

—In the recollection of memories, emotions are redistributed and neural pathways fire with electrical signals.

The living archives (held by mega corporations extracting our data) remain in stasis after we pass into the other world.

A facebook notification pops up - “who do you want to manage your profile after you're dead? Nominate a friend to hold the space where you projected your sense of self onto the interface between the digital and physical world.”

Let them gather in that space, to celebrate and remember you.

Click the link to leave flowers.

—This is a curatorial text about *Ghost Hiikoi 2*, a solo exhibition from ilish thomas. An audio-visual installation, a sensitive and loving embrace of two friends separated by two worlds, a space where dreaming allows grief to move in our bodies.

— Working with a livestreamed video Zoë Angus posted to instagram during the 2020 COVID-19 lockdown, ilish has blurred the lines between the living and the dead. During Zoë Angus' government mandated walk, they filmed themselves journeying around Ōtepoti's back streets, telling local ghost stories as they sought to find a mysterious abandoned phone box.

Every so often, you can hear ilish's responses echoing after their words. The sound of their interaction collapses time and space. No longer separated by six years, the two friends occupy the same space within the artwork.

We, the viewers, are implicated by hearing and seeing their interactions. We join the conversation and time folds in on itself again.

Like a cosy blackhole, *Ghost Hiikoi 2* distorts all compass points and timelines, leaving us in a dreamspace.

—Glimmers, moments, lush memories, dreams, unconscious bias, smokescreens, the fragmented, the pause, the person, the personhood and the projection.

The phonebox mystery. A search with google maps screenshots and Instagram replies for guidance. Getting lost because the replies are too good. Telling everyone “fuck you” and hearing “but i love you!” in response.

—Phantasmagoria is a kind of horror theatre dating back to the late 1700s. Projection (from technologies like magic lanterns), surround sound and stage effects created an opportunity for enterprising conmen and clergy to terrorize and enthrall audiences with demons and ghosts.

—You need to search for the tohu in the work yourself. I'm sorry, I can't help much. Maybe take what resonates and leave what doesn't.

—Swapna is the sanskrit word for dream. It is a particular dreamstate, where the soul journeys out from the body into the cosmos. The signs in this state of dreaming are indicative of many things, good omens, bad omens or karma which needs to be addressed from this life or previous ones.

—The screen is suspended right above you - a ghost talking about ghost stories projected from above.

In the making of a soft box within a white cube, ilish has built the structure for the audio-visual artwork to function as an entry portal to the dream-world. The space creates a feeling of sleepy respite to work through our collective grief.

After all, don't we all know people who have left far too soon.

# GHOST HIIKOI 2

ilish thomas



“I love you neither with my heart

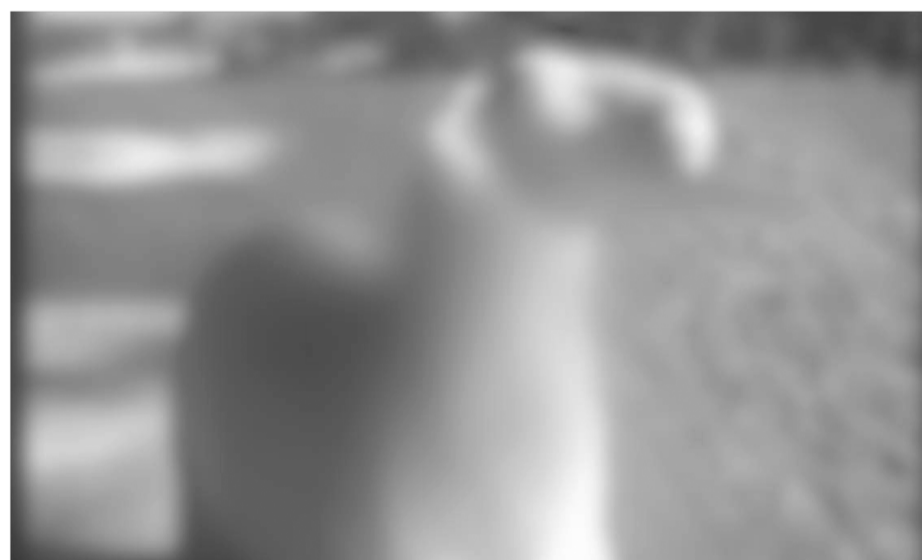
nor with my mind.

My heart might stop

my mind can forget.

I love you with  
my soul because  
my soul never stops  
or forgets.”

- Rumi



ilish

is an multidisciplinary artist whose practice explores the complexity of the mixed indigi & South Asian diasporic identity through themes of whakapapa, memory, grief, loss, and belonging - both personal and collective. Working across textiles, analogue and digital video, audio, and other archival strategies, they seek to engage modes of storytelling and oral histories as tools for cultural navigation and mediation. Central to her work is a focus on ‘in-betweenness,’ and of dreaming new political imaginaries.

ilish would like to thank: Zoë Angus Tahere-Hayes

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