called 'flattering and creepy'.²⁰ He did react by removing some sensitive images from his online portfolio. Meanwhile, Denny's graphics are yet to be removed from the floors and baggage carousel at San Marco Airport. Five years later, they have become—like the cameras and other security apparatus—a naturalised, inconspicuous, but inherently dangerous part of the airport environment.

13 Greg Weston, 'CSEC Used Airport Wi-Fi to Track Canadian Travellers: Edward Snowden Documents', *CBC News*, 30 January 2013, www.cbc.ca/news/politics/csec-used-airport-wi-fi-to-track-canadian-travellers-edward-snowden-documents-1.2517881.

14 Denny's use of the airport-terminal floor as a site would play out in his 2019 project *Mine* at Hobart's MoNA, where the exhibition experience was transformed into a boardgame, where visitors follow set pathways and devices as pieces or data flows in someone else's game.

15 Studio Architetto Mar, 'New Terminal, Marco Polo Airport: Tessera, Venezia, Italy, 2002', www.architonic.com/en/project/studio-architetto-mar-new-terminal-marco-polo-airport/5100588.

16 Ibid.

17 Chris Kraus, 'Here Begins the Dark Sea', *Simon Denny: Secret Power* (Milan and London: Mousse Publishing and Koenig Books, 2015), 24.

18 'Mary Barr Talks to Simon Denny', *Simon Denny: Secret Power*, 96.

19 Charlotte Higgins, 'Simon Denny, the Artist Who Did Reverse Espionage on the NSA', *Guardian*, 5 May 2015, www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/may/05/edward-snowden-nsa-art-venice-biennale-reverse-espionage.

20 Ryan Gallagher, 'Inside the Secret World of NSA Art', *The Intercept*, 12 June 2015, theintercept.com/2015/06/11/secret-power-nsa-darchicourt-art-denny/.

THE RUNWAY

THE RUNWAY

3

The runway is built for
surviving, not for
thriving. It's a place of
endurance, not of
adventure. It's a place
where the only way to
survive is to be the
strongest. It's a place
where the only way to
win is to be the
fastest. It's a place
where the only way to
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Lauren Brincat

This Time Tomorrow, Tempelhof 2011

video installation

collection Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney



Lauren Brincat has performed her walking pieces in different environments, including a misty field, a busy street, and, here, an empty airport runway. All are presented as single fixed-shot videos, showing her walking away from the camera into the distance. Sometimes she carries objects that charge her performance with politics or poetics; other times the site carries these possibilities.

This performance feels transgressive from the outset. It takes place in a site normally off-limits to the human body. Boarding ramps and jet bridges were invented to remove bodies from the runway. Smaller airports, lacking these technologies, position attendants and barriers to prevent this access. Humans on the runway pose a risk to themselves and to the smooth operation of the flight schedule. Even knowing that this is a decommissioned airport, it's exhilarating to watch Brincat stride purposefully down the broken white lines of the runway.

The runway is built for technology, not for the body. Brincat's entire body is contained within the width of just one of its markings, and is eventually swallowed up by its expansive space. She moves swiftly, yet it takes over five minutes to walk this section of the runway. The skid marks that surround her are a reminder of the speeds that we are normally propelled at on runways. Most takeoffs and landings occur at around 285km per hour and would cover this distance in seconds. Like the solitary airport official in Gursky's *Düsseldorf, Flughafen II*, Brincat enters and becomes subject to the vast industrial-technological spectacle that is the airport. Yet, there is no submission to its processes. Where Ed Atkins's *Safe Conduct* satirises the body's surrendering to security technologies

within the terminal, Brincat's performance outside wrestles its agency back. The body is liberated from the systems of control the airport normally forces upon it.

As a work of art staged at the airport, it is equally liberating. Inside the terminal, art is designed to engage with the ambulant passenger, providing stopping points, navigational assistance, or distractions from the neverending trudge. Jim Campbell's light installation *The Journey* (2013), at San Diego International Airport, goes further by lighting up, joining, and guiding passengers on their route. Brincat's performance breaks this dependency, connecting instead to Richard Long's and Francis Alÿs's walking pieces. Her use of the airport as a site to test the body's limits also chimes with Chris Burden's performance *747* (1973). On the outskirts of LAX, Burden was filmed from behind, firing a pistol at a Boeing 747.

An Australian, Brincat made this work while homesick in Berlin on a residency. The runway performance negotiates the physical, temporal, and emotional distance from home that is part of the traveller's condition, symbolised by 'taking off' or 'landing'. Naeem Mohaiemen and John Akomfrah's video works in *Terminal* set key scenes on the runway to explore these themes in relation to the exile or refugee experience. (In one scene in Mohaiemen's *Tripoli Cancelled*, the protagonist reverses Brincat's route by walking down the white markings of the runway of an abandoned airport *towards* the fixed camera.)

For Brincat, the performance was also a way to come to terms with a new city—which is often felt or navigated bodily. This is especially the case in Berlin, whose dark history physically and symbolically looms over you. She walks the runway of the decommissioned Berlin Tempelhof

Airport, once a central cog in the Nazi war machine. The eventual seizure of this runway by Russian forces helped end the war. Tempelhof subsequently became a US military base and would be the site of the Berlin Airlift (transforming a symbol of Nazi ideology into one of freedom). Many others have walked here before her.

Brincat walks into the site's past and future. The performance was only a few years after Tempelhof was controversially closed. It would reopen as a city park, with its old terminal and facilities left intact as reminders of its history. When the European migration crisis hit, it was transformed into Germany's largest refugee shelter. Now the park is promoted as the heart of Berlin, a popular space for recreational activities. Its website claims that 'the former runway and the so-called taxiway offer the perfect ground for cyclists and in-line skaters'.¹ Brincat's performance seems more aligned with the unsanctioned activities that continue to happen there, such as the open-air raves that were once a symbol of new-found freedoms but now constitute illegal gatherings. Her performance reveals the limitations of thinking of the airport as a non-space, grounding the experience of the airport in real times, spaces, relationships, and histories. These belong to and flow through her performance, which transports us to yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

¹ www.thf-berlin.de/en/tours/.

