

Rebecca Ross' *Greater Sunrise*

Snowflakes are translucent. It is the light you see reflected by the snowflake plates that makes them look white. And, however infinitely different their patterns may be, they are commonly bound by six points¹. So too in Ross' *Greater Sunrise*, influenced as it was by a great many intersecting concepts, her hexagonal kaleidoscopic projection seems to both seduce with infinitely transcendental patterns while at the same time meditatively bind the eye to a single point focus, on the ecology of images of opaque geopolitics at play.

Ross' work invites us to meditate on the inescapable process one is forced into when deciding what to leave in and leave out, and also what it means to transcend boundaries. *Greater Sunrise* cognitively maps the Greater Sunrise fields, a gas field 'discovered' in 1974 approximately 450 kilometres north-west of Darwin and 150 kilometres south of Timor-Leste that has seen decades of controversy and a maritime border dispute between Timor-Leste and Australia².

While *Greater Sunrise* is Ross' first exhibition at Outer Space, the work is an expansion of *Dark Entries*, a meditation room exhibited at Metro Arts in 2020³. Where that work was an immersive and simultaneous multi-channel experience, this work, also a large-scale video installation, brings the viewer to a single channel video montage. A single point that stands, from my perspective, as the geo-coordinate pin drop of the Greater Sunrise fields. While Ross' sensibilities to maps, meditation and musings on the triangulation of site, situation and sensation are still centred, *Greater Sunrise* takes this lineage of work to a new place, a political place.

The large-scale projection sits like a sun rising over the horizon from the floor. The video montage features footage, predominantly news feeds, pertaining to the Greater Sunrise development. Characteristic of all Ross' kaleidoscope works, domestic screening devices; previously venetian blinds and shower curtains surround the video projection. In *Greater Sunrise* Ross uses shade cloth to screen the space and to fashion triangular meditation cushions. Cumulatively the room, projection and installation artefacts evoke a sense of opaqueness; of what values and cost can and can't be illuminated, what comfort is and is not acceptable in an age of western commodified wellbeing and what ways we humans are being sustainable animals connected with cycles of nature or being extractive beasts.

While at once the work draws a plural, meditative trance of the dialectic of geopolitics, it also draws your eyes to concentrate on how such a great many actor-networks⁴ can emanate from one pinpoint on a map in the middle of the ocean. Your only access to any cohesive view is through the kaleidoscope, try as you may to locate some clarity to intersections of Climate Change, geopolitics, extractive industries and nation states. When viewing the work, it is as though Ross' deep mapping and analysis of the abovementioned intersections predominates the way the work asks the viewer to become awake to what might be concealed or otherwise be asleep to.

The soundtrack to the video is a Singing Ring® instrument performed by Michael Deanshaw. Ross describes how a particular aesthetic comes into play in the way ordering content in the video is approached. In no particular chronology or typology, emphasis is placed on the meditative relationship to the sound, to visual clarity, and on hovering on the edges of abstraction between the presence and absence of the human.

In my meditation of *Greater Sunrise*, I am cognisant that I can't see sunlight unless I look through a kaleidoscope, just like I can't see major strategic geopolitical dealings in universally dull non-place boardrooms unless I harness transcendental imagination. With immaculate generative

¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zmqmrj6> accessed 12/03/2021

² <https://www.nsenegybusiness.com/projects/greater-sunrise-development/> accessed 12/03/2021

³ <https://www.rebeccaross.com/#/dark-matters/> accessed 12/03/2021

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Actor%E2%80%93network_theory accessed 12/03/2021

conception provided by video editing and the kaleidoscope—the symmetry and balance and order—I see beauty in an organic aesthetic as if I am transcending to see everything all at once, yet at the same time the technology allows me nothing tangible, nothing rational to see. Just nature morphed into a bricolage of what constitutes an exploitative standing reserve fed by neo-colonial productivism and development theory.

I reach for metaphors in the ecology of images. I map in my mind the visceral materiality of gas, of a pipe it must go through, the infrastructure, the mistakes, the cover-ups and methane emissions. I feel like I am a CCTV single-channel eye-view with an entrancing backing soundtrack echoing around the inner walls of the banality of the transfer of gas in pipes; some to Australia and some to Timor-Leste—50/50 split at first, then 70/30, then 80/20—on condition of decades long geopolitical negotiations; grey suit cuffs, white paperwork, black pens and leather. Having been dropped inside the pipes of a gas field in the deep waters of the Asia Pacific region, in full colour I now see that the gas speaks. Unlike the snowflake cooling the earth, the *Greater Sunrise* is pleading for us to open our eyes to the hot air rising all around.

— Tristan Schultz, 2023

Greater Sunrise

20min 3 sec

Single channel video with sound, shade cloth screening, equilateral cushions made from shade cloth and recycled rags.

Singing Ring® sound healing instrument performed and recorded by Michael Deanshaw from Supersonic Harmonics. All video sourced from the public domain and used under Creative Commons.

With gratitude: Michael Deanshaw, Tristan Schultz, Chris Bennie, Keemon Williams, Georgia Hayward, Tess Bakharia, David M. Thomas, Valerie Ross, Byron Coathup.

Rebecca Ross lives on Kombumerri Country (Southern Gold Coast). Since completing a Master of Fine Art at Queensland University of Technology she has exhibited at the Embassy of Australia in Washington D.C. and Festival 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, and was awarded the Rome Studio at the British School at Rome by the Australia Council for the Arts. Rebecca has exhibited nationally and participated in international artist in residence and research programs in Malta, Italy, New Zealand and U.S.A. In 2013 she founded The Walls Art Space on the Gold Coast which she directed for almost a decade. Her contribution to the Gold Coast arts ecology was recognised with an International Women's Day Leadership Award in 2020.

Tristan Schultz is a designer, researcher and strategist of Gamilaroi and Australian-European descent living and working from Jellurgal (Burleigh Heads, Gold Coast). Tristan has a Bachelor of Design, Masters of Design Futures (hons) and a PhD in Design and is currently Honorary Adjunct Fellow at the UTS and RMIT. Tristan is the founder and director of Relative Creative, one of Australia's leading strategic design studios where his research and practice in critical design, futures thinking, decolonial thinking and sustainable transitions cuts across commercial, non-commercial and government settings.