

# UC Irvine

## UC Irvine Electronic Theses and Dissertations

### Title

Re-presenting the Excremental Body in Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba's Memorial Project  
Waterfield: The Story of the Stars and Jae Rhim Lee's Infinity Burial Project

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/92q2d301>

### Author

Lee, Taryn Ching-May

### Publication Date

2020

### Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,  
IRVINE

Re-presenting the Excremental Body in Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba's  
*Memorial Project Waterfield: The Story of the Stars* and Jae Rhim Lee's *Infinity Burial Project*

THESIS

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements  
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in Art History

by

Taryn Ching-May Lee

Thesis Committee:  
Professor Bert Winther-Tamaki, Chair  
Professor Cecile Whiting  
Professor Roberta Wue

2020



## **DEDICATION**

To

My late grandfather Jae Chun Koh whom I miss dearly.

And

To my family and friends for always supporting my endeavors.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iv
ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS .....	v
I. Introduction: Formation of the Excremental Body .....	1
II. The Vietnam War and Environmental Awareness: Neo-Colonial Remains.....	4
III. Purification: Temporal Relations of Water and Urine in the Mourning Process .....	7
IV. Militant Mourning: A Photojournalist Challenges US Depictions of the Vietnam War .....	15
V. Confronting Morbidity .....	17
VI. Re-Imagining Death through Decompiculture .....	20
VII. Expanding the Limina of Animacy: Melding Ecological and Emotional Needs.....	24
VIII. Conclusion: Resilient Residues and Dark Ecology .....	27
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	31
IMAGES .....	35

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express the deepest appreciation to my committee chair, Professor Bert Winther-Tamaki, who always inspires me with his passion for teaching art history and his dedication to scholarship. Without his guidance and generous help this dissertation would not have been possible.

I would like to thank my committee members, Professor Cecile Whiting and Professor Roberta Wue, whose encouragement and support allowed me to develop my thesis to its fullest potential.

In addition, a thank you to Professor James Nisbet who introduced me to eco-critical scholarship in his Getty Consortium Seminar on “Art and Ecology.”

I thank Jun Nguyen-Hastushiba for his permission to include copyrighted images of his artwork as part of my thesis. Financial support was provided by the University of California, Irvine, Marjorie G. Reday Scholarship and the Virginia H. Laddey Endowed Fellowship in Art History awarded by the School of Humanities Department of Art History.

## ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Re-presenting the Excremental Body in Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba's *Memorial Project Waterfield: The Story of the Stars* and Jae Rhim Lee's *Infinity Burial Project*

by

Taryn Ching-May Lee

Master of Arts in Art History

University of California, Irvine, 2020

Professor Bert Winther-Tamaki, Chair

As the devastating effects of the Anthropocene become ever more acute, contemporary artists are increasingly concerning themselves with ecology: the study of relations between organisms and their environments. In this thesis I examine several projects that address these critical issues. Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba and Jae Rhim Lee are two artists who focus on the excremental body by which I mean the vulnerable, mortality of the body through its excretions in life and after death. In their works they confront various dimensions of death and transmute the excremental body in order to expose neo-liberal necropolitics and remediate disembodiment. Nguyen-Hatsushiba's film *Memorial Project Waterfield: The Story of the Stars* (2006-2014) and Lee's *Infinity Burial Project* (2008-Present) both utilize substances that are considered taboo, such as urine and corpses, in order to transgress boundaries of purity and danger. Through a transdisciplinary analysis, I will examine how each artist approaches US necropolitics affecting Vietnamese and American bodies through ecological, psychological, and cultural lenses.

## **I. Introduction: Formation of the Excremental Body**

The excremental body<sup>1</sup> has been defined by Mark Featherstone as the disposable body that is set up within US society as a foil to the formalized, white, utopian American body in order to assert the US's global power through corporeal poetics.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the excremental body has been demonized as a way to justify the disembodied, mechanized body of supermodernity<sup>3</sup> which represents the perfect, post-human body which does not break down, feel pain, or expire. Ultimately, the excremental body is the pathologized other that feels pain and ultimately represents "the horrific real of the vulnerable body."<sup>4</sup> In regards to the US's involvement in Vietnam during the Cold War Era, American society was, and still is, culturally and psychologically unwilling to recognize and empathize with the suffering and tortured bodies in the Global South and within its own borders. The pathologization of the "natural" body, soil, water, urine, and all that is "other" allows US society to relentlessly exercise and grow its accursed share through neo-colonial agendas.<sup>5</sup>

As the devastating effects of the Anthropocene become ever more acute, contemporary artists Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba and Jae Rhim Lee re-present the excremental body at the forefront of their respective projects in order to remediate disembodiment, highlight the interdependency of all life forms, and hold the US necropolitics accountable for countless ecological atrocities. The "Anthropocene" popularized in 2000 by the atmospheric chemist Paul Crutzen and ecologist Eugene Stoermer, has been deemed by geologists to begin in the 1950s

---

<sup>1</sup> Mark Featherstone, "Utopian Bodies," In *Acting Bodies and Social Networks: A Bridge Between Technology and Working Memory*, eds. Bianca Maria Pirani and Ivan Varga (University Press of America, 2010), 9-17.

<sup>2</sup> Warwick Anderson, "Excremental Colonialism: Public Health and the Poetics of Pollution," *Critical Inquiry* 21, no. 3 (Spring, 1995): 644.

<sup>3</sup> Supermodernity is the current epoch defined by archaeologist Gonzalez Ruibal as an excess of factual overabundance, spatial overabundance, self-reflexive individuality, and material overabundance.

<sup>4</sup> Featherstone, "Utopian Bodies," In *Acting Bodies and Social Networks*, 7.

<sup>5</sup> Anderson, "Excremental Colonialism," 642.



due to the dramatic effects of modern and nuclear weapons upon ecosystems during WW2 and the Cold War battles fought between communism and capitalism.<sup>6</sup> The Anthropocene critically links human actions with the rapid change and depletion of earth's systems, but its history actually begins long before the 1950s. When German biologist, Ernst Haeckel, coined the term "ecology" in 1866, it became a discipline that facilitated the domination of colonial anthropocentrism over passive, human and nonhuman worlds — effectively becoming what T.J. Demos calls the "science of empire."<sup>7</sup> A lot has changed for the worse since 1866, since ecology's colonial origins still persist through turbo-capitalism's apathy towards the biosphere exacerbates a psychological and cultural fear of morbidity due to a "uniquely modern form of egoism [which] has broken [the] interdependence between the living and the dead. With disastrous results for the living, who now think of the dead as eliminated."<sup>8</sup> This perversion of death is further clarified by Achille Mbembe's theory of Necropolitics as "let live and make die" which is in direct response to Michel Foucault's concept of biopolitics defined as "live and let die." Coined by Foucault in the 1970's during the Cold War era, biopolitics meant to "make live and let die" in line with the capitalist liberal governmentality that specifically sought to make life "cozy" for the First World nation states.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, necropolitics delineates a management of life in the neo-liberal capitalist world: let all those who hold wealth and power live, and make the rest die through systematic abandonment.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Heather Davis and Zoe Todd, "On the Importance of a Date, or, Decolonizing the Anthropocene," *ACME* 16, no. 4 (January, 2017): 768.

<sup>7</sup> T.J. Demos, *Decolonizing Nature: Contemporary Art and the Politics of Ecology* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016), 14.

<sup>8</sup> Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2011), 18.

<sup>9</sup> Marina Grzinic, "Biopolitics and Necropolitics in Relation to the Lacanian Four Discourses." In *Proceedings of the Symposium Art and Research: Shared Methodologies—Politics and Translation* (September, 2012), Barcelona: 2.

<sup>10</sup> Achille Mbembe, *Necropolitics*. Translated by Steven Corcoran (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2019).

The Vietnam War is particularly relevant to the artists Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba and Jae Rhim Lee since their projects relate to the necropolitics of US chemical warfare that sparked the formation of an ecological consciousness in American society. In these works, the contaminated human and environmental “body” collide.<sup>11</sup> Staged in South Korea and later shown to a Japanese audience, Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba’s film, *Memorial Project Waterfield: The Story of the Stars* (2006-2014), aims to commemorate the losses incurred by ecological, political, and economic violence during the American War in Vietnam (fig. 1). Focusing on the violent trauma incurred on the body, land, and water Nguyen-Hatsushiba re-presents the act of urinating as a way to memorialize the embodied struggles of Vietnamese people who suffer from slow ecological violence and US cultural hegemony. By creating a multidimensional space within his work, he offers a heterogeneous re-presentation of Vietnamese society and suffering that has been systematically erased by hegemonic US narratives of the Vietnam War.

On the other hand, Jae Rhim Lee’s *Infinity Burial Project* (2008-Present) offers consumers an opportunity to remediate the imperceptible accumulation of industrial toxins within the human body through the use of mushroom mycelia in order to promote environmental stewardship and provoke the psychological structures surrounding cultural death denial (fig. 2). By uncovering the ubiquity of invisible chemical contamination in America and offering a green-burial alternative that facilitates a physical transfer of nutrients from a decomposing human body to the soil, her work expands one’s understanding of how human death is linked to vibrant, non-human systems. In order to ease a people’s fear of death stoked by supermodernity, her work

---

<sup>11</sup> Alexandra R. Toland, Jay Stratton Noller, and Gerd Wessolek. *Field to Palette: Dialogues on Soil and Art in the Anthropocene*, First Edition (CRC Press, 2019), 463.

attempts to bridge the dichotomy between “man” and “nature” with her focus on interspecies relationships within the soil.

