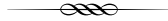


Afterword

After Extinction

Valérie Bienvenue and Nicholas Chare



We Murder to Dissect

Brandon Ballengée's series of artworks 'The Frameworks of Absence' were created using pre-existing illustrations of extinct species.¹ These illustrations, mostly dating from the nineteenth century, have been intentionally marred. The depictions of the animals in them have been cut out, leaving only their silhouettes. Ballengée burned the cut-outs and placed their ashes in glass vials etched with the abbreviation RIP (*Requiescat in pace* or Rest in peace) and the name of the animal whose image has been cremated. He calls the vials funerary urns. Each artwork therefore consists of a despoiled illustration and a cinerary container. The series can be read as a meditation on mourning and loss, as elegiac. This is a common response to extinction, one that has featured in several chapters in this volume. Yet Ballengée destroys not genetic material, not some physical remnant of each species, but a representation of them. He is engaging in acts of iconoclasm, extinguishing *images* of animals, visual remains. The artworks play on a sense of equivalence or substitutability between an animal and their representation.² At some level, despoiling the image, ripping into it, seems to repeat the violence each animal was subjected to. Through 'hurting' the illustrations, Ballengée owns anthropogenic extinctions, replicating them in miniature through practices of obliteration, showing the human hand in them. He uses violence to highlight violence.

Are reactions to the works, be they of anger or sadness or bewilderment or something else, generated by the loss of the animal or the loss of the image? Many of the illustrations that Ballengée has damaged beyond repair are dated. They derive from the history of natural history. Something of the power of ‘The Frameworks of Absence’ therefore stems from it involving acts of vandalism directed towards culturally significant artefacts. The artist’s assault on the archive would not possess the same power if all the images were from twenty-first century publications. A spectator’s distress potentially derives from their knowledge that the illustrations, which possessed historical importance and financial worth, are now ruined. The illustrations he chooses were often produced roughly at the time the depicted species disappeared. The more ancient the extinction, the greater the possible shock at the mutilation Ballengée has subjected the illustration to.³ The excision of a Lesser Antillean macaw (*Ara guadeloupensis*) from a 1660 hand-coloured copper plate engraving, for example, is an act that potentially resonates more strongly than the removal of the Rabbs’ fringe-limbed treefrog from several photographs that were reproduced in 2008 in the *Journal of Herpetology*.⁴ The reaction accorded the images is conceivably bound up more with the age and origin of their material support and less with the species they portray. Ballengée visual attacks are calculated, designed to cause a measured loss. The impact of his slash-and-burns is partly muted by the knowledge that other copies of the images he has used continue to exist. The pictures Ballengée has destroyed are not unique, none of them have become ‘extinct’.⁵

The image of the macaw, titled *RIP Lesser Antillean Macaw: After Matthäus Merian* (1660/2014), features a bird labelled in the illustration as an *Araracanga brasiliensibus*, a Brazilian macaw. The name Lesser Antillean macaw, along with the Latin binomial *Ara guadeloupensis*, was not proposed until 1905 by Austin Clark, long after Merian’s engraving was made and the bird had disappeared. Ballengée is therefore wishing rest and peace to a macaw that, in a sense, did not exist in the seventeenth century.⁶ His decision to adopt Clark’s name also reinforces Western dominance over the nomenclature of extinct species. From Jean-Baptiste du Tertre’s discussion of the use of tailfeathers as decoration by Indigenous peoples in Guadeloupe, it seems probable the bird had cultural significance.⁷ Both Clark’s names, however, derive from the Tupi language. The name *Ara* derives from the Tupi word *ará*, which mimics a macaw’s vocalization.⁸ The name ‘macaw’ may also derive from a Tupi word, *macavvauana*, reputedly the name of a kind of palm tree, the fruit of which is consumed by scarlet macaws (*Ara macao*).⁹ Clark’s names retain traces of Indigenous terminology yet not from the Kalinago (Carib) groups who lived on Guadeloupe when European colonists first settled there. Their name for the bird may have been *kouléheuc*

but records as unclear.¹⁰ As this volume has shown, Indigenous knowledge of more recently extinct species continues to be at risk of disappearing.

'The Frameworks of Absence' works form a predominantly Western vision of natural history. Extinction is figured as loss, as absence. It is also pictured as a modern anthropogenic phenomenon. The nature of the project precludes engaging with previous mass extinctions and background extinctions. As this volume has shown, however, until the Holocene (or the period that many refer to as the Anthropocene) non-anthropogenic extinction was the norm.¹¹ Extinction is a 'deep time' phenomenon that was present aeons prior to the emergence of archaic humans. The portrayal of extinction offered by 'The Frameworks of Absence' elides this reality. More than that, Ballengée's surgical excisions, the neat-edged voids he creates, imply the loss of a species has no fallout and causes no incidental damage to an ecosystem. Rough cuts that mar the surrounds of each image would better reflect the impact that some extinctions (such as those of keystone species) can have on a given environment.¹² Extinction is often a messy process, with multiple knock-on effects.¹³

