



The International Association of Corporate Collections of Contemporary Art (IACCCA) is a non-profit organisation that brings together curators of over 50 corporate collections from around the world with the aim of sharing best practices and inspiring one another in ways of collecting and promoting contemporary art in corporations. We meet twice a year at stimulating workshops and a seminar, and every second year in a symposium that is open to a broader audience. IACCCA members are active collections run by professional corporate curators who work towards the development of their individual art holdings with a view to building up a long-term heritage. We are all concerned with purchasing, exhibiting and conserving significant artworks that testify to our time. bringing to the fore present-day issues that affect the societies we live in. Art offers insight, promotes thought and gives visibility to important matters. Profoundly convinced of art's capacity to open the mind and stimulate action, our members display their art inside the premises of their companies or in publicly accessible exhibition spaces. Together, IACCCA members support the arts and their makers and seek to facilitate access to art, at work or outside it.

A decade after its inception, the association decided to invest in research into the contents of our many members' carefully assembled corporate collections. Realising that together we have more than 150,000 artworks, we decided it was time to take a closer look at our varied holdings. Our goal was to underscore the quality of our members' corporate collections that go way beyond the decorative, and which have come to play a very active role both as cultural patrimony and as an integrated part of life in the corporate world.

To this end we decided to join forces with the independent curator Heidi Ballet, to whom we gave carte blanche to develop a thematic concept for the presentation of the holdings of the IACCCA members. After looking closely at the collections, Ballet suggested we examine the extent to which art in the time of ecological disruption reflects the human condition.



International Association of Corporate Collections of Contemporary Art What struck us about Ballet's project was the originality and subtlety of her proposal to look at the collections through the lens of the evolving human perception of self, others and nature. This made it possible to single out artworks that offer images of and ideas about our vulnerability in the face of a nature in flux that threatens to run amok. By focusing on the complex mechanisms of human psychology and its development in relation to an ever-changing world, hiding from or meeting face on the threats of climate change and its related consequences, Ballet's work forms the backbone articulating this book project.

At the same time, this publication is the result of a fruitful collaboration of co-curating where each participating member chose specific works that could potentially match Ballet's focus and form part of one of the three chapters into which the book is divided. This entailed a passionate exchange of ideas and artworks, with members' selections thoughtfully balanced and combined by the IACCCA editorial committee subject to Ballet's final decision. Both the process and the final publication have been most rewarding, as they have provided deeper insight into the multiple collections.

Today, we are proud to present this first IACCCA publication as a testimony of our wish to take part in the debate on contemporary issues and challenges facing humanity and to share, in an open source spirit, some of the contents of our members' collections.

In addition to Heidi Ballet's curatorial participation, art historian T. J. Demos agreed to share with us his insights and recent research on the intersection of contemporary art and ecology, and we are happy to publish his new and sharp contribution to this topic in this book.

Writer Selina Nwulu offers additional perspective and perception, this time from a literary angle, on race, climate change and social justice through her engaged poetry, which is both beautiful and powerful and leaves no one indifferent.

Finally, it seemed to us a natural conclusion to invite some IACCCA members to take part in a conversation on corporate collections' role in relation to ecological disruption. Kika Kyriakakou, Athanasios Polychronopoulos – both from Polyeco (Greece) –, Javier Quilis – from Inelcom (Spain) – and Caroline Stein – from Banque Neuflize OBC (France) –- were joined by the editorial committee in an enlightening discussion about the part corporate collections can play in inspiring the collective mobilisation and widespread change needed to tackle the current climate crisis. This exchange reveals our strong belief in art and its transformative power.

Aiming at coherence with our chosen topic, we decided for this to be a free digital book with no commercial distribution, which allows

us to share our research broadly with minimal use of energy and materials.

