

## **Deep-time moles: art and archiving for an uncertain radiological future**

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This paper will present Deep Field [UnclearZine], a 2016 art-science project conducted at Mol and Dessel, two neighbouring rural villages co-existing with sites for planned geological nuclear-waste disposal in eastern Belgium. Dave Griffiths produced a microfiche publication that probes and narrates the scientific testing and politics of decision-making surrounding controversial ONDRAF-NIRAS (Belgian National Agency for Radioactive Waste and Enriched Fissile Materials) projects - at CatA, a tumulus for encasing low-level waste, and HADES, a lab investigating the feasibility and safety-case for deep-time geo-burial of high-level waste in clay strata.

Griffiths' field work used qualitative and experiential methods such as ethnographic interviews with state scientists and independent monitoring groups, photographic derive, and sound recording, to sense a wider Anthropogenic narrative of energy production, mineral extraction and terrorist threat. Data were then remixed through narrative responses by scientist-poet Dr Sam Illingworth (Manchester Metropolitan University) and DIY-comix artist Matt Girling. Through experimenting with archaic analogue film technology, Griffiths collaged and miniaturised content to produce an edition of microfiches that have been distributed to zine libraries internationally. This subcultural format attempts to translate the past, present and future history of the repositories as folkloric sites of conflict, complexity and unknowing, for the benefit of a far-future readership.

The paper will discuss the contemporary context of epistemological uncertainty around the survival and reception of crucial nuclear-security information in the face of inevitable material, linguistic and political ruination. We suggest that place-markers, as monumental semiotic warnings to the future, along with digital archives, might also be augmented by decentralised analogue fragments that promote ongoing memorialisation of nuclear-heritage sites through intergenerational storytelling and re-archiving. The gesture of microfiche proposes an indeterminate, spectral archive for future citizens, that could be re-translated and reproduced many times through deep-time subject to a decision: to remember, or to delete?

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