Frames of Reference

Ballengée's frameworks as 'frames' perform the function of boundary markers or brackets. Erving Goffman discusses how frames organize experience in *Frame Analysis*, noting that they serve to focus attention and define what is key in a given setting. For Ballengée, loss and mourning are placed front and centre. Certain kinds of extinction – amphibian, avian and mammalian – are also privileged. There is considerable emphasis on North American subspecies, with images of Audubon's bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis auduboni*), the California grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos californicus*), the Eastern cougar (*Puma concolor cougar*), the eastern wood bison (*Bison bison pennsylvanicus*) and the southern Rocky Mountain wolf (*Canis lupus youngi*) included. Additionally, some animals seem to require greater mourning than others. There are multiple images, for instance, dedicated to the great auk (*Pinguinus impennis*) and the passenger pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius*), common extinction pin-ups. Ballengée's personal interests as a biologist specializing in frog deformities have also shaped his vision of extinction, with the number of anurans included probably more than if he had been an expert in carcinology or entomology. Hierarchies of visibility of the kind discussed in this volume therefore register in Ballengée's choice of absences, his inclusions and exclusions.

Plants are notable by their non-appearance as explicit subjects in the series. This may be because extinction rates among plants are relatively low

compared to some other kinds of organism. Plant extinction rates, however, vary by region, and are higher in biodiversity hotspots.¹⁴ Ballengée's omission of plants from the current corpus forming 'The Frameworks of Absence' (the work is ongoing) occurs despite the reality that the images he partially destroys are all works on paper and most fibre used in paper pulp derives from trees. Ballengée burns his cut-outs to fuel an ecological message. Meanwhile, forest fires are often being started intentionally to clear land for use in agriculture, causing either total deforestation or significant forest degradation.¹⁵ Conversion of primary or logged forest to plantation crops causes immense loss of biodiversity, and is an extinction driver.¹⁶ This botanic dimension to extinction falls outside Ballengée's frame. As numerous chapters in this volume suggest, plant blindness is an ongoing problem in efforts to address the contemporary extinction crisis.

Cutting out what is the centre of attention in many of the illustrations does encourage spectators to perceive what was previously (in) the background or, at least, tangential, potentially passing unnoticed. In *RIP Lesser Antillean Macaw*, for example, Merian has 'sawn' the branch the bird is perched on to avoid the need to use foreshortening when depicting the tree limb. Often, as with Merian's branch, the putative habitat afforded each animal is minimal, schematic. Occasionally, however, the periphery is of considerable interest, such as in the work *RIP Hare-Indian Dog: After John Woodhouse Audubon*, which portrays the Hare Indian dog (*Canis familiaris lagopus*), also known as the Mackenzie River dog. The canine was used for hunting by the Sahtú or North Slavey (called Hare Indians by settler colonists) people and other First Nations peoples of north-western Canada.¹⁷ Probably a domesticated form of coyote (*Canis latrans*), the Hare Indian dog disappeared sometime after the 1820s.¹⁸ Ballengée's excision of the striking silver-black-striped canine means that the tipis to the left of the illustration gain greater emphasis.¹⁹ One of the tipis has smoke issuing from the flaps at its top, showing it is inhabited.

Usually, natural history illustrations reinforce the idea of *terra nullius*, with animals shown either stark against the snowy paper, or living in an abbreviated setting, a few trees and plants, perhaps some rocks, a land represented as uninhabited by humans. Audubon's hand-coloured lithograph shows an Indigenous presence, one which Ballengée unintentionally brings in from the margins.²⁰ Michelle Fine and Eve Tuck refer to 'the hegemonic voice-over of colonization' that acts to suppress colonization's ongoing reality.²¹ Here that reality is maintained by Ballengée's sidelining of Indigenous epistemologies and animal imageries. 'The Frameworks of Absence' is constructed as if there is only one *natural* history for these extinct animals, absencing Indigenous experiences and perspectives.²² For some Indigenous peoples, extinction conceived as absence is conceptually aberrant. As Katie

Glaskin notes in the context of Aboriginal Australia, ‘the material absence of an entity is not necessarily equated with a corresponding conclusion about its ontological absence’.²³ In Aboriginal cosmologies, the disappearance of a species in embodied form ‘does not indicate a final end’.²⁴

Matters of Testimony

In making the image of the Hare Indian dog, Audubon worked not from life but using a taxidermy mount. His representation therefore figuratively resuscitates the dog, who is portrayed looking out from a rocky promontory, open-mouthed, in a pose that is loose and relaxed yet alert. From the context, it seems the ‘stuffed specimen’ that inspired the drawing was sourced for scientific purposes.²⁵ Audubon’s father, John James Audubon, also worked from a ‘specimen’ to create his depiction of a pair of Great auks.²⁶ ‘Specimens’ are examples of species, a typification comprising the whole or part of an organism, which can be used for scientific study. The word ‘specimen’ enacts distancing, delimiting the animal or other creature as object. Giovanni Aloï describes the ‘specimen’ as transfixed ‘in an atemporal milieu in which any individual history is removed by preparation and decontextualization’.²⁷ Ballengée’s artwork *RIP Endemic Freshwater Mussels of the Americas: After David H. Stansbery* (1971/2015) provides a good example of ‘specimens’ as Aloï describes them. The work features photographs of mollusc shells derived from various natural history collections, including the Henry Moores collection (Ohio State University Museum of Zoology) and the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology. As Ballengée has decided to focus on mussels, he has left intact two photographs of the shell of an extinct species of snail, the catenoid river snail (*Oxytrema catenoides*), that appear as part of the group.²⁸ Each of these ‘specimens’ stands for a unique species of mussel: the shell numbered 1, for example, derives from the sugarspoon mussel, *Dysnomia arcaeformis*; and the shell numbered 3, from the narrow catspaw mussel, *Dysnomia lenior*.²⁹ Ballengée, however, fails to give the individual names for each of the bivalves; cumulatively they are made to exemplify mollusc extinction in general, the singular sacrificed to the broader picture.

