

# LARK RING

The work of Lark Ring focuses on social and spatial assembly. Often triggered by a sense of frustration with normative modes of thinking and viewing the world, his work derives from the urge to question and examine existing structures and seemingly universal truths. Central to this inquiry is the interest in how language structures the way we see, think, and relate to the world. His artistic practice thus combines a playful approach to semantics and linguistic patterns with the repurposing of materials away from their preoccupied function, in order to challenge social conventions of knowledge production. This assemblage of seemingly minimal quotidian materials and poignant poetic language invites the viewers to reflect on the interferences between medium and significance, between object and representation. The aesthetics of his installations stress the temporality of positions, discourse and the social fabric of society, blending the positions of author and spectator and thereby demanding a critical engagement with the contemporary.

Lark Ring

\*1993 in Tiverton, England

Dual citizenship Swiss, English

Lives and works in Zurich, Switzerland and Tokyo, Japan

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#### Education

MFA, Zurich University of the Arts, 2021–2023

BFA, Zurich University of the Arts, 2017–2021

#### Exhibitions

FUTILE, 8.–29.12.2022, ENTERPRISE, Zurich, Group Show

YAU TEN, 20. – 27.5.2022, Tokyo Photographic Research, Yūrakuchō Tokyo, Group Show

Preview, 13.12.2021, ZHdK, Solo Show

The Road To Hell Is Paved With Good Intentions, 16.1.2020, ZHdK, Group Show

Untitled Exhibition, 5.–7.11.2019, Tokyo Polytechnic University, Group Show

A Work of One's Own, 16.5.2019, ZHdK, Group Show

Addendum, 13.–15.1.2019, ZHdK, Solo Show

RETA episode 007, 15.–20.11.2018, ZHdK, Group Show

Tamed Frustrations, 7.10.2018, in collaboration with Andre Veigas Pereira, ZHdK

LSD 75, 19.–22.4.2018, Basel, Group Show

#### Kunst am Bau

Temporary sports halls for the locations, 20.1.2022, Kanton Zurich:

Kantonsschulen Freudenberg und Enge, Shortlist

Kantonsschule Uetikon am See, Shortlist

Kantonsschule Provisorium UZH Campus Irchel, Shortlist

#### Residency

YAU Studios, 1. – 31.5.2022, Tokyo Photographic Research, Yūrakuchō Tokyo

#### Performance

Invocation II, RFSC Performance Abend – Ways Of Being, 30.7.2020, at Rote Fabrik, Zurich

#### Performer

Twins & Lovers, Alicia Frankovich, 8.7.2017, Kunsthau Glarus

## ENTERPRISE

2022

ENTERPRISE is a artists' initiative with no fixed location, instead offering change and reflection to the spaces it temporarily occupies. Its title is as much a homage to the global industry, its enterprises and commerce as a caricature of the aforementioned. Enterprise's vision is brought to life by artists Lark Ring and Taiga Nakazaki.



2022

GC is a working group based in Tokyo, Japan. It consists of 19 members with mixed international backgrounds that periodically put on exhibitions and gather material to release small self-published publications on a diverse set of topics.

#### Publications

YOU WANT IT DARKER, ENTERPRISE, 29.12.2022, Zurich

GC 20, self published, 27.11.2022, Tokyo

GC 19, self published, 28.10.2022, Tokyo

GC 18, self published, 30.9.2022, Tokyo

GC 15, self published, 29.6.2022, Tokyo

GC TAU, self published, 20.5.2022, Tokyo

Artifice Historia, self published, 18.1.2022, Zurich

Dissipate or in the dying moments, self published, 15.3.2021, Zurich

Odyssey, in collaboration with Ryoko Ogiwara and Alessandro Habegger, at MATERIAL, 13.3.2020, Zurich

星明かりの無い, in collaboration with Masaya Fujitani, at POST, 1.11.2019, Tokyo  
Hochglanz, at Pissoir Contemporary, 10.11.2017, ZHdK