Both artists utilize alienated substances, such as dejecta and decomposing bodies, in order to probe colonial logics and animacy hierarchies that are socially and racially charged. Such matter labeled as “waste” is often steeped in logics of purity and danger that justifies necropolitical classifications of people as valuable or disposable. Residues of human life, ranging from excreta and corpses to industrial toxins and landmines, serve as important reminders of humans’ undeniable entanglement with ecological systems that lie beyond human control. Although these residues are out of sight, and often imperceptible, they are potent reminders of anthropocentric frameworks and heighten the agency and animacy of nonhuman “objects” or systems. In this paper I will show how both artists seek to halt the repetitious calamities caused by humans by transforming substances that are considered taboo — urine and corpses — into opportunities for ecological, psychological, and cultural remediation.

## **II. The Vietnam War and Environmental Awareness: Neo-Colonial Remains**

In 2006, Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba staged *Memorial Project Waterfield: The Story of the Stars* as a performance installation at the 6<sup>th</sup> Gwangju Biennale in South Korea with the main intention of turning it into a video performance (fig. 3). The physical performance space was confined to a prison-like structure constructed out of 8-meter tall walls that were lined with long metal poles (fig. 4). Visitors could only view the work from an aerial perspective provided by standing on the bridge that overlooks the courtyard and connects the Gwangju Biennale’s two gallery buildings. 26,000 plastic water bottles packed the entire ground surface of the 10-meter wide by 14-meter-long space. During the live performances, there were 3 groups of 5 men and women who would alternate shifts every hour. Some performers came from Vietnam in order to

assist the artist with training, while the rest of the cast consisted of Korean men and women volunteers aged 18-30 years old. These volunteers were cast based on their interest in contemporary art, youthful appearance, and overall good health.<sup>12</sup> During shifts, the performers were tasked with drinking water, urinating into containers, injecting urine into recently emptied bottles, carefully wading through the bottles, and listening to the spontaneous orders of the shift leader to take cover, sit, or lie down (fig. 5).<sup>13</sup> Over the span of about 20 days, these repetitive, carefully orchestrated tasks gradually formed 50 urine-colored stars that were each 1-meter wide and constituted the image of the 50 stars on the American Flag hybridized with the yellow star of the Vietnamese flag (fig. 6). This symbolic relationship between the two flags' stars reflects the entwined historical, cultural, and economic relationships between the US and Vietnam.

Nguyen-Hatsushiba attributes the chemical destruction of US and Vietnamese ecosystems to militarization and neo-liberal capitalism. From 1961 to 1971, the United States' military enacted Operation Ranch Hand and sprayed more than 19 million gallons of herbicides over almost 3 million acres of Vietnam to defoliate the jungle canopy and expose the movement of the National Liberation Front. Agent Orange, a herbicide mixture known for its toxic levels of 2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin (TCDD), constituted the majority of chemicals deployed over foliage, villages, and agricultural areas.<sup>14</sup> Before herbicides were used in the war, the US agricultural sector had been using them for years. The book *Silent Spring*, written by biologist Rachel Carson in 1962, exposed the US chemical industry's unregulated use of pesticides

---

<sup>12</sup> Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, [Waterfield Project Performance and Installation Workplan], courtesy of the artist, 2006, 10.

<sup>13</sup> Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, [Waterfield Project Performance and Installation Workplan], courtesy of the artist, 2006, 5.

<sup>14</sup> Edwin A. Martini, *Agent Orange: History, Science, and the Politics of Uncertainty* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 2.

supported unquestioningly by the US government.<sup>15</sup> It was one of the most influential books documenting environmental degradation caused by synthetic pesticides and helped grow American environmental consciousness and helped fuel rallies against the US military's irresponsible use of chemical agents in Vietnam.

In 1971, just one year after the first Earth Day celebration, President Nixon forced the US military to end Operation Ranch Hand in a two-step process of returning the 1.5 million gallons of Agent Orange sitting in drums throughout Vietnam to the US and incinerating it along with the other 860,000 gallons sitting in the Naval Construction Battalion Center in Gulfport, Mississippi. This two-step process, called Operation Tracer IVY and Operation Pacer HO, was closely monitored by the newly created Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). However, rounding up all of the rusted Agent Orange in Vietnam was handled by enlisting the help of local Vietnamese women. This rebarreling effort contaminated the soil at all four of the bases at which it was kept: Da Nang, Phu Cat, Nha Trang, and Bien Hoa. The women laborers were not protected from the chemical agent and worked with their bare hands since gloves provided by the US were simply too big. In contrast, Nguyen-Hatsushiba's performers' protective white garb, which includes goggles, gloves, a mask, and shoes, mimics the uniform given to US workers at Johnston Atoll who were trained to carefully handle the incineration of Agent Orange (fig. 7).<sup>16</sup> The discrepancy of protection between Vietnamese women and American workers, along with the sheer use of chemical agents in war, exposes the overt military mechanisms of necropolitics. Even after 30 years, the dioxin levels in the bloodstreams of Bien Hoa residents are 135 times more than that of those out of range from the spraying and barrels of Agent Orange are

---

<sup>15</sup> Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962).

<sup>16</sup> Edwin A. Martini, *Agent Orange: History, Science, and the Politics of Uncertainty*, 103-105.

continually being dug up at former US military bases in Korea and Japan.<sup>17</sup> The biomagnification of dioxin accumulating through ecosystems and vital resources continues to cause cancer, birth defects, and exponential numbers of deaths.

A few hours after the official end of the US embargo on Vietnam, in 1994, PepsiCo beverages and water were on the shelves of Vietnamese stores. By memorializing the war-torn land of Vietnam with plastic water bottles, Nguyen-Hatsushiba displays how Vietnamese people have been caught between America's war against communism and US corporations' economic war within Vietnam's beverage industry. US chemical companies profited from the degradation of the Vietnamese ecosystem during the war and subsequently US water companies have capitalized on that by the "regeneration" of clean water to villages.<sup>18</sup> US herbicides contaminated the water and debilitated people's bodies with chemicals while US corporations profit from the market selling clean water to that same population. Even today, Coca-Cola and PepsiCo scramble to recover their reputations after having lowered water tables to the point of devastating crops and polluting water sources with factory waste.<sup>19</sup>

### **III. Purification: Temporal Relations of Water and Urine in the Mourning Process**

"Water" in Vietnamese is *nước*: which takes on the dual meanings of homeland and water. Water has been used by Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba as a crucial metonym, or substitute, for conceptualizing underrepresented Vietnamese experiences.<sup>20</sup> In his previous underwater works,

---

<sup>17</sup> Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, 14.

<sup>18</sup> Hong Nhung, "Ha Tinh to Receive Safe Drinking Water from EKOCENTER," *Vietnam Economic Times*, January 26, 2018, <http://vneconomictimes.com/article/business/ha-tinh-to-receive-safe-drinking-water-from-ekocenter>.

<sup>19</sup> John DaSilva, "CSR Case Studies: Coca-Cola," *Kenan Institute Asia*, Oct. 2010.

<sup>20</sup> Yen Le Espiritu, "Negotiating Memories of War: Arts in Vietnamese American Communities," in *Art in the Lives of Immigrant Communities in the U.S.*, eds. Paul DiMaggio and Patricia Fernandez-Kelly (New York: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 212.

such as *Memorial Project Nha Trang, Vietnam: Towards the Complex-For the Courageous, the Curious and the Cowards* (2001) the limits imposed on the human body submerged in water mirrored the stifling socio-political and economic state of “post”-war Vietnam for cyclo drivers (fig. 8). For Nguyen-Hatsushiba the sea serves as a conceptual space where the marginalized residues of Vietnamese experiences and memories could be re-imagined and presented. In his four preceding films, the process of mourning takes place underwater in order to show the immense and overwhelming loss that he has witnessed from his transnational perspective of war.

Born in Japan during the 1968 Tet Offensive to a Japanese mother and a South Vietnamese father, Jun’s life began during a tumultuous time for his family. During the last official year of the Vietnam War, he and his family visited his grandmother in Vietnam despite the dangers of war. While Nguyen-Hatsushiba was able to leave Vietnam in 1975 with his Japanese mother and two sisters, his South Vietnamese father had to complete the communist regime’s re-education program. Although the family was eventually reunited in Japan, Nguyen-Hatsushiba’s parents divorced a few years later and split the family. Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba immigrated to the US with his father in order to live with his Vietnamese grandmother who had fled Vietnam by boat.<sup>21</sup> His experiences in Japan, Vietnam, and America are perceptible in his various memorial films that he created before filming *Memorial Project Waterfield: The Story of the Stars*.

Eight years after the 6<sup>th</sup> Gwangju Biennale, Nguyen-Hatsushiba’s 11-minute film was finally conceived in 2014 and presented at Mizuma Gallery in Tokyo. In this film version of

---

<sup>21</sup> Drake Stutesman, Barbara Pollack, and Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, “Creative Particles: An Interview with Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba,” *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media* 47, no. 1 (2006): 36-59. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/194347>.

*Memorial Project Waterfield: The Story of the Stars* (2006-2014), the artist acted as a photojournalist grounded in a video game simulation where war and agricultural practices simultaneously take place on one field (fig. 9). While the film is anchored in the footage taken of performers drinking from and urinating in plastic bottles at the Gwangju Biennale, computer graphics visually transform the space into a rice-paddy field or a warzone filled with mines at any given moment. This confusing oscillation between the water-bottle filled Gwangju Biennale exhibition space, a rice-paddy field, and a mine-infested warzone, exemplifies the artist's complex relationship with water and memory of the Vietnam War (fig. 10). Unlike the numbingly sublime, underwater scenes he is famous for, this film's focus on urination and the performers' controlled relationship to water, land, and hidden mines seems to be his return to the harsh embodiments of war.