Andreas Gursky

Düsseldorf, Flughafen II 1994

colour photograph

collection Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; gift of John Kaldor Family Collection; donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Programme.

Andreas Gursky uses 'photography as a way of understanding how the world fits together'.² He chronicles the spaces of late capitalism: stock exchanges, markets, factories, stadiums, luxury stores, apartment blocks, and airports. In his work, airports repeatedly appear as symptoms of the borderlessness and time-space compression that capitalism creates. Gursky doesn't simply picture capitalism, he co-opts its technological possibilities to make hybrid photographs that question the reality or validity of the world they represent. His photographs speak both to and through the current cultural condition. Their neutral, objective look masks any overt criticality of—or complicity with—a system that enables his regular travel around the world to make, display, and sell what art historian James Elkins describes as 'airport-lounge size photographs'.³

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Gursky made many photographs of the airport in his home city of Düsseldorf. Germany's third busiest airport, it remains central to the city's economy and culture. Gursky always sets his human subjects in a complex relationship to the airport. In *Düsseldorf I* (1985), they crowd the tarmac, eyes raised to the arriving or departing plane and all it symbolises. *Düsseldorf Airport, Sunday Walkers* (1985) shows people milling on the airport's fringe. It's a banal scene of escapism rather than escape; its subjects are 'the terminally grounded'.⁴ Yet, as Gursky knows, this space at the airport's edge holds revelations. Hungarian student Andras Kisergely—a self-described 'aviation anorak' who drove around European airports photographing planes from his car—was circling Charles De Gaulle Airport in 2000, when he captured the only image of the Air France Concorde exploding on the runway.⁵ It was picked up

by Reuters and became an iconic image of airport disaster. It is but one of a thousand-strong archive of airport photographs made with fellow anorak Szabolcs Szalmási that offer a counter to artists Fischli and Weiss's *800 Views of Airports*, taken from inside the terminal looking out.

Gursky's *Düsseldorf, Flughafen II* (1994) feels abstracted. There's his signature bird's-eye view (presumably from the windows in the terminal). Ground and sky are demarcated by a green band of grass; tarmac markings become pure pattern. Hazy forested hills retreat into the distance, suggesting that, for many, it is the airport that now enables that escape to nature—if this is even possible any more. A solitary subject—an airport worker standing on the empty runway—is dwarfed within this epic constructed site. The allusion to nineteenth-century German romantic painting is irresistible. Where Caspar David Friedrich located his solitary monks and wanderers within sublime natural vistas, Gursky's dot constructed ones, always pulling us back to the human within the machine. This figure is a cipher for a collective experience of the spaces and systems of the post-industrial world. (Gursky's scenes of crowds at football games and concerts make the same point in the opposite way.) *Düsseldorf, Flughafen II* moves beyond the representation of a specific airport to represent the airport as an emblematic site. It is all airports.

Gursky has made some of art's best known airport images. In *Frankfurt Airport* (2007), travellers are dwarfed by the iconic announcements board and the sheer weight of information it offers: departures, locations, gates, times. This is travel as data, which, like photography, can transport us everywhere and nowhere. The board lists a Lufthansa flight to Düsseldorf, taking off at

8.35pm. Düsseldorf airport remains a key to Gursky's art. It was a subject in his early investigations and he held his first exhibition inside its advertising vitrines in 1986. Last year, Gagosian Gallery upped the ante by presenting Gursky's work as the first exhibition at Tarmak 22, a private gallery at Switzerland's Gstaad Saanen Airport, which promises to 'bring contemporary art to new heights' while offering panoramic views of the runway.⁶ But it's not all alpine vistas and ski resorts. After Gursky made *Frankfurt Airport*, Lufthansa closed its Düsseldorf operations, with significant impact on the local economy. More recently, the sound of Frankfurt's split-flap announcement board echoing around the abandoned airport has become a symbol of the grounding of the aviation industry by the coronavirus pandemic.⁷ Somehow, Gursky's photographs seem to anticipate it all.

2 'Redefining Photography: Andreas Gursky: Interview with Ralph Rugoff' (London: Hayward Gallery, 2017), www.youtube.com/watch?v=CdOxpTARGx4&feature=emb_rel_pause.

3 James Elkins, *What Photography Is* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 77. In 2011, Gursky earned the title of the world's most expensive photographer when his *Rhine II* (1999) fetched \$US4.3m at Christies.

4 Ralph Rugoff, 'Andreas Gursky: Four Decades', in *Andreas Gursky* (London: Hayward Gallery, 2018), 15.

5 Simon Bowers, 'The "Aviation Anorak" Who Took the Now Famous Photo', *Guardian*, 27 July 2000, www.theguardian.com/world/2000/jul/27/concorde-simonbowers.

6 Fleur Burlet, 'New Gallery Brings High Art to Gstaad Airport', *WWD.com*, 2 April 2019, www.wwd.com/eye/lifestyle/new-gallery-tarmak-22-art-gstaad-airport-1203093327/.

7 Joe Miller, Tanya Powley, and Alexander Vladkov, 'Coronavirus: Future Looks Bleak for Global Airports', *Financial Times*, 16 March 2020, www.ft.com/content/1d12dbca-6533-11ea-b3f3-fe4680ea68b5.



Adrian Paci

Centro di Permanenza Temporanea 2007

video

Centro di Permanenza Temporanea ends with one of contemporary art's most enduring images of the refugee crisis: people are stranded on the boarding stairs of a runway with no plane. They have no access to the freedom of movement enjoyed by the unseen 'regular' passengers in the planes that take off around them. The image captures the harsh reality behind the romanticisation of the airport as an escapist non-place—especially as it exists for the refugee or the exile. As an image of traumatic displacement, the image is not far removed from those heart-wrenching accounts of refugees on boats who look up to observe planes flying high above them.

The video plays like a series of stills, set to ambient runway sounds. It opens with a side view of the empty boarding stairs, then cuts to a high-angle shot looking down the stairs to a vacant runway, which is soon occupied by approaching feet and bodies. Their slow, silent shuffle suggests people being collectively processed at airports and other borders. After the stairs fill up, the video alternates between group shots and closeups. The camera pulls back to reveal its final twist, that iconic image of the fully occupied boarding stairs adrift on the runway. The video moves the viewer through different stages and moments, while halting the movement of its subjects. We 'arrive' at that last image and are forced to confront its implications.