#### Assistant

Rico Scagliola & Michael Meier 2007–2009



**Endless Wartime, 2023 & THE THREE GREAT ALLIED POWERS, 2023**

*Installation view*

*Artist's studio  
Zurich  
2023*

The faded portraits of the three great allied powers served as visual reminders of their intricate web of economic and political acts and endorsements. In direct response to the transformative Marshall Plan, the Soviet Union introduced the Molotov Plan, subsequently evolving into COMECON, as a deliberate and contrasting endeavor aimed at safeguarding their own sphere of influence, marking a defining moment in the complex dynamics of post-war Europe. The work invokes the enduring consequences of geopolitical rivalries.

This stands in stark contrast to the video work "Endless Wartime" which portrays a projectile in perpetual state of repetition.



**Endless Wartime, 2023**

*Rendered video, monitor, wood base*

*67 × 60 × 155 cm*

*<https://vimeo.com/827447850>*

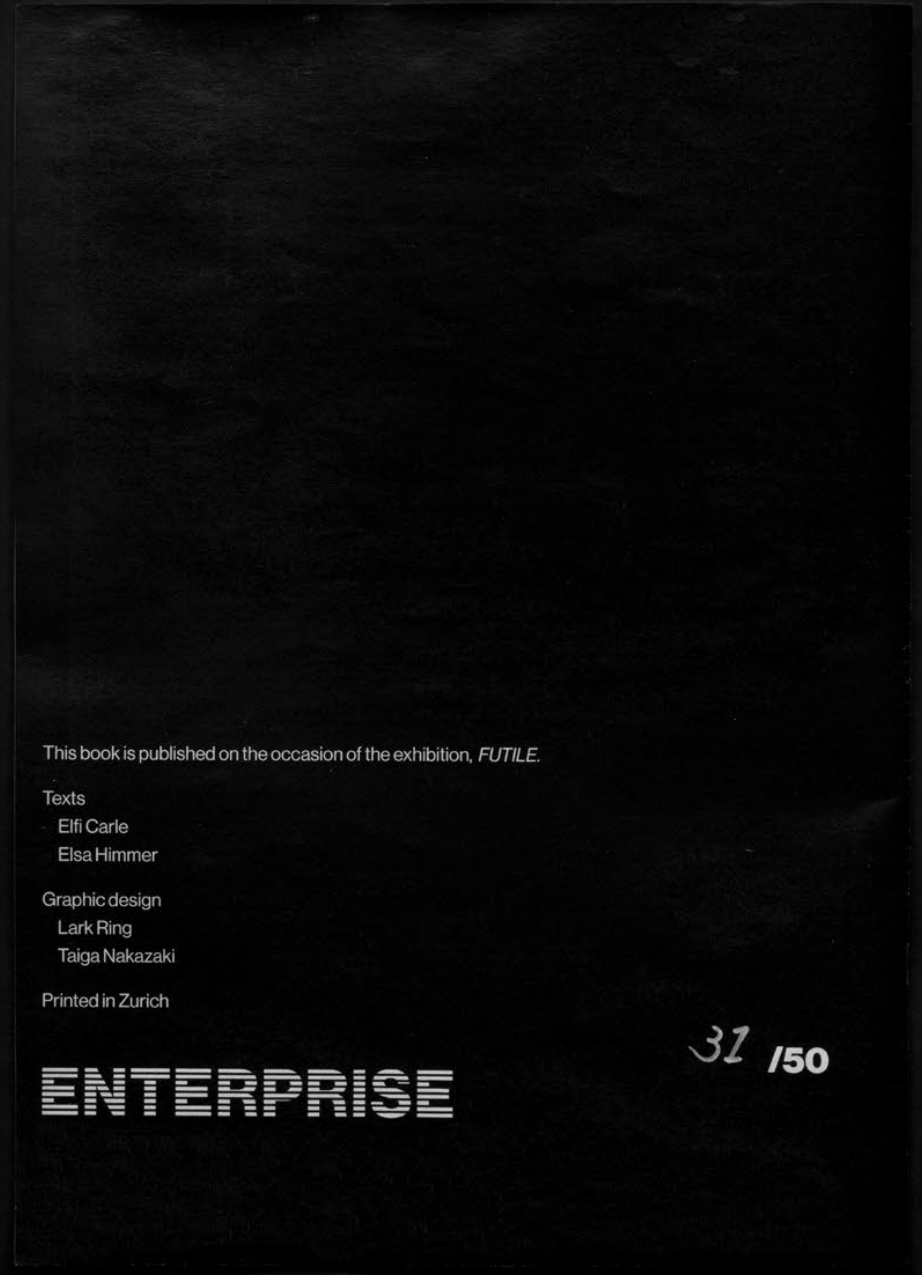
*Installation view*

*Artist's studio*

*Zurich*

*2023*





This book is published on the occasion of the exhibition, *FUTILE*.

Texts

Elfi Carle  
Elsa Himmer

Graphic design

Lark Ring  
Taiga Nakazaki

Printed in Zurich

**ENTERPRISE**

31 / 50

**YOU WANT IT DARKER, 2022**

Newsprint paper, pigment print, staple binding

40 × 28 cm

*Documentation of zine*

*Front & Back*

While World War II began in Europe with Hitler's invasion of Poland in September 1939, Japan had already invaded China and Korea in 1937 in the course of the so-called Pacific War (1937-1945) and aggressively asserted its supremacy in the Asian region. In 1941, Japan expanded its attacks on Dutch and U.S. territories in Asia and the Pacific. Part of this offensive was the attack on Pearl Harbor in Hawaii: the surprise attack, which the unprepared U.S. troops had little to counter, led to active U.S. intervention in the war effort.