Another work that makes clear use of ‘specimens’ is *RIP Nelson’s Rice Rat: After Edward A. Goldman* (1918/2015) which features skulls from various species of *Oryzomys*, semi-aquatic rodents. Ballengée has excised the skulls (numbered 1 and 1a) of the Nelson rice rat (*Oryzomys nelsoni*), which was endemic to Isla María Madre in Mexico, from a plate in Edward Goldman’s *The Rice Rats of North America (Genus Oryzomys)*.³⁰ Four individuals from an already small population were collected over a seven-day

period in May 1897 in damp thickets near springs at the island's summit. The skins and skulls of the rats are retained by the National Museum of Natural History in Washington DC. The image of the skull cut out and burnt by Ballengée was of USNM 89200, an adult male, the holotype. This cranium is described by C. Hart Merriam as part of his identification of the rice rat as a new species.³¹ Merriam's textual sketch of the cranial characteristics is concerned with size and, to a lesser extent, weight: the skull is 'very large' and, when compared to *Oryzomys mexicanus*, 'very much larger and heavier', the interparietal is 'very broad'.³² The repetition of the adverb of degree 'very' works to intensify physical characteristics of the skull and emphasize its significance. As a concern to accurately record morphology shapes the descriptors and modifiers, with attention to scale the overriding concern, the rat remains an abstract entity, big and weighty but also something of a flat character. Artists such as Audubon, with his portrayal of the Hare Indian dog, put metaphorical flesh on the skins and bones of 'specimens', undoing something of natural history's abstracting and objectifying tendencies and offering a more rounded, characterful sense of an animal.

RIP Nelson's Rice Rat: After Edward A. Goldman leaves the skulls of other river rats such as the subspecies *Oryzomys rostratus megadon* visible. These enduring crania give a good indication of what has been cut out from the image, of the physical remains of the Nelson rice rat. This image and others like it therefore show the lie of absence. Extinction leaves material and textual wreckage in its wake. For the Lesser Antillean macaw we have eyewitness accounts and, recently, the discovery of material remains, albeit a single bone – namely, a terminal phalanx – excavated on Marie-Galante, one of the islands that form Guadeloupe.³³ The bone is roughly ten thousand years old, predating human settlement, and provides material evidence of endemic macaws.³⁴ Extinction involves the cessation of living examples of a given species, but organic materials from that species often persist, granting them a substantial afterlife. Eye and ear witness accounts also act as afterimages, holding something of the departed species in the fields of vision and audition. An overemphasis on absence risks sidelining material and lay witnesses to 'disappeared' species. Some of the contributors to this volume have gestured to the power of physical memorials, flesh and/or bone archives, as sites of remembrance and sources of information. These are often used in museum displays that explore forms of extinction, as was the case when 'The Frames of Extinction' was exhibited at the Louisiana Art and Science Museum. A monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) specimen and mounts of a hawksbill sea turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) and a gentoo penguin (*Pygoscelis papua*) were displayed alongside the artworks.

Pictures at an Exhibition

Museum exhibitions frame how any artefacts on display are received, encouraging particular interpretations over others, and are in themselves frames of a kind. As Goffman notes, frames often perform the function of boundary markers or brackets.³⁵ The art gallery and the natural history museum are spaces that bracket off ‘art’ and ‘nature’ respectively from everyday life. ‘The Frameworks of Absence’ was installed at various venues, including The Armory Show in New York (2015), Expo Chicago (2018) (where the Natural Resources Defense Council partnered with the Ronald Feldman Gallery to present the work at Navy Pier’s Festival Hall) and the Louisiana Art and Science Museum (2019). These temporary exhibitions framed how Ballengée’s works would be received and understood, bracketing them as art rather than, for instance, vandalism. He also contributed to the framing of the works, such as choosing how they were to be hung and opting to display them against a red background.

Contemporary art is often displayed in a white cube gallery, a seemingly neutral exhibition space. Thomas McEvilley writes that the roots of the white cube are to be found in ritual spaces that are segregated from the outside world, in tombs and places of worship.³⁶ The white cube aesthetic seeks to ‘bleach out the past’ and sterilize art, purging it of any links with life, transforming it into something transcendental.³⁷ Through insisting on a red background, Ballengée refuses pretensions of neutrality. As the artworks have no backing, the red of the wall is visible through those parts of the works that have been cut out. The resultant sanguine silhouettes suggest violence and cruor.³⁸ Not all the extinct animals that feature in ‘The Frameworks of Absence’ met bloody ends. The gory backdrop therefore contributes to the project’s overgeneralizing tendencies.