Beyond doubt, climate change and human resilience and response to the ecological crisis will continue to be a major, if not the most crucial topic for years to come. All agendas need to address and adapt to this urge for collective action. Solidarity is the keyword. As an association of curators of corporate collections of contemporary art, we do not pretend to have the answer to what must to be done on a planetary level. Our target here is not to propose ways of mitigating and improving our individual ecological footprint or impact but to share our true concern and desire to be a part of the debate. We want to look for ways to develop critical thought and effective action by letting artworks speak and offer relevant and pertinent viewpoints related to self-perception and our vulnerability. This publication reflects our conviction of the crucial role of art as a cultural sign, a man-made image of how we perceive ourselves and the surrounding reality, in awakening consciousness and inspiring action. With this project IACCCA wishes to send the clear message that this association of corporate collection curators is conscious of its responsibility, and cares and supports art, including its subversive and critical thinking.

I should not like to conclude without acknowledging the work of all the people who have contributed to this project. In addition to the authors, my warmest thanks go to María Aguilera, Nimfa Bisbe and Claudia Schicktanz, members of the editorial committee and of the Board of IACCCA, who have been attentive to every detail and performed their editorial task to the full; to Sophie Roose, our coordinator and general secretary, for the perfect coordination of all the people and steps involved; to the studio of Lacasta Design for their impeccable and congruous design; to Erica Witschey, whose editing has ensured scientific rigour and meticulously and exhaustively unified the many versions of English of the international community we belong to; to the curator, Heidi Ballet, for her critical eye and vision of art and ecology, which has guided us through the IACCCA collections; and finally, and without doubt most importantly, to all the curators of IACCCA, who have supported this book with enthusiasm and dedication as co-curators with expert knowledge of their collections, selecting the artworks from their holdings which fit the topic and also kindly contacted all the artists, galleries and estates to help us secure reproduction rights - without them, this book could not have been produced. We can proudly say that this has been a true case of worldwide teamwork. Together, we have gone many extra miles with a light carbon footprint.



Heidi Ballet

## ART IN THE TIME OF ECOLOGICAL DISRUPTION

Five young people sit by a large body of water. In the background is a large city. The relaxed group chats in the afternoon sun. Their sunglasses, smiles and T-shirts make it look like a poster image of a perfect summer day in New York, as Brooklyn Bridge gives away. For all that there is one very disturbing element in the ideal picture. A large cloud of thick black smoke looms over the city across the river, smack in the middle of the image. The cloud is disturbing for the viewer, but not for the youngsters, who do not seem to notice it and are not bothered at all. Looking at the print more closely, we notice that the smoke plume rises from a skyscraper in the back – and then slowly comes the realisation that it is the image of 9/11 that most people saw on TV. While this disaster is unfolding in the background, the young people in the foreground seem too occupied with their own lives to even notice the event that will change the world in the decades to come.

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Thomas Hoepker's *View from Williamsburg, Brooklyn, towards Manhattan, September 11, 2001* (2001) [p. 126] is a striking illustration of a disastrous event taking place right before of our eyes, while we are not noticing. This arresting picture is today a compelling symbol for how the climate crisis has intensified in recent decades. Exactly twenty years later, it has accompanied me in my research. Even if climate change has been ongoing for decades, it seems to have recently caught us by surprise, as if unawares.

With all the information and resources at hand, how did we arrive at this situation of oversight? It is as if the general inability to imagine a future of climate crisis had prevented politicians from seeing and acting. In trying to comprehend what type of zeitgeist was present in the past decades, the production of contemporary art offers a prism through which to understand not only what was occupying an individual artist's imagination, but also what the world was concerned with at a specific point in time. It is with this blueprint in mind that I approached the art that is present in the holdings of the IACCCA members – thousands of artworks predominantly from the early 1990s to the present - when I was asked to develop a thematic concept for the presentation of its members' collections. Looking through today's lens, I tried to trace in the works the underlying dynamics that played a role in today's climate crisis. I detected three types of psychological alienation that may have contributed to the wishful delusional thinking of the past decades, and three mechanisms in Western society that have become the three chapters into which the works have been organised.

