



English

HALF HIDDEN – a video installation by Anne Haaning

November 30th 2019 – February 16th 2020

In the southwestern Greenlandic town of Ivittuut, a number of dilapidated houses and industrial buildings dot the shore of an oval lake. This place has clearly been abandoned for many years, and there are few signs that this lake covers the site of the biggest mining operation in Danish history. The story of the white mineral cryolite (cryo = ice or cold, and lithos = stone) is unknown to many today, even though the mine produced more than 3.7 million tons of cryolite in its more than 150 years of operation.

The overlooked stories and consequences of cryolite mining comprise the raw materials for artist Anne Haaning's video installation, *Half Hidden*. Denmark began mining cryolite in Greenland in the 1850s and continued shipping the mineral from the port of Ivittuut until 1987. Also known as "white gold", cryolite was an important ingredient in the mass production of aluminium and therefore proved critical for the shipbuilding and aviation industries during World Wars I and II. The mineral was so important that Greenland's cryolite mine was put under US administration after Denmark was occupied in 1939, and remained so until the end of WWII. But this history has been virtually erased from our collective memory and awareness. The abandoned mine was flooded and is now out of sight, submerged in an artificial lake that stands as a scar in the Greenlandic landscape: an expansive geographical and symbolic void concealing centuries of history.

A core theme examined in Haaning's work is how forgotten places and structures persist invisibly as memories and the sediment of time, and the impact this can have on us. Through extensive research she has gained insight into life in Ivittuut during the mining era – from the signing of major trade agreements and the fight against a syphilis epidemic, to general observations about day-to-day life in the town. These stories intertwine in a total installation featuring hand-carved wooden frames, animations, polarised light effects, archival film clips, 3D reconstructions from the Danish National Archives, myths about the stone spirits documented by Knud Rasmussen in 1923, and written correspondence between Haaning herself and the shaman Nakasuk.

With *Half Hidden*, Haaning draws our attention to a corner of the shared heritage of Denmark and Greenland, as well as to the story of modern technology and its impacts.

With this exhibition, she aims to illuminate the connections between the extraction of resources and the ideologies underlying colonisation. The work takes us under the surface of the flooded cryolite mine and confronts us with the absence of awareness in today's Denmark regarding Greenland and Danish colonial history. *Half Hidden* is an important and timely work. It is important because it chronicles a significant chapter of history that is far too often overlooked. It is a story that invites new perspectives on our shared history and cultural heritage, and it is essential to understanding the present reality. It is also a timely work, as the eyes of the world are now turned to the Arctic.

Anne Haaning holds an MFA from Goldsmiths, University of London and an MA from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture. She is currently working on an artistic research project in Norway, where she is a PhD student at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts and the Tromsø Academy of Contemporary Art. Haaning has exhibited extensively at venues including: Jing'an Sculpture Park, Shanghai; The Jerwood Space, London; Whitechapel Gallery, London; the Icelandic Biennale Sequences VII; CPH:DOX; Kurzfilmtage Winterthur; Nottingham Contemporary; FACT, Liverpool; and CCA, Glasgow International. She also participated in the Jerwood/Film and Video Umbrella Awards in 2014.

Video duration: 18 minutes.

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