Adrian Paci explores movement as form, process, and possibility. His work—especially his use of video—is determined by his own movements as one of thousands of refugees who escaped Albania to Italy during the civil war in the late 1990s. Trained in Albania as a painter, he turned to video through his experience of immigration and exile. *Albanian Stories* (1997), his first video, was made a

few months after arriving in Milan. With her dolls, his three-year-old daughter acts out a story studded with the real events and forces that drove the family from their homeland—things children shouldn't have to know. In this moment, Paci recalibrated his practice, understanding that 'What I needed to use was a simple video camera and stand in front of my daughter to witness this moment.'⁸ He temporarily abandoned painting and sculpture, feeling that his new medium was better tuned to the experience of exile. Video, he argued, 'doesn't indulge itself as a medium, nor does it set out to gratify its author'.⁹

Paci would return to painting and sculpture, while continuing to make videos with a strong performative element. His continual shifting between and across these media—with the tensions set up between the still and moving images they produce—is part of his wider rejection of boundaries and borders of all kinds. 'I don't look for closed or definitive forms', he has stated, 'but am interested instead in their mutual relations.'¹⁰ *Centro di Permanenza Temporanea* does feel like a video made by a painter, especially in the ways it slows down or freezes the moving image to invoke a certain type of aesthetic and emphatic response. Curator Rosa Martínez sees other art forms embedded in that image of the boarding stairs. She describes it as 'a free-standing sculpture, a huge inhabited though isolated pedestal, an artefact that leads nowhere'.¹¹

Albanian Stories and *Centro di Permanenza Temporanea* use portraiture to draw attention to the individuals behind prevailing abstractions of 'refugee' and 'migrant'. Seen together, these two works articulate the shift away from the documentation of personal stories and histories towards more collective experiences of displacement and exile in





Paci's work—though the two constantly bleed into one another.

Rather than use actors, Paci works with people who, like him, have a direct experience of displacement. *Centro di Permanenza Temporanea* was shot at San Jose International Airport in California using migrant workers hired for the day. This workforce plays an important role in the state's economy and has a long history in art stretching back to Dorothea Lange's Depression-era photographs. The central metaphor of stranded migrant workers has assumed even greater poignancy with the coronavirus pandemic. California has reclassified migrant labour as 'essential', rather than a border-control problem. Yet, in doing so, it has put these already vulnerable workers at high risk of exposure to the virus, to keep others safe and the economy buoyant.¹² Passenger numbers at San Jose International Airport have also fallen by up to ninety percent—few are flying out.¹³

Paci's workers are caught in a different yet similar state of limbo to the subjects of his Albania-related work. He makes this explicit by titling the video after the temporary relocation camps set up in Italy to process refugees—many of whom have to wait for years before being granted further passage. There is an uncomfortable tension in Paci's treatment of his subjects. He works to maintain their vulnerability, to not let the viewer, art, or politics off the hook, but this has occasionally landed him in trouble. Kristen Chappa notes that 'the artist's concern for the plight of his subjects is evident [in this video] ... but Paci is also complicit in the system he critiques by momentarily employing these workers, only to subsequently send them on their way'.¹⁴

A more serious interrogation followed a laboratory tipping off police after processing

Paci's *Exit* photographs (1999), which document passport-control stamps drawn onto his daughter's shoulder blades. *Believe Me, I'm an Artist* (2000) restages the interrogation via surveillance-camera footage. Paci counters charges of child abuse and exploitation by calmly explaining that the photographs are a commentary on migration and expatriation (in a situation where his own visa status and liberty were potentially under threat). The exchange is treated as another border issue, this time between the art and non-art contexts that determine Paci's own freedoms and movements. He treats himself like the subjects of his other videos, as a vulnerable migrant worker caught in a hostile system. In the interrogation room, Paci's attempt to legitimise his own work—by insisting that a related video of his daughter, *Albanian Stories*, was recently shown at the Venice Biennale—doesn't fly.

8 'Adrian Paci: Moments of Transition' (Humblebaek: Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, 2014), www.vimeo.com/167090251.

9 Federico Florian, 'Interview with Adrian Paci', *Art Slant*, 13 May 2013, www.artslant.com/ny/articles/show/34974-interview-with-adrian-paci.

10 Ibid.

11 Rosa Martínez, 'Centro di Permanenza Temporanea: The Caixa Collection', www.coleccion.caixaforum.com/en/obra/-/obra/ACF0057/TemporaryPermanenceCenter.

12 Yvette Cabrera, 'Essential but Exposed: Farmworkers Are Risking Their Lives to Feed a Nation on Lockdown', *Grist*, 4 April 2020, www.grist.org/justice/farmworkers-are-risking-their-lives-to-feed-a-nation-on-lockdown/.

13 Jody Meacham, 'Coronavirus Takes Massive Toll on San Jose Airport Passenger Numbers', *Silicon Valley Business Reporter*, 23 March 2020, www.bizjournals.com/sanjose/news/2020/03/23/coronavirus-takes-massive-toll-on-san-jose-airport.html.

14 Kristen Chappa, 'The Workers', *Frieze*, no. 143, November–December 2011: 134.

DEPARTURES



John Akomfrah

The Airport 2016

video installation
courtesy Smoking Dog Films and Lisson
Gallery, London, New York, and Shanghai



UK artist John Akomfrah's recent films give sprawling, elliptical form to the diasporic experience. They centre on contemporary issues rooted in histories and ideologies of empire, such as environmental destruction, religious persecution, economic collapse, and the refugee crisis. Untethering art's historical relationship to power, Akomfrah mixes cultural forms, narratives, and perspectives. His films often operate like epic history paintings entered from the wrong (or right) side. Often grounded in folk songs and local stories, they make new possibilities out of outdated art tropes, testing the 'truths' of history and the archive that we trust to retell it.