In Freud's writings on "Mourning and Melancholia" and the death instinct, mourning is a process that restitutes mastery over one's world through repetitious returns to the lost object which results in the eventual decathexis of the libido from the object of loss. Rather than being behind the camera in *Memorial Project Waterfield: The Story of the Stars*, as he had in his previous films, he is an active participant. However, in pathological melancholia, an irrational attachment to an imaginary or "false" loss results in the griever attempting to become the lost object by incorporating its residues. Melancholia thus results in the withdrawal from the lost object and the "representation of the object gets installed within the ego" as a static ego-ideal.<sup>22</sup> In Susette Min's chapter in *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*, she argues that the artists Dean Sameshima's and Khanh Vo's investigations into loss are not static nor pathological by viewing

---

<sup>22</sup> Susette Min, "Remains to Be Seen: Reading the Works of Dean Sameshima and Khanh Vo," In *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*, ed. David L. Eng and David Kazanjian (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 2002), 232.



melancholia through the lense of Giorgio Agamben. Min highlights Agamben's theories concerning the transformative capabilities of melancholic acts such as incorporation. For example, while Nguyen-Hatsushiba's initiative to literally incorporate himself in the waterfield shows an intense entrenchment into the memorialization of Vietnamese experiences, Agamben would not view this melancholic act in the static, pathological sense that Freud suggests. In contrast, Min's analysis of Agamben frames melancholia as "a metaphor of becoming" that re-connects the "false" loss with reality through an "acting out" of the lost object to the ego.<sup>23</sup> The artist's re-articulation of lost Vietnamese history can be seen through his active performance as a photojournalist- a role he had been already playing as the videographer of his other videos. Nguyen-Hatsushiba's film is replete with various scenes of the waterfield that flicker from the past and present state of Vietnam, showing how "the ego within the process of mourning and melancholia becomes a repository and multilayer[ed] history."<sup>24</sup> In the film, the waterfield constitutes the surface of the ego that serves as the archeological remainder of unresolved sediments of grief.

Therefore, melancholia mimics and intensifies Nguyen-Hatsushiba's processes of incorporation in that the metonymic traces of Vietnam have become embedded in the psychic topography of the waterfield. This film, replete with flickering images, collapses the distinctions between reality and fantasy. It is in this realm that the artist renders his clearest articulation of his lost Vietnamese history and reconnects this "false" loss to the ego. At the end of the *Memorial Project Waterfield: The Story of the Stars* film, the artist-as-photojournalist is shot dead by an unknown sniper. This "death" concludes the artist's five film series of "Memorial

---

<sup>23</sup> Sussette Min, "Remains to Be Seen: Reading the Works of Dean Sameshima and Khanh Vo," In *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*, 233.

<sup>24</sup> Sussette Min, "Remains to Be Seen: Reading the Works of Dean Sameshima and Khanh Vo," 234.

Projects” and is his last artwork that investigates the American War in Vietnam. The end of the artist’s focus on Vietnam shows his sense of mastery gained through his active participation as a performer. By appropriating the role of the photojournalist in war, he critiqued his own role as a creator contributing to a certain construction of history. Furthermore, water no longer physically consumed the artist and his performers in the ocean; instead they are above ground, ingesting the water, incorporating the loss, and expelling it from their body as an act of psychological purification. The performers’ ingestion of water becomes a purification that contrastingly embodies “a sense of self [that] may fully be infected by the residues and memories of the lost object, in which case mourning has no beginning or end, [ultimately] blurring the division of labor between mourning and melancholia.”<sup>25</sup> With this in mind, the commodification of water in *Memorial Project Waterfield: The Story of the Stars* shows how even a necessity for life, something specifically linked with Vietnamese culture, cannot be taken for granted as a refuge for re-enlivening cultural memories or as a resource in present-day Vietnam. In the water-bottle laden setting of the waterfield, water, the metonymy of Vietnam, is contained within plastic bottles — but not without modification.

Repetitiously consuming water from the bottles and expelling urine back into them is a driving force of the performance video. Throughout the film, urine levels acquired by drinking more water are imperative for “survival” and a message that appears, “URINE LEVEL: 100% PURIFICATION SUCCESS TIME REVERSED,” signals a temporal link between biological processes and cultural remembrance (fig. 11). When water passes through the body of the performer and becomes incorporated with their biological data in the form of urine, urine can be seen as a reclamation of the water from US corporations since it creates a salty liquid substance

---

<sup>25</sup> Min, “Remains to Be Seen,” 234.

symbolically approximate to the ocean.<sup>26</sup> The film's purity associated with urine runs in contrast with a western sense of "danger" historically associated with human dejecta by American medicine practices particularly in tropical countries such as Vietnam. US biologists have pathologized and classified bodily excretions as a taboo in order to impose bodily control.<sup>27</sup> In addition, as the message infers, the accumulation of urine offers an opportunity to reverse time and investigate the past (fig. 11). Therefore, urine is dangerous to the colonial order of hygiene as well as the US's narrative of the Vietnam War.

Scenes from the "past" recount US military violence in Vietnam and are represented through manga-esque<sup>28</sup>, black-and-white shots of the performers in a battlefield; whereas, scenes from the "present" are grounded in a "waterfield" constituted by thousands of plastic Coca-Cola and PepsiCo water bottles commonly sold in Vietnam, known as Joy and Aquafina.<sup>29</sup> However, there are moments when temporalities fluidly enmesh themselves together and break down the visual strategies that delineate past from present (fig. 12). Time seems to collapse in scenes that collage together the waterfield, American flag, and Vietnamese landscapes or cities (fig. 13). Military operations drive the video game film and prompt the viewer to complete five missions amidst warnings of mines and dropping bombs, and the suggestion of death at every turn. Like the unexploded mines and chemical agents that still haunt Vietnam, the waterfield has similar dangers that the performers must try to avoid; thus reminding the viewer that "slow violence is never past, so too the post is never fully post [as in post-Cold War, post-industrial, etc...]:

---

<sup>26</sup> Jean-Claude Lebensztejn and Jeff Nagy, *Pissing Figures 1280-2014*, translated by Jeff Nagy (New York: David Zwirner Books, 2017), 86.

<sup>27</sup> Mary Douglas, introduction to *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concept of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 2002), xvii.

<sup>28</sup> Manga is a type of Japanese comic book.

<sup>29</sup> Fyfe, "In Deep Water," 136.

industrial particulates and effluents live on in the environmental elements we inhabit in our very bodies...”<sup>30</sup> The gradual formation of the 50 American stars crystallizes the inescapable US geopolitics that continue to dictate the fate of Vietnamese society. What Rob Nixon calls the “temporalities of place” come to fore since the film recapitulates not only the experiences of diasporic refugees who fled Vietnam, but also the communities of refugees who were displaced from their environments without moving.<sup>31</sup> For example, ongoing casualties of Agent Orange do not fit within the neatly framed official years of the Vietnam War and are often forgotten and deemed disposable by war strategists.<sup>32</sup> Thus the abjection written into the production of plastic water bottles by American companies mirrors the disposability attributed to Vietnamese lives by US necropolitics.

Urine coloring the yellow star(s) of the US and Vietnamese flag can be interpreted as the collapse of “official” delineations marking past and present US-Vietnam relations through the memory of water and the body working together. Like the encased area the performers are trapped in, Vietnamese people can find no refuge in Vietnam or the US. They are trapped in their homeland and abroad — like water in a plastic bottle. In addition, the performers laboring over US commodities by way of ingestion and urination reduces the body to its orificial functions. Caged performers urinating to create the US flag ad nauseum as computer graphic US planes rain bombs on them, encapsulates the constricting US authority that subordinates Vietnamese people. Speaking to how animality has been utilized by structures of authority to dehumanize and objectify certain people into subordination, Mel Chen distinguishes objectification from dehumanization with a quote from Marx’s “Estrangement of Labor” in order

---

<sup>30</sup> Nixon, *Slow Violence*, 8.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* 19.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* 13-14.

to illuminate industrialization's impoverishment of life through notions of estrangement, animality, and control relationships:

Labour not only produces commodities; it also produces itself and the workers as a commodity...the external character of labour for the worker is demonstrated by the fact that it belongs not to himself but to the another... The result is that man (the worker) feels that he is acting freely only in his animal functions — eating, drinking, procreating... while in his human functions, he is nothing more than an animal.<sup>33</sup>

In spite of the objectification and animal-like treatment of performers in the film, who labor over creating the US flag with American commodities and their urine, the artist asserts that “the slow acts of picking up, and then working with thousands of bottles of mineral water, are also metaphorical actions for landmine removal...at the same time, [they] are also metaphorical images for sowing (fig. 14). Through the simultaneous metaphor of these two behaviors, the image of Vietnam in the recent period [emerges] - an image of reconstruction and renewal.”<sup>34</sup>

Opposed to the renewal or reconstruction suggested by the artist to seemingly resolve his melancholic mourning, the true decaethesis or “purification” from the artist's attachment to loss comes from the concluding scenes of the film, where the photojournalist is shot to death by three bullets through the lens of the camera with a violent “ejaculation of blood standing in or the pain of death” (fig. 15).<sup>35</sup> The artist's death at the end of the film can be seen as a part of melancholia when the superego hosts a death drive due to the ego's failure to “preserve loss by suspending

---

<sup>33</sup> Mel Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 45.

<sup>34</sup> Joe Fyfe, “In Deep Water,” *Art in America* 96, no.8 (2008): 136.