The first chapter, 'Dreaming of Omnipotence', examines the relationship between us and our environment, in which humans try to define and master nature: the image of the human race dominating nature that has been cultivated in Western culture. The second, 'Relationship to the Other', points at global inequality, the history of 'othering' and emotional distancing that started with coloniality, and our extractive connection with the environment. Finally, the third chapter, 'Constructed Selves', looks at the fabricated self-image, the difficulty in accepting vulnerability as part of the climate crisis, and the tensions between different points of view.

#### DREAMING OF OMNIPOTENCE

Associated by the Romans with thunder and storms, Jupiter was generally represented with a lightning bolt in his hand and a sullen look beneath his furrowed brow to convey the wrath and omnipotence of this supreme god, ruler of heaven and Earth. Those who believed in him usually explained climatic events as divine interventions on Earth, but when it came to the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in the year 79 AD, they did not relate the event with Jupiter's supremacy. Regardless of their beliefs or any of their religious ideas, the volcano spewed fire, and the city at its foot was not spared.

Today, one of the places where Jupiter lives on lies beneath the deep waters of the Pacific Ocean, where a 14,557 kilometre-long Internet cable is named after him. The cable connects Japan with the United States, and the reference is telling. Jupiter's son in classical mythology, Apollo, lends his name to another cable, the one that runs between the United States and Europe. Stripped from their divine function, the former rulers of the cosmos remain omnipresent and connect to a contemporary trust in the abilities of technology. Meanwhile, at the foot of Mount Vesuvius new villages have sprung up whose inhabitants trust seismographs to keep at bay their fear of imminent danger. This is just one symbolic example of how the whims of the gods, which once explained the order of the world, have been replaced by technology, which at times gives the impression that we humans can carry lightning bolts in our hands. If the cable network managed to connect all places on Earth, the meteoric rise of Internet connectivity and artificial intelligence has driven our ambitions ever further.

The first chapter, 'Dreaming of Omnipotence', takes as its starting point the image that we have historically built of ourselves in relation to our environment. The representation of humans at the top of the pyramid of species that has been promoted in Western culture gives us the right to rule over our natural environment, its resources and all its species. This approach stands in contrast to a coexistence that relies on conscious awareness of our interdependence, or a relationship on equal terms. Based on an art history in which the character of nature has been defined by whether it is depicted as object or as subject, this section includes several artworks that portray nature and consciously or unconsciously give it a certain stature. Other pieces illustrate our struggle to master nature, and the power play between humans and the forces of nature, in which we keep dreaming of omnipotence.

The switch from godly intervention to technology that heightened our status in the pyramid of beings did not take place in the past century alone and is not that new. Indeed, it did not come about with the rise of technology. Several scholars believe that the idea that we are at the centre of the universe, on top of the pyramid of species, was already embedded in the Book of Genesis in Judeo-Christian religions, where God created Man as the endpoint of the creation story, on the seventh day, to rule over all beings that were brought into being before him, even if almighty God was ruling over humans, meting out punishment for not living up to the standards of His creation. This also changed in the Modern Age. When faith was replaced by reason and science on the wake of the Renaissance movement and the philosophical stance of Humanism, the belief in our capabilities and our image as the highest beings ceased to know limits. Man-made scientific progress came to be the highest moral and philosophical standard in Western cultures. unwittingly breaking our spiritual relationship with nature. Nature was studied as a wonderful but scientific object that could be understood and manipulated through human research. This replaced the spiritual interconnectedness that is still present in, for example, the Latin American image of the 'Pacha Mama', or Mother Earth - relationships of balance experienced in non-Western cultures.