The Airport is set in a derelict, abandoned terminal. Across three screens, figures walk through its interior and exterior spaces, and the surrounding landscape. These travellers from other times pass but never connect. Forever in transit or limbo, they are delayed in what was once the ultimate symbol of freedom and escape. Akomfrah's use of long, slow takes across multiple screens transfers this sense of immersion and suspended temporality to the viewing experience. In one sense, his figures are abstractions of all humanity, now trapped within the vestiges of twentieth-century modernity with its blind faith in progress. Steeped in the form and languages of a premodern romantic tradition, Akomfrah treats the airport as modern ruin.

While evoking all airports, the film is specifically set in Athens's abandoned Ellinikon International Airport and addresses the predicament of contemporary Greece. Akomfrah describes it as 'a conversation with that space, and the desire to see how the airport can be both a fiction as well as a literal place'.¹ It is a project of sensory ethnography that attempts to make sense of the economic and migrant crises that have brought Greece to its knees.² Akomfrah has dealt with Greece



before. His *The Nine Muses* (2002) rethought Homer's *Odyssey* as a meditation on the mass migration from the Caribbean to post-war Britain, told through intertwined found and made journeying narratives. While *The Airport* starts and concludes with a lingering glance across Athens to the Parthenon, Akomfrah is dealing with a very different mythology—the rise and fall of Greece as a modern nation, and its role in contemporary geopolitics.

Where previous films, like *The Nine Muses*, were montages of found and made material, *The Airport* consists entirely of new footage shot by Akomfrah. Yet, a sense of montage lingers in the ways that he layers historical traces and fragments from the history of this site. The terminal walkers are dressed in period costume from different moments in modern Greek history. Classical music is mixed with Greek folk songs. Sampled radio broadcasts recall the histories of war and occupation that have played out in this region, which have seen this airport occupied by Nazi and US forces. The film links these historical events with the current refugee crisis, all of which utilised Greece as a gateway into Europe.

Ellinikon's modern terminal, in which most of the film is set, was bankrolled by Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis and designed by Finnish architect Eero Saarinen in 1969. It was built as part of Greece's postwar economic boom and symbolised modern cosmopolitanism—openness to the world. In 2004, Ellinikon was closed and replaced by an even larger airport, as Greece prepared to host the Olympics. This investment is sometimes identified as the start of the country's economic decline, which became one of the world's most severe under the Global Financial Crisis. Subsequent economic reforms and austerity measures dismantled the Greek welfare state and created a humanitarian crisis. This was compounded

by the tens of thousands of refugees who flooded and were trapped in Greece at this time. The film demonstrates Akomfrah's belief that these personal and collective histories 'are absorbed by places'.³

Akomfrah makes a new symbolic form out of a building that once symbolised a more prosperous future for Greece, and has subsequently come to signify the failure of that dream. His airport links the national and personal histories of Greek people stuck inside a structure, system, and promise from which there is little hope of flight. At the edge of this airport sits the ocean and the boats that feature in so many of Akomfrah's other films as symbols of the diasporic experience. His airport connects the disparate migratory stories of the past and present, the real and the mythological, and the Greek and non-Greek. It is an architectural and symbolic structure that has absorbed and transmits all of these migratory stories.

There are other travellers here: a gorilla and an astronaut. They have migrated from Stanley Kubrick's science-fiction film *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), made a year before the terminal was built. The astronaut seems to be less trapped inside the airport than transported to it from another time and space. Observer rather than participant, he is a stand-in for the artist working with this material and for the viewer who Akomfrah leaves adrift amongst multiple fragments, narrative possibilities, and slipping time scales. Akomfrah notes:

He is us. We are rummaging through a series of discrete events from the past, albeit fiction, but alluding to things we're not in complete control of, which we don't understand, that we're always outside of looking in.⁴

Akomfrah references Kubrick and Greek filmmaker Theo Angelopoulos, whose films allowed him to see and respond to this space and the crisis it embodies. He makes visible 'the unseen guests that are there, whether it's filmmakers, artists, or narratives' that emerge 'every time I bring a camera out'.⁵ He soon became one of these guests himself, when Naeem Mohaiemen made his film *Tripoli Cancelled* in Ellinikon a year later. Mohaiemen treats Akomfrah's *The Airport* as one of those narratives and presences that have now been absorbed by this abandoned, yet still potent, airport.