<sup>35</sup> Sylvia Shin Huey Chong, *The Oriental Obscene Violence and Racial Fantasies in the Vietnam Era* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 88.

and controlling time.”<sup>36</sup> After trying to keep alive the losses sustained by Vietnamese people, the photojournalist’s death repeats the trauma of war upon the body of the artist in one final moment. Instead of death being a process of life, in this game as in necropolitics, it is seen as termination. But the artist’s termination can be seen as the death of the symbolic self constructed within a symbolic order rather than an actual physical death. He considers this film his last artwork he made before ending his artistic career; thus, the death drive seems to stem from a desire to “obliterate the cage of the signifying network itself” exemplified through the prison-like space and American stars that dominated the performance.<sup>37</sup> By obliterating his symbolic self within the US structure of death and inequality, the artist freed himself psychologically from the US narrative that has defined his identity and the Vietnam War.

#### **IV. Militant Mourning: A Photojournalist Challenges US Depictions of the Vietnam War**

Delving into Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba’s decision to play the part of a photojournalist, a deeper understanding of his thoughts about US propaganda can be uncovered. The beginning of the film opens with the message “You are a photojournalist, life is your game... Inviting you to survive.” Shot in a video game format known as a “first-person shooter” point of view, the spectator takes on the perspective of a photojournalist in the midst of war (fig. 10). By highlighting the political nature of documentation, this orientation critiques photojournalism’s role in the Vietnam War for having provided the American public a false sense of witnessing that capitalized on the sensationalization of Vietnamese suffering through “screen memories.”<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> Min, “Remains to Be Seen,” 233-255.

<sup>37</sup> Sharif Mebed quoting Zizek’s discussion on Lacan’s death drive, “A Critique of Desire: Law, Language, and the Death Drive in Kawabata’s House of the Sleeping Beauties,” *Japan Review*, no. 32 (2019): 89-106. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26652951>

<sup>38</sup> Screen Memories are characterized by Viet Thanh Nguyen in, “Impossible to Forget, Difficult to Remember: Vietnam and the Art of Dinh Q. Le,” as America’s cultural hegemony in US media, cinema, and TV coverage of the Vietnam War which systematically marginalizes refugee experiences.

These screen memories that photojournalism contributed include, but are not limited to, extensive bombing campaigns across Vietnam, the massacre at My Lai, and children being burned by napalm.<sup>39</sup> These dehumanizing images ignore the long-term, attritional fatalities of war from toxins such as Agent Orange that go increasingly uncared in projected casualties of future wars.<sup>40</sup> Adding on to this point, the US's decision to not acknowledge the Vietnamese lives lost in the Vietnam War Memorial clearly shows how art and the media shape the political, hierarchical organization of lives. The double meaning of to "shoot" with a camera or a gun transforms photojournalism's figurative ability to "kill" other perspectives of war into a literally fatal contributor to the long-term scheme of necropolitics.

In an attempt to remediate these representational inequalities of war traumas, the artist himself performs in the film as the photojournalist character named "Jun Uncooks" (fig. 9). This name can be linked to Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba's earlier practice of cooking sticky rice and applying it to surfaces where it would dry and crust off as a metaphor for a refugee's sense of displacement in a new land. However, it can also be linked to the computing term "uncook": to repair a file that has been damaged or "cooked."<sup>41</sup> In the latter sense of the name "Uncooks," the artist seeks to restore Vietnamese experiences by offering a juxtaposition of overlapping temporalities — between the war-torn past and the contaminated present. His acknowledgment of the present-day residues of war expands understandings of invisible assertions of domination. Unlike his previous films that were filmed in the seemingly limitless underwater expanses of the ocean, the enclosed landscape of the water bottle field uncovers a more sobering view of Vietnam's relationship to the disempowering violence of US geopolitics and modernization. The

---

<sup>39</sup> Martini, *Agent Orange*, 18.

<sup>40</sup> Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, 13.

<sup>41</sup> "Uncook vs Cooked - What's the Difference?" *WikiDiff*, 16 Mar. 2019, [wikidiff.com/uncook/cooked](http://wikidiff.com/uncook/cooked).

artist as a photojournalist, serves as a militant mourner that defends against erasures and revisions of Vietnamese history. Repetition allowed Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba to challenge, recreate, and deconstruct his memories of the Vietnam War. Consistently mourning and returning to a particular moment in history attests to one artist's militant dedication to repetition and eventual "destruction" through a metaphorical death.

## V. Confronting Morbidity

In Jacques Derrida's "The Ends of Man," the "end" could mean both disappearance and accomplishment. In her essay, "Repetition, Revenge, Plasticity," Catherine Malabou quotes Derrida as so, "The human is achieved in its disappearance, in becoming inhuman, nonhuman, post-human... Such is the apocalyptic nature of the human: its destruction is its truth, whereupon the unity of death and completion, dissolution and achievement, are to be revealed."<sup>42</sup> The concepts of the nonhuman, post-human, and beyond represent the human possibility of alterity.<sup>43</sup> Within this realm, artist Jae Rhim Lee seeks to question what is "properly" human and beyond the human about death in her *Infinity Burial Project* (2008-Present).

When speaking to the plasticity of humans and repetitive nature, Malabou presents Nietzsche's argument that humans seek revenge for the passage of time, transiency, and passing away. Temporality engenders resentment and repetition of that which humans cannot change. Malabou goes on to include Nietzsche's assertion that "The essence of humanity is to repeat its anger and dispossession; it is always too late."<sup>44</sup> This repetitive revenge towards death is prominent in the creation of countless US-produced Vietnam War movies that constantly repeat

---

<sup>42</sup> Jacques Derrida quoted in Catherine Malabou, "Repetition, Revenge, Plasticity," in *Superhumanity: Post-Labor, Psychopathology, Plasticity* (National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, 2018), 105.

<sup>43</sup> Catherine Malabou, "Repetition, Revenge, Plasticity," 105.

<sup>44</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, cited in Malabou, "Repetition, Revenge, Plasticity," 106-107.



violence upon the peoples and land of Vietnam in order to create a manufactured heroic transcendence for American soldiers.<sup>45</sup> A war practice relating more closely to Lee's ambitions to make post-mortem practices more eco-friendly, embalming was first used in the US for the purpose of preserving soldier's bodies from the battlefield long enough to be transported to family members during the Civil War. Modern embalming practices were introduced during the Civil War and have persisted in funerary practices to this day; thus heroism, embalming practices, and death denial are inextricably linked.

Before Jae Rhim Lee was interested in post-mortem burial practices, concepts of death were always at the core of her works. Born in Gwangju, Korea in 1975, Lee had a traumatic experience of death as a young child. Upon the death of Lee's grandfather, her mother became overcome with grief and despair.<sup>46</sup> Later, as a college student, Lee had an immensely difficult time accepting the death of roommate who struggled with mental illness and committed suicide. Despite Lee's historically negative relationship with death, she faces her fears head on in her art practice. In 2006, Lee received a Master's in Science at MIT's Department of Architecture upon the completion of a sculptural performance piece called  $N=I=NPK=KIMCHI=N$  along with a written thesis. In order to grow cabbage and make the Korean side-dish called "kimchi" Lee optimized her urine with a strict diet and constructed a feedback control system in the form of a living unit complete with a hydroponic garden, urinal, urine processor, bed and kitchen. Picking apart the title of her performance piece is needed in order to understand her complex project. "NPK" represents nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium since they are the elements that are

---

<sup>45</sup> Forty, Adrian Forty and Susanne Küchler, "Remembering to Forget," in *The Art of Forgetting* (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 133.

<sup>46</sup> Jae Rhim Lee, "Accepting Death: One Family, One Burial Suit at a Time," Tedx Talks Youtube video, 16:26, May 10, 2016, <https://youtu.be/yr2-Xyd6ViA>.

present in human urine and are the main macronutrients required by all plants. Moving on, the “N” present at the beginning and end of the title stands for “narcissism” and the Greek myth of Narcissus. Finally, “N=1” refers to the scientific notation indicating the number of subjects in a given study and her role as the sole experimental subject.<sup>47</sup> Her goal was “to achieve a still, weightless body and [distribute] the body via growing and sharing vegetables made with one’s urine” as a “simulation of death, [a] thought experiments of an irrevocable, terminal state enacted through the body.”<sup>48</sup> In her thesis, Jae Rhim Lee considers “death [as] the medium between the body and the self,” and her research pertaining to  $N=1=NPK=KIMCHI=N$  helps illuminate a deeper understanding of her *Infinity Burial Project*.<sup>49</sup> The *Infinity Burial Project* is also titled  $N=1=0=Infinity$ .<sup>50</sup> This lesser known title is proof of a strong conceptual continuation from Lee’s investigations in  $N=1=NPK=KIMCHI=N$  to her most recent *Infinity Burial Project*. Except this time, the “0” in  $N=1=0=Infinity$ , denotes her eventual death that will provide nutrients for microorganisms present in the Earth and become a part of the infinite cycle of decomposition and regeneration.<sup>51</sup>

Although decomposition is equally as important as production,<sup>52</sup> the body becomes a feared symbol of mortality since it is vulnerable to death and decay, and in retaliation, humans create systems of meaning in order to elevate the animal status of the body to that of a cultural symbol in order to minimize psychic fragility towards death.<sup>53</sup> Lee is cognizant of heroism as a

---

<sup>47</sup> Linda Weintraub, “Jae Rhim Lee: Cultivating the Human Body,” in *To Life!: Eco Art in Pursuit of a Sustainable Planet* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 2012), 227.

<sup>48</sup> Jae Rhim Lee, “N=1=NPK=KIMCHI=N,” Master’s Thesis (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2006), 28.

