



ART AND NUCLEAR TESTING

Featuring Elin O'Hara Slavick

"As a university professor, I can attest to the power of art to educate. If we can interject a discussion of peacemaking and an understanding of our involvement in war after war into the deafening noise of patriotism and the chaotic speed of information and communication systems, then we have begun to challenge the status quo.

to have a sense of the unimaginable scope of our violence against civilians, even against ourselves, especially the lingering perils of nuclear weapons. I use a ground of abstract swirling or bleeding to depict the manner in which bombs do not stay within their intended borders. Radioactive materials and chemical agents contaminate the soil, travelling in water and currents of air for decades. Mines and unexploded bombs lay in wait for unsuspecting victims who were not even alive during the war. Bombs lay the groundwork for genocide, cancer, more war, terrorism, widows, orphans and a vengeful populace on all sides of conflict."

Art can teach us in so many ways about so many things: it can literally help us understand space and perspective, relationships between objects, scale, colour, composition, texture and all those formal qualities; but it can also open our mind to new ways of seeing and thinking in this world – that history is usually told from one perspective and usually by men and the winners; that art can and does change the world, as much as anything else does; that we can make beautiful things amidst so much ugliness; that art is hope, a constructive, positive process, and often a collaborative one – not only between artists but between artist and viewer.

In my series of bomb drawings, it is important to show places unknown to most Americans, like Enewetak Atoll in the Marshall Islands, alongside infamous sites like Iwo Jima where a major battle took place during the Second World War. It is imperative that I not only represent the places familiar to everyone but include the lesser known locations so that people can make connections and begin

Elin O'Hara Slavick

has been a Distinguished Term Professor at the University of North Carolina in the USA since 1994. Slavick teaches Conceptual and Experimental Photography, Collaborative Visual Projects, Drawing, Mixed Media and Body Imaging.

Enewetak Atoll
by Elin O'Hara Slavick

The Enewetak Atoll drawing takes as its reference a map from a world atlas. The United States conducted forty-three atmospheric tests at the Enewetak Atoll in the Marshall Islands between 1948 and 1958. Several of these tests were thermonuclear. The small islet of Elugelab was vapourized and the radioactive fallout produced by the tests contaminated the islands and the lagoon of the atoll.

i **NUCLEAR TESTING**

NUCLEAR TESTS 1945-1996

COUNTRY	NO. OF TESTS	TIMESPAN
United States	1,032	1945-1992
Soviet Union	715	1949-1990
United Kingdom	45	1952-1991
France	210	1960-1996
China	45	1964-1996

The history of nuclear testing began early on the morning of 16 July 1945 at a desert test site in Alamogordo, New Mexico, USA, when the United States exploded its first atomic bomb.

In the five decades between that fateful day in 1945 and the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996, over 2,000 nuclear tests were carried out all over the world.

The figures above are approximate and based on official government sources, as well as on information provided by research institutions such as the Natural Resources Defence Council in Washington D.C., and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