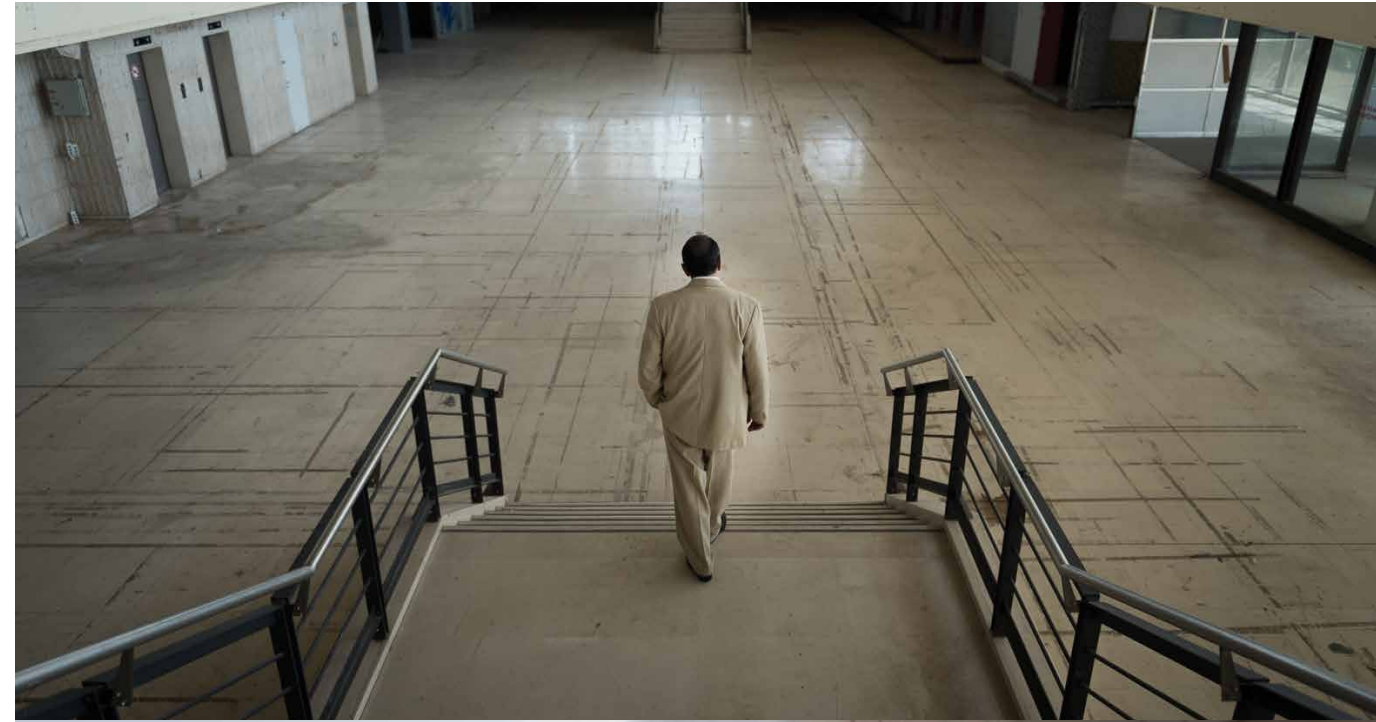
- 1 Tess Thackara, 'John Akomfrah Summons the History of Migration in Chillingly Beautiful New Films', *Artsy*, 23 June 2016, www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-john-akomfrah-reawakens-history-in-chillingly-beautiful-new-films.
- 2 Ashley Clark, "'We Will Be Fine. We Will Absolutely Be Fine": A Conversation with Artist and Filmmaker John Akomfrah', *Filmmaker Magazine*, 18 July 2016, www.filmmakermagazine.com/99122-we-will-be-fine-we-will-absolutely-be-fine-a-conversation-with-artist-filmmaker-john-akomfrah/.
- 3 Tess Thackara, 'John Akomfrah Summons the History of Migration in Chillingly Beautiful New Films'.
- 4 Ashley Clark, "'We Will Be Fine. We Will Absolutely Be Fine": A Conversation with Artist and Filmmaker John Akomfrah'.
- 5 Ibid.

Naeem Mohaiemen
Tripoli Cancelled 2017
film

Tripoli Cancelled is artist and writer Naeem Mohaiemen's first fiction film, but not his first set in or around the airport. His ongoing analysis of historical ruptures, leftist movements, and failed utopias has often circled the airport as a complex site embodying the key global political shifts and tensions of the recent past and present.

Mohaiemen's 2011 film *United Red Army* uses archival footage and sound recordings of tarmac negotiations to reconstruct the 1977 hijacking of Japanese Airlines Flight 742. The hijackers—associated with the Japanese Red Army, a revolutionary communist group—were demonstrating solidarity with the Palestinian cause. After misidentifying Bangladesh as an Islamic Republic (an identity being heavily contested within the country at that moment), they diverted the plane to Dhaka. Mohaiemen intertwines this event with the internecine conflictual politics of 1970s Bangladesh and the wider Southeast-Asian region, along with his own family history. In the film, a young Mohaiemen is heard wishing the live television coverage of the negotiations would end, so that normal programming can resume. His father was a colleague of hostage negotiator, Air Force Chief A.G. Mahmud, who provided the recordings of the negotiations used in the film.

Mohaiemen describes *Tripoli Cancelled* as 'a fable of a man who lives in the airport'.⁶ It follows his movements for a week, in the limbo state he has occupied for a decade. He wanders the airport, occupying himself by exploring rooms and equipment, playing pilot and control-tower operator, dancing, and striking up imaginary conversations. This is a very different film to *United Red Army*, but is constructed through a similar web of personal, cultural, and political allusions. If there is a negotiation in *Tripoli*



Cancelled, it is between the artist and the viewer. The experience of this abstracted, discursive film parallels the protagonist's exploration of the airport as a physical, temporal, and symbolic structure. We constantly seek direction and meaning in a form that normally carefully controls our movement.

Narration comes via the letters the man writes daily to his wife and the passages he reads from his son's favourite book, *Watership Down* (1972). This device surfaces various historical events—especially through references to the writings of Hannah Arendt and Giorgio Agamben and the use of Boney M's migration disco hit *The Rivers of Babylon* (1978). Yet, it's the man's innate solitariness that propels the narrative and opens onto larger issues. We witness his awkward attempts to recover social situations by playing house with airport mannequins, attempting to call home, or rifling through piles of other people's boarding passes, whose names and destinations he recounts as mantras or as if old friends.

The film's long takes and slow pace also convey this state of limbo and exile. Time is stretched to become as portentous as the architectural setting. Mohaiemen has identified a similar sense of 'suspended time' in Palestinian artist Emily Jacir's *Embrace* (2005).⁷ Jacir's sculptural remake of a luggage carousel, scaled to the artist's body, is set in an endless rotation that symbolises the condition of exile—of being in and out of time and place, never arriving or departing. At one point in *Tripoli Cancelled*, the man curls up and sleeps on a disabled carousel.

The film was written, shot, and improvised with Greek-Iranian actor Vassilis Koukalani in Athens' Ellinikon airport, which is already freighted with a complex history. The terminal was built in the late 1960s as a

symbol of Greece's bright future and jet-age glamour. Closed in 2004, then abandoned as conjoined financial, humanitarian, and migration crises decimated the Greek economy, it has come to symbolise the failure of the nationalistic and neoliberal dream it once represented. Mohaiemen presents this once-futuristic airport—then fuelled with national pride and promise—in ruins, as symbol and as witness.

Initial plans to turn Ellinikon into a metropolitan park following the model of Berlin's Tempelhof Airport were shelved as part of widespread austerity measures. One long take in *Tripoli Cancelled* shows the man slowly walking the white line of the runway towards the camera, reversing the trajectory of Lauren Brincat's walking performance on the Tempelhof runway in *This Time Tomorrow, Tempelhof* (2011). Both artists use this runway walk to explore the possibility of individual agency within the larger structures and systems the airport symbolises. As a different form of tarmac negotiation, this scene also recalls *United Red Army*.