<sup>49</sup> Jae Rhim Lee, “N=1=NPK=KIMCHI=N,” 28.

<sup>50</sup> Linda Weintraub, “Jae Rhim Lee: Cultivating the Human Body,” 228.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Thierry Bardini, “Decompicultures: Decomposition of Culture and Cultures of Decomposition,” *Green Letters: Junk/Composting* 18, no. 1 (January 2, 2014): 9–21.

<sup>53</sup> Jae Rhim Lee, “N=1=NPK=KIMCHI=N,” 29.

reaction against the fear of death. Citing the book, *Denial of Death*, by Ernst Becker she argues that the struggle for heroism is central to human nature due to an “orgasmic narcissism” stemming from an innate need for self-esteem. For example, amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, healthcare workers have been burdened with the media’s labels of heroism and people cheer from their homes worldwide in joyous support of these essential workers. While recognizing the hardships and importance of healthcare workers is an important societal response to the pandemic, heroism masks over three important topics: the duties and limits of health care workers, the importance of societal and institutional reciprocity towards supporting health care workers during and not during a pandemic, and the negative psychological toll that expectations of heroism can have on healthcare workers whom have personal anxieties and difficulties stemming from their line of work.<sup>54</sup> As Becker is quoted in Lee’s thesis, “Society itself is a codified hero system, which means that society everywhere is a living myth of the significance of human life, a defiant creation of meaning.”<sup>55</sup> Heroism works to conceptually preserve human life in direct response to death in war, everyday life, or a pandemic. As a result, Lee tries to expand conversations about death and green burial options in order to ease fears of death in environmentally and psychologically beneficial ways.

## **VI. Re-Imagining Death through Decompiculture**

While Nguyen-Hatsushiba’s film re-presents the slow violence of American weapons and industry wrought upon the poor, forgotten bodies of Vietnamese refugees abroad and in Vietnam, Jae Rhim Lee brings attention to the over 200 toxic chemicals in American bodies

---

<sup>54</sup> CL Cox, “‘Healthcare Heroes’: problems with media focus on heroism from healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic,” *Journal of Medical Ethics* (2020), 46: 510-513.

<sup>55</sup> Lee, “N=1=NPK=KIMCHI=N,” 28.

including tobacco residues, dry cleaning chemicals, pesticides, flame retardants, heavy metals, preservatives, and more. Bisphenol-A (BPA), a synthetic estrogen and plastic hardener which causes reproductive and neurological damage, alone is found in 93% of people over the age of 6.<sup>56</sup> Lee's *Infinity Burial Project* seeks to end the cycle of toxicity by purifying these pollutants from the body in death while directly trying to dismantle the traditional funerary practice of embalming. Each artist's work offers some form of purification from the necropolitical ordering of life on earth. Illuminating the politics of imperceptibility, both artists' works bring a heightened awareness to the political intersections of waste, "nature," and death.

Jae Rhim Lee's *Infinity Burial Project* (2008-Present) works against the culture of death denial by offering a re-imagination of death that focuses on a re-connection to the earth's nutrient systems. The "infinite" aspect of her work lies in the conceptual distribution of animacy from living mushrooms to the dead body in a way that frames decay in a positive light. Environmental reciprocity is not only achieved through bio-physical means since, as Lee explains, "In a time of mounting threat and destruction, the self also needs an offensive strategy, one that heals the core of the psyche."<sup>57</sup> By revealing the cyclical nature of ecological processes of decay within decompiculture, she allows the viewers to face the taboo of death and corpses in a psychologically comforting way. While green burials options are increasingly popular and offer a wide range of options, her project offers a uniquely natural way to cleanse the body of toxins after death.

The *Infinity Burial Project* features the *Infinity Burial Suit* that can allegedly cleanse one's dead body and deliver nutrients to plant roots (fig. 2). Costing \$1,500 dollars, the suit is

---

<sup>56</sup> "Frequently Asked Questions," *Coeio*, 2014, <https://coeio.com/faqs/>.

<sup>57</sup> Lee, "N=1=NPK=KIMCHI=N," 21.

marketed as the “green” alternative to both cremation and embalming, which contaminates living human bodies and the environment. Cremation requires energy and releases the toxins within our bodies into the air while embalming requires the harmful carcinogen called formaldehyde. In contrast, the suit is made with organic, biodegradable cloth that is infused with mushroom mycelia and other organisms in a dendritic pattern that activates upon contact with dead human tissue (fig. 2). Jae Rhim Lee’s *Infinity Burial Project* seeks to revolutionize funerary practices in ways that protect the living and sustainably connects the body to soil.

In 2007, Lee’s wish to remedy cultural death denial and unsustainable funerary practices began at an artist residency in Northern California. During her time there, she visited a permaculture school, farm, and green cemetery located nearby. At the cross-section of the remedial abilities of mushrooms, green burials, and food production, she saw the potential for cultural and ecological reimaginings of death through fungi.<sup>58</sup> Upon this revelation, she began researching the possibility of breeding an “Infinity Mushroom” that would be optimal for remediating the toxins in bodies and soil. Lee took inspiration from the entomologist Timothy Miles who coined the term “decompiculture,” the cultivation of organisms that facilitate decomposition, in his research that aimed at breaking down petrochemicals with mushrooms.<sup>59</sup> However, she soon realized that mushrooms are nearly impossible to hybridize and that existing strains are already effective at cleansing toxins. Following her viral presentation at the TEDGlobal conference in 2011, she formed the Decompiculture Society in order to foster public knowledge about post-mortem options and cultural ideologies surrounding death through online

---

<sup>58</sup> Jae Rhim Lee, “How the Mushroom Death Suit Will Change the Way We Die,” *Medium*, TED Fellows, (July, 2016) [fellowblog.ted.com/how-the-mushroom-death-suit-will-change-the-way-we-die-a52f486dc816](https://fellowblog.ted.com/how-the-mushroom-death-suit-will-change-the-way-we-die-a52f486dc816).

<sup>59</sup> “Frequently Asked Questions,” *Coeio*, 2014.

platforms and workshops (fig. 16).<sup>60</sup> In 2014, Lee became a lecturer and fellow at the Hasso Plattner Institute of Design at Stanford to further her research for the *Infinity Burial Project*. Following this period, she founded the company Coeio in 2015 and started producing her *Infinity Burial Suit* to sell.<sup>61</sup>

The name of the company is derived from the Latin word, *coeo*, which means “to come together.” The name reflects the *Infinity Burial Project*’s goal of connecting humans and the earth through death. Proving their commitment to this idea, Coeio promises that with every purchase of an *Infinity Burial Suit*, they will plant 2 trees, compost any manufacturing scraps, and primarily use renewable energy sources. The suit was even designed by zero-waste fashion designer Daniel Silverstein. Clearly, this project truly lies at a future-oriented intersection of business, biotechnology, ecology, design, and art.<sup>62</sup>

Built into the suit is a biomix consisting of mushroom mycelium and other microorganisms that aid in the body’s decomposition in order to neutralize toxins in the body and speedily transfer nutrients to the soil. Mycelium consist of threadlike hyphae, or branches, that facilitate the rhizomatic reproduction of fungi. “A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo,”<sup>63</sup> and the mycorrhizal fungi that Lee utilizes colonize the root systems of a host plant and provide heightened water and nutrient absorption while the plant provides the fungus with carbohydrates formed from photosynthesis.<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> “Decompiculture Society,” *Coeio*, 2014, <https://coeio.com/decompiculture-society/>.

<sup>61</sup> “The Story of a Green Burial Company,” *Coeio*, 2014, <https://coeio.com/coeio-story/>.

<sup>62</sup> Corrado Nai, and Vera Meyer, “The Beauty and the Morbid: Fungi as Source of Inspiration in Contemporary Art,” *Fungal Biology and Biotechnology* 3, no. 1 (November 29, 2016): 4.

<sup>63</sup> Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Translation and Foreword by Brian Massumi (London: Athlone Press, 1989), 25.

<sup>64</sup> “Hidden Partners: Mycorrhizal Fungi and Plants.” *NYBG.org*, The New York Botanical Garden, [sciweb.nybg.org/science2/hcol/mycorrhizae.asp.html](http://sciweb.nybg.org/science2/hcol/mycorrhizae.asp.html).

Although oxygen, soil depth, and temperature variables impact mycelium development, Lee claims that the 4-foot depth used by green cemeteries does not hinder growth.<sup>65</sup>

Mycoremediation is the process by which mushrooms remove toxins from the soil or body. Lee uses oyster and shiitake mushrooms for their aptness at consuming various sources of nutrients. These mushrooms neutralize organic toxins by breaking down molecular bonds and bind to heavy metal particles through a process called chelation.<sup>66</sup> While the possibility of eating mushrooms laden with heavy metals seems to be a likely risk, no evidence of fungal surface growth has been shown.

