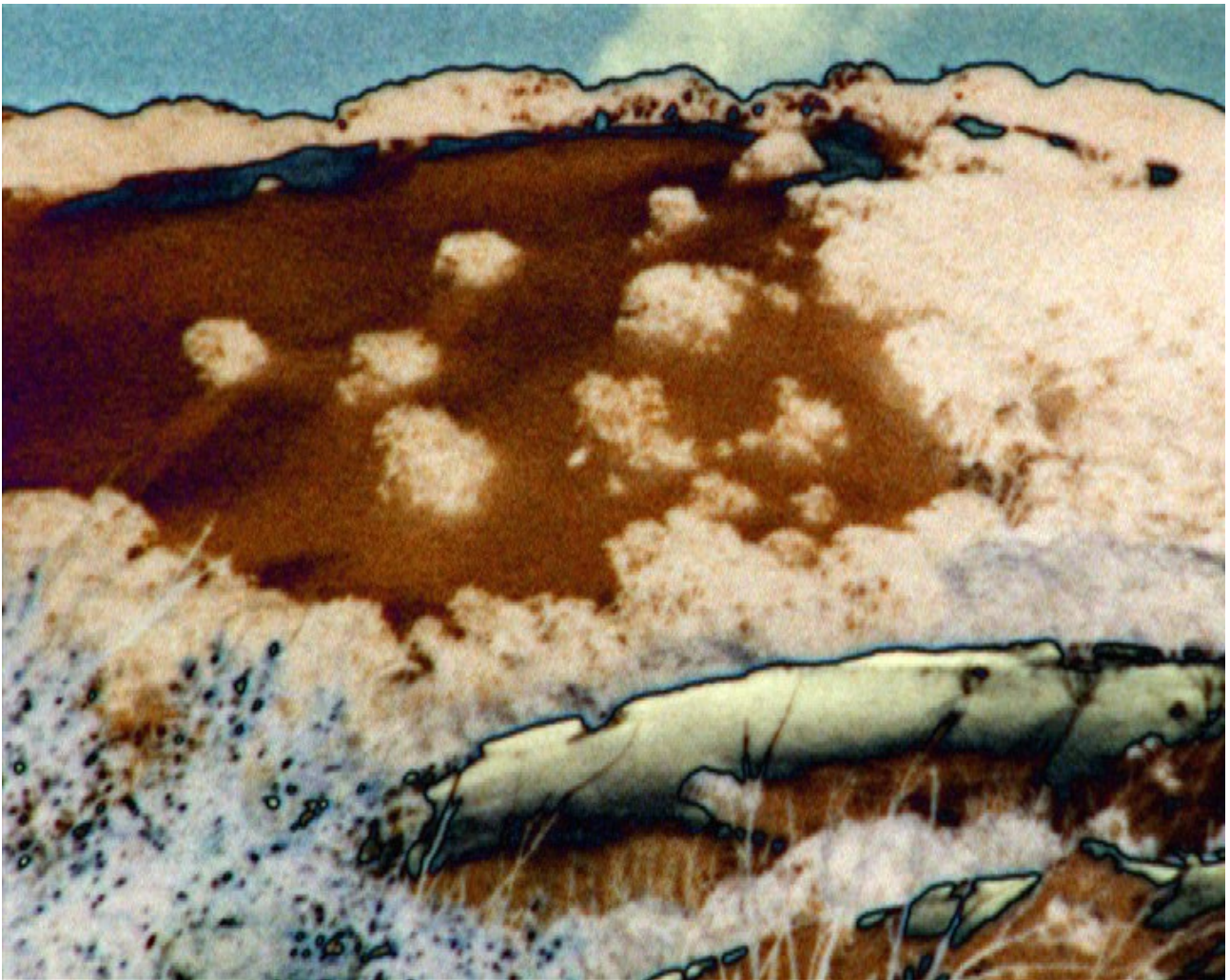


Rising Thermal

by Irene Proebsting and Barry Brown 2022



RISING THERMAL Video produced from original Super 8 Film, 9:46 mins, 2022

A CSIRO paper suggests that “... in Australian alpine environments, extensive fires occur only in periods of extended regional drought, and when severe local fire weather coincides with multiple ignitions in the surrounding montane forests. Dendrochronological evidence indicates that large fires have occurred approximately every 50-100 years over the past 400 years.”¹

¹ <https://www.publish.csiro.au/WF/WF07154>

However in the past 20 years, the Alpine region has burned three times. Past bushfire maps show that in recent times the Alpine areas of Victoria were burnt in bushfires in 2003, 2006-07, 2019-20. An Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report points to collapse of Alpine Ash and Snowgum woodland.²

These findings have positioned Alpine areas as vulnerable to climate change, and 78 threatened species and ecological communities are at risk of extinction in the Australian Alps.³ Species include amphibians, bats, birds, invertebrates, marsupials, reptiles, rodents and plants. Some on the critically endangered list include the Smokey Mouse (*Pseudomys fumeus*), Black Hooded Sun Orchid (*Thelymitra atronitida*) and the Southern Corroboree Frog (*Pseudophryne corroboree*).

Our experimental film *RISING THERMAL*, was filmed on two occasions in the Victorian Alps on Mount Hotham. The first roll of Super 8 was filmed in summer on a trip over the mountain to Bright a few years after the Alpine fires of 2006-07. The second and third rolls, in the middle of winter some years later in 2017. I was intrigued that humans had built in such a fragile and inhospitable area, but the beauty and enticement of the mountains in snow is undeniable.

Evidence of the aftermath of the fires could be seen everywhere in the form of stark white trunks of burnt trees.

Making the video included using digitised versions of the original Super 8 films which were then manipulated to create an interesting colour palette sometimes resembling a thermal heat map. The perceptual shift reflects on the rising temperature of earth's warming atmosphere and how it will cause catastrophic changes to the Alpine Region and the species dependant on it.

The sonic component creates an unsettling atmosphere as we all grapple with our own involvement as the species responsible for creating these overarching changes, and the political inaction needed to slow them. The window for change is quickly closing.

Rising Thermal (Soundtrack/Audio Installation)

The soundscape for *Rising Thermal* was composed from recordings of a milling machine and factory ambiances that have been multi-layered, detemporalised and electronically treated. The resulting mix is a febrile, obsidian and immersive psycho-acoustic maelstrom of uneasy minimalist drones, imploding expressionistic frequencies and dystopian futurist dissonance.

An ominous sonic narrative contemplating the frenetic escalation of absolute commodification, the collapse of seasonal weather patterns and impending oblivion.

² <https://themountainjournal.com/2022/03/01/ipcc-report-points-to-collapse-of-alpine-ash-and-snowgum-woodland/>

³ <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/threatened-species/about-threatened-species/key-threatening-processes>