One of the potentialities of art that represents animals is to singularize them. The singularizing power of some artistic representations, the capacity to communicate an animal’s individuality, bears on ethical questions about how to portray animals, extinct or otherwise. Such questions inflect many of the preceding chapters in this collection. It is clear that some depictions of extinct species, particularly from prehistory, embody ‘alternative facts’ and bear little relation to contemporary scientific understandings of a creature’s appearance and behaviour. Bad palaeoart of this kind, which often appears on the internet, confuses and misleads. Such objectively inaccurate works ‘distort proportions measurable from fossils, omit integumentary structures documented from the taxa concerned, include blatant anatomical errors . . . or mix geographically and stratigraphically disparate species’.³⁹ This is not to say that good palaeoart simply reflects scientific data. There are always gaps in our understanding of the past and the artist

must speculatively fill these, employing inference and plausible theorizing. Good palaeoart is therefore credible if not truthful. It is a way of visually thinking through possibilities and probabilities linked to the palaeontological record. Mark Witton emphasizes that in such art notions of accuracy need to be nuanced.⁴⁰

Witton, Naish and Conway suggest that, at its best, ‘the relationship between palaeoart and palaeontological science is mutualistic, a genuine fusion of artistry and science where both sets of practitioners are inspired by, and learn from, the other’.⁴¹ Their observation presumes that the categories ‘art’ and ‘science’ are distinct and stable. One of the aims of this volume has been to demonstrate that art and science are not antithetical or oppositional but imbricated, inseparable. There is an artfulness to all scientific inquiry, a creativity and a capacity for imagining, and equally, through its qualities of observation and experimentation, something scientific at the heart of art. In this context, Ballengée, rather than being a scientist who is also a practising artist, is an artist-scientist. The scholars from the arts and the scientists who have contributed to this volume, like Ballengée, all embody an awareness of the value of both these ‘cultures’ of knowing. As the chapters by curators have shown, the museum is frequently the space within which the two ‘cultures’ meet, conjoin.

Museums, with their display cases and their segregated artefacts, can often contribute to the objectification of animals, plants and other organisms.⁴² Images can also objectify. Their potentially objectifying power and their generalizing tendencies raise important ethical questions. Representing non-human animals as if they are objects, for example, encourages viewing them as instruments for human use and pleasure. The reductive focus on form in morphologically motivated depictions of organisms renders a given species into units of data – into colours, shapes, dimensions. ‘The Frameworks of Absence’ can be read as an exercise in morphology in the negative; form is still privileged but by its absence.

From the General to the Particular

Steve Baker notes that pictures which utilize animals as symbols are inevitably anthropomorphic, and transform them into meaning-making machines serving human ends.⁴³ Rosi Braidotti has urged a move beyond human exploitation of animals for metaphoric ends and the cultivation instead of a bioegalitarianism, a recognition ‘that we humans and animals are in this together’.⁴⁴ Portrayals of extinct species are, perhaps, particularly prone to being made into vehicles for political messages. The politicization of a species, their being co-opted to stand as prompts for environmental

awareness and conservation, comes at the expense of their singularity. Josephine Donovan views singularizing as crucial to fostering compassion towards animals.⁴⁵ Poster species such as the Yangtze River dolphin (*Lipotes vexillifer*), the thylacine (*Thylacinus cynocephalus*) and the passenger pigeon can stand as powerful warnings against inaction regarding the ongoing extinction crisis. As symbols of loss, however, they are evacuated of their particular attributes. Ballengée's artworks in 'The Frameworks of Absence' literalize this voidance. The issue of how images of extinct species are put to work (and the implications of this signifying labour for the ways they are perceived and understood) are themes that unify many of the volume's chapters.

As well as concerns regarding how extinct species are represented, ethical questions arise regarding how representations of extinct species should be received and read. Griselda Pollock has noted the importance of close reading (an imperilled skill as the internet shifts reading habits towards scanning, skimming, speeding and swiping) for appreciating the particularity of a given artwork.⁴⁶ Pollock advocates close reading as a means to attend to images as 'singular sites of subjectivity-inflected production of meaning'.⁴⁷ She notes of her own reading of an artwork that it 'involves a careful attuning to its otherness, as well as a subtle, always cautious and avowed borrowing from my own experience that might register or resonate with the affective tone, and note the singular turns of a work'.⁴⁸ Ballengée's individual readings of the corpus that makes up his 'The Frameworks of Absence' do not seem of this order. All the artworks are treated as substitutable: 'This is a picture of a species that once was'. There are, however, qualitative differences, for example, between a painting by Randy Fehr of the eastern cougar (*Puma concolor couguar*) used as a cover image for the December 1993 issue of *Fur-Fish-Game* and a lithograph by John Gerard Keulemans of a slender-billed grackle (*Quiscalus palustris*) used in the avian science journal *The Ibis*.

