

# TERMINUS

Monika Lukowska | Melanie McKee

## **Terminus**

in search of an (im)possible conclusion

**Monika Lukowska**

**Melanie McKee**

5 - 22 October 2016

Paper Mountain ARI



Monika Lukowska *Nikiszowiec I*, 2016.  
Lithography, 30 x 40 cm

**A terminus is a place of arrival and departure** - an airport concourse, a train station, bus depot, a port-of-call that is often the end point of a journey. As travellers, wayfarers, strangers or welcomees, we have all been there, physically and emotionally drawn into its machinations. As a physical location, the terminus is a noisy place of transit. Marc Augé (1995) contends such spaces are 'non-places'. They are zones of mobility whose architectural forms and configurations present a generic view of the world, a nowhere but everywhere that people pass through on their way to somewhere. For many migrants and refugees, the terminus is not just a physical place of embarkation but a metaphoric location. It can be both an ending and a beginning, offering incalculable moments of transition and possibility as the memories of the past succumb to the cacophonous dreams and desires for the future.

Having arrived here from elsewhere, both Melanie McKee and Monika Lukowska imagine Perth as a kind of terminus. Yet unlike Augé's contention that it is a generic 'non-place', they picture its unique characteristics as a location of affective and embodied sensibilities. Drawing upon their experiences of residing in differing locales, they render the paradoxical senses of dislocation and belonging as they try to become emplaced. Individually and in collaboration, they mobilise their artistic expertise to respond to the specificities of living here, in this place, as it tugs at their memories, emotions and desires. Thus this exhibition offers an appreciation of the affective dimensions of emplacement and the material conditions of knowing our place in the world through the practices of two women artists as they picture their (im)possible terminus.

Melanie McKee whose family migrated here after being dispossessed of their home farm, Marston, in Zimbabwe, uses a combination of printmaking, digital photography and plain sewing techniques to explore the personal and historical narratives that surround her sense of both displacement and home making. Stitching together memories of the lost homestead, family stories, and understandings drawn from her doctoral studies, McKee creates highly accomplished and engaging works that evoke more than a memorial to the past or a passing nostalgic reverie. Rather she presents ways of reconciling there and then with the here and now. Such conjunctions of space and time can be seen in works like *Plication I* and *Plication II, reverie between two places* in which fabric - overlaid with solvent transferred, fragmented images of Marston and Perth - is pleated into a placed tactile intimacy. The plain sewing - a skill learnt from her grandmother - reflects a generational passage of time, while the printed images convey a fleeting familiarity with places lived and experienced.

Considering the affects of living far from her home town Katowice in Poland while undertaking doctoral studies, Monika Lukowska portrays her experiences of place making as she comes to terms with two radically different locations. The combination of lithography and digital technologies provides Lukowska with a perfect vehicle for picturing the particularities of each cityscape, their surface appearances, architectural forms, textures and emotive resonances. Her works not only reveal her deft skills as a printmaker but also highlight her sensitive apprehension of the material conditions of these differing environments. Lukowska's evocation of place can be seen in works like *Immersed in coal I*, and *Nikiszowiec II*, where the comfortable familiarity of coal soot that dusts Katowice's cityscape provides a visual leitmotif for rendering her sense of place. In these works, the embodied experiences and memories of over there are collaged into the present realities of now from the viewpoint of here in Perth.

