

Undercurrents: meditations on power

A film by Margot Nash 19min 2023 AUSTRALIA



A 'song' for the dark times



2023
Melbourne International Film Festival



Press Kit

As If Productions

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One line synopsis

A poetic essay documentary about the undercurrents of history playing out in the present: a cautionary poem or 'song' for the dark times.

One paragraph synopsis

Made from reimagined/recycled images and sounds from the filmmaker's archive and other found materials, *Undercurrents* is a poetic essay documentary about the undercurrents of history playing out in the present. It is a meditation on the global rise of the far-right, war and the nuclear threat. It explores links between patriarchal power, the environmental crisis, racism and colonisation and pays tribute to the life affirming power of resistance.



The Blood of Empire



Listen to us

The Investigator (Rose Wanganeen) from *Shadow Panic* (Nash 1989)

Cast and Crew

Producer, Director, Editor: Margot Nash

Sound mix, online and colour grade: Michael Gissing, Digital City Studios

Narration recording: Luke Bacon

Narrated by: Margot Nash

Archival restorations: Ray Argall, Piccolo Films

Music: Selected music from *Shadow Panic*, composer Elizabeth Drake; selected music from *Vacant Possession*, composer Alistair Jones



She wondered what a nuclear winter might look like.

The Child (Elizabeth Cook) from *Shadow Panic* (Nash 1989) Still: Corrie Ancone

Completion date

2023

Genres

Creative Documentary, Short,
Experimental, Hybrid

Shooting format

HD, DV, 16mm, Super 8

Running time

19 minutes 22 seconds

Speed

24fps

Resolution

1920 x 1080

Aspect ratio

1:85:1

Screening Format

DCP



Agit Prop Anti-Fascist Group (with Walter Ballhaus) 1932 courtesy Walter Ballhaus Archive, Berlin

Director's Statement

I wanted to make a poetic response to the dark times we live in through stepping back into the past and asking questions about the present. I worked primarily with my archive of film work both drama and documentary, reimagining or recycling images and sounds I had created for other films; and putting them together to tell a new story. I was inspired by Chris Marker's meditative documentary *Sans Soleil* (1983) with its use of letters from a mysterious 'he'; Sarah Polley's use of dramatic reconstructions in *Stories We Tell* (2012) and Aimé Césaire's poetic and incendiary *Discourse on Colonisation* (1950). I worked with memories, dreams, home movies, Super 8, iPhone footage and other found materials. I wanted to work simply and inexpensively through editing it myself and being open to new connections. I was looking for a narrative that contained lessons from the past that might inspire us in the present.

The film is Part 3 of a trilogy: *We Aim to Please* (Robin Laurie/Margot Nash 1976); *Shadow Panic* (Margot Nash 1989); *Undercurrents* (Margot Nash 2023)

Short Biography



MARGOT NASH is a New Zealand-born Australian-based filmmaker. Her directing credits include the award-winning feature dramas *Vacant Possession* (1994) and *Call Me Mum* (2005), the experimental short *Shadow Panic* (1989) and the feature documentary *The Silences* (2015). She was a co-filmmaker and editor on the landmark feminist films *We Aim To Please* (Robin Laurie, Margot Nash 1976) and *For Love Or Money* (Megan McMurchy, Margot Nash, Margot Oliver, Jeni Thornley 1983). Margot has worked as a consultant and mentor for Australian Indigenous filmmakers as well as working in the Pacific running documentary workshops for Pacific Island women television producers. In 2016 she won an Australian Writers' Guild AWGIE Award for the screenplay of *The Silences*. She is currently a Visiting Fellow in Communications at the University of Technology Sydney, Australia. <https://www.margotnash.com>