

**Wit(h)nessing Zinland:  
From the affective encounter to unfolding a shadow country  
in the Anthropocene-in-the-making**

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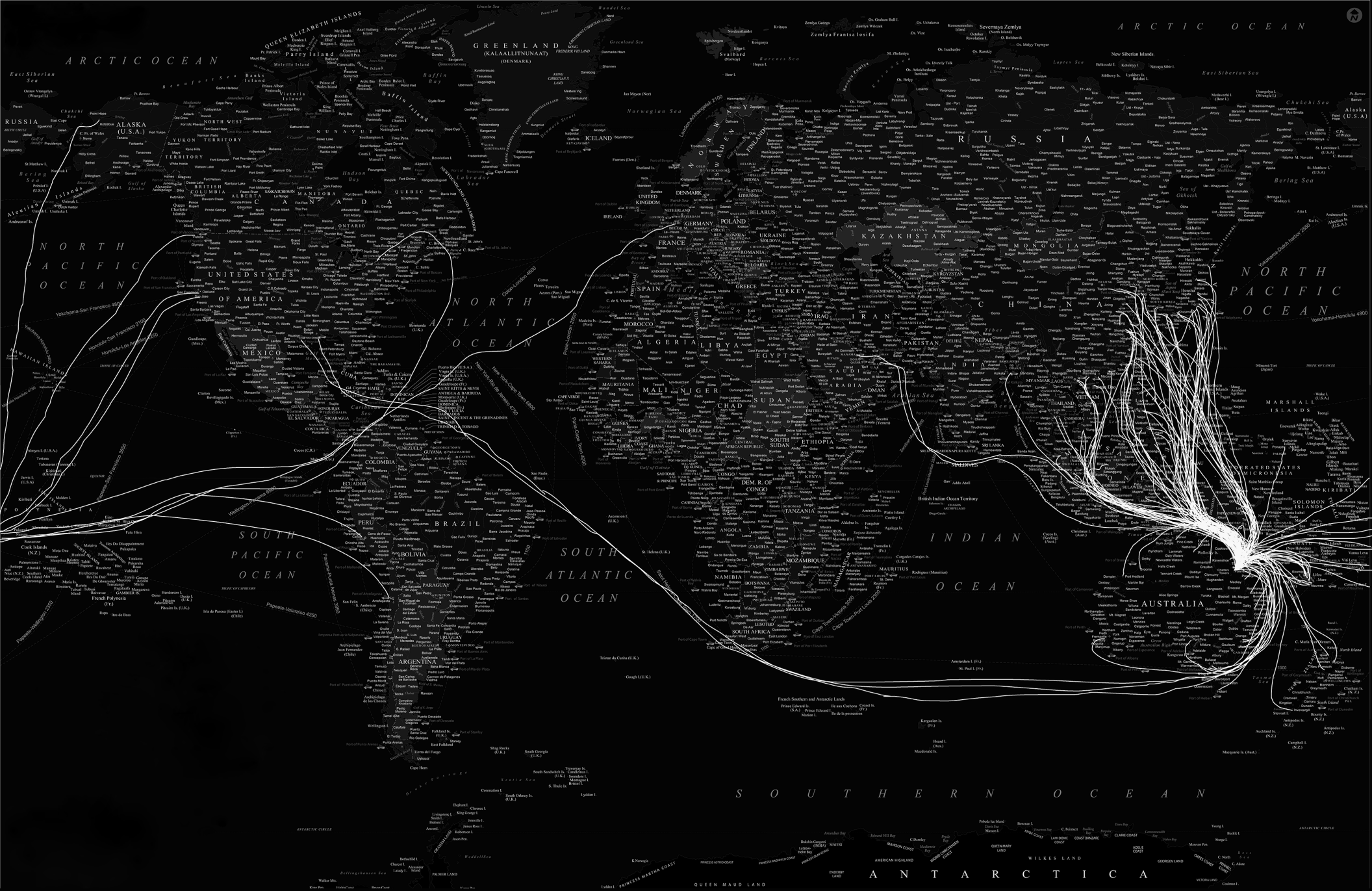
National Art School, Gadigal Country, the Eora Nation, Gadi/Sydney

Melodious and unmistakable. Brolgas are overhead, crossing country. They bugle on the fly. In a Sydney gallery, Elder, eminent artist and activator Nancy Yukuwal McDinny scans the postcard I hand her. An aerial photograph of a zinc refinery on the east coast of Queensland connected to the catastrophic McArthur River Mine in her Country (Garrwa, Yanyuwa) near Borroloola in the Northern Territory, Australia. She pauses, steadies her hand, looks more closely, then speaks.

