

I like to think that I hold these prints in ceremony, that I am caring for them indefinitely well beyond my own physical presence. At each visit you make, I prepare them like I would visitation, dressing the containers that carry them and keeping the surfaces clean. It is my job to keep watch and hold vigil until these images are laid to final rest. Positioned between manila cardboard spacers and folders, I pull groups of postcards organized in gray boxes on shelves for you to hold on to. I place them for you on tables where you are already seated, giving you the space you need to spend with them. This is your time to hold them, this is your time to mourn.

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Here in the Archive of Constraint, an archive filled with images of unspeakable death and torture, materials are allowed to exist in a state of perpetual calm. Similar to that of a morgue, objects are prepared for viewing, kept in suspension from total deterioration, and preserved for you to inspect and handle later. But I should mention that these images were not always this way. Prior to finding their way into the Archive, these diasporic objects migrated across the world as they were tied to online marketplaces and auction houses. The perpetual desire for their possession through image searches and object queries pushed these images into a feedback loop of consumption and investment, cursing them into a double form of capture. Images of unnamed and masked insurgents are seen swinging from the gallows or tied to wooden posts. Images of prisoners seen internalizing colonial desire. Images of trauma that haunt the legacy of our existence. Bought and sold through online marketplaces, where they only held interest to the next highest bidder, collectors would often turn around the following week and resell their investment to other consumers, perpetuating a pernicious cycle of investment contingent on the profit of Brown death. In these moments where the desire for our bodies is based on legacies of control, there is no way that we can even begin to tend to these wounds.

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I'm not sure what compels me to do so, but just the thought of others holding these images troubles my ability to cope with the past. Yes, these images are diasporic, severed from the locations of their emergence and tethered temporally to moments well over a 100 years ago. And yet, they maintain a sort of resonance with the world today, particularly as contemporary images retain similarities to the images held here. Having seen and removed these objects from the perils of the online marketplace, I am compelled to say that their recurrence elongates the eventness of their death. Thought as an extended sense of duration, images are constantly resurfacing as part of an ongoing practice in search for continual profit. To see death tied to profit is to relive the trauma of watching a death in real time. An endless cycle of recurrence, profitable death fetishizes a logic of control, one derived from the desire to uphold colonial values of extraction and vision. In these moments of continual recirculation, where images move across the Internet between small and large screens, they stretch the events of a death while reigniting the desires of a colonial gaze that established the photograph in the first place.

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Let me say this: The Archive is an assemblage that is only powerful when seen in larger groups. Outside of the collection, objects remain fragmented, singularized, separated from the context and conditions of meaning-making. Not only do they lack the power of a critical mass, but as individual materials, they only exist as ancillary, unable to provide further context or comparison without the existence of a referent. A single image of death is only indicative of a coincidental occurrence, a happenstance of the

camera that doesn't always feel intentional. But when grouped with several other similar images, we begin to understand the systemic and strategic nature of its occurrence. If there is one thing that this Archive can achieve, it is the ability to underscore the consistent practice of spectacular execution at the hands of the state, to inject the recognition that state violence was part of gathering in the prison yards.

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WRITING BELOW IS NOT DONE

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I am reminded often, particularly as a steward of these objects, that it is inadequate to use the language of forever. Yes, in many ways, the Internet is forever. But it is only forever insofar as the real estate is forever. We pay an annual fee to rent space on a server hidden from the public eye, while the domain gives viewers directions to access the server. Transmitted across space/time through fiber optic cables buried in the ground,

What do we do with images of literal death? While many memorial pages (on social media) highlight the lives of the dead through images of their life, their joy, their happiness, those images allow for a kind of

While these images circulate, living on servers waiting to be accessed, there is a risk that they might go away. Digital

On the hidden figure(s)

Perpetual and intentional silence is a form of recurring violence.

I want to point you in the direction of these 8 postcards made by

The internet is a graveyard.