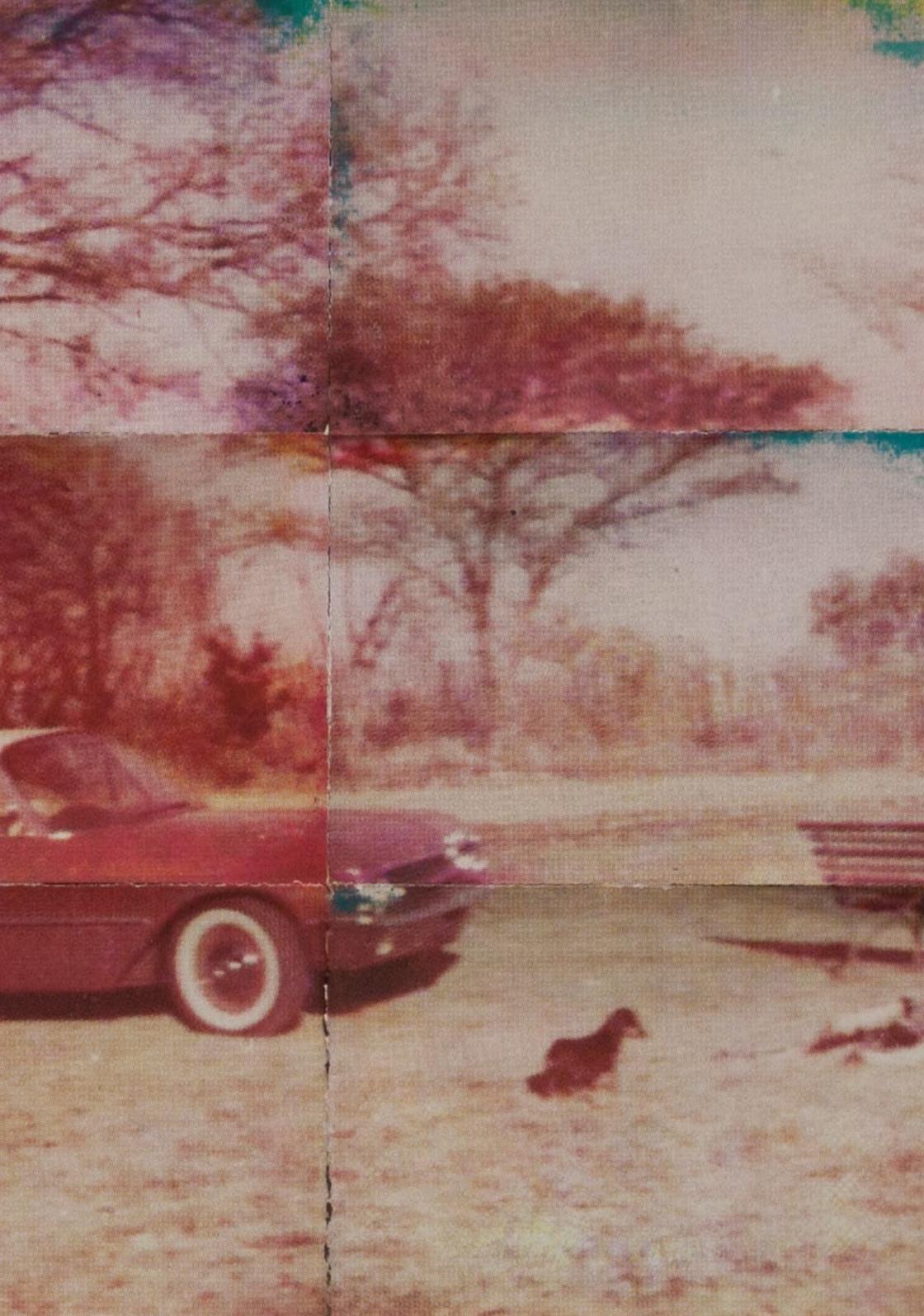


Below:  
Melanie McKee *Plication III, reverie between two places* 2016.  
Solvent transfer on polyester, dimensions variable

Overleaf:  
Melanie McKee *Candy*, 2015. Screen print, 84 x 60 cm







Working together for the first time, McKee and Lukowska bring together a rich and potent understanding of the complex experiences of contemporary nomadic lifestyles, the interplay of memories and everyday realities that are imagined through the sensate material world. In their collaborative work *Traversing the Terminus I, II and III* the individual artist's concerns for a sensed apprehension of places are brought into dialogue to create a poetics of transition. This panorama of stilled moments in time and space is pleated into a subtly nuanced meditation, one that transcends nostalgia and sentimentality. Through rendering the light, textures and other aspects of the environmental locale in which they find themselves, these two artists picture a personal and intimate portrayal of this place, as they create a home in the here and now.

