

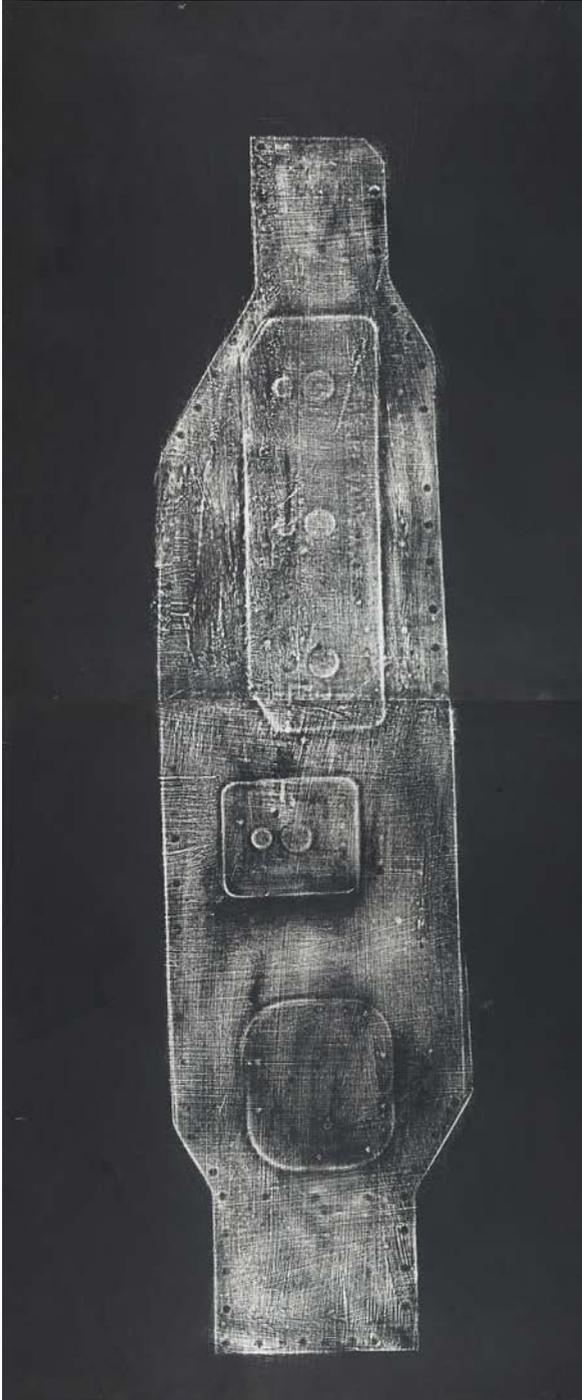


1:1 Airplane Pause

Susanna Castleden



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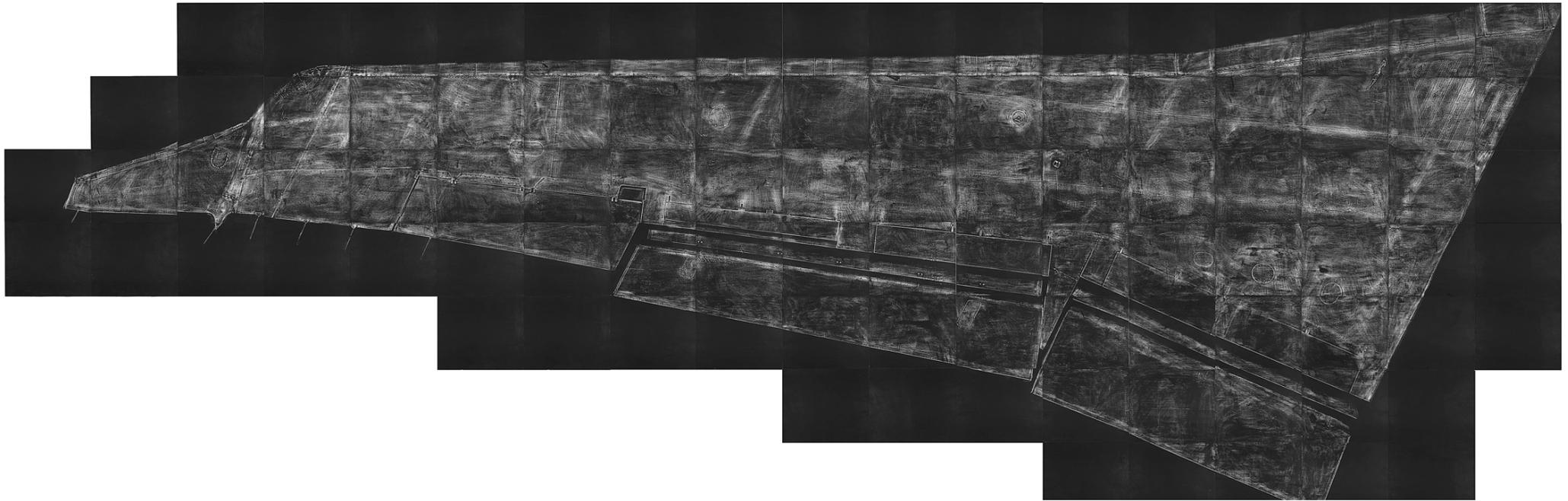


1:1 Miscellaneous Airplane Part
(DHL). 2015. 141 x 59.5cm.
Gesso on paper maps.

The works in this exhibition were made in a boneyard - a desert site in Arizona used for storing and scrapping unused aircraft. As a way of contrasting methods of mass distribution associated with both modern air travel and digital print technologies, the works in this exhibition present images of parts of stationary aircraft created through a rudimentary, manual printmaking process. Through accessing airplanes that are temporarily still, this body of 'reverse-frottage' works bear evidence of being in a location that runs counter to the usual flow of mobility associated with air travel. I use the term reverse frottage to describe the mezzotint-like process that, through sanding and rubbing, allows a white image to emerge from a black surface, thus reversing the traditional frottage image. 1:1 Airplane Pause is part of a series of works that use this process as a way of recording proximity to a place or object. Through sanding by hand, the process records a physical encounter with a surface, leaving traces of not only that surface but also the weight, pace and action of my hand, and the desert environment in which the work was made.

Considered in its historical context as a means of collecting anthropological data from gravestones and brasses, frottage operated as a precursor to the camera, recording, multiplying and dispersing representations of objects that would otherwise be fixed in place. In the boneyards of Arizona, rather than recording static