By June 1942, Japan had brought large parts of Southeast Asia and the western Pacific under its control. The civilian population there was enslaved to forced labor, while military personnel were taken prisoners of war. From a European perspective, the fighting in the Pacific region is often misunderstood to this day as a sideshow of World War 2. Japan's aggressive wartime actions are often relegated to the background in the mirror of a Eurocentric culture of war and guilt and form a harsh contrast to the ongoing stereotypical attributions of Eastern need for harmony, quiet docility and sensitive closeness to nature, which create a one-dimensional image of the island nation in the context of Western projections.

In the course of the Pacific War, Japan was able to report early wartime successes, but the country's resources were soon depleted, while the Allies were able to invest enormous sums in the war and further increase their military strength. After the U.S. entered the fray on the European continent, the war against Japan was intensified at the same time. In order to break Japanese war morale, which had been united under God Emperor Hirohito, the U.S. began to massively intensify the bombardment of Japan starting in 1944. In the course of the offensive, Tokyo was completely destroyed. However, it was the atomic bombing in August of the following year that forced the Japanese surrender - after the German one.

On August 6, 1945, the Little Boy atomic bomb detonated over Hiroshima, one of Japan's few remaining intact cities. Between 90,000 and 200,000 people were killed instantly and 80% of the city destroyed. President Harry S. Truman, who had given the order to drop the bomb, acted against the advice of scientists and military leaders. Knowing the fatal consequences, especially for the civilian population, the drop was a perfidious demonstration of power by the USA, with which Japan was relegated within a few minutes by a military aggressor to the role of the victim, which is attributed to the country by the West until today and a culture of guilt of Japan in the mirror of the total destruction by the atomic bombs nipped in the bud.