## **VII. Expanding the Limina of Animacy: Melding Ecological and Emotional Needs**

If someone is uneasy with the idea of being “eaten” by mushrooms, Lee asks us to consider that:

...at any given moment, there are a million fungal spores, bacteria, and even viruses in the air, on every surface, and even in your own body competing for nutrients. Your body, when alive, has a natural defense mechanism (your immune system) to fight off these microorganisms. Your body, when dead, no longer has an active immune system and will therefore become food for any organism.<sup>67</sup>

Human bodies serve as ecologies for microscopic organisms in life, so there is nothing insidious to fear about hosting life on our bodies after death. Lee’s influence from the ecopsychologist pioneer, Theodore Roszak, is prominent in her MIT thesis since she links

---

<sup>65</sup> “Frequently Asked Questions,” *Coeio*, 2014.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

capitalistic alienation of the Earth and the human body with fears of mortality; and thus, she seeks to foster a reconciliation between self and planet through the internal development of an ecological unconscious.<sup>68</sup> Quoting Roszak’s idea of a “narcissistic revolution”, Lee agrees that “a process of self-examination, body-self integration, reconciliation with death, and a uniting of body with nature” is needed in order to replace the attention-demanding, energy economy.<sup>69</sup> Pulling from Freud’s essay “On Narcissism”, Lee wants to meld primary narcissism (self-preservation) with ecological stewardship in order to counteract the secondary (pathological) narcissism which disengages from the world and only focuses on a “false self” — similar to melancholic processes of mourning. Secondary narcissism is fed by “mass consumption, warfare, economic decline, environmental degradation, and the dependence on technologies, [that] pose a threat to the self,” ultimately resulting in psychological and cultural annihilation.<sup>70</sup> Drawing from Foucault’s concept of the “technologies of self,” Lee believes the psychic inwards turn to practice self-care purifies oneself from the destructive consumptive practices that degrade the environment, waste human energy, and sideline deep personal needs.<sup>71</sup>

In Jae Rhim Lee’s words, “If the body is the first boundary of the self... Death is the eventual distribution of the body into the earth via — the ultimate formlessness, weightlessness of the body.”<sup>72</sup> Lee recognizes that the dualistic relationship between body and self is connected but fundamentally at odds with each other. As the body is always asserting its mortality, the self is always trying to transform itself into a symbol of transcendence. Concepts of selfhood and existential threat occupy a large part of human psychology and constantly affects the makeup of

---

<sup>68</sup> Lee, “N=1=NPK=KIMCHI=N,” 33.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. 20.

<sup>71</sup> Amanda Boetzkes, *Plastic Capitalism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2019), 173.

<sup>72</sup> Lee, “N=1=NPK=KIMCHI=N,” 32.



society. Expanding on Erst Becker's research on how societies manage fears of death, Terror Management Theory looks into the ways in which societal norms are upheld, such as hygiene, in order to buffer death-anxiety.

Although Lee's project seems other-worldly, her design practice is grounded in feeding emotional and ecological needs. Her *Infinity Burial Suit* challenges the boundaries between self, "nature," and other in order to have a closer relationship between self and planet. Lee, like Roszak, advocates for a moderate form of narcissism as a way to reconnect with one's ecological unconscious and support an environmental stewardship that is desirable and not based on fear or guilt. Like ecopsychology, Lee questions the destructive traits of capitalism and seeks to grow the ecological unconscious which lies in the center of the mind. Capitalism's "economy of spectacles and desires... [make it] harder to imagine where life should lead and what, besides commodities, should be in it."<sup>73</sup> By fostering an ecological ego through narcissistic self-seeking, one can eliminate the "false self" and focus on the needs of the planet as their own.<sup>74</sup> In line with moderate narcissism, her burial suit offers a "unique option [that is] as unique as [people's] lives."<sup>75</sup> By appropriating the sense of self boosted by consumption of commodities, her product offers a desirable example of how one can declare self-hood even in death. Also, from a marketing point of view, the transcendence reached for by the self is still comforted by the sense of "infinity" conferred in the product's name. By imbuing the seemingly static state of death with the rhizomatic nature of ecosystems, she provides a crucial conceptual linkage between death as a part of sym-poiesis: the interspecies networks of decay and renewal, rather than auto-

---

<sup>73</sup> Anna Tsing, *Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 263.

<sup>74</sup> Lee, "N=1=NPK=KIMCHI=N," 22.

<sup>75</sup> "The Story of a Green Burial Company," *Coeio*, 2014.

poiesis, solely sustaining oneself (which is impossible). “Chthulucene” is Haraway’s term derived from the Greek word *chthon*, meaning “earth”, which focuses on sym-poiesis “making-with.”<sup>76</sup> She proposes that humans are composts comprised of an infinite variety all different “kinds-of-assemblages” and that “Right now, the earth is full of refugees, human and not, without refuge,” and “To live and die well as mortal critters in the Chthulucene is to join forces to reconstitute refuges, to make possible partial and robust biological-cultural-political-technological recuperation and recomposition, which must include mourning irreversible losses.”<sup>77</sup> By aiding the body in becoming “clean” compost for the Earth, Lee expresses her utopic vision of death with her *Infinity Burial Project*.<sup>78</sup>

### **VIII. Conclusion: Resilient Residues and Dark Ecology**

The projects of Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba and Jae Rhim Lee hold US neo-liberal necropolitics accountable for the “Anthropocene” through marginalized excremental bodies, memories, and toxins that ultimately “subverts the notion of the ‘anthropos’ conceptualized around a disembodied human subject associated with planetary geological changes.”<sup>79</sup>

Foregrounding the excremental body and tracing the lineage of chemical contamination through the elements of water and soil serves as a potent reminder of the necropolitics that actively erases its crimes against the human and environmental “body” through cultural, psychological, and

---

<sup>76</sup> Donna Haraway, “Symbiogenesis, Sym-poiesis, and Art Science Activisms For Staying With The Trouble,” in *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene*, ed. Anna Tsing et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 25-27.

<sup>77</sup> Donna Haraway, “Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin,” *Environmental Humanities* 6, May 1, 2015, <https://doaj.org/article/0ddadd557ca64af49869cc895d704851/>, 100-101.

<sup>78</sup> Linda Weintraub, “Jae Rhim Lee: Cultivating the Human Body,” in *To Life!: Eco Art in Pursuit of a Sustainable Planet* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 2012), 299.

<sup>79</sup> Serpil Oppermann, “Introducing Migrant Ecologies in an (Un)Bordered World,” *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 24, no. 2 (2017): 250

ecological coercion.<sup>80</sup> Each respective work presents physical bodies, urinating or decaying, for people to connect with their own excremental bodies. Inanimate objects, such as barrels of Agent Orange, and non-human organisms, like mushroom mycelia, participate in the regimes of coercing death (as in necropolitics) and life (“making live” as in biopolitics). Although necropower has seeped into almost every facet life, each artist sees potential in the excremental body and substances that are cast aside. Breaking through the weaponization of death and disembodiment, Nguyen-Hatsushiba and Lee offer radical hope for growth and renewal through the growth of fungi and allusions to planting rice paddy fields.

Reconnecting the excremental body’s vital relationship with Earth, as represented through processes of urination and decay, serves as a resilient reminder that disembodiment is a harmful colonial construct that must be resisted. Confronting the excremental body, with its close epistemological proximity and physical treatment to waste, the artists show viewers in their own disembodiment in civilization and alienation from earth’s systems. As much as American society distances itself from that which is wasted or impure, it has ensured the creation of a planet where contamination is inescapable.<sup>81</sup> Rather than accepting that humans are more comparable to waste in a static sense, these artists see the importance of the excremental body and its remnants as compost brimming with potential for life.<sup>82</sup>

*Memorial Project Waterfield: The Story of the Stars’* abstract space oscillates, from a controlled space with water bottles to a warzone within a cage-like structure, displaying how coercion is intrinsic to the project of imperialism and modernization; thus asserting how power is

---

<sup>80</sup> Chen, *Animacies*, 6.

<sup>81</sup> Alfredo González Ruibal, *An Archaeology of the Contemporary Era*, First Edition (Boca Raton, FL: Routledge, 2018), 179.

<sup>82</sup> Thierry Bardini, “Decompicultures: Decomposition of Culture and Cultures of Decomposition,” 13.

not a ‘*simple logic of space*’ but is induced through strict hierarchies of death.<sup>83</sup> In Nguyen Hatsushiba’s work, through the assertion of the excremental body’s urination, one can glimpse at the shards of discarded Vietnamese trauma which interrupts the myth of modernity and “progress.”<sup>84</sup> Sedimented within memories of the body and the land, his work contains a desire for the intertwining of ecological and social issues. The excremental body remembers what imperialist amnesia does not.<sup>85</sup>

Jae Rhim Lee extends decompiculture’s capabilities of replenishing soil ecosystems to propose an alternative relationship to morbidity and foster a desire for environmental stewardship. To achieve sustainable life on Earth, caring for the environment and self-care must coincide. Dispelling fears of mortality with openness and care through Coeio and the Decompiculture Society, Lee’s *Infinity Burial Project* dares to nourish the ecological ego and revitalize the Earth. While Lee’s project proposes an ideal relationship with “nature” through moderate narcissism, the reality that there is little being done to prevent bodies from becoming vestiges of toxins is an issue that extends into the complicity of health systems and governments that capitalize off of one’s debility and recovery.<sup>86</sup> The residues of toxins in the body that Lee uncovered should continue to alarm, rather than be quelled in the transaction of purchasing a commodity that promises purification. Nguyen-Hatsushiba’s melancholic memorialization of Vietnamese trauma offers a start towards acknowledging the excremental body of the Global South and the need to recognize extensive ecological harm caused by human activity. However, transcendence into a utopic vision of nature is simply not possible if one must patiently wait for

---

<sup>83</sup> Anderson quoting Henri Lefebvre in, “Excremental Colonialism,” 651-652.

<sup>84</sup> Rebecca Schneider, *The Explicit Body in Performance* (London: Routledge, 1997), 98.

<sup>85</sup> Robert Fletcher, “The Art of Forgetting: Imperialist Amnesia and Public Secrecy,” *Third World Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (April 1, 2012): 423-439.

<sup>86</sup> Jasbir K. Puar, *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017).

purification after death while Vietnamese children are continually being born with bodily deformities and medical expenses remain the number one reason for bankruptcy in America.<sup>87</sup> Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, as the excremental body loudly asserts itself and its vulnerability, human suffering has still been largely ignored by the cruel presidential regime that prioritizes economic profit.

