

Memory Sites

**Fletcher Aldous, Kailum Graves, Starry Kong,
Remi Siciliano**

Memory Sites is a photographic and moving image exhibition that explores landscape photography as a remnant and cue to memory through the work of four artists: Fletcher Aldous, Kailum Graves, Starry Kong and Remi Siciliano. Each artist employs unique photographic processes, considering cultural, political, and environmental dimensions in capturing landscapes. Together, they emphasise the role of photography in shaping our perception and experience of a place, mediating between what is visible and how it is perceived. Ultimately, the collection reveals the haunting nature of the photograph, where memories linger and shape our understanding.

Starry Kong's series, *You can't walk this earth forever; Someday you will have to fly*, reflects a phrase her late mother often said. The work is deeply personal, rooted in her struggle with depression and the enduring impact of her mother's death, with landscapes becoming metaphors for her inner turmoil. Using intense flash [lighting] and colour, Kong turns everyday scenes into vivid, surreal images. In one image, a faceless figure stands in a car park during a purple sunset, resembling an extra-terrestrial apparition. In another, the delicate surface of an iridescent bubble shimmers, creating a marbled landscape against a black sky. These works convey isolation, fragility, and beauty as Kong projects her inner world onto her external environment, bridging personal memory and external reality.

Moving from Kong's dreamlike visions, Remi Siciliano's *Ecotone #1* uses manipulation techniques to evoke a liminal space between nostalgia and unfamiliarity.

Solarisation is a technique that disrupts the developing process through re-exposure to light, resulting in unpredictable highlights darkening into deep tones and shadows lifting into pale silver. Siciliano describes the photograph as a vessel holding many meanings, experiences, perceptions, and visual outcomes, revealing abundant possibilities for how a place can be experienced and expressed. Her photograph is not simply an image of what the artist sees but a cultural construct that shapes how we see and remember the Burnt Bridge Creek area.

Connecting the theme of cultural and natural interplay, Fletcher Aldous explores the colonial history embedded in the Australian landscape in his project, *A Place of Leaves*, set in the Blue Mountains region known as 'The Devil's Wilderness.' This term, coined by explorer George Caley, reflects a settler-colonial perspective. Aldous seeks to shift this view by creating a personal narrative that engages with the ecology and connections within the region. Aldous's practice involves immersing himself in the area by walking, photographing, returning to and writing about places. His approach is influenced by environmental and feminist philosopher Val Plumwood, who once wrote, "Without the richness of narratives and narrative subjects that define and elaborate place, the connection between lived experience and the sense of this interweaving is lost, along with the sensitivity of place. Life can then come to lack immediacy, become flat, impersonal and placeless" (Plumwood 1999, p.158).¹ Respecting the Dharug people, the land's traditional custodians, Aldous also consulted the Deerubbin Land Council to learn about the Indigenous history, probing ideas around authorship and the photographer's role in representing landscape.

This approach emphasises memory in our relationship to place, using photography to bridge personal reflections and broader cultural narratives. His work exemplifies a sensitive and immersive approach to landscape photography, honouring the intricate connections

¹ Plumwood, V. (1999). *The Struggle for Environmental Philosophy in Australia*. *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology*, 3(2), 157-178

Adding another layer to the exploration of memory and landscape, Kailum Graves' *Spukhafte Fernwirkung* involved manually collecting every photo uploaded to www.road.is—a website using a vast network of webcams to show the road and driving conditions of Iceland—each day for a year. Graves began collecting the images in early 2017 during a residency in Skagaströnd, Iceland and continued from various locations worldwide. His project explores the disappearance of clear boundaries between culture, technology, and the environment, focusing on Route 1 (the Ring Road), which connects most of Iceland's inhabitants and tourist attractions.

Graves' long durational engagement with the Icelandic landscape through digital means created a hybrid process between plein-air painting and computer processing. His work challenges the fast and high-quality aspects often associated with digital art by emphasizing the passage of time and the low-resolution, painterly quality of the images. This digital exploration presents an alternate view of the Icelandic landscape, one not typically seen in tourist images of sublime vistas. Graves' work resonates with the other artists' by examining how memory, culture, and technology intertwine to shape our understanding of landscapes.

In *Memory Sites*, the works of Fletcher Aldous, Kailum Graves, Starry Kong, and Remi Siciliano collectively illustrate the complex relationship between memory and landscape. Through various photographic techniques and personal stories, each artist delves into how photographs act as both remnants and triggers of memory, blending the visible with the perceived. This exhibition reveals the haunting nature of landscapes, where memories linger and shape our understanding of place. Photography becomes a vessel, mediating between personal experiences and broader cultural histories. As viewers, we are invited to navigate these memory sites, confronting the interplay between the known and the unknown, the past and the present.

Image List

4. Fletcher Aldous

***A Place of Leaves*, 2023**

archival inkjet prints

60 x 35 cm each

5. Remi Siciliano

***Ecotone #1*, 2023**

archival inkjet print from solarised silver gelatin photograph

112 x 140 cm

\$1700

6. Starry Kong

***You can't walk this earth forever. Someday you will have to fly.* 2020**

inkjet print

39.4 x 59 cm

\$420

7. Starry Kong

***You can't walk this earth forever. Someday you will have to fly.* 2020**

inkjet print

59 x 39.4 cm

\$420

8. Starry Kong

***You can't walk this earth forever. Someday you will have to fly.* 2020**

inkjet print

59 x 39.4 cm

\$420

9. Kailum Graves

***Spukhafte Fernwirkung*, 2017-2019**

single-channel high-definition digital video

36:50 minutes (looped), 16:9, colour, sound

edition of 6 + 2 AP

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