Three days later, on August 9, 1945, the second atomic bomb detonated over Nagasaki, destroying 80% of the buildings within a one-kilometer radius, while some 75,000 people died as a direct result of the blast. In addition to the people who lost their lives directly as a result of the detonation, the deadly consequences of the atomic bombs lasted for decades. As late as August 14, 1945, the Japanese and U.S. militaries engaged in heavy aerial combat before the Japanese government accepted the ultimatum given by the Allies and surrendered. To this day, aerial views of the mushroom clouds symbolize the horrors of World War II and humanity's capacity for self-destruction. In particular, the complex Japanese-American history, which has also been negotiated culturally and artistically by both states since the postwar period, culminates in these images.

When the U.S. installed its occupation government in Japan at the end of the war, it found a country that it had devastated to a large extent during the war. With their bombing raids, the troops had completely destroyed 68 cities, the economy was in ruins, and 2 million Japanese (including about 700,000 civilians) had lost their lives. Douglas MacArthur, who was commissioned by the Allies to administer and demilitarize Japan in the spirit of a Western ideal of democratization, took up his post as Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers in the belief that it was his destiny to have a say in Japan's destiny after the end of the war.

While he had opposed the dropping of the atomic bombs, his stance, which clearly exposed 'pacification' as a colonial project, envisioned subordination of the island nation to Western interests. While McArthur is often glorified in the U.S. as a benefactor who ushered in a new era with the best intentions for the Japanese people and an awareness of the country's culture, the reality was different. Under the strict supervision of a propaganda apparatus that used racist rhetoric to suggest to the Japanese that the occupiers were not only legitimate but also invincible, the U.S. occupation resulted in the establishment of penal camps and countless acts of violence and rape against Japanese.

MacArthur launched a reconstruction campaign that used the New Deal as a template for redesigning the Japanese economy along Western capitalist lines, both to arm the country against the feared influence of communism and to open up a new market for the domestic economy. The new American-style constitution imposed on Japan completely demilitarized the country. It quickly proved problematic that the constitution was imposed from the outside and, despite protestations to the contrary, ignorant of Japanese culture and spirituality. While the West repeatedly praised the occupiers for leaving the emperor in office for the benefit of Japan, this was more of a strategic move: whoever controlled the God-Emperor controlled all of Japan. The images of Hirohito signing the surrender documents, which lasted only ten minutes, became symbolic.

The Japanese people were kept in a submissive role via the Allies' control of the emperor, from which it was only possible to a limited extent to reflect on the country's role in World War II and as an aggressor in the Asia-Pacific region. To this day, Japan and the West, especially the United States, are linked by a common history that is characterized by various colonial to political attributions, which make it difficult to present historical events and their significance in a sufficiently complex way. How to deal with history that has seen not only the ability but also the will of humanity to its own nuclear annihilation remains an open question that must be critically posed to this day.