In keeping with McKee and Lukowska's contention that places are understood through embodied sensitivities, while we may not be able to smell the soot as it coats Silesia's architecture, nor taste the fruit in the lost orchard left behind, nor hear the sounds of unfamiliar languages as we migrate to new destinations, through the art works in this exhibition we can appreciate those desires and affective experiences that are to be found when travelling through the terminus.

### Ann Schilo



#### References:

Auge, Marc. *Non-places: introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity*. London: Verso. 1995.

Dr Ann Schilo is a senior lecturer in the School of Design and Art at Curtin University. She is a co-supervisor of the doctoral studies of both Melanie McKee and Monika Lukowska.

**Melanie McKee** (b.1986) was born in Harare, Zimbabwe and immigrated with her family to Perth, Western Australia in 2001. She has undertaken study in the Fine Arts at Curtin University, graduating with First Class Honours in 2011. Melanie completed an international study exchange program at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts de Paris in 2008-09. She has been heavily involved with the Perth Centre for Photography and is a Sessional Academic in the Department of Art at Curtin University. Melanie has exhibited both locally and internationally, and is currently a PhD candidate at Curtin University in Western Australia. She has been awarded several government grants in order to carry out her research and creative practice.

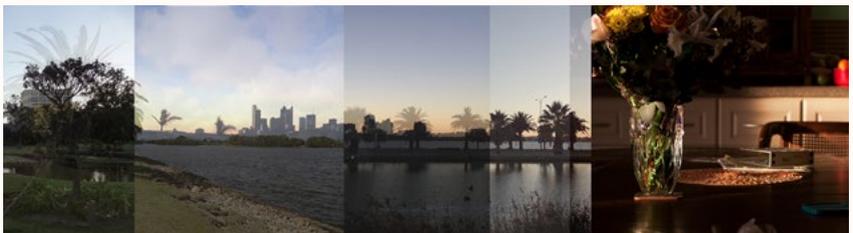
**Monika Lukowska** is a printmaking artists from Poland. She obtained her MA in Printmaking from the E. Geppert Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Wroclaw, Poland in 2011 and MFA in Printmaking from the San Francisco Art Institute, USA in 2014.

Her artworks were exhibited internationally at: Student Printmaking Biennale in Poznan, Poland; International Print Triennial in Kraków, Poland; International Lithographic Symposium in Tidaholm, Sweden; Freies Museum, Berlin; Diego Rivera Gallery and SOMArts Gallery, San Francisco, USA; Gallery 1010, Knoxville, USA, IMPACT Conference at the Museum of Modern Art, Hangzhou, China, and 5th International Printmaking Exhibition, Istanbul, Turkey among others. She is a recipient of a Minister of Culture and National Heritage Award for the Best Graduate Diploma in Poland 2011, Fulbright Graduate Student Awards, 2012 and Murphy and Cadogan Contemporary Art Awards, 2013.

Lukowska is working in the field of digital printmaking and lithography and is currently pursuing her PhD at Curtin University, for which she received Curtin Strategic International Research Scholarship, 2015.

[www.monikalukowska.com](http://www.monikalukowska.com)

Monika Lukowska and Melanie McKee  
*Traversing the Terminus I* 2016. Digital print, 30 x 134 cm  
*Traversing the Terminus II* 2016. Digital print, 30 x 155 cm  
*Traversing the Terminus III* 2016. Digital print, 30 x 109 cm





Monika Lukowska *Immersed in coal II*, 2016.  
Digital print, 68 x 143 cm

Monika Lukowska *Immersed in coal I*, (detail) 2016.  
Digital print, 68 x 143 cm



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