

**For Immediate Release**  
May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024



Jason File, *Persistent Illusions*, 2024

## *Persistent Illusions*

May 31 – June 14, 2024

Jason File

Opening Reception & Open Studios: Friday, May 31, 6-9pm

NARS Project Space

NARS Foundation is pleased to announce *Persistent Illusions*, a solo exhibition by New York artist **Jason File**. This two-channel video installation examines the conditions giving rise to mass atrocities through the lens of a Hague war crimes trial and the moving image evidence used as proof in court. Juxtaposing real trial footage of the artist cross-examining a politician with the VHS tapes played in court, the work invites the audience to sit as a jury—perhaps to determine what we can know from video as a medium itself.

At the heart of the installation are two video screens akin to those used in courtrooms around the world. One screen displays footage of the artist cross-examining a defense witness in the Hague war crimes trial of Radovan Karadžić, the president of a breakaway Bosnian Serb entity during the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. The subject of the examination is the August 21, 1992 massacre of approximately 200 detained Bosnian Muslim civilians by Prijedor police forces at the

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Korićanske Stijene ravine. During the examination, File confronts the witness, a local Bosnian Serb politician, with video evidence that challenges the witness's position that the Karadžić administration intended to hold the perpetrators accountable.

The other screen displays the underlying VHS video evidence used during the cross-examination, synchronized to the moment of its use in court. By expanding the frame beyond the court's narrow relevance standard, the artist facilitates a broader, more open-ended inquiry into the pathologies of our social and political structures that systematically reproduce mass atrocities across the globe and across history.

A space resembling a hybrid courtroom houses the videos, linking elements of the U.N. tribunal seen onscreen with features more familiar to domestic courts, like a jury box and framed portraits. Here, however, the portraits of two prior U.N. Secretary Generals, seemingly occluded by moisture, gesture towards the unknown opportunities and risks of individual leadership, while the translucent designer furnishings and flags combining elements of failed republics may query the sustainability of contemporary systems themselves.

### **About the artist:**

**Jason File** (1976, USA) is an artist, practicing lawyer and former United Nations war crimes prosecutor whose art practice uses legal materials and contexts to explore the poetics of systems of justice, property and power. His work has been shown at institutions including the Whitechapel Gallery (London); Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam); the Historical Museum of Bosnia & Herzegovina (Sarajevo); and Stroom (The Hague). A graduate of the Chelsea College of Art and Design (London), the Royal Academy of Art (Netherlands), and Yale Law School, Jason is a studio member at the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts in New York.

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**The New York Art Residency and Studios (NARS) Foundation** is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit arts organization committed to supporting artists and curators on an international level as well as engaging the local community in Brooklyn and the Greater New York area. Our mission is to present diverse platforms on which to nurture creative inspiration and innovative cross-pollination of ideas.

The NARS Galleries are open Monday - Friday from 12 to 5 pm. For further information, please contact us at [www.narsfoundation.org](http://www.narsfoundation.org) / [info@narsfoundation.org](mailto:info@narsfoundation.org) / 718-768-2765.



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