## **YOU WANT IT DARKER, 2022**

*Newsprint paper, pigment print, staple binding*

*40 × 28 cm*

*Documentation of zine*

*Digital version of text*



**YOU WANT IT DARKER, 2022**

*Newsprint paper, pigment print, staple binding*

*40 × 28 cm*

*Documentation of zine  
double spread*



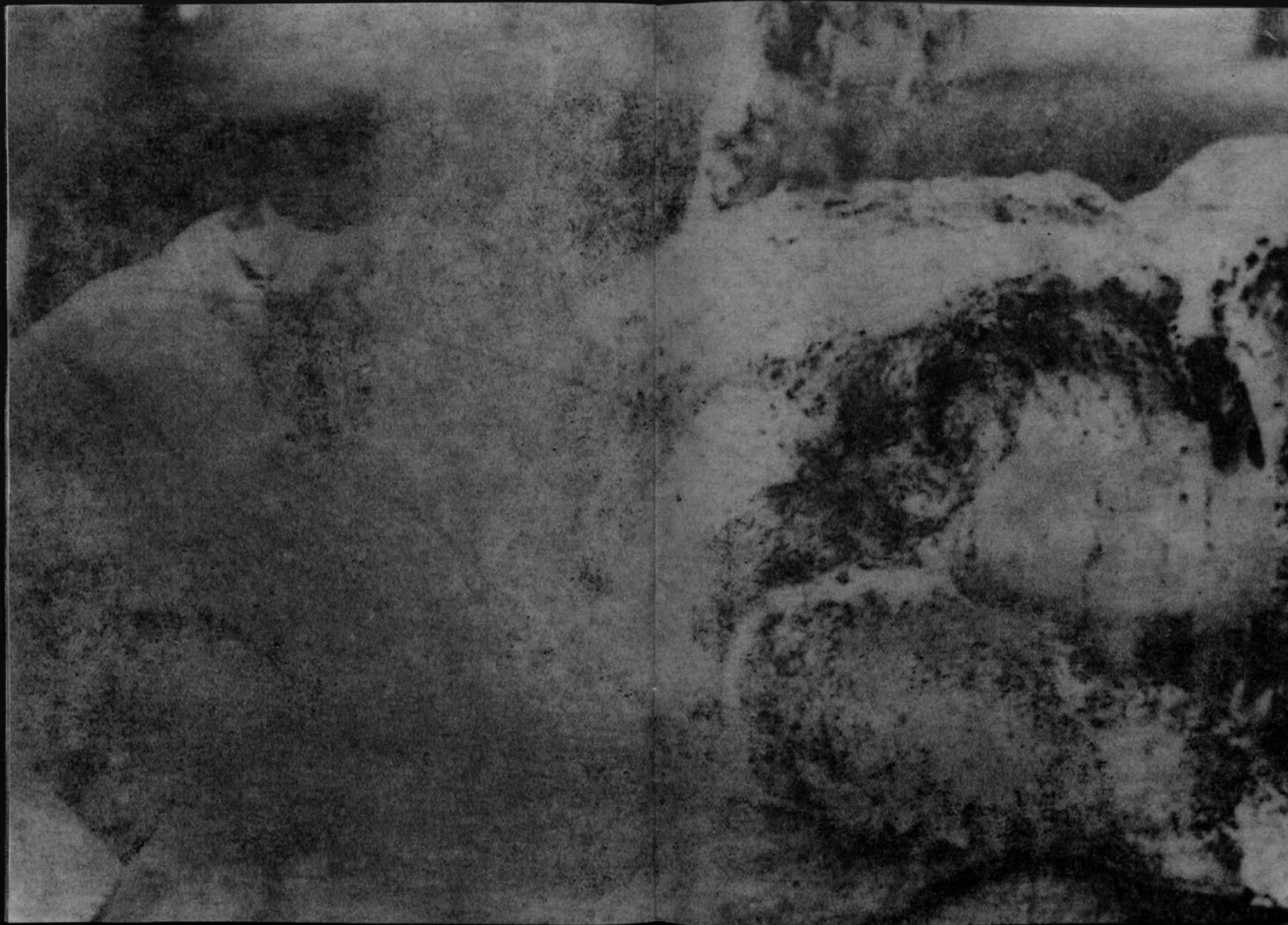


**YOU WANT IT DARKER, 2022**

*Newsprint paper, pigment print, staple binding*

*40 × 28 cm*

*Documentation of zine  
double spread*



**YOU WANT IT DARKER, 2022**

*Newsprint paper, pigment print, staple binding*

*40 × 28 cm*

*Documentation of zine  
double spread*



**Douglas MacArthur, 2022**

*Sandblasted pigment print, alder frame, photo mount*

*23 × 27 cm*

*Installation view*

*"FUTILE"*

*ENTERPRISE, Zurich*

*2022*

The faded portrait of the five-star general of the U.S. armed forces and commander-in-chief during the postwar U.S. occupation of Japan has been sandblasted beyond recognition. The technique recalls the farewell address to the U.S. Congress in 1951 by Douglas MacArthur, during which he quoted from a soldier's folk: "Old soldiers never die, they just fade away." Here, it is now the general himself who is subjected to fading, the technique with which the surface of the image has been treated allowing the violence to become thematic, euphemistically covered over and romanticized in the quote. Thus the work reflects forms of commemoration but also of forgetting.



