

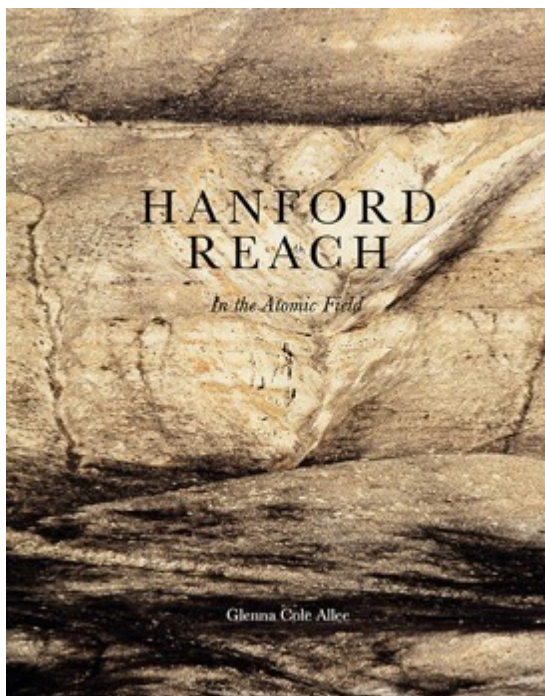
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Daylight

HANFORD REACH:
In the Atomic Field
PHOTOGRAPHS BY GLENNA COLE ALLEE

Essay by Mark Auslander, Essay and Interviews by Glenna Cole Allee

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"To traverse the Hanford Reach through Glenna Cole Allee's remarkable photography is to participate in a kind of time travel, suspended between sorrow and prophecy, longing and hope. The longest free-flowing stretch of the Columbia River within the United States transports us into other eras, from the distant past to the unfathomable future."—Mark Auslander

In *Hanford Reach: In the Atomic Field* (Daylight Books, November 30, 2021), interdisciplinary artist Glenna Cole Allee explores the resonances of the Hanford nuclear reservation upon people and landscapes, past and future. The book includes a series of fifty photographs, and excerpts from an archive of twenty-two original oral histories recorded with residents of communities within the long temporal and geographic shadow of this nuclear territory.

Hanford created plutonium for the Trinity test and for the Fat Man bomb dropped upon Nagasaki on August 9, 1945, and over four decades created two-thirds of the plutonium in the US nuclear arsenal. Today, the vast region encompasses a decommissioned nuclear reactor reimagined as a museum; multiple nuclear reactors and processing plants in various stages of demolition, entombment, preservation, and active production; abandoned pioneer townships and orchards; and Native American sacred ancestral grounds. The part of this terrain called Hanford Reach was closed to public access as a nuclear buffer zone for four decades, then reopened as a national monument and wildlife refuge, in the year 2000.



White Bluffs Triptych

"I wanted to understand how the nuclear zone is perceived in the farmlands and cities at close range within the site's radius," Allee writes in her essay included in the book. "There was a range of voices not centered in the historic record, a field of the uncounted. Tribal elders, farmworker advocates, Downwinders, plant workers, whistleblowers and others offered interviews. Their commentaries together with those of Manhattan Project scientists and engineers, create a complex weave... The narratives related mirrored the landscapes. There was the constant question of what might rest uneasily buried a few feet, or a few inches, beneath the surface. Loss, and denial, seemed inherent in the genetic code of the culture surrounding Hanford, like a double helix spiraling through the stories recounted to me there."



During four decades of plutonium production at Hanford the site released at least twice to four times as much radiation as Chernobyl. Radioactive releases entered waterways and wafted airborne over wildlands, farmlands, and cities throughout the Pacific Northwest. Fifty-six million gallons of high-level radioactive waste remain in storage on the reservation today, and there is a plutonium-contaminated area destined to remain a no-go-zone. Chemical plumes are slowly leaking from the aging steel canisters in Hanford's "tank farms," snaking down toward the aquifer and the adjacent Columbia River.



