



CUTTING

LOSSES

Lenka Clayton

**Decolonizing Architecture
Art Residency (DAAR)**
with Sara Pellegrini

Heide Fasnacht

Curated by Susanne Slavick

October 17 - November 21, 2012

John and June Allcott Gallery
Art Department, Hanes Art Center
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Cutting **Losses**

“Cutting Losses” is an expression often applied to situations headed for failure or disaster. Facing economic crises, we may tighten our belts, sell our stocks or withdraw our investments to avoid further financial ruin. Foundering in military quagmires, we may withdraw our troops to staunch the flow of blood. Witness recent headlines such as “Foreign Affairs: Afghanistan: Cut Losses or Double Down?” or “Market Watch: U.S. stock futures cut losses after jobless claims.” In such scenarios, we arrest whatever role we have played in the crisis and salvage as best we can, cutting and being cut by the losses before us.

In the hands of Lenka Clayton, Decolonizing Architecture (with Sara Pellegrini), and Heide Fasnacht, “cutting” is both an adjective and a verb pertaining to the aftermath of war and occupation. They cut through, out, and apart, literally and figuratively. Adopting techniques of incision, they interrupt pre-existing images of bombed buildings, military bases and storage areas, and villages attacked by drones. Some use what has become a fundamental automatic, unconscious gesture of contemporary culture — the cut and paste. Whether editing text or altering images, it is increasingly easy to select, copy and paste, substitute or delete components.

Digital commands affect the technology of war as well. Drones and other weaponry activated by remote devices and distant personnel often detach us from the damage they (and we) inflict. The ease of technology makes it easy to leave holes in the landscapes and lives of people far from the control boards. Were it as easy to reassemble or put things back together again.

Still, artists reveal and repurpose the rubble, using imagery from a variety of photographic sources: historical archives, the internet, the work of photojournalists or pictures personally taken. Cutting into them can re-inflict the wounds symbolically, exposing what has been destroyed, stolen, or vacated. The pieces extracted reflect the enormity of loss, a loss that cuts to the quick and deeper in human flesh, the social fabric or cultural heritage.

Gallery Hours

Monday - Friday: 8am - 5pm

Fall Break Hours:

Wednesday, October 17: 8am -6pm

Thursday, October 18: noon - 5pm

Friday, October 19: noon - 3pm

Saturday, October 20: 3pm - 7:30pm

Curator's Presentations

Out of Rubble: The Terrain of War

Saturday, October 20, 3:30 -5:30 pm

Southeastern College Art Conference

Durham Marriott Civic Center

201 Foster St., Durham NC 27701

secollegeart.org

Cutting Losses

Monday, October 22, 6pm

Art Department, Hanes Art Center 218

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

115 South Columbia St., Chapel Hill NC 27599

Phone: 919/962-2015

For more information: art.unc.edu

Reception

Monday, October 22

Following the lecture until 8pm

Image: Heide Fasnacht, *London Blitz III*, 2011,
Courtesy of the artist and Kent Fine Art, New York

Lenka Clayton



From *Repairing Lebanon*, 2007, digitally altered photographs, 11 7/8 x 17 7/8 inches each

Lenka Clayton dissects to rebuild in a way that crosses from the actual to the imaginary. In the *Repairing Lebanon* series, she digitally alters five images of buildings damaged during the 2006 conflict with Israel. A journalist working in Lebanon took the source images specifically for this project. Clayton asked for no information about the original buildings and had no idea how they had looked before bombardment. Close examination of the ruins within the photograph provided the only clues for envisioning their prior status. All tones and textures were cut or cloned from the rubble in the images to visually repair each edifice.

Clayton is careful to retain the artifice and uncertainty of her repair. In comparing “before” and “after” images, the reconstituted structures can appear slightly askew with cutout qualities suggesting the scrims of temporary stage sets rather than the solid walls of real houses. Their tentative quality reflects the uncertainty of war and its consequences. Even with post-war recovery, things are not like they were before. Despite the healing power of the human imagination, the fissures and frailty of our built environments and psyches are neither disguised nor erased.

Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency (DAAR)



Project: Return to Nature, 2007, photomontages by DAAR with Sara Pellgrini, variable dimensions

The collective Decolonizing Architecture uses spatial practice as a form of political intervention and narration. They observe that the “acceptable precondition for planning is a situation of spatial and political certainty – a clear site demarcation, a schedule, a client and a budget. The erratic nature of Israeli control and the unpredictable military and political developments on the ground renders Palestine an environment of high uncertainty and indeterminacy. Planning in such conditions could not appeal to any tested professional methods.” Decolonizing Architecture responds to the uncertainty and indeterminacy of sites like Oush Grab, a former Israeli military base that has been cannibalized for construction materials and reshaped as both a source for landfill and a dumping ground for unwanted rubble. In proposing the transformation of this site, DAAR would render its buildings unusable to prevent “revolving door occupation,” drilling holes in the walls to create concrete screens and shifting the ramparts to partially bury the buildings in the rubble of their own fortifications. Sara Pellegrini’s photomontages with DAAR visualize the transformation, cloning images of holes and repeatedly pasting them into the image to pierce the walls. Flocking birds are cut and pasted as well, implying attraction to the once formidable site. It has now become hospitable to migrating birds converging over Palestine that tend to land on the Oush Grab hilltop, providing roost for those who know no borders.

Heide Fasnacht



Trummerfrau, 2010, mixed media, 16 1/4 x 12 1/2 x 7/8 inches



Drone Attack, Pakistan, 2011, mixed media, 14 1/2 x 20 1/4 x 2 inches

Heide Fasnacht examines the fate of cultural artifacts in times of conflict. Working from archival photographs, her process of incision, excision, dissection and dislocation reveals what has been defaced, stolen, hoarded, lost or destroyed as a result of war. An array of images refer to distant and recent incidents from around the world, including the Nazi's confiscation of art and treasure, the Allies' bombing of Monte Cassino, looting and damage at the Umm al-Aqarib archaeological site in Iraq following the US invasion, civilian deaths from drone attacks in Pakistan, the methodical looting by Japanese forces in WWII, the dispossession of Japanese assets resulting from the internment camps in the US, the Taliban's destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas, the London Blitz, the TET offensive, the Monuments Men, and the Rubble Women. Fasnacht's collages and constructions reveal the enormity of loss, a loss that cuts cultural inheritance to the quick and deeper. The wounds remain fresh and irreparable in these landscapes of destruction as we live with their continuing and contemporary repercussions.