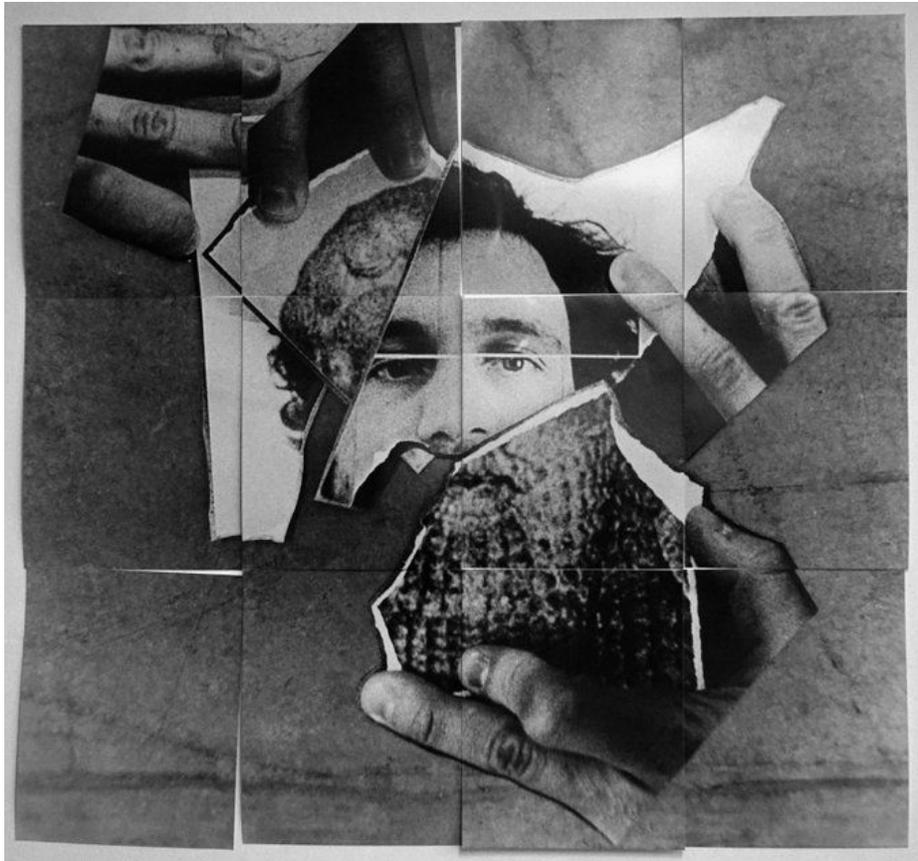


A.D.



A Requiem: Nivhek + Guests

Nivhek + Guests (Oregon Coast) *Requiem*, West Coast
Premiere, September 15, 2019

Portland Institute for Contemporary Art

The closing night of PICA's TBA festival ended the ten day event on a moody, contemplative note. Artists Nivhek (Liz Harris/Grouper), January Hunt, and Dicky Bahto invited the audience to slow down and collectively participate in the act

of remembrance. Harris's departure from her pseudonym Grouper to her new iteration Nivhek is subtle yet precise. Her work remains consistent stylistically and yet at every turn she is further developing a language for the intangible. Her new work quietly fidgets and collapses between field recordings layered with piano and a chorus of vocals that shift into a shadowy ether. There is an elegance to Harris's methodical live performance that exhumes sorrow with gentle restraint.

Hunt also toys with intangibility but focuses more on the disintegration of structure. Hunt's work questions the malleability of not only our environment but our bodies, allowing an extended monotone note to drone into a sonic dirge. There was a moment in her performance where an indistinguishable noise became an audible voice, a fluidity I believe Hunt asks you to pay attention to.

Flickering in the adjacent annex was Dicky Bahto's installation Notes on the Ruins for Visitors. Bahto reconfigures a personal narrative out of found footage displayed through vintage slide projectors, video collage and reappropriated videos of ISIS destroying sacred artifacts. Bahto's work feels like a struggle to remember history and his relationship to the Assyrian diaspora at the same time it is being violently erased. Bahto leaves his work open-ended, perhaps intentionally, as a means to contextualize the feeling of erasure. The use of ISIS propaganda videos without context could run the risk of being misconstrued as a further sensationalization of a vilified other, especially while the US enacts greater levels of destruction on sacred sites. Still, Bahto's work successfully situates this media as an artifact within an experimental archive of a precarious moment in time.