This paper presents the project “Greetings from *Zinland*: Unfolding a Shadow Country” associated with *Postcards from the Anthropocene: Unsettling the Geopolitics of Representation*, an international exhibition and conference held in Edinburgh, Scotland in 2017, and since published as a book in 2022 (Cincik and Torres-Campos). *Greetings from Zinland*, a postcard I sent across the equator as a digital image, a recorded voice reading, and a critical text, is a dispatch from belonged-by country and its shadow places (Boscacci; Plumwood). It recalibrates vintage 1950s’ imagery of local tourist views composed in the North Queensland port city of Townsville—on Gurambilbarra Wulgurukaba and Bindal lands—with one contemporary sighting of a twenty-first century becoming. It introduces and maps a scattered particular-planetary shadow country found in the glare of bleaching tropical light. With it, I unfold a *wit(h)nessing* story from one shadow place of unexpected connection and confrontation in the antipodean *Anthropocene-in-the-making* (Yusoff 2). If a picture postcard is a material form of encounter-exchange, an affect charged one is also an im/material dispatch. And, Auckland, you are one of my shadow places.

### **A Note**

This creative critical investigation, which continues to unfold, was presented at *Ngā Tūtaki – Encounter/s: Agency, Embodiment, Exchange, Ecologies* for the opening panel, “Affective Encounters, Shadow Traces, and Resonant Naturecultures in the Anthropocene: Particular-planetary aesthetics in the feminist ecosocial turn.” The full essay, in press elsewhere at the time of writing, will not be replicated in this *Swamphen* issue (Boscacci). In the follow-on essay, “Relationscapes of Extinction, and More Life: Zinland to Zealandia”—part two of ‘before and after’ mode of this issue’s reflective call—I pick up the affective encounter and trace to chronicle



**Fig. 1** *Mapping a Shadow Country* (2011–2020). A visual trace of ship connections between Gurambilbarra Townsville and 120 shadow ports in twenty-five countries dispersed across the planet. Digital print, 100 x 65 cm. Image © Louise Boscacci

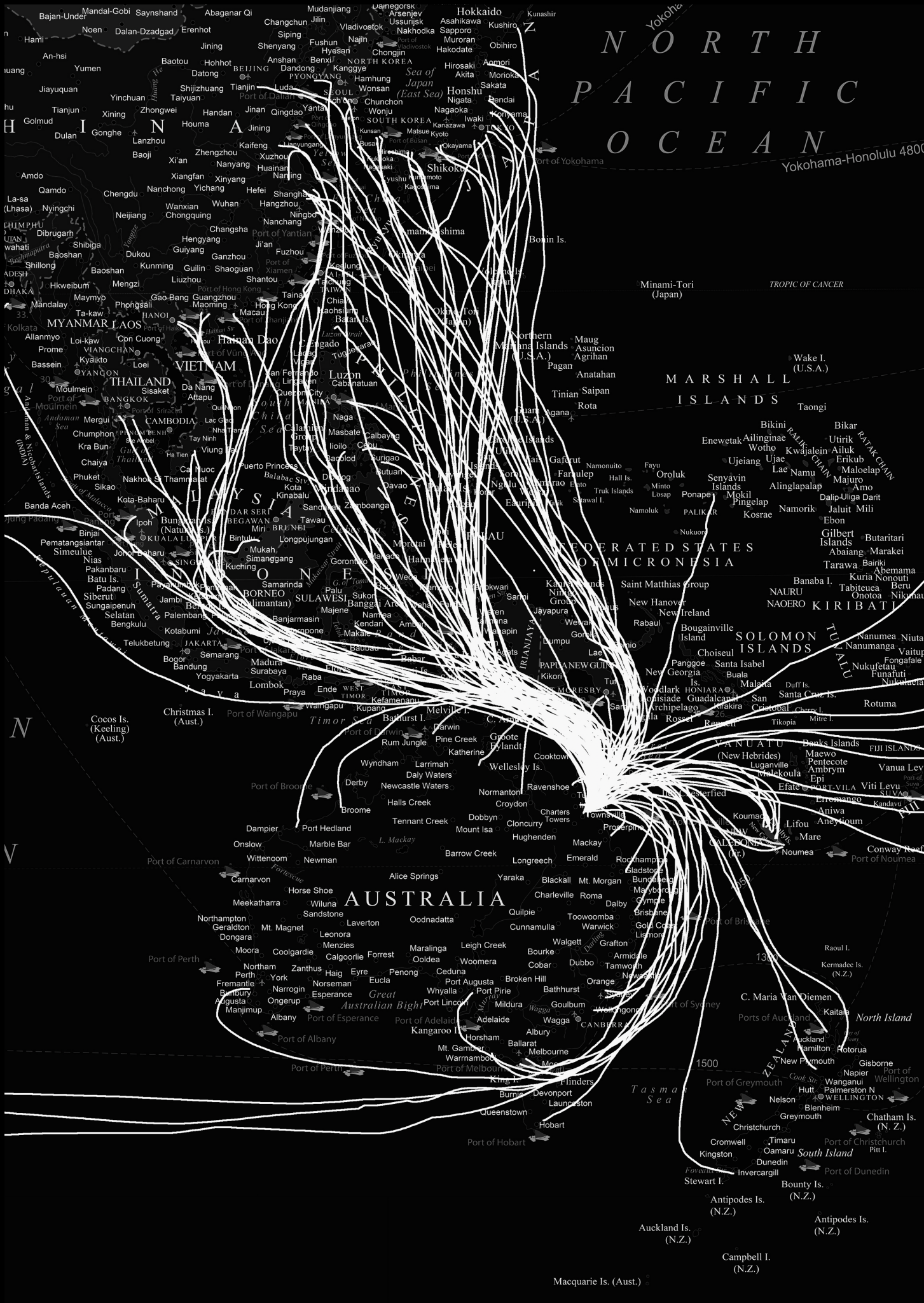
a passage of a-bodied, more-than-human wit(h)nessing that begins in, and moves from, Tāmaki Makaurau.