and bound surfaces, frottage is utilised to record objects that epitomise mobility. In the same way a frottage may record the recessed surface of an engraved headstone, here the process is used to trace the polished edge of a wing tip or the triple glazed windows of a cockpit. In our digital age frottage runs counter to the pace and rapidity of image generation and distribution; it slows down the production and transmission of representations, presenting as an anomaly in the post-print age for its slow, tactile and low-tech sensibilities. The process requires a direct and durational means of making, demanding attentiveness to the presence of practice; frottage is made in the moment, no post-production, just presence.

In Arizona at the boneyard an airplane sits stationary alongside the chopping pad, awaiting its eventual redistribution into the mobile world, not as a carrier of travellers, but as recycled aluminium cans. But before then, in the desert sun, it offered the opportunity for me to settle on its wing and distribute sheets



1:1 Airplane Wing. 2015. 4.16 metres x 12.69 metres. Gesso on paper maps.

of paper over its smooth yet detailed surface to capture a 1:1 replica of its form. Rubbing from the tip of the wing back to the body of the airplane measures 11 meters, uses 93 sheets of paper and takes three days. It is a slow but inherently active process performed on a stationary aircraft that, although still, is still in transition. The midday desert sun slowly turns the overnight chill of the metal wing into a scorching surface that adds sweat marks to the rubbings of inspection caps and aluminium rivets. Here the embodied experience gives rise to a nuanced image – heat, hands, proximity, stillness.