Alphabet Cities (Nightlights) / Salsola 1

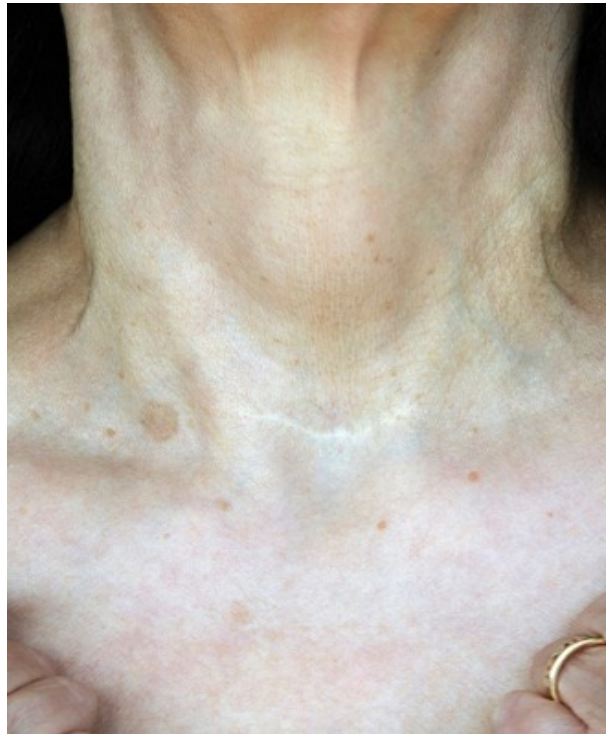
When the federal government designated the region for the Manhattan Project in 1943, Native tribes, farmers and others were given weeks or merely days to leave; some were hired to work on the classified government project. Some are still living in the communities that border remnants of their former foraging grounds and farmsteads that remain confined within the bounds of the nuclear territories. A culture of silence and secrecy encoded in wartime has endured in the region for decades, into the present.



Hanford Township Triptych

Allee's photographs— from the expansive bluffs of Hanford Reach to the winding Columbia River through the nuclear zone, to a full body scanner once used at Hanford site, to the scars borne by cancer-survivors that have been dubbed “The Hanford Necklace,” play out across the pages as singles, diptychs, and triptychs. The triptychs depict panoramas that are disjunct to one degree or another. Misaligned horizon lines and subtle repetitions suggest that the continuity and veracity of the landscapes presented is uncertain. These visual ambiguities echo the contentious quality of the oral history archive, a collection that holds disparate narratives.

A long look at lives and landscapes bearing secrets and scars of the atomic/nuclear era, Hanford Reach: *In the Atomic Field* reflects the complexity of individual and collective memory, and the manner in which personal lives are ensnared within dynamics of state power.



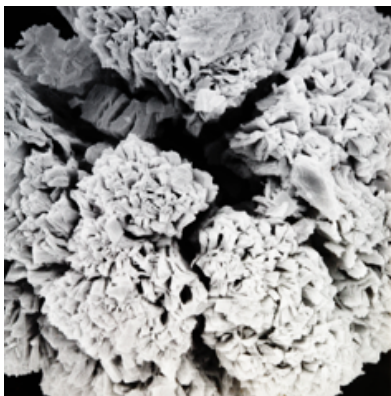
Hanford Necklace Cameo

Glenna Cole Allee is an interdisciplinary artist. Her work explores the shifting relationships between place, myth and memory. She holds an MFA from San Francisco Art Institute and a BFA from Reed College, and has exhibited nationally and internationally. Her work has shown at many spaces in the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond including: Minnesota Street Project; Southern Exposure; Swissnex; Root Division; Luggage Store Gallery; Diego Rivera Gallery; Mission 17; Reynolds Gallery, University of the Pacific, Stockton CA; Sarah Sturgeon Gallery, Central Washington University, Ellensburg, WA; Maxey Museum, Whitman College, Walla Walla, WA (with the Nagasaki-Hanford Bridge Project); Museum of Alexandria, LA; RadicallIntent D-Camp Artist Residency, Corniolo Art Platform, Italy; Live! Exhibit Space, Tosei Building B2, 8-10-7 Ginza Chuo-ku, Tokyo; Yellow Dot Auction/International Foto Biennale, Ballarat, Australia; and many others. For a full artist cv, please see: glennacoleallee.net

Allee co-founded MicroClimate Collective, a curatorial project that produced twelve thematic exhibitions. MicroClimate Collective was a recipient of the Round V Alternative Exposure Grant from Southern Exposure in San Francisco in 2012. Alternative Exposure Grants are supported by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Arts. Please see: microclimatecollective.com

About the Contributor:

Mark Auslander, Ph.D. is a sociocultural and historical anthropologist, who works at the intersection of environmental transformation, ritual practice, aesthetics, kinship, and political consciousness, with particular emphasis on Africa and the African Diaspora. His book *The Accidental Slaveowner: Revisiting a Myth of Race and Finding an American Family* (University of Georgia Press, 2011) re-reads American racial politics under slavery and post-slavery through structuralist approaches to mythology and kinship. His curatorial work engages with art, environmental crisis, race, gender, and memory politics. He has directed museums of science and culture at Central Washington University and Michigan State University. He is currently a visiting faculty member at UMass-Amherst and Boston University and consultant at the Natural History Museum.



Plutonium Particle 6200X
Re-photographed from vintage polaroid
thanks to Hanford History Project

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