

SASHA LITVINTSEVA

ASBESTOS (2016)

Mined, extracted, and woven, asbestos was the magic mineral. Towns became cities under its patronage, Persian kings entertained guests with its fireproof nature, and centuries of industry raked in the profits of its global application. We now live in the remains of this toxic dream, a dream that with the invention of electron microscopes revealed our material history as a disaster in waiting. Yet the asbestos industry has far from left us with extraction from the soil transforming to extraction from our walls. We are now faced with two options: to remove this material from our homes and start anew, or to build upon its residue. Removal is a dangerous and costly operation. So often we choose to live amongst it instead, choking out our walls with plastic tarping: the failed promises of modernism literally entombed all around us. Shot in the mining town of Asbestos, Quebec, home to the world's largest asbestos mine that only stopped extraction in 2012, the film is a meditation on the entanglement of the fragility of bodies, the nonlinearity of progress, and the persistence of matter.

collapsing together two temporal scales: the micro-histories of Israeli settlements and the slow disaster produced by the exhaustion of natural resources. It appears as the collapsing of the surface into the sub-terrain, with that collapsing the possibility of thinking of territory as mere surface.

Sasha Litvintseva

Sasha Litvintseva was born in Russia in 1989. She studied at the Slade School of Fine Art and Kingston University, London. Currently, she is a Ph.D. candidate at Goldsmiths, London. Her works have been shown widely, including the Berlinale Forum Expanded, International Film Festival Rotterdam, Kunstverein Göttingen, Kasseler DokFest, Cinéma du Réel and Edinburgh Film Festival. Sasha Litvintseva lives in Berlin and London.

SALARIIUM (2017)

Departing from the etymological derivation of both "salary" and "soldier" from "salt", the film "Salarium" captures the entanglement of economic, military, and geological forces, which manifests in the figure of the sinkhole. Thousands of sinkholes are today perforating the shores of the Dead Sea in Israel and Palestine, covering a wide strip of land that stretches between the water and the vast Judean desert around. Swallowing the remnants of what used to be a popular beach, a water park, or a settlement, the sinkholes make the land uninhabitable and hazardous. What was once called a Natural Treasure to attract tourism and investment, is today a dilapidating site erected on unstable grounds. The sinkhole appears as both visible symptom and active cause of the failure of a colonial project to instrumentalise nature,