

EXTRACT: CHRIS FITE-WASSILAK

And then the woman...

Then the woman moves away from the space and deeper into the rooms, the numberless rooms of the villa and we follow her for a moment, until she passes and exits through a space in which she leaves us, static, staring at walls. The walls are painted and like almost all the other spaces the paint has faded though only with time as no sunlight has penetrated here in years. On a once white table we can see a colour photograph: a sort of still life from above of a set of items on top of a stained and marked surface, maybe a desktop. There's a blank, faded yellow piece of sticky note paper next to an oblong white ring, a pen resting partially upon a sheet of white paper to the left of the photo. The paper lies on top of another sheet. The surface of the white sheet is imprinted with of a set of numbers. The pen is out of ink. The ring is made of worn down coral. Underneath the white sheet is a black and white photo of a sandstone carving of a dog. The woman looks down at all this but does not touch the photograph because it would disturb the dust that lies in a thin layer over all and for a moment she has the notion that the dust lies within the image as well as on top of it and somehow she finds the thought of leaving a shadow of white, say where the pen was, troubling.

Why does she find this troubling?

As we are allowed the privilege of tapping into her thoughts, the momentary confusion cause by her misreading of the image causes an electro-chemical reaction to trip across a synapse sparking an instantaneous connection between the space left in the dust by (impossibly) removing the pen in the image, the photo of the sandstone dog, the curled, agonised white plaster figure of a petrified dog she saw at Pompeii and the famous image from Hiroshima wherein a human shadows is burnt into stone, itself a reverse image.