**Douglas MacArthur, 2022**

*Sandblasted pigment print, alder frame, photo mount*

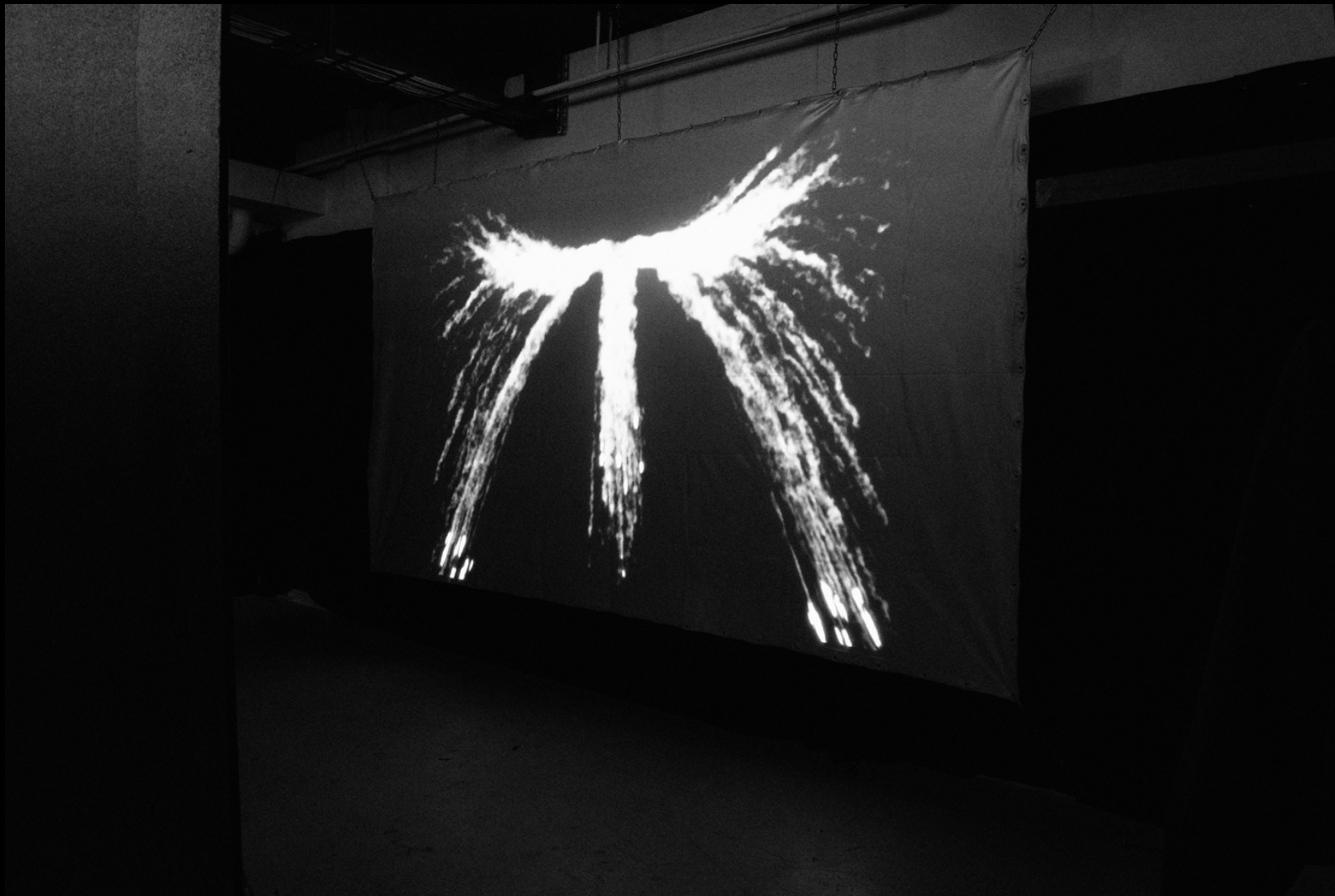
*23 × 27 cm*

*Installation view*

*"FUTILE"*

*ENTERPRISE, Zurich*

*2022*



**Decoy, 2022**

*Rendered video, projector, opera foil, chains*  
400 × 240 cm

<https://vimeo.com/782662968>

*Installation view*

*“FUTILE”*

*ENTERPRISE, Zurich*

*2022*

In slow motion and against a black background, rockets launch into the abyss. Their descent and the accompanying smoke form an ephemeral shape reminiscent of an angel. It is this appearance of lethal force that has earned the military aircraft Hercules AC-130 the nickname “Angel of Death” during World War II. Against this historical setting, the