Human power outgrew the planet - which can no longer handle the pressure - and changed our idea of what we perceive as natural landscape. One of the works in this section is Edward Burtynsky's Oil Fields #19a & #19b: Belridge, California (2003) [pp. 90-91], a diptych that presents a field of oil wells that stretch out into the distant horizon, all flora scraped from the ground except for some sparse shrubbery. No immediate danger emanates from the scene, but it nonetheless gives off a sense of imminent menace. The infinite lifelessness feels dystopian, as does the activity that takes place there. By splitting the landscape across a diptych, the work gives the impression of being a window, where the void between the two pictures can be filled in at any moment. The viewer expects more pumpjacks left and right. Burtynsky's photographs alarm, despite the order and structure of the landscape - we do not see a devastating avalanche, as in Romantic painting. In the vast panorama, the nodding donkeys, as the above-ground pump sections are called, seem to operate like a perpetuum mobile - a hypothetical machine with the capacity to work indefinitely without an energy source. This impression

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of infinity, both spatial and temporal, triggers a cry of distress, as if we were no longer capable of stopping our own oil production and consumption, as if the inventor of humanity forgot to install the brakes. The advice of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to

In Burtynsky's work we see a marked departure from the original Romantic conception of the sublime, which coupled awe with a sense of unease. The heady scenes of nature in the paintings of Caspar David Friedrich or William Turner are enjoyable as long as humans are in a safe position within that landscape. The Romantic sublime that takes centre stage in art, and produces an imaging of nature, constantly plays with that uneasy border between certainty and the fearful expectation of disaster. Today, sublime landscapes cause a different kind of unrest. We are still in danger of being a victim of nature's mercilessness, only now feelings of guilt and shame override the original, ambiguous sensation of the Romantic sublime.

zero within the next 15 years seems impossible to attain.<sup>1</sup>

Now there is little of the Romantic awe of nature. At this stage of the environmental disaster, the sun, water and atmosphere are no longer the source of our admiration, but our enemies. Fear of an incomprehensible threat and insecurity dominate Burtynsky's ecologically sublime landscape. The pumped-up black gold, a 'natural resource', understood in this sense as a 'gift from the Earth', ultimately turns against its original giver.

Few events in modern history have had more impact on our self-image as omnipotent beings as the astronaut landing on the moon. Back in 1968, the crew of Apollo 8 brought back images from their mission, but the photographs of Earth taken from space in 1972 particularly captured the new possibilities that came with this momentous event. For the first time it was possible to take a picture of the planet that we inhabit from outer space. Known as the 'Blue Marble', it shows planet Earth in full colour. At the moment the crew of Apollo 17 pulled out the camera to photograph our world from outer space, clouds were swaying gracefully around the globe's southern hemisphere - like a gift wrap. They concealed what later satellite images would reveal in detail. In an image of the globe known as 'Earthrise', an intriguing planet emerges from the darkness, with a piece of the moon in the foreground. The whole world was introduced to the massive white Antarctic ice sheets; and since then, the entire globe can be imagined and reproduced in our retinas. The astronauts were touched, astounded and moved by the beauty of the planet, even if the aim of the space programmes, the space race, was actually part and parcel of the Cold War quest for superiority.

Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla's Land Mark (Foot Prints) #7 (2002) [pp. 92–93] brings to mind the iconic photograph of the first step on the moon. But their work questions the claiming of land and the implications of that appropriation. The artists had protesters walk with custom-designed

shoes that left footprints with slogans which refer to the American military tests on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques. For 60 years, US Army and NATO exercises had been taking place on the island, which left the soil contaminated by chemical weapon experiments. At the beginning of this century, when Allora & Calzadilla were fully denouncing the ecological and social impact of these polluting actions, they slowly withdrew. The footsteps in the sand are subtle and fragile, but their meaning is not to be misunderstood. Neil Armstrong's print went out into the world in 1969 with the words 'that's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind', insinuating that the moon was henceforth human territory. The mere presence of Armstrong apparently sufficed for this. What Allora & Calzadilla left behind on Vieques, on the other hand, was a demand to leave.