The finely detailed image of the cougar by Fehr, entitled 'Keeper of the Creek' and with the big cat identified by the artist simply as a 'Cougar/Mountain Lion', may have been intended as a homage to the animal but in the context of the magazine for 'practical outdoorsmen', which has a regular feature on 'predator hunting', the large felid becomes a feared enemy, a symbol of wilderness that is untamed and unwelcoming.⁴⁹ The cougar, portrayed on the snow-covered bank of a shallow stream, has seemingly been interrupted while fishing (a salmon or similar fish is visible in the foreground, beneath the water's surface).⁵⁰ Casting the cat as a purposive freshwater fisher potentially encourages the magazine reader to identify with the predator, given that many hunters are also anglers. The main message, however, as communicated by the bared teeth, seems to be that

cougars are aggressive and dangerous. Attributing greater hostility to the cougar enhances the status of a hunter who successfully kills one, as the sense of risk involved is increased. In the context of its appearance in *Fur-Fish-Game*, the image can be read as a stimulus to cougar trophy hunting.⁵¹ Keulemans's grackle is identified as *Quiscalus tenuirostris* by Philip Sclater, the author of the article that the plate accompanies. He states: 'I have little doubt that this is the true *Q. palustris* of Swainson; but it will only create more confusion to supersede the very appropriate name *tenuirostris* given by the same author'.⁵² Keulemans depicts a male and female grackle perched on branches. He used 'specimens' or study skins from Sclater's collection.⁵³ Like Audubon with the Hare Indian dog, Keulemans therefore revives dead animals. His success in such endeavours is evinced by claims that each of his artworks 'hums with life'.⁵⁴ Keulemans's birds in *The Ibis* are designed to illustrate Sclater's Latin descriptions, although the ornithologist's careful detailing of the female's colouration seems more muted than the artist's bright yellow-breasted representation. This is a scientific image, whereas Fehr's is a work of drama, consciously seeking to generate an atmosphere, one of fear and awe.

Ballengée encourages seeing both images as on a continuum, their singularity ceded to a general argument about loss. Similarly *RIP California Grizzly Bear: After Felix Octavius Carr Darley* (1888/2015) is presented as of the same order as *RIP Great Auk: After Henry Pawson and Joseph Brailsford* (1896/2014). Darley's drawing, which was made in 1887 and etched by Stephen James Ferris in 1888, is titled *After a Good Day's Sport* and shows a man with a rifle resting against the trunk of a tree, contemplating the corpses of three bears (an adult and two cubs) he has shot. Pawson and Brailsford produced a lithograph of an auk egg (Plate 28) for Henry Seebohm's posthumously published *Coloured Figures of the Eggs of British Birds*. The eggs are linked with national interests, as the great auk is granted 'British citizenship' and because the image of the egg is home grown. In the book's preface, Richard Bowdler Sharpe states with satisfaction that 'while many recent Ornithological illustrations have avowedly been "made in Germany", in this instance all the work in connection with the drawing of the eggs, the lithographing of the plates, the printing of the letterpress and the binding of the volume has been done in Sheffield'.⁵⁵ The motivations behind the images of the bears and the egg are markedly different; one celebrates the outdoorsman, the other is an expression of avian national pride. For Ballengée, they are both ultimately concerned with absence.

Despite the etched-glass urns and ashes, despite the ritual of mourning that Ballengée urges enacting, his works overwhelmingly bind extinction to melancholia. Sigmund Freud differentiates mourning from melancholia,

with the latter characterized as a failure of perception – the melancholic ‘cannot see clearly’ (*nicht deutlich erkennen*) what it is that they have lost.⁵⁶ In melancholia, that one has lost is recognized, but not what it is that one has lost. Ballengée’s artworks, which only allow loss to be known in outline, compellingly figure melancholy. As Ursula Heise notes, melancholy possesses a politically mobilizing power yet it also has its drawbacks. Nostalgic and pessimistic narratives can put off potential supporters of conservation initiatives. Because of this, the challenge Heise identifies for conservationists is to ‘enable the imagination not so much of the end of species as of their future’.⁵⁷ Drawing attention to extinction can raise awareness but it is also backward looking and risks generating a sense of hopelessness.⁵⁸

Afterimages

All the artworks that form ‘The Frameworks of Absence’ acknowledge the original creator of the image by way of their name, preceded by the preposition ‘After’. This is the case, for instance, with *RIP Maryland Darter: After Aleta Pahl* (1983/2014). The preposition indicates both that the work was made at a later time than Pahl’s and that the work is inspired by hers.⁵⁹ The linear temporality of the works positions extinction as a thing of the past (every representation has been chosen so its initial production roughly coincides with when the species it portrays died out), even as a contemporary take is provided on each image. This linear conception of temporality is not universally held. Some Indigenous understandings of temporality are ‘intergenerational and fold back on themselves’.⁶⁰ Non-linear temporalities can lead ‘present actions and interactions’ to be viewed as ‘taking place in a productive dialogue with ancestral pasts to collaboratively establish futures’.⁶¹ Such a concept of time renders the idea of extinction as having an ‘after’ that is demarcated as strictly separate and set apart from the present questionable; the past is in the present. Our use of the term ‘afterimages’ in this volume has sought to capture something of this temporal complexity, conceiving extinction as a phenomenon that traverses past and present, undoing any simple partition of the two. This is the case not just for recent extinctions but also ancient ones. Fossil fuels, the use of which contributes to global warming and climate change, derive from extinct organisms. Plastics derived from fossil fuels pollute the environment and can be fatal to animals.⁶² Ancient extinctions therefore act upon the present.