video installation “Decoy” (2022) deals with forms of aestheticizing unimaginable violence and horror. The suffering spread by the military planes remains invisible, referencing the dominant media perspective of war reporting. As a rule, this is done from the distanced perspective of the winners, not from the perspective of the people suffering. For example recall the iconic shot of the mushroom clouds, which is anchored in the collective memory. It is a U.S. military aerial shot from a safe distance, which leaves the horror of the dropping invisible.



**Strangers, 2022**

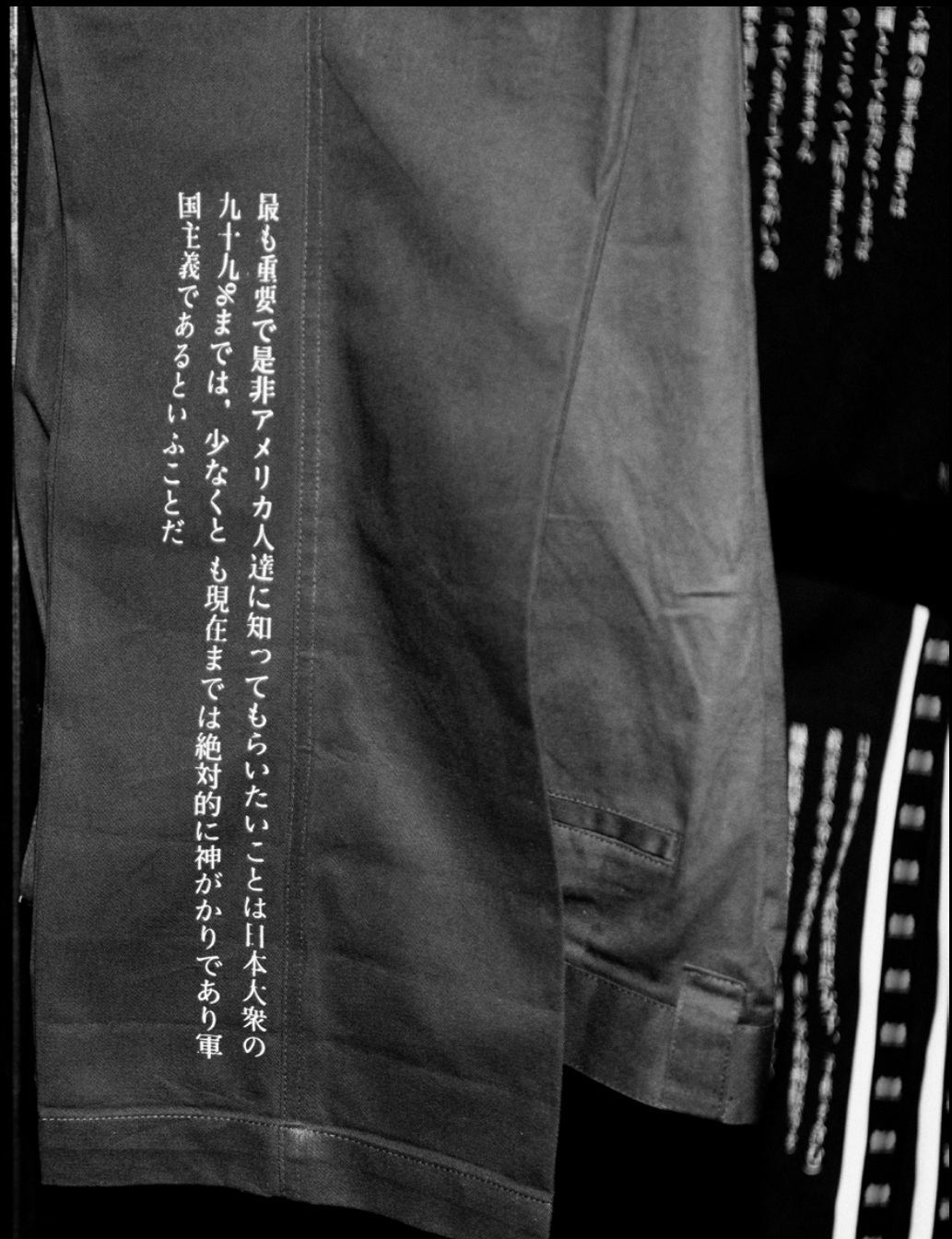
*Silk screen printed uniforms, wood, paint, paracord, metalbraces  
Six sculptures, varying sizes*