Timothy Morton's dark ecology, "has a dark side embodied not in a hippie aesthetic of life over death, or a sadistic sentimental Bambification of sentient beings, but in a 'goth' assertion of the contingent and necessarily queer idea that we want to stay with a dying world..."<sup>88</sup> While Jae Rhim Lee's work suggests hopeful biotic interconnections, the unprecedented chemical contamination of Vietnamese and American bodies alone attest to the myth of a decolonized future. Epitomizing the aporia of dark ecology, the struggles of substantiating the excremental body are perceptible through each project's continual flux between historical temporalities, psychological states, self and planet, human and nonhuman, production and waste, taboo and purity, agency and subjugation, life and death. Within *Memorial Project Waterfield: The Story of the Stars* and the *Infinity Burial Project*, urination and decay serve as resilient reminders of human embodiment and biotic entanglement that will remain throughout the fraught moments in history when the excremental body faces extraordinary erasure and demands immediate recognition in inescapable ways.

---

<sup>87</sup> Jasbir K. Puar, "Coda: The Cost of Getting Better: Suicide, Sensation, Switchpoints," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 18, no. 1 (2012): 149–158.

<sup>88</sup> Timothy Morton, *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2007), 184–185.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderson, Warwick. "Excremental Colonialism: Public Health and the Poetics of Pollution." *Critical Inquiry* 21, no. 3 (Spring, 1995): 529-700.
- Malabou, Catherine. "Repetition, Revenge, Plasticity," In *Superhumanity: Post-Labor, Psychopathology, Plasticity*. National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, 2018.
- Bardini, Thierry. "Decompicultures: Decomposition of Culture and Cultures of Decomposition." *Green Letters: Junk/Composting* 18, no. 1 (January 2, 2014): 9–21.
- Boetzkes, Amanda. *Plastic Capitalism: Contemporary Art and the Drive to Waste*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2019.
- Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962.
- Chen, Mel Y. *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012.
- Chong, Sylvia Shin Huey. *The Oriental Obscene Violence and Racial Fantasies in the Vietnam*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2012.
- Cox, CL. "'Healthcare Heroes': problems with media focus on heroism from healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic." *Journal of Medical Ethics*, no. 46 (2020): 510-513. <https://jme.bmj.com/content/46/8/510>
- DaSilva, John. "CSR Case Studies: Coca-Cola." *Kenan Institute Asia*, October, 2010.
- Davis, Heather, and Zoe Todd. "On the Importance of a Date, or, Decolonizing the Anthropocene." *ACME* 16, no. 4 (January 1, 2017): 761-780. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/2120183990/>.
- "Decompiculture Society." *Coeio*, 2014. <https://coeio.com/decompiculture-society/>.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translation and Foreword by Brian Massumi. London: Athlone Press, 1989.
- Demos, T. J. *Decolonizing Nature: Contemporary Art and the Politics of Ecology*. Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016.
- Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concept of Pollution and Taboo*. London: Routledge, 2002

- Espiritu, Yen Le. “Negotiating Memories of War: Arts in Vietnamese American Communities.” In *Art in the Lives of Immigrant Communities in the U.S.* Edited by Paul DiMaggio and Patricia Fernandez-Kelly. New York: Rutgers University Press, 2010.
- Fletcher, Robert. “The Art of Forgetting: Imperialist Amnesia and Public Secrecy.” *Third World Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (April 1, 2012): 423-439. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01436597.2012.657476/>.
- Forty, Adrian and Küchler, Susanne. *The Art of Forgetting*. Oxford: Berg, 1999.
- “Frequently Asked Questions.” *Coeio*, 2014. <https://coeio.com/faqs/>.
- Fyfe, J. “In Deep Water.” In *Art in America* 96, no. 8 (2008): 136.
- González Ruibal, Alfredo. *An Archaeology of the Contemporary Era*. First Edition. Boca Raton, FL: Routledge, 2018.
- Grzanic, M. “Biopolitics and Necropolitics in Relation to the Lacanian Four Discourses.” *Proceedings of the Symposium Art and Research: Shared Methodologies–Politics and Translation*, Barcelona. May 21, 2020. [http://www.ub.edu/doctorat\\_eapa/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Marina.Grzanic\\_Biopolitics-Necropolitics\\_Simposio\\_2012.pdf](http://www.ub.edu/doctorat_eapa/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Marina.Grzanic_Biopolitics-Necropolitics_Simposio_2012.pdf).
- Haraway, Donna. “Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin.” *Environmental Humanities* 6, May 1, 2015. <https://doaj.org/article/0ddadd557ca64af49869cc895d704851/>.
- Haraway, Donna. “Symbiogenesis, Symptoiesis, and Art Science Activisms For Staying With The Trouble.” In *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene*, Edited by Anna Tsing, Heather Swanson, Elaine Gan, and Nils Bubandt. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017.
- “Hidden Partners: Mycorrhizal Fungi and Plants.” *NYBG.org*, The New York Botanical Garden, [sciweb.nybg.org/science2/hcol/mycorrhizae.asp.html](http://sciweb.nybg.org/science2/hcol/mycorrhizae.asp.html).
- Lebensztejn, Jean-Claude, and Jeff Nagy. *Pissing Figures 1280-2014*. Translated by Jeff Nagy. New York: David Zwirner Books, 2017.
- Lee, Jae Rhim. “Accepting Death: One Family, One Burial Suit at a Time.” Tedx Talks Youtube video, 16:26, May 10, 2016, <https://youtu.be/yr2-Xyd6ViA>.
- Lee, Jae Rhim. “N=1=NPK=KIMCHI=N.” Master’s Thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2006. <http://dspace.mit.edu/handle/1721.1/37269>.
- Lee, Jae Rhim. “How the Mushroom Death Suit Will Change the Way We Die.” *Medium*, TED Fellows, July 7, 2016. [fellowblog.ted.com/how-the-mushroom-death-suit-will-change-the-way-we-die-a52f486dc816](https://fellowblog.ted.com/how-the-mushroom-death-suit-will-change-the-way-we-die-a52f486dc816).

- Martini, Edwin A. *Agent Orange: History, Science, and the Politics of Uncertainty*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012.
- Mbembe, Achille. *Necropolitics*. Translated by Steven Corcoran. Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2019.
- Mebed, Sharif. "A Critique of Desire: Law, Language, and the Death Drive in Kawabata's House of the Sleeping Beauties." *Japan Review*, no. 32 (2019): 89-106.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26652951>
- Min, Susette, "Remains to Be Seen: Reading the Works of Dean Sameshima and Khanh Vo." In *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*, Edited by David L. Eng and David Kazanjian. Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 2002.
- Morton, Timothy. *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2007.
- Nai, Corrado, and Vera Meyer. "The Beauty and the Morbid: Fungi as Source of Inspiration in Contemporary Art." *Fungal Biology and Biotechnology* 3, no. 1 (November 29, 2016): 10.
- Nhung, Hong. "Ha Tinh to Receive Safe Drinking Water from EKOCENTER." *Vietnam Economic Times*, January 26, 2018.  
<http://vneconomictimes.com/article/business/ha-tinh-to-receive-safe-drinking-water-from-ekocenter>.
- Nixon, Rob. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2011.
- Oppermann, Serpil. "Introducing Migrant Ecologies in an (Un)Bordered World." *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 24, no. 2 (2017): 243–256.
- Featherstone, Mark. "Utopian Bodies." In *Acting Bodies and Social Networks: A Bridge Between Technology and Working Memory*. Edited and Introduced by Bianca Maria Pirani and Ivan Varga. University Press of America, 2010.
- Puar, Jasbir K. "Coda: The Cost of Getting Better: Suicide, Sensation, Switchpoints." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 18, no. 1 (2012): 149–158.  
[http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal\\_of\\_lesbian\\_and\\_gay\\_studies/v018/18.1.puar.html/](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_lesbian_and_gay_studies/v018/18.1.puar.html/).
- Puar, Jasbir K. *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.
- Schneider, Rebecca. *The Explicit Body in Performance*. London: Routledge, 1997.



- Stutesman, Drake, Pollack, Barbara, and Nguyen-Hatsushiba, Jun. "Creative Particles: An Interview with Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba." *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media* 47, no. 1 (2006): 36-59. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/194347>.
- Thanh Nguyen, Viet. "Impossible to Forget, Difficult to Remember: Vietnam and the Art of Dinh Q. Le." In *A Tapestry of Memories: The Art of Dinh Q. Lê*, 19-18. Washington: Bellevue Art Museum, 2007.
- "The Story of a Green Burial Company." *Coeio*, 2014. <https://coeio.com/coeio-story/>.
- Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. *Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015.
- Toland, Alexandra R, Jay Stratton Noller, and Gerd Wessolek. *Field to Palette: Dialogues on Soil and Art in the Anthropocene*. First Edition. CRC Press, 2019.
- "Uncook vs Cooked - What's the Difference?" *WikiDiff*, March 16, 2019. <https://www.wikidiff.com/uncook/cooked/>.
- Weintraub, Linda. "Jae Rhim Lee: Cultivating the Human Body." In *To Life!: Eco Art in Pursuit of a Sustainable Planet*. Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 2012.

## IMAGES



Figure 1. Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, *Memorial Project Waterfield: The Story of the Stars*, 2006-2014, Video still, Mizuma Art Gallery, Tokyo.



Figure 2. Jae Rhim Lee, *Infinity Burial Suit*, n.d, Organic cotton infused with mushroom mycelia, <https://coeio.com/>.

