



COLLAGE

Kirsten Stolle Edits
Vintage Monsanto
Ads to Show the
Company's Dickey Past

These collages made from vintage chemical ads are not what they seem.

Photo by Gianmarco Bresadola

In black-and-white newsprint, a plane sits on a runway, threatening to take off. Alongside the jet stand smiling, uniformed men holding signs **in front of piles of chemicals in sacks and barrels**. Underneath, in cheery block caps, is the tagline: "Monsanto Chemicals—by the ton—help a hurrying nation go places."

There's just one twist: the barrels are affixed with a ginger label, reminding the viewer that the chemicals about to board the aircraft may have been **Agent Orange**, an herbicide used in the Vietnam War that was liberally sprayed over the forest to remove cover for guerrilla fighters. It was later found to have caused fatal health issues for much of the Vietnamese population, as well as US service people.

"I felt like I don't need to add much more: it's already there," says artist **Kirsten Stolle**, who collaged the orange strips to the Monsanto advertisement in her work *By The Ton* (2013). It forms part of the series *Monsanto Intervention*, which explores the ways the chemical company portrayed itself through advertising in the middle of the 20th century, exhibited as part of Stolle's solo show *Proceed At Your Own Risk* at **NOME** in Berlin.



Little Man now what?, Kirsten Stolle, 2013. Courtesy NOME.

Many of the collages leverage redaction—thick black cards stuck over sections of the text—next to the cheerful domestic illustrations of the commercials. "When governments redact sensitive information, they're hiding something," Stolle explains. "I wanted to change the language to read as what they truly are. Their agenda is to make money." These redactions turn the text into something harsh yet beautiful: "Make Insect Profit!" "War in paradise," and "The condemned hear." "To me, they're sort of like postmodern poetry," Stolle says.

The project began when Stolle was researching **genetic modification** (GM) farming techniques—and particularly how they affected the production of soy, which she, as a vegetarian, was consuming a lot of. Her research led her to **Monsanto**, a large player in the GM market, and particularly how the company contributed to the Vietnam War and World War II, such as its role in the development of the atomic bomb.



Rosie, 2013, Kirsten Stolle, Collage on magazine advertisement. Courtesy NOME.

"These are adverts that would've been found in *Time Magazine*, *Life* magazine, *Fortune* magazine, from 1944 up until 1960," says Stolle. "They're promoting their chemicals to use during wartime: insecticides and herbicides for the home

user to kill bugs or pests." Even in the original advertisements aimed at regular consumers, Monsanto's language is macho and militaristic, at times racist and xenophobic—a reminder of the chemical company's link to products of war.

Stolle's additions also take the form of colorful collaged dots and fantastical doodles that nod to the more contemporary scientific procedures that chemical and food conglomerates engage in, such as genetic modification, or "pharming" (a biotech process of genetically modifying plants or animals to produce medicinal substances).



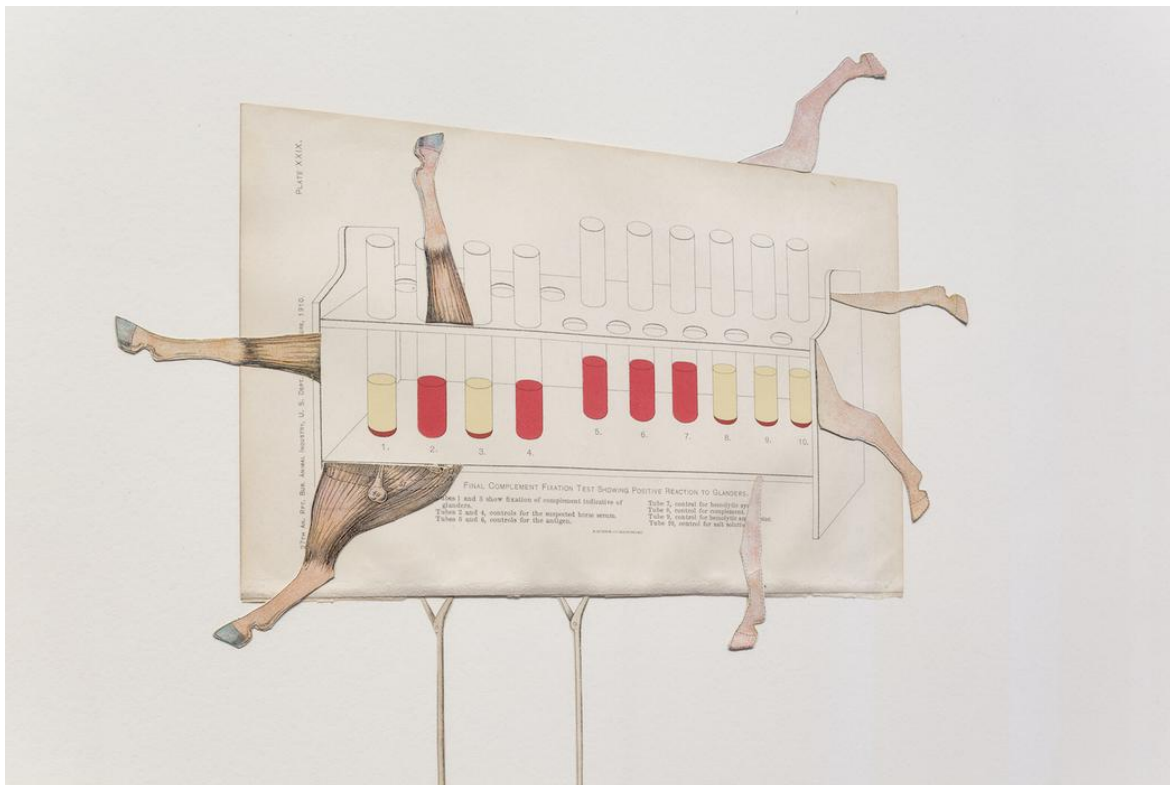
Proceed At Your Own Risk by Kirsten Stolle at NOME. Photo by Gianmarco Bresadola