*Installation view*

*"FUTILE"*

*ENTERPRISE, Zurich  
2022*

Various items of clothing, including school uniforms and sports jackets, adorn a group of black-painted cross constructions: What the presented clothes have in common is that they were all acquired in Japan and bear witness to the (cultural) influence of the U.S. occupation of the country after World War II. This influence is also reflected in the white imprints, which are letters written by Japanese citizens to Douglas MacArthur in the late 1940s and early 1950s. They express both admiration and undisguised hatred. At the same time, the installation refers to the violent relationship between Japan and the West long before the 20th century. The crosses are reminiscent of the Roman Catholic Church's missionary attempts in the mid-16th century. The brutal missionary period, fueled by the colonial trading interests of Portugal and Spain, lasted about a hundred years until Japan sealed itself off in the beginning of the Edo period in 1639. Thus, "Strangers" reflects the multidimensionality of history across eras, through which aggression is a common thread.



**Strangers, 2022**

*Silk screen printed uniforms, wood, paint, paracord, metalbraces*

*Six sculptures, varying sizes*

*Installation view*

*"FUTILE"*

*ENTERPRISE, Zurich*

*2022*



**For The Love Of Life There Is A Trade Off, 2021**

*Pigment print, chrome frame  
21 pictures, 21 × 21 cm*

*Installation view  
“Preview”*

*Zurich University of the Arts, Zurich  
2021*

“For The Love Of Life There Is A Trade Off” addresses suicide through the motif of the knotted noose as the symbol most strongly associated with it. Inspired by Richard Serra’s video work “Hand Catching Lead” (1968), which repeats the attempt to catch a brick made of lead, the 22 photographs bear witness to the attempt to ‘catch’ the moving noose. In the juxtaposition of the photographs, the rope seems to dance with lighthearted ease, so that the formal insouciance is positioned in contrast to the gravity of the subject and, in many cases, the stifling silence that accompanies it.





**For The Love Of Life There Is A Trade Off, 2021**

*Pigment print, chrome frame  
21 pictures, 21 × 21 cm*

*Installation view  
"Preview"  
Zurich University of the Arts, Zurich  
2021*



**For The Love Of Life There Is A Trade Off, 2021**

*Pigment print, chrome frame  
21 pictures, 21 × 21 cm*

*Installation view  
"Preview"*

*Zurich University of the Arts, Zurich  
2021*