Tripoli Cancelled accidentally anticipates the future uses of this airport. After the film was shot, but before it premiered at *Documenta 14* in Athens in 2017, Ellinikon became a temporary refugee shelter. Thousands of migrants lived there, many sleeping in tents inside the departure lounge. The documentary *Greece: The Airport of Disillusion* (2017) presents Ellinikon as a metaphor for the country and a world in the midst of a migration crisis it cannot handle. Mohaiemen's film sits adjacent to these issues, but has a more speculative reach. 'I wanted to make a film about loneliness', Mohaiemen says, explaining the gap between his original intent and the actual reception, 'but by the time the film came out, the refugee crisis was full-blown. You can't show

a film about someone stuck in an airport and not have everybody read it as a metaphor for the refugee crisis.⁸ It has perhaps also influenced how others see the situation. *Greece: The Airport of Disillusion* follows the daily movements and rituals of two men caught in limbo at Ellinikon: a young Afghan refugee Ratib and a Greek pensioner Yorgos. Both films linger on a broken announcements board, forever frozen on Flight 737 boarding for Paris.

For Mohaiemen, the story sits closer to home. It is inspired by the experience of his father, who in 1977 lost his passport while transiting through Greece to the family's then home of Tripoli, Libya. He was stuck in the Ellinikon terminal for nine days, as Greek authorities verified his nationality and allowed him to return to Bangladesh. Mohaiemen describes the event as an urban legend in the family, as well as 'the reason everyone in my family arrives at the airport four hours early'.⁹

The film constantly blurs these real, fictional, and metaphorical transit scenarios. Koukalani looks like Mohaiemen's father, the number he dials is that of their old house in Dhaka, and *Watership Down* symbolises the British literature that circulated within Mohaiemen's early childhood in Bangladesh and Libya. The questions around citizenship, nationality, and borders embedded in all Mohaiemen's work were strangely underscored with his 2018 nomination for the Turner Prize. The definition and relevance of this 'British Art Prize' was thrown into question that year, since, like Mohaiemen, the other nominees (including New Zealand artist Luke Willis Thompson and multi-nation collective Forensic Architecture) came from or spent a great deal of their lives elsewhere.

As part of an outreach programme for *Documenta 14*, Mohaiemen worked with Greek photography schools on a project

that sent twenty-three photographers to Ellinikon. For the younger participants especially, the project offered physical and imaginative access to 'an airport that never was'.¹⁰ Collectively titled *What We Found after You Left*, the photographs are presented alongside the film as parallel narratives or possibilities. They conspire with *Tripoli Cancelled*, and by association John Akomfrah's *The Airport* (acknowledged by Mohaiemen as an inspiration for his film) to present Ellinikon as 'a site of many stories, waiting'.¹¹

6 Artist talk by Naeem Mohaiemen, *Chobi Mela*, 20 April 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=NbUMODwd1J4.

7 'Never Liked Goodbyes Anyway: Naeem Mohaiemen and Didem Pekün in Conversation', *E-Flux*, 4 May 2017, www.conversations.e-flux.com/t/never-liked-goodbyes-anyway-naeem-mohaiemen-didem-pekun-in-conversation/6587.

8 Killian Fox, 'Naeem Mohaiemen: 'I Wanted to Take the Documentary Form and Jar It'', *Guardian*, 22 September 2018, www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2018/sep/22/naeem-mohaiemen-turner-prize-2018-documentary.

9 Artist talk by Naeem Mohaiemen.

10 'Tripoli Cancelled: Exhibition of Greek Photography', EMST National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens, 2017, www.emst.gr/en/emst-without-borders/exhibition-of-greek-photography-inspired-by-tripoli-cancelled.

11 Ibid.

*What We Found After You Left:
A Project by Twenty-Three Greek
Photographers Responding to
Tripoli Cancelled 2017*