Temporal complexity informs artworks by the Tlingit and Unanga̓x artist Nicholas Galanin. His work *Inert* (2009) is composed of a wolf taxidermy mount and a wolf rug which are joined together to appear like a single animal. The *gooch* (wolf) is important to Tlinglit storytelling. Simi-

larly, in Unangaꝯ culture, the *aliꝯngiꝯ* (wolf) has great significance.⁶³ *Inert* shares similarities with the works in ‘The Frameworks of Absence’ in that it employs pre-existing materials. Galanin’s piece, however, succeeds in being simultaneously backward and forward looking. The wolf can be read as transforming into a rug, yielding to the floor, or as rising up, refusing to be walked all over, inviting respect. Held in suspense between states, either reading is possible, or both can be refused. The wolf is neither a trophy nor at liberty, neither prostrate nor upright. Half-rug, half-animal, *Inert* presents the viewer with a wolf suspended between states and times. A beholder can either embrace the nascent wolf subject, a recognition that manifests care and compassion, or not care less, and see only the ‘harvested’ pelt, the spreadeagled decoration.

Another of Galanin’s works that employs taxidermy is *We Dreamt Deaf* (2017), featuring a polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*) stilled in a state similar to *Inert*: ‘fixed in the struggle to survive an unsustainable condition’.⁶⁴ The bear was shot by a White hunter as a trophy; he came to Shishmaref in Alaska to ‘bag’ a bear and then left. He had no connection to the locale. Galanin has described his artistic practice as one that is rooted in connection to land and that pursues freedom and vision for the present and the future.⁶⁵ He invites reflection on how people relate to place, to the environment in which they live and the locations they visit. Galanin explains that the title *We Dreamt Deaf* refers to our implication ‘in the anthropocentric industrial dream that renders us deaf to our impact on all of our relatives (human and non-human)’. He goes on to emphasize that humans are also animals, but ones that have forgotten their place in the world. We no longer *listen* to the land of which we are a part. Galanin consciously exploits the vulnerable polar bear’s iconic status to foreground the ways animals and cultures have been ‘decimated through colonial corporate enterprises focused on extraction from land, and the development of capital without care for consequences’. The bear becoming rug is the continuity of this decimation (a decimation that includes many species extinctions), while the rug becoming bear is its refusal.

In *Frame Analysis*, Goffman notes of the ‘wooden frame of a picture’ that it is ‘presumably neither part of the content of [the] activity proper [that is art] nor part of the world outside the activity but rather both inside and outside’.⁶⁶ Jacques Derrida similarly calls attention to the undecidability of both material and conceptual frames.⁶⁷ In such understandings, the frame of an artwork resists being framed as either ‘art’ or ‘life’. The pictures that feature in Ballengée’s ‘The Frameworks of Absence’ are all carefully framed, literally and figuratively. Galanin’s *We Dreamt Deaf* is also ‘framed’, elevated from the floor by a low white plinth, a metaphorical Arctic region, yet the nature of the work makes it more resistant to bracketing. Our aim

in this volume has been to similarly create a space which opens up what representations of extinction might be and might do. The diverse images explored in the volume demonstrate that extinction is not a singular event, one assimilable to a sole frame of reference, but a multiplicity of histories and understandings, some focused on finality, others more equivocal. These differing forms of afterimage each contribute something important to our efforts to feel and think extinction.

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Notes

1. The series is sometimes simply called ‘Frameworks of Absence’ but, following Ballengée, we refer to it as ‘The Frameworks of Absence’. <http://brandonballengee.com/the-frameworks-of-absence/> (last accessed 9 June 2021). Although our engagement with the project here is sometimes critical, something of the strength and depth of Ballengée’s endeavour is revealed in the many reflections that it has prompted in us.
2. To resist objectifying animals, we refer to them as he, she or they (depending on whether their gender is known) rather than ‘it’.
3. A 1590 copper engraving identified by Ballengée as the North Atlantic Grey Whale (*Eschrichtius robustus*) seems to be the oldest illustration used. This picture is sourced from Volume IV of Joachim Camerarius’s *Symbolorum emblematum centuriae tres*.
4. The journal article is readily accessible whereas the engraving by the Swiss illustrator Matthäus Merian the Elder was sourced from Book 6 of John Jonston’s *Historiae naturalis*. A second edition of the *Historiae naturalis* sold at auction for 8,125 USD in 2016. See <http://www.bonhams.com/auctions/23255/lot/83/> (last accessed 5 June 2021). Whether the bird that Ballengée has excised is a Lesser Antillean macaw is highly debatable. The bird is identified as *Araracanga brasiliensibus* in the illustration and although described as predominantly coloured an elegant red (*elegantibus rubris*),

Jonston mentions azure (*coeruleus* [coeruleus]) and brown back and tail plumage. The Latin name also links the bird to Brazil. All translations are our own unless otherwise stated. We are grateful to Kristine Tanton for assisting us in translating Jonston's Latin text. See Jonston, *Historiae naturalis*, 201. The section that discusses the macaw in *Historiae naturalis* derives substantially from information sourced from Georg Marcgraf, a naturalist who resided in Brazil. He published *Historia naturalis brasiliae* in 1648 which features an illustration of an *Araracanga brasiliensis* (206). This looks like a blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara araruna*) to us. The Lesser Antillean macaw is closer to the scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*), differing in that the former had red tailfeathers. Du Tertre describes the bird from Guadeloupe, for instance, as having a tail that was entirely red. See Du Tertre, *Histoire generale des isles de S. Christophe*, 295. *Araracanga brasiliensis* would subsequently be identified as the *ara rouge* or scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*) by Buffon in his *Histoire naturelle des oiseaux*, which mentions the Antilles. Buffon questions whether there are a number of distinct species across the Caribbean and neighbouring regions or simply several varieties of a single species (239–40). Rochefort suggests in *Histoire naturelle et morale* that the plumage colouring varied and was distinct for each island of the Antilles (154).