If viewed very closely, another desert location is evident on the surface of the frottage. In tiny slivers where the black surface is rubbed away, small glimpses of another remote territory can be seen. These glimpses reveal redundant maps of the Great Sandy Desert in Western Australia; maps discarded as digital technologies transformed paper to pixel. The 1:1 scale of the disused airplane emerges on a similarly disused 1:250,000-scale map of a desert on the other side of the world.

At the end of my time in the boneyard in Arizona the frottaged sheets are packed back into crates and flown back to Australia. Here they are unpacked, documented, redistributed as digital images, which are then reprinted in catalogues such as this and distributed once again. The frottage artworks, marked by sweat and dust, are repacked and sent to a gallery in another place. Distribution in a mobile world has many guises. From the high tech speed of air travel and digital transmissions to the measured decommissioning of an aircraft and the low-tech manual labour of frottage, distribution works at varied tempos. It is the registers of stillness that occur within these tempos that allow a greater understanding of the mobile world in which we live.

Susanna Castleden 2015.

Susanna Castleden is an artist and Senior Lecturer at Curtin University, Western Australia where she is Director International and Coordinator of Printmedia in the School of Design and Art. Susanna recently completed a PhD at RMIT University, Melbourne and was awarded the Linden Prize in 2015. In 2014 Susanna was awarded second place in the Fremantle Print Award and was shortlisted to exhibit in the 2014 International Print Biennale in UK. Other awards include the Joondalup Art Award in 2011; the Burnie Print Prize in 2013 and the Bankwest Art Prize also in 2013.



1:1 Airplane. Chad's Horizontal Tail. 2015. 141 x 119 cm. Gesso on paper maps



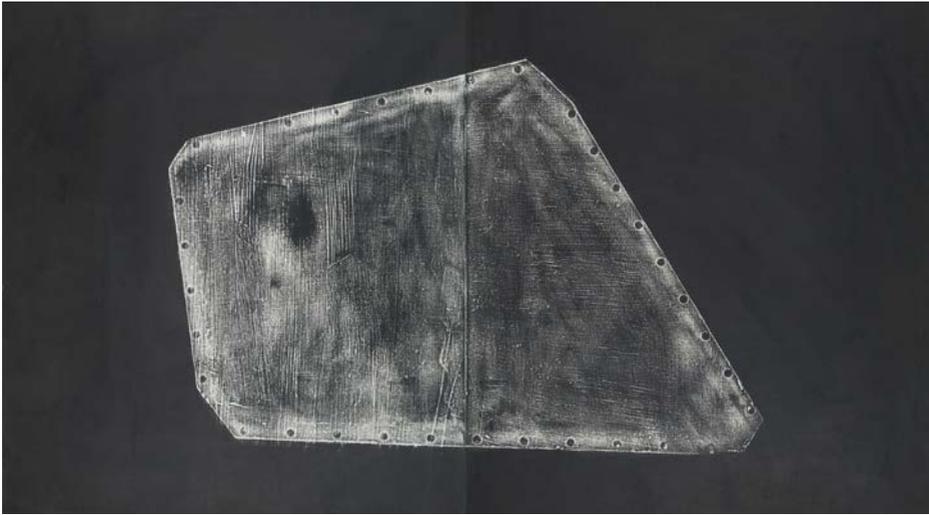
1:1 Airplane (Wheel). 2015. 119 x 141 cm. Gesso on paper maps





1:1 APU Cover (*Spaced*). 2015. 119 x 423cm. Gesso on paper maps





1:1 *Miscellaneous Airplane Part*. 2015. 59.5 x 141cm. Gesso on paper maps



Right 1:1 *Wing Tip CRJ*. 2015. 282 x 151.5 cm. Gesso on paper maps.





1:1 Airplane Pause
Museum of Contemporary Art
China Academy of Art
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susannacastleden.com

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