Ioanna Paraskelidi
Nora Gkika
OPPOSITE
Panagiotis Vorgias





Lea Martin Abazoglou

OPPOSITE FROM TOP

Michalis Georgiou

Christos Kanakis

Dimitris Chronopoulos

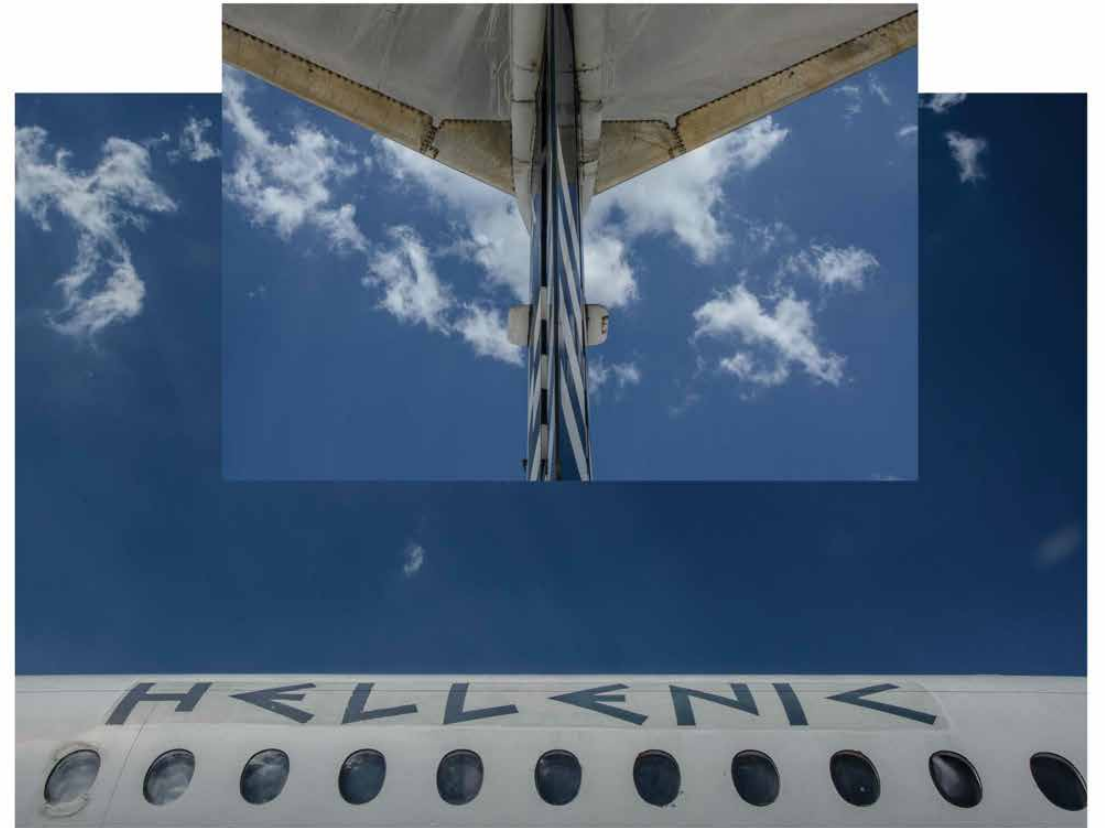




Eleftheria Motaki

OPPOSITE

Rita Chela





Panos Mazarakis
OPPOSITE FROM TOP
Stella Anastasopoulou
Kostas Klinakis
Konstantina Flegka



Παγιδευμένος και εγκαταλελειμένος στον ενδιάμεσο σταθμό, σε ένα μέρος όπου χιλιάδες άνθρωποι συναντώνται για λίγο, για να συνεχίσουν.
Το σχέδιο είναι η φάρμα σε έναν προορισμό.

Η αναπόφευκτη μοίρα σε κάνει να βιώσεις μια κατάσταση μοναχική, σκληρή και μοναχική.

Φόβος, αγάπη, ελπίδα, και νοσταλγία είναι τα συναισθήματα που σε βοηθούν να αντιμετωπίσεις α' αυτή τη δύσκολη κατάσταση.

Οι αναμνήσεις και οι αποκαλύψεις του παρελθόντος σε βοηθούν να διατηρηθείς ήρεμος.

Μια με τη μέρα αυτό γίνεται όλο και πιο δύσκολο, μην ξηронισ πότε θα τελώσει αυτό το βασανιστήριο, σχεδόν οδηγείσαι στην τρέλα.

Παύσιμα, για άλλη μια φορά, ότι ο συνδυασμός αγάπης, φόβου και ελπίδας είναι αυτό που σε βοηθά να το αντέξεις και τελικά να φτάσεις στον προορισμό σου. Αν το ήξερα και από μια φιλοσοφική σκοπιά, θα υπερέλασα να το συνδέσω με ολόκληρη την ύπαρξη και το ταξίδι μέχρι να φτάσουμε σε έναν τελικό προορισμό.

Ο θάνατος είναι αναπόφευκτος και ποτέ δεν μπορούμε πραγματικά να ξέρουμε πότε θα έρθει.

Trapped and abandoned in transit. In a place where thousands of people meet for a while, always to move on after a time.
Scheduled to reach a destination.

Unavoidable fate makes you live in a situation which is very unique, cruel and lonely.

Fear, love hope, and nostalgia are emotions that help you make it through this difficult situation.

Memories and pleasures of the past help you to keep calm and sane.

Day by day this gets more difficult, not knowing when this torture will end almost drives you insane.

I believe once again that love, fear, and hope combined is what helps you to bear this and finally reach your destination.
If we look at this from a philosophical point of view, we could connect it with the whole existence of life.

The journey continues until we reach an ultimate destination. Death is unavoidable and we never can really know when it shall come.





