

Cindy Bernard: Silent Key

For most of my life, I lived with a soundtrack of blips and beeps emanating from my grandfather's "radio room." A dedicated "Dx-er" operating first as W6ANN and later as W6BA, Bill Adams pursued contact with fellow ham radio operators located in the most distant regions of the world. Licensed in 1923, he remained active until his death in 1999, when he became a "silent key."

The series *Silent Key* maps these communications, which occurred across vast political divides and shifts in territorial alliances. It is derived from Adams' archive of 6000 "QSL" cards spanning 1923 -1996. QSL cards are exchanged by amateur radio operators to verify a 2-way contact. In ham lingo, QSL means, "I hear you" or "I acknowledge receipt." Each card contains the ham's call sign, location and the details of the communication. Because much of amateur radio is in Morse code, hams use the QSL cards to express their personality and/or something about the region in which they live,



Antenna (NW), W6BA/W6ANN is one of several photographs documenting the antennas on the W6BA "antenna farm" located in Twentynine Palms, California.

Fifteen Interstitial Beauties pairs eight French postcards discovered with the bulk of the QSLs with JH3HTD, November 23, 1996, Japan, the final card in my grandfather's scrapbook of rare and special QSL cards.



The *Portraits* are derived from photographs used by the hams to represent themselves to other operators and are titled with their call sign, name, location, the date of the card containing the image, the dates they were active and if they have passed, the year of their death. In some cases this information is lost and the fate of the ham radio operator depicted remains unknown.



To Radio: W6ANN
 CPM our QSO on 20-11-1964
 At 0830 MSK in CW/Phone.
 Ur sigs 589 RS on Z mc.
 Xmtr 40 wts. Rcvr SUPER
 Ant 2/2
 Pse/Tks or QSL via _____
 Post Box 88, Moscow, 78 Op GERMAN
 USSR. QTH KOSTROMA.

APRIL QSL BUREAU
 S.D. DX CLUB
 MAY 12 1965

Оборотная сторона луны, сфотографированная советской межпланетной станцией 7 октября 1959 года
 The Back Side of the Moon Taken by the Soviet Interplanetary Station on the 7-th of October 1959.

QSL

resulting in an amazing visual array of graphics, images and vernacular typography representing virtually every country in the world.

Deleted Entities 1925 - 1996 consists of scans of cards from hams operating in political entities that no longer exist, such as the USSR; Nazi Germany; Korea and China during Japanese occupation; Japan and Germany during American occupation and Colonial Africa. When sorted by continent and date, the result is a spatial and durational mapping consisting of 115 pieces in an array 6 feet high by 55 feet long. The archive is inevitably incomplete - there isn't necessarily a card for every continent from every year - and these gaps cause the grid to resemble a musical score or perhaps even the rhythm of the code used for many of the contacts.

The title of each work cites three moments in time - the world order of the past as reflected in the entity named on the card (i.e. "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)"), the entity as it is known today ("Georgia") and the date the prior order shifted ("independent 1991"). That in some cases these terms remain unsettled is a sign of the transient nature of political boundaries.

ZC6UNJ

UNITED NATIONS
 AMATEUR STATION
 JERUSALEM - Palestine

الاتحاد العربي الفلسطيني
 الامم المتحدة

אומות המאוחדות
 ירושלים, ארץ-ישראל

Radio W6ANN Confirming
 our 24 Mc. QSL
 communication of NOVEMBER 1949 to
 GMT 19
 Ur sigs QSA 5 S 9
 XMTR 2000 PA 150-5000 ON
100 watts input.
 Ant. SWR 1.5
 Rcvr. HR JAG 1 19 27
VAR TX 100 135
 Per QSL Glan Gullenbary OP
 c/o KLLN, United Nations
 Lake Success,
 New York, U.S.A.

3 10
 JAN 7 1949
 Bill Adams
 San Pedro,
 California
 U.S.A.
 6405 Cassini Pl
 San Pedro, Calif

Cindy Bernard is based in Los Angeles, CA, where she teaches at the Art Center College of Art and Design. She graduated from CalArts in 1985. Bernard's practice includes organizing events, curating and producing sound projects. Bernard is the founder and director of SAS-SAS, The Society for the Activation of Social Space through Art and Sound, an organization devoted to the creation, presentation, and recognition of experimental art and sound practices in the Greater Los Angeles area. Additionally she recently co-founded MOCA Mobilization, an advocacy group supporting the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Bernard is a Guggenheim Fellow and Creative Capital recipient. Her work has been exhibited in museums and galleries in the US, Canada, Mexico, Europe, and Japan, and was included in the Whitney and Lyon Biennials. In 2008, her work was included in several group shows, including: *Index: Conceptualism in California from the Permanent Collection*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; *Video Programme*, Brandenburgischer Kunstverein, Potsdam; and *Under the Influence*, Art and Culture Center of Hollywood and the Girls Club, Florida. Bernard had a solo exhibit at Tracy Williams LTD, New York, this past fall.

A comprehensive Curriculum Vitae with detailed information about her projects can be found on Bernard's web page: www.sound2cb.com.

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CREDITS:

1. *Silent Key: Deleted Entities 1925 – 1996*
UA3NU, November 20, 1964
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)
today: Russian Federation (independent 1991)
2008
Pigment prints
78 of 115 parts
Framed: 12-1/2 x 10 inches

2. *Silent Key: Antenna (NW), W6BA/W6ANN*
Twentynine Palms, CA
2007
Chromogenic print
Framed: 61 x 47-1/2 inches

3. *Silent Key: Portraits*
ZL420, G. Bell
Dunedin, New Zealand, 1934
Active / Silent Key, Unknown
2008
Pigment print
24 x 18-1/2 inches

4. *Silent Key: Deleted Entities 1925 – 1996*
ZC6UNJ, November 12, 1948
Palestine
today: Palestine (partitioned 1947, dissolved 1949, disputed with Israel)
2008
Pigment prints
31 of 115 parts
Framed: 12-1/2 x 10 inches

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6 pm

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Saturday February 7, 2009

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