**Exceeding the Limits to Growth** In the work *Speculations on Disappearance* (2016) [p. 211], the art collective Cooking Sections recorded the sound of several species such as the Swainson's hawk, the California gnatcatcher, the red-legged frog or the Florida panther, all animals that are becoming extinct. These are some of the world's most banked on species, having become attractive for investment institutions that deal with the preservation of ecology. This type of 'natural capital' investment products include environmental resources ranging from water to geology or non-human species. The sector speculates on the restoration of damaged habitats through laws that oblige an investor to pay for the restoration of an amount of natural habitat equivalent to the one that is destroyed by a real estate developer. This activity, called 'habitat banking', reconfigures the way that the value of endangered species is defined and extracted.

In Le contrat naturel (1990) the French philosopher Michel Serres calls for a natural contract to be negotiated between Earth and its inhabitants.<sup>2</sup> In the Western 'anthropocentric' worldview, forests, water and all natural resources are at the service of human survival. Moreover, the idea of ownership and unlimited license to extract resources from nature, which is facilitated through industrial and technological progress, has become so engrained in Western thinking that it has become one of the leading principles of how modern society and the economy have been organised in the past centuries. The human relationship to the Earth became one of control, and we have increasingly learned to bend natural laws to our will and to extract not only to feed a growing population, but also for financial gain. This view has become embedded to such a degree that it is commonplace for governments, organisations and companies to make decisions based on cost overviews that do not take the burden on the environment and the effects on the coming generations into account.

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The warning that nature is not a limitless resource was publicly addressed for the first time in 1972 when the report 'Limits to Growth' was published by the Club of Rome, a think tank formed in April 1968 by some 30 scientists and economists who pondered the cracks in humanity's project. This report was based on computer models calculated by the first supercomputers at MIT, which predicted that the Earth's systems would collapse unless limits were put on economic growth and the accompanying burden on the natural world. The models predicted the future effects of human impact on the physical environment based on three models: one without intervention, another with medium intervention and a final one with considerable intervention. The model without any intervention, called 'business as usual', predicted a real collapse around 2070, with the first signs of the ecological crisis appearing around 2015. In addition to the environmental issue, inequality between rich and poor in the economic system was questioned in the assessment of 1972, which did not see the crises as isolated phenomena but as a set of symptoms of a global system with interacting components.

In 2012, researchers at the University of Sydney revisited the report and found that most of the predictions of the business-as-usual model had become a reality by that point in time, indicating that there were grounds to believe that the 1972 predictions for the decades to come could also come true.<sup>3</sup> This ties in with the urgent calls of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that does not see any room for procrastination. In 2021 our perception of the situation is moving away from the anticipation of a climate crisis to the realisation that we are in an ongoing crisis, as we are obviously already experiencing pandemics, floods and forest fires. As climate scientist Ken Caldeira notes, 'We're increasingly shifting from a mode of predicting what's going to happen to a mode of trying to explain what happened.'<sup>4</sup>

When looking at art production, this shift of being in a crisis rather than before one becomes clear in artists who speak less and less about a worrisome future that we need to prepare for and instead talk implicitly about the catastrophic situation we are all in, a crisis that forces us to live with other species in ways we had not imagined before. In some way, influenced by books such as *The Mushroom at the End of the World* by Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, the idea of 'making the best of this crisis' seems to have taken hold in the field of art production. An artist like Julie Mehretu, for example, refers to Tsing's book as follows: 'It's not because [the author] thinks that the "answer" lies in the story of this mushroom, but that the story of this mushroom allows our imagination to think differently about how to live this precarious future. How do we make sense of it? And because this [mushroom] is a thing that actually lives off of deforestation, in that space of the abyss, if you will, how can you imagine a future in that space, since that is where we are.'<sup>5</sup> The Pursuit of Invulnerability Daniel Steegmann Mangrané's practice aims to erode the Western conception of a worldview based on opposing dualisms, like nature and culture. Instead he proposes a new paradigm that acknowledges the interdependence of all species. The work Spiral Forest Gimbal (2014–15) [pp. 74–75], for example, draws on the notion of Amerindian perspectivism as developed by the anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, who presents Indigenous cosmologies that assume the world to be inhabited by all types of beings, human and non-human, each of which perceives reality from a different point of view with none of these perspectives being superior to another. The film was shot at a fixed location, near the trunk of a giant tree in the Mata Atlântica rainforest in Brazil. The artist used a custom-made gimbal camera that has the ability to film while rotating in any 360° axis, and in this way literally illustrates the viewpoint of all the species that live there.