5. Some of the lithographs used were hand-coloured and therefore likely differed across each volume of a given publication.
6. Ballengée manifests a tendency to gloss over taxonomic uncertainties, referring with conviction to some depictions as particular species, when things, at least to us, do not appear so clear-cut. He may believe that, as the likeness of the species or subspecies is to be cremated, occasional confusions do not matter. The beholder of each work is meant to mourn the name, not the image.
7. Du Tertre, *Histoire generale des isles de S. Christophe*, 296.
8. The word 'ara' (or the plural 'arras') was also commonly used in European works of natural history to describe macaws in the seventeenth century.
9. The Tupi-Guarani people, the Araweté, use macaw feathers to make arrows and for decoration. Scarlet and blue-throated macaws (*Ara glaucogularis*) are sometimes raised as pets in Araweté villages. See Viveiros de Castro, *From the Enemy's Point of View*, 42.
10. In his Carib vocabulary in *Histoire naturelle et morale des îles Antilles de l'Amérique*, Rochefort gives the name *Kouléhuec* for parrot and *Tônoulou* for bird (525). Although Rochefort divides parrots into three types based on their size, referring only to *per-roquets* (173) and not *arras* as *Kouléhuec*, the Carib term may have encompassed the triumvirate without distinction. The term *guacamayo* is sometimes suggested as the Indigenous name for the Lesser Antillean macaw but this is a Taíno word that was used by Christopher Columbus's interpreters to refer to the macaw when he landed on the island. The Spaniards were unable to speak directly to the Caribs. See the entry for *Guacamayo* in Friederici, *Amerikanistisches Wörterbuch*, 267–68. Scientists are increasingly acknowledging the need to engage in retrospective name changes that recognize longstanding Indigenous names for species. See Gillman and Wright, 'Restoring Indigenous Names'.
11. The term Anthropocene fosters a sense of universal human culpability for climate change and, for this reason, we do not adopt it here. In reality, colonialism and the petrochemical industry precipitated climate change. For a useful discussion of the Anthropocene as a term that rightly foregrounds how it violently erases difference, see Davis and Todd, 'On the Importance of a Date'. Kyle Whyte suggests climate change should be understood as intensified colonialism. See Whyte, 'Indigenous Climate Change Studied'.
12. For an analysis of the effect of non-random extinctions on two biosystems (a marine one and a terrestrial one), see Raffaelli, 'How Extinction Patterns Affect Ecosystems'.

13. Van Dooren emphasizes the entanglement of species, their co-shaping coexistence. Extinction forms a loose thread that unravels part of this patchwork of interdependence. See Van Dooren, *Flight Ways*, 42.
14. See Le Roux et al., 'Recent Anthropogenic Plant Extinctions'.
15. See McFarland, *Conservation of Tropical Rainforests*, 36–38.
16. For an analysis of this phenomenon in a South East Asian context, see Wilcove et al., 'Navjot's Nightmare Revisited'. For a discussion of how forest burning can contribute to the reduction of tree diversity, see Tabarelli, Cardoso da Silva and Gascon, 'Forest Fragmentation'.
17. Richardson states that the dog was used 'solely in the chase'. See Richardson, 'Canis f. var. B. Lagopus. *Hare Indian Dog*', 78.
18. Woodhouse, 'The North American Jackal', 148.
19. Tipis are also present in the background of a copper-plate etching of a pair of the dogs created by Thomas Landseer for John Richardson's collaborative project, *Fauna Boreali-Americana*. Landseer's depiction also features two First Nations people with rifles beside the tipis. This portrayal therefore also shows the indirect cause of the dog's extinction: the introduction of rifles rendered the hunting dogs obsolete.
20. Merian's lopped branch also indexes human inhabitants albeit in a more ambiguous way.
21. Tuck and Fine, 'Inner Angles', 147.
22. If Ballengée burnt Indigenous portrayals of extinct species, this would, obviously, raise considerable ethical issues. There is, however, clear scope for dialogue and strategic collaboration with Indigenous stakeholders as a means to acknowledge alternative perspectives and understandings of nature.
23. Glaskin, 'Extinction, Inscription and the Dreaming', 11.
24. *Ibid.*, 15.
25. Audubon and Bachman, *The Viviparous Quadrupeds*, 155.
26. Dry specimens of birds are usually referred to as 'study skins'.
27. Aloï, *Speculative Taxidermy*, 73.
28. Ballengée sourced the images from Stansbery's 'Rare and Endangered Freshwater Mollusks in the United States'.
29. *Epioblasma arcaiformis* and *Dysnomia arcaiformis* are taken to be synonymous.
30. Goldman, *The Rice Rats of North America*.
31. Merriam, 'Oryzomys nelsoni', 15.
32. *Ibid.*
33. An ulna excavated on the same island and previously attributed to a macaw is now thought to belong to the extinct parrot the Guadeloupe amazon (*Amazona violacea*).
34. Gala and Lenoble, 'Evidence of the Former Existence of an Endemic Macaw'.
35. Goffman, *Frame Analysis*, 251.
36. McEvelley, 'Introduction', 8.
37. *Ibid.*, 11.
38. Boettger notes the importance of the red walls to the tenor of the work. See Boettger, 'Ways of Saying', 259.
39. Witton, Naish and Conway, 'State of the Palaeoart', 3.
40. Witton, *Palaeoartist's Handbook*.
41. Witton, Naish and Conway, 'State of the Palaeoart', 4.
42. For an analysis of the isolation of objects as a stimulus to visitor interest, see Melton, *Problems of Installation in Museums of Art*, 257–60.
43. Baker, *The Postmodern Animal*, 82.
44. Braidotti, 'Animals, Anomalies and Inorganic Others', 528.