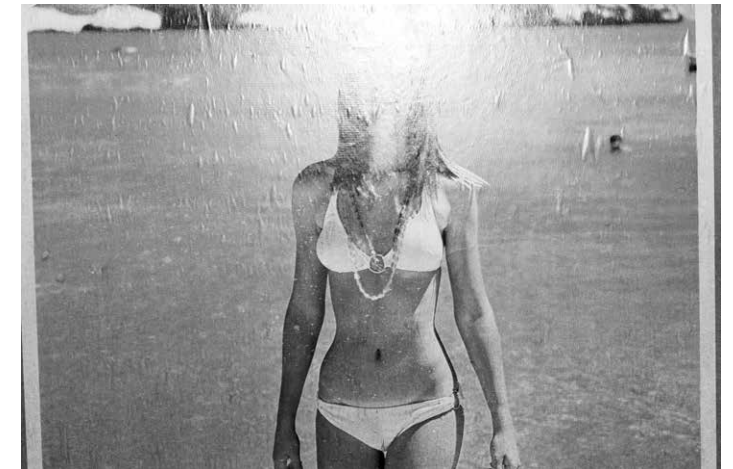
Nantia Panagopoulou

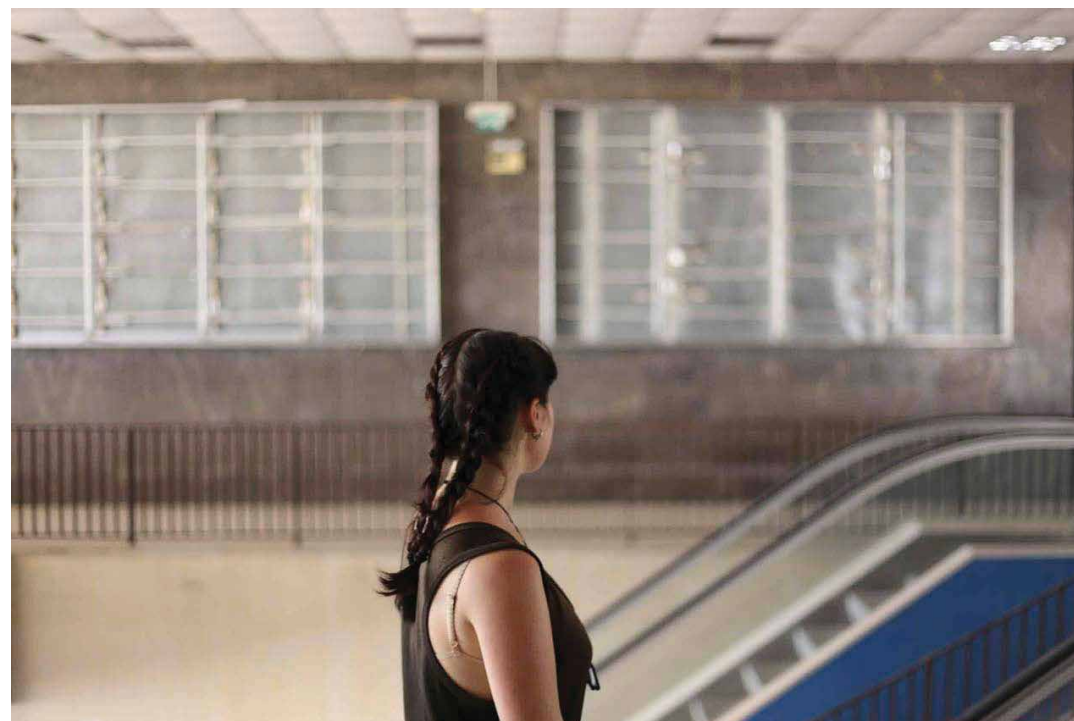
OPPOSITE FROM TOP

Christina Zagoreou

Eva Besleme

Viktoria Kounaki





Filippos Ferentinos
OPPOSITE
Vaggelis Kokoroskos



Eirini Angelidi
OPPOSITE FROM TOP
Giorgos Sotiriou
Anna Kantrivioti
Penny Theodosiou



Works List

John Akomfrah

The Airport 2016
video installation, 53min
courtesy Smoking Dog Films and Lisson Gallery,
London, New York, and Shanghai

Ed Atkins

Safe Conduct 2016
video installation, 9min 4sec
collection Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney;
Mervyn Horton Bequest Fund and German
Foundation Tour 2018.

Walead Beshty

Transparency I (Positive (Fujichrome RDPIII Provia 100F Em. No. 064-821) December 19, 2018–January 6, 2019 LAX/EWR/FCO FCO/EWR/LAX; Negative (Kodak Portra 400NC Em. No. 1101) December 19, 2018–January 6, 2019 LAX/EWR/FCO FCO/EWR/LAX; Positive (Fujichrome RDPIII Provia 100F Em. No. 064-821) May 11–July 9, 2019 LAX/IAD/FCO NAP/GVA GVA/NCE NCE/NAP NAP/ZRH ZRH/FCO/NAP NAP/LGW LHR/LAX; Negative (Kodak Portra 400NC Em. No. 1101) May 11–July 9, 2019 LAX/IAD/FCO NAP/GVA GVA/NCE NCE/NAP NAP/ZRH ZRH/FCO/NAP NAP/LGW LHR/LAX; Positive (Fujichrome RDPIII Provia 100F Em. No. 064-821) August 29–September 9, 2019 LAX/ORD/BRU CRL/TSF VCE/FCO/LAX; Negative (Kodak Portra 400NC Em. No. 1101) August 29–September 9, 2019 LAX/ORD/BRU CRL/TSF VCE/FCO/LAX; Positive (Fujichrome RDPIII Provia 100F Em. No. 064-821) October 10–26, 2019 LAX/EWR EWR/LAX; Negative (Kodak Portra 400NC Em. No. 1121) October 10–26, 2019 LAX/EWR EWR/LAX; Positive (Fujichrome RDPIII Provia 100F Em. No. 064-821) November 20–22, 2019 LAX/EWR EWR/LAX; Negative (Kodak Portra 400NC Em. No. 1121) November 20–22, 2019 LAX/EWR EWR/LAX] 2019
archival inkjet prints
Each 100 x 120mm
Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Marco Brambilla

Approach 1999
video installation, 9min

Lauren Brincat

This Time Tomorrow, Tempelhof 2011
video installation, 5min 20sec
collection Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

Thomas Demand

Gangway 2001
colour photograph/diasec
2250 x 1810mm
collection Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney;
gift of the John Kaldor Family Collection; donated
through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts
Programme.

Simon Denny

Marciana Library/Marco Polo Airport Overlay
Proposal Diagram 3 2015
silkscreen on plastic
1550 x 920mm
Jim Barr and Mary Barr Loan Collection, Dunedin
Public Art Gallery

Charles and Ray Eames

The Expanding Airport 1958
film, 9min
courtesy Eames Office, Los Angeles

Brian Eno

Ambient 1: Music for Airports 1978
audio recording, 48min 32sec
Polydor Records

Andreas Gursky

Düsseldorf, Flughafen II 1994
colour photograph
1449 x 1904mm
collection Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney;
gift of the John Kaldor Family Collection; donated
through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts
Programme.

Naeem Mohaiemen

Tripoli Cancelled 2017
film, 95min

Adrian Paci

Centro di Permanenza Temporanea 2007
video, 5min 30sec

Alex Prager

Crowd #7 (Bob Hope Airport) 2013
colour photograph
1496 x 1976mm
courtesy Alex Prager Studio and Lehmann
Maupin Gallery New York, Hong Kong, Seoul,
and London

Taryn Simon

from *Contraband* 2010

Animal Medication (Counterfeit)
BB Guns and BBS (Illegal)
Cuban Cigars (Prohibited)
Erectile Dysfunction Medication, Cialis, and Viagra (Counterfeit)
Fat (Prohibited)
Handbags, Louis Vuitton (Counterfeit)
Hash (Illegal), Heroin (Illegal), Peyote (Illegal), Psychedelic Mushrooms (Illegal)
Leaves (Prohibited)
Movies (Pirated)
Sausages (Prohibited)
Yam (Prohibited)
archival inkjet prints in plexiglass boxes
various dimensions
Gagosian Gallery, New York

Various Artists

What We Found After You Left: A Project by Twenty-Three Greek Photographers Responding to Tripoli Cancelled 2017
video, 11min 40sec
produced by Sadia Marium, Bengal Foundation,
Dhaka



← Claim
Oversize Baggage

← Love doesn't make
the world go 'round.
Love is what makes
the ride worthwhile.
Euphem P. Jones

Terminal

City Gallery Wellington
13 August 2020–14 February 2021

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FRONT COVER Lauren Brincat *This Time Tomorrow, Tempelhof* 2011

BACK COVER Thomas Demand *Gangway* 2001

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