The artists João Maria Gusmão and Pedro Paiva invite the viewer to question one's capacity for perception in a series of what they call 'poetic-philosophical fictions'. They have developed a body of work that takes as a point of departure 'abismology', a neologism coined by the writer René Daumal for an invented science that deals with 'the abyss', which redefines spirituality through the study of the limits of perception. In Gusmão and Paiva's work, layers of fiction are superimposed upon everyday situations and objects, which turn them into extraordinary worlds. The work *Mercury* (2009) [p. 95] generates tension between illusion and the conceptual truth. The gesture in the image, the cupping of water in one's hands to drink, is recognisably harmless, but the reflection of the liquid as well as the work's title create unease owing to the poisonous characteristics of this liquid metal, and thus open up a wider interpretation about the influence of mercury in our societies.

In Guido van der Werve's video Number Eight: Everything is going to be alright (2007) [p. 120] we see a man imperturbably walking the endless white expanse of an ice sea. Like a grotesque monster, an icebreaker sails behind him. The ship is called Sampo, the man Guido van der Werve. The Dutch artist and filmmaker often places himself in romantic, sublime scenes. Against the grandeur and imminent threat of nature stands the insignificance of the man. The layer of ice beneath him is the winter landscape of the Gulf of Bothnia between Sweden and Finland, and it is several dozen centimetres thick. His filmed performance is a bit like tightrope walking: the distance between him and the icebreaker behind is only 10 metres, the ice under his feet breaks up easily. But he believes, the title implies, that everything will be alright.

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**Recalibrating Humanity** Anthropocentrism is not absent from the human approach to nature. In the most essential sense of 'untouched by human activity', nature exists only as an image. As the antithesis of the wild and untamed, culture stands for civilisation, which continues to expand. Humans classify, interpret and control. The entire Anthropocene, the period named after human impact on the Earth and its atmosphere, is dominated by the steady conversion of nature into culture. That culture is about subjugation of the lower forms to our rationale, a deceptive license to exclude other life forms. Today culture dominates: the whole Earth has been carefully mapped, no ecosystem is truly pristine. Anthropocentrism is about the careless destruction of the pristine, about forgetting that any human movement into the wild reduces that wilderness.

Artist Vik Muniz made a series of early works that play with the border between the natural and the human, or nature and artist, in this case. In his first large-scale public art project in 2001, Muniz used a modified crop-dusting plane to draw cartoon-like clouds over the Manhattan skyline at four separate moments over a period of six days [fig. 1]. The action occurred on a monumental scale and forced people out of their routine to stop and look. One year later, he made a series in which he portrays the work of the artist in the natural environment in a similar way. His print *Hanger* (2002) [p. 106], from the *Sarzedo Drawing* series, shows a desert-like setting in which everyday objects are engraved, like a clothes hanger, glasses or a pair of scissors, generating tension between the everyday objects and the larger-than-life natural environment that humans cannot master, but which masters humans.