The latter forms the thematic basis for the second series on display in *Proceed At Your Own Risk*, entitled *Animal Pharm*. In these collages, scientific illustrations of cow ankles shoot like clock hands out of test-tubes, while elsewhere a rib cage makes a gruesome apparatus for forceps and a tube of K-Y Jelly. "It's about using animals to create drugs, which I thought was a little creepy. What are the ethical implications of this?" asks Stolle. "I wanted to amalgam body parts and medical instruments to engage people. I want people to feel uncomfortable about it."

Today, Monsanto is perhaps best known as a food producer, with much of its toxic, warmongering past forgotten. Stolle is fascinated by this greenwashing: "Their website, as it is today, hardly uses the word 'chemical' at all. 'Monsanto: a sustainable agriculture company'—sustainable for who?"



Proceed At Your Own Risk by Kirsten Stolle at NOME. Photo by Gianmarco Bresadola



AP 3, Kirsten Stolle, 2014. Courtesy NOME.

MAKE [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] INSECT [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] PROFIT!



Money [REDACTED] in dead insects [REDACTED]
 bug [REDACTED] bug [REDACTED]
 is [REDACTED] a [REDACTED] Insect [REDACTED]
 you [REDACTED] you [REDACTED] Insect [REDACTED]
 revolutionary [REDACTED] potent insecticide [REDACTED] all
 one. [REDACTED]
 average [REDACTED] every day [REDACTED] two [REDACTED] three times [REDACTED] druggists
 [REDACTED] every day [REDACTED] for [REDACTED]
 invasion. [REDACTED]
 fast [REDACTED] high [REDACTED]
 it [REDACTED] kills [REDACTED]

...3.00%
 ...2.00%
 ...5.00%
 ...5.00%
 ...85.00%

*What to tell a Housewife
 about INSECT-O-BLITZ*

[REDACTED] it [REDACTED] kills [REDACTED] as [REDACTED] inflam-
 mable and [REDACTED] explosive. [REDACTED] used overseas by the Armed Forces [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] Enough [REDACTED] of [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] Insect-O-Blitz [REDACTED] U. S. Department
 of Agriculture tests prove [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] nothing [REDACTED] Show [REDACTED] tell [REDACTED] sell [REDACTED]

PRICE LIST
 AEROSOL INSECT-O-
 BLITZ retail list price
 \$3.00 per unit. Fair-
 traded \$2.95. Subject to
 liberal trade discounts.
 F.O.B. destination on 3
 cases or more. Presently
 packed 24 per case.

Order NOW From Your Local
 Distributor or Direct.

INSECT-O-BLITZ

INSECTICIDE DIVISION

INDUSTRIAL MANAGEMENT CORPORATION



SALES OFFICES: 639 S. Spring St., Los Angeles 14, Calif.; 38 S. Dearborn St., Chicago 3, Ill. FACTORY: Valparaiso, Ind.

Make Insect Profit, 2013, Kirsten Stolle. Courtesy NOME.



V Day After the boys come back, the plan can mean more at the road

now told to look to their return. The no "benefits." Paying no money and self respect. future... not existence.

now Products that people want!

the mad contributions of Monsanto Chemistry

the chemical industry prepared to process

Monsanto the leader in American war-work



MONSANTO CHEMICAL COMPANY
St. Louis 4, Missouri

SERVING INDUSTRY...WHICH SERVES MANKIND

V Day, Kirsten Stolle, 2013. Courtesy NOME.



[REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] remember [REDACTED] the story of [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] this South Pacific island.
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] things can happen [REDACTED] a cloud [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] in the tropics
 [REDACTED] America [REDACTED] came
 to [REDACTED] island [REDACTED] kept
 on erecting [REDACTED]
 why [REDACTED] wait
 [REDACTED] launch a mighty blow
 fist [REDACTED] firm
 pain [REDACTED]
 oil solution [REDACTED] chemicals
 produced by Monsanto [REDACTED] chemical [REDACTED] used
 for protection of army and navy [REDACTED]
 the
 Americans came [REDACTED] for [REDACTED]
 Japs again [REDACTED] the moral [REDACTED] must
 be [REDACTED] learned [REDACTED]
 battle [REDACTED] will [REDACTED] add [REDACTED] permanence and
 [REDACTED] build [REDACTED]
 War [REDACTED] that you're buying now. MONSANTO CHEMICAL
 COMPANY, St. Louis.



"E" FOR EXCELLENCE—The
 Army-Navy "E" burgee with two
 stars, "representing recognition by
 the Army and the Navy of es-
 pecially meritorious production of
 war materials" over a two-year pe-
 riod, flies over Monsanto.

SERVING INDUSTRY... WHICH SERVES MANKIND

Chief Talugi/Remember the Story, Kirsten Stolle, 2013. Courtesy NOME.

Kirsten Stolle, *Proceed at Your Own Risk* is on show at **NOME**, Berlin until
 8 April 2017.