

A womb of things to be and tomb of things that were

Marleen Boschen & Charles Pryor, 2023, 28 min

Seed banking has become a hopeful technology of *ex situ* conservation in the face of devastating biodiversity loss. Through storing seeds in liminal, often frozen, states, seed banks create valuable living archives. *A womb of things to be and tomb of things that were* is a film by artists and researchers Marleen Boschen and Charles Pryor about collaborative survival, containment and vulnerability in seed banking practices. Via episodic, speculative storytelling we follow three seed banking and saving practices at the Millennium Seed Bank in the UK, a forest gene bank in Poland and a food sovereignty organisation in Palestine.

Through sonic experimentation and speculative fiction *A womb of things to be and tomb of things that were* experiments with how scientific practices can foster ecological imaginaries of restoration, repair and custodianship. The film traces how seeds move in and out of seed banks and how their metabolic life slows down in processes of freezing. What does it mean to remove a lifeform from its world in order to save it? What are these practices saving their seeds for, but also what escapes them in freezing life?

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