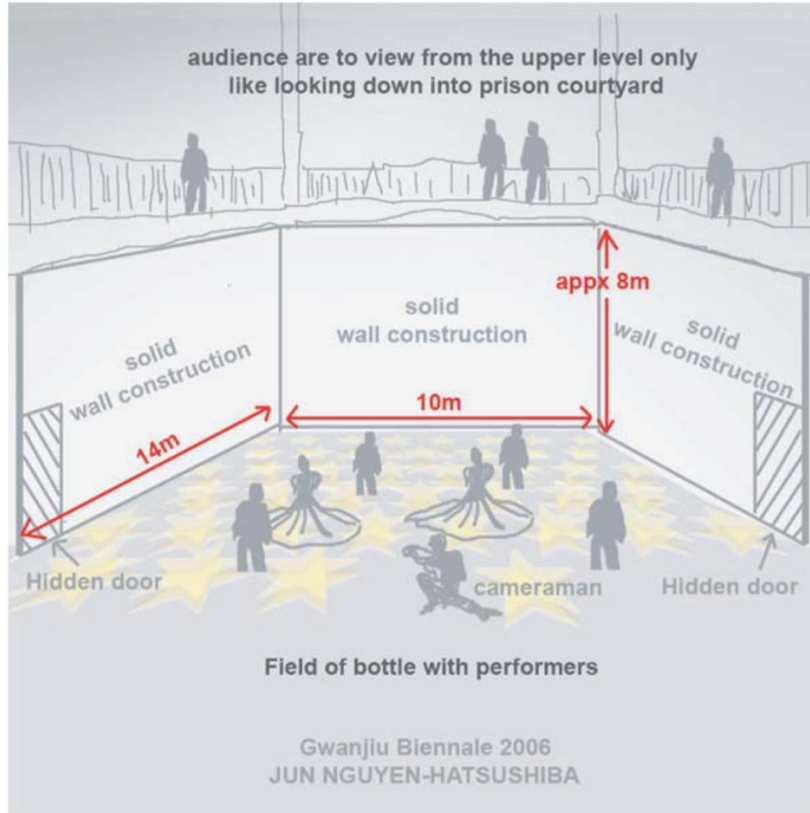


Figure 3. Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, [Waterfield Project Performance and Installation Workplan], 2006, Digital rendering, Courtesy of the Artist.



Figure 4. Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, [Metal poles enclose the Gwangju Biennale performance space in front of a bridge that overlooks the courtyard], 2006, Photograph, Courtesy of the Artist.



Figure 5. Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, *Memorial Project Waterfield: The Story of the Stars*, 2006-2014, Video still, Mizuma Art Gallery, Tokyo.

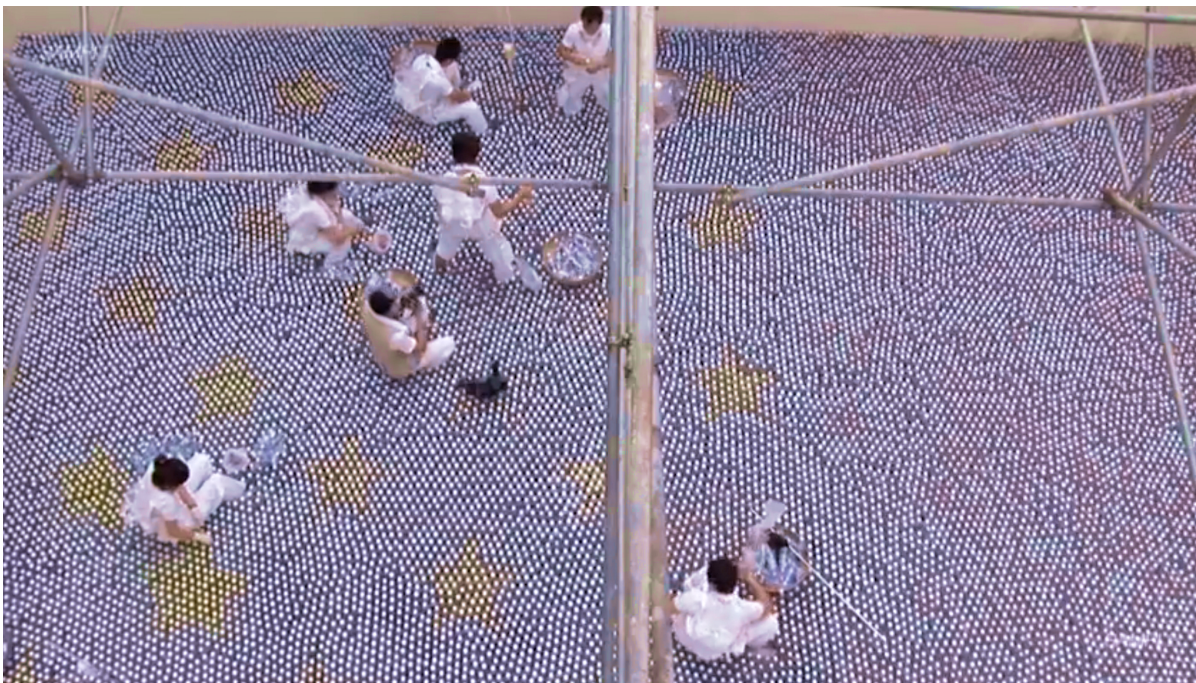


Figure 6. Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, *Memorial Project Waterfield: The Story of the Stars*, 2006-2014, Video still, Mizuma Art Gallery, Tokyo.



Figure 7. [Worker wearing safety gear during Operation Pacer HO], 1977, Photograph, National Archives, Maryland.



Figure 8. Jun Nguyen Hatsushiba, *Towards the Complex-For the Courageous, The Curious and the Cowards*, 2001, Video still, Mizuma Art Gallery, Tokyo, <http://www.nguyen-hatsushiba.net/projects/#films>.



Figure 9. Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, *Memorial Project Waterfield: The Story of the Stars*, 2006-2014, Video still, Mizuma Art Gallery, Tokyo.



Figure 10. Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, *Memorial Project Waterfield: The Story of the Stars*, 2006-2014, Video still, Mizuma Art Gallery, Tokyo.



Figure 11. Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, *Memorial Project Waterfield: The Story of the Stars*, 2006-2014, Video still, Mizuma Art Gallery, Tokyo.

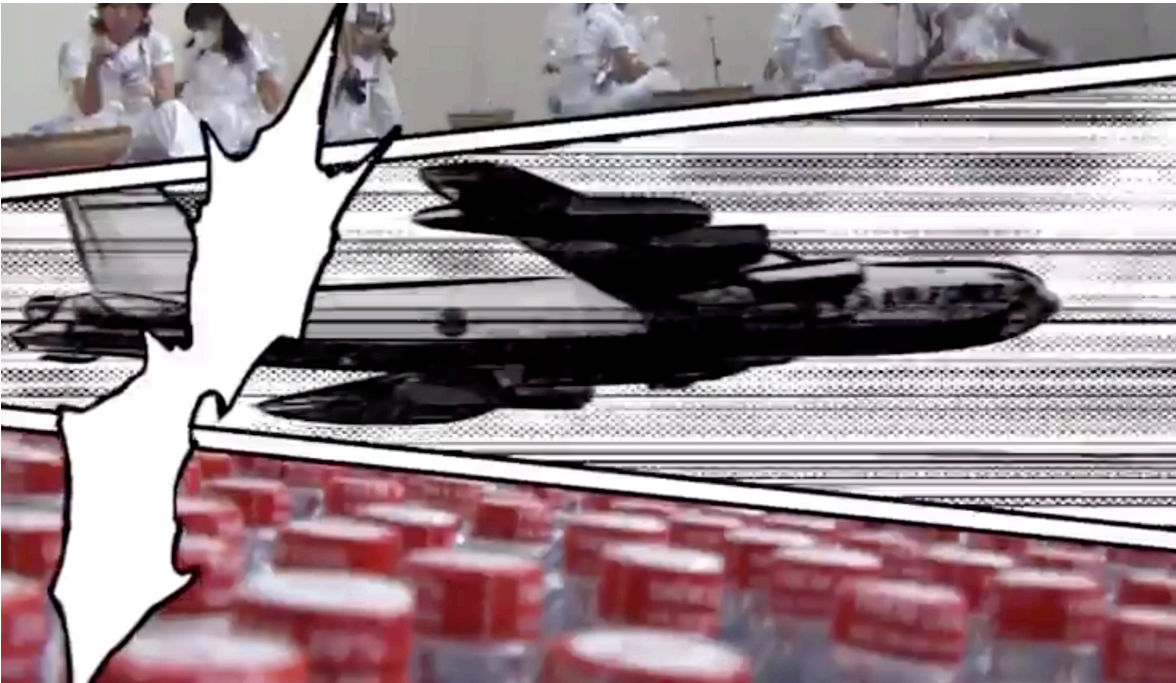


Figure 12. Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, *Memorial Project Waterfield: The Story of the Stars*, 2006-2014, Video still, Mizuma Art Gallery, Tokyo.



Figure 13. Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, *Memorial Project Waterfield: The Story of the Stars*, 2006-2014, Video still, Mizuma Art Gallery, Tokyo.



Figure 14. Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, *Memorial Project Waterfield: The Story of the Stars*, 2006-2014, Video still, Mizuma Art Gallery, Tokyo.





Figure 15. Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, *Memorial Project Waterfield: The Story of the Stars*, 2006-2014, Video still, Mizuma Art Gallery, Tokyo.



Figure 16. [Jae Rhim Lee giving a talk at the TEDGlobal Conference], 2011, Photograph, Edinburgh, Scotland, <http://coeio.com/press/>.