45. Donovan, *The Aesthetics of Care*.
46. For an extended analysis of online reading habits, see Herath, 'How Do We Read Online?'
47. Pollock, 'To Play Many Parts', 65. Donovan's call for 'attentiveness' in *The Aesthetics of Care* might also be interpreted as an invitation to close read.
48. Ibid.
49. The artwork is reproduced (currently in reverse to how the image appears on the magazine cover) here: <http://www.artcountrycanada.com/images/fehr-randy-keeper-of-the-creek.jpg> (last accessed 9 June 2021).
50. Although not a common component of their diet, there are records of cougars consuming fish. The remains of a carp have been found in cougar scat but whether the fish was scavenged or self-caught is unknown. See McClinton, McClinton and Guzman, 'Utilization of Fish'.
51. Hunting cougars as trophies is thought to exacerbate human-cougar conflict. See Teichman, Cristescu and Darimont, 'Hunting as a Management Tool?'
52. Sclater, 'A Review of the Species of the Family *Icteridae*', 158.
53. Ibid.
54. Holmes, 'Exhibition', 1143.
55. Bowdler Sharpe, 'Preface', iii.
56. Freud, 'Trauer und Melancolie', 290.
57. Heise, *Imagining Extinction*, 50.
58. In the 'Introduction' to the edited volume *After Extinction*, Richard Grusin suggests it is possible to view extinction not simply as causing the end of life but as generative of life (ix). In the case of preceding mass extinctions or background extinctions this seems a reasonable assertion. In the case of anthropogenic extinctions, however, some of which involved deliberate efforts at extirpation, it appears perverse.
59. Similarly, the 1888 etching of *After a Good Day's Sport*, which inspired *RIP California Grizzly Bear: After Felix Octavius Carr Darley*, states that it is 'After drawing by F.O.C. Darley'. In this case, Ballengée's work should more accurately be titled '*After Stephen J. Ferris After Felix Octavius Carr Darley*'. Although omitting Ferris's role from the title, Ballengée does include the information that he is the maker of the etching as part of the work. 'After' can also mean 'in pursuit of' and indicate efforts to catch someone or something. Given the creative violence underpinning 'The Frameworks of Absence' it is also possible to hear this sense of the term in Bellangée's titles.
60. Randazzo and Richter, 'The Politics of the Anthropocene', 10.
61. Ibid., 9–10.
62. Virgin plastic is still used in much manufacturing, with recycling of plastics, often an expensive process, being at disappointingly low levels. The negative impact of plastic on the environment has been given considerable visibility in recent years. In a segment of Episode 7 of *Blue Planet II* (2017), Lucy Quinn, a seabird ecologist working for the British Antarctic Survey, describes the varied plastics found in albatross chick nests on Bird Island in South Georgia; this continues to garner attention. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I4QNolP7Khc&t=30s> (last accessed 11 June 2021).
63. Wolf is given the alternative spelling of *aliixviix* in Black, 'World of the Aleuts', 129.
64. These words are Galanin's, sourced from an interview with Kathleen Wong on behalf of the Honolulu Museum of Art. blog.honoluluacademy.org/nicholas-galanin-the-polar-bear-is-an-iconic-symbol-of-the-struggle-for-survival-of-animals-and-cultures/ (last accessed 10 June 2021). Carefully crafted, unsettling artworks such as *Inert* and *We Dreamt Deaf*, which are designed to be exhibited in museum spaces, embody a decolonizing impulse that refuses to be reduced to metaphor. The artworks are in-

tended to agitate and act upon the beholder, rather than simply aesthetically please. For a key examination of the importance of not reducing decolonization to a metaphor, see Tuck and Yang, 'Decolonization is Not a Metaphor'. When displayed in a museum context, Galanin's works that employ taxidermy also connote natural history discourse. Their unnatural natures, however, unnerve. They have none of the neutrality associated with science, Dolly Jørgensen has recently emphasized how museums can unite science and affect in this way. See Jørgensen, *Recovering Lost Species in the Modern Age*, 123.

65. http://docs.google.com/document/d/1c7DB1fFxsrjGPA4x41xH5y_lzWwVYVeQ_2D_hoGzGtpY/edit?resourcekey=0-vU5WOau6AxBscHityuKg6g&resourcekey=0-vU5WOau6AxBscHityuKg6g (last accessed 10 June 2021).
66. Goffman, *Frame Analysis*, 252.
67. Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*. For a discussion of aspects of Derrida's vision of animal-human relations, see Bienvenue and Chare, 'The Animal Nude'.

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