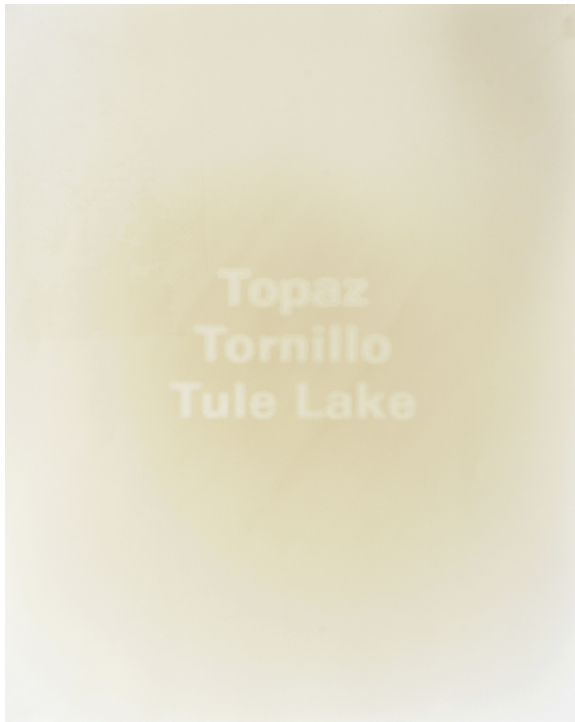


CRITIC'S PICKS



Carrie Yamaoka, *Archipelagoes* (2019) panel 15A, archival pigment print, 20 x 16".

NEW YORK

Carrie Yamaoka

ULTERIOR GALLERY

172 Attorney St

September 15–October 20, 2019

Carrie Yamaoka makes subtle, chancy works about the dead ends of depiction. For this show, the artist, who's long operated at the junction of photography, sculpture, and painting, digitally transferred a four-year cycle of eighteen photograms begun in 1991—the same year she cofounded the feminist collective fierce pussy with Nancy Brooks Brody, Zoe Leonard, and Joy Episalla. Pinned side by side across the gallery walls and titled *Archipelagoes* (2019), the twenty-three achromatic, malformed reproductions (five of which were produced this year) array an alphabet of captivity: Yamaoka

impressed most prints with the names of United States carceral sites, from Angel Island—a center in the San Francisco Bay that detained and processed Asian immigrants following the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882—to Val Verde, a private prison in Texas that is currently contracted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Tule Lake, an internment camp for Japanese Americans during World War II, appears above Tornillo, a sprawling tent city near the US-Mexico border that caged thousands of migrant children last year.

Over time, Yamaoka's photograms have warped and faded, their defects pickled by the digital facsimiles. *Archipelagoes*' overlaid text includes both half-legible words and letters, for this alphabet is deliberately incomplete—a language we continue to hazard. A white *O* floats in grayness, like light at the end of a tunnel, or an unblinking eye. If the American landscape is Yamaoka's subject, her durational process suggests that its tattered memory is her true focus: what remains, what doesn't. The Ulterior show, which runs concurrently with a retrospective of the artist's work at Seattle's Henry Art Gallery, is called "Panorama," as though Yamaoka sought to pit her stealthy pictures against traditional landscape photography, to stress their material and technical restrictions. Note also that Angel Island, whose station once crowded numberless refugees under appalling conditions, is now a national park best known for its 360-degree view of the San Francisco skyline. They say it is beautiful.

— Zack Hatfield