I begin the next leg in Auckland because it is one of the 120 oceanic ports of connection and exchange with Gurambilbarra Townsville that disclose and compose a previously hidden shadow country of particular planetary connection, disconnection, and implication. This shadow country is visually worlded in the trace map and toponymy of shadow place names in Figures 1 to 3.

Antofagasta Antwerpen Auckland Baie Ugue Bataan-Mariveles Baton Rouge Beihai BING BONG Bintulu Bluff Botany Bay Brisbane Broome Cairns Cagayan Callao Cape Town Changsu Chiba Chittagong Cigading Crockett Daikoku Island Dalian Darwin Davao Fangcheng Fujairah Geelong Gladstone Guangzhou Hachinohe Haikou Haiphong Hibikinada Hiroshima Hitachinaka Ho Chi Minh City Hong Kong Hobart Houston Huangpu Ichihara Iloilo (Panay) Inchon Isabel Jubail Kanda Kaohsiung Karembé Karumba Kashima Kawasaki Keelung/Chilung Kendari Kiunga Kobe Kouaoua Kwinana Lae Laem Chabang Lanshan Lianyungang Mackay Manila Manuran Melbourne Mizushima Nagoya Nakety Nanjing New Orleans New Plymouth Ngoma Noumea Omaezaki Ozamis Panama City Phu My Pohnpei Poro Port Alma Port Hedland Port Kembla Port Moresby Port Pirie Portland Prai (Penang) Prony Bay Pusan Pyeongtaek Qingdao Qinhuangdao Rayong Red Dog Saganoseki Shanghai Shikama Singapore Stockton Su-ao Subic Bay Surigao Sydney Tagonoura Taichung Taizhou Tauranga Timaru Tonda Tontouta Toronto Ulsan Vancouver Yizheng Yokohama Yosu-bando Zhangjiagang Zhanjiang Zhenjiang .... Australia—CURRUMBILBARRA—THUL GARRIE WAJA—Queensland—Northern Territory—New South Wales—Western Australia—South Australia—Victoria—Tasmania Aotearoa New Zealand Bangladesh Belgium Canada Chile China Indonesia Japan Micronesia New Caledonia Papua New Guinea Panama Peru Philippines Singapore Saudi Arabia South Africa South Korea Taiwan Thailand United Arab Emirates USA Vietnam

**Fig. 2** Composing a Shadow Toponymy: 120 shadow port place names in twenty-five countries/geopolitical nation states, from Moana Oceania to the edge of the Arctic Ocean, connected to the Port of Townsville (Gurambilbarra Wulgurukaba land and sea Country). First Nations' place names are being added to the growing roll call, gleaned and gathered over a multi-year investigative trace of ship origins, destinations and material cargoes. Image © Louise Boscacci

**Fig. 3 (Overleaf)** *Mapping a Shadow Country* (2011–2020); detail. The shadows trace is an eco-affective waymaker. How to enter these particular shadow port places? How to wit(h)ness a minoritarian reworlding? In short, what and who lives in the shadows? Digital print, 100 x 65 cm (original). Image © Louise Boscacci



# NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN

Yokohama-Honolulu 4800

Minami-Tori (Japan) TROPIC OF CANCER

MARSHALL ISLANDS

FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

SOLOMON ISLANDS

VANUATU

FIJI ISLANDS

NEW ZEALAND

AUSTRALIA

Antipodes Is. (N.Z.)

Auckland Is. (N.Z.)

Campbell I. (N.Z.)

Macquarie Is. (Aust.)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge with gratitude the living expertise, fierce wisdom and kind power of Nancy Yukuwal McDinny. Jo Holder of The Cross Arts Projects, Sydney, hosted the transformative exhibition to which I allude in the abstract above: *Open Cut: Jacky Green, Sean Kerins and Therese Ritchie* (2018). Most recently, in December 2020 amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the exhibition *Lead in my grandmother's body* was launched online as the second part of the *Open Cut series*.

## WORKS CITED

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