The widely used term 'environment' is not innocent. 'Forget the word environment', Michel Serres writes.<sup>6</sup> Assuming that we are the centre of a system of nature that flawlessly turns around us testifies, in his view, to narcissism. If any event has brought us 'back to earth' it has been the coronavirus crisis. Yet the weakness of the SARS-CoV-2 virus lies in the fact that it is parasitic. It needs a host, so if it kills the host it endangers the survival of its own species. The relationship of humans to the Earth is equally one of parasitism, Serres argues. The social contract made by humans – virtually or otherwise – to enter into a collectivity that distributed power among people was a condition for a balanced society. That contract entailed an exodus from nature into culture and marked the beginning of human history: 'as if the group that had signed it [...] were no longer rooted in anything but its own history".<sup>7</sup>

What can take the place of the mutual alienation in which the human race and Earth were entangled? By analogy with the social contract, Serres sees the current ecological crisis as an opportunity to make the same commitment between nature and the human race. The premise of the natural contract is symbiosis: reciprocity replaces domination and possession. The natural contract is a non-linguistic commitment: 'In fact, the Earth speaks to us in terms of forces, bonds, and interactions, and that's enough to make a contract.'<sup>8</sup>

It is time, as T. J. Demos suggests, to decolonise nature and stop treating it unilaterally as an object to be commodified. Does the ingrained paternalistic attitude of the Western community allow for ecosystems to be given back their freedom, to stop curtailing them with herbicides and pesticides? What holds us back the most, the resurrection of the wilderness, from which we are estranged, or the paralysing fear of losing any comfort? The compass by which we orient ourselves as acting subjects in a world full of acting beings is in dire need of recalibration.

#### **RELATIONSHIP TO THE OTHER**

Daniel Steegmann Mangrané believes that 'the question – who is a subject of full right, who belongs to "us", is the most essential political question.<sup>9</sup>

The second chapter of this volume, 'Relationship to the Other', centres on the question of who belongs to the group that we call 'us' and we feel responsible for. The artworks in this section touch on the subject of solidarity at several levels. One is the global, marked by a power imbalance that follows the fault lines of colonisation and to this day operates with the unjust status quo of 'the West and the rest'. Their artists look for clues as to how this emotional distance



[fig. 1] Vik Muniz, *Clouds*, 2001. Gelatin silver print, 127 × 101.6 cm

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from 'the other' was created, and ponder on whether it is possible to expand the notion of 'us' to care for people in other parts of the world as a shared responsibility, and to regard non-human species as part of us. The works in this section also examine the economies based on extraction, whether of labour or of natural resources. One of the problems of the current climate crisis is the fact that the origins of the catastrophe, as well as its mitigation, entail a common global answerability, while political responsibility is taken only at a national level. Paradoxically, the richer countries have a bigger responsibility in this cataclysm, since they developed an economic system with a large ecological footprint, while the lion's share of the consequences will be felt in the poorer parts of the world. It is likely that in due time, extractivism, the act of extracting natural resources to sell on the world market without taking responsibility for the ecological – or social – effects will no longer be an accepted business model.

Definitions of 'Us' When Alfredo Jaar participated in Documenta 8 in 1987, he attempted to respond to the specific context of the exhibition. Accordingly, he created 1 + 1 + 1 [pp. 182-83], a triptych consisting of three lightboxes each containing a single black and white image of impoverished children standing in a dusty landscape. The photographs are cropped and shown upside down. The faces of the children are not visible, but the abject poverty of their surroundings is clearly discernible. Jaar introduced them into the context of Documenta because the exhibition has long been dominated by a Western perspective. Bringing in these images in this context, he wanted to subvert not only the Western assumptions of the 'third world', but also stereotypical representations of economically marginalised positions in the contemporary art world. Throughout his practice, Jaar has built a decades-long oeuvre that simultaneously asserts art's ability to raise awareness while guestioning it, looking at the way that social and economic inequities are understood in the West and considering art's abilities to advance social justice or to solicit empathic responses.

If Jaar questions art's responsibility in global inequality, then in *The Great Derangement* writer Amitav Ghosh looks into art's potential in addressing the climate crisis. Ghosh approaches climate change as a crisis not just of nature, but also of culture and the imagination – in particular, he points to the dearth of images of climate-induced natural disasters in literature and other cultural fields outside the genre of science-fiction or action movies.<sup>10</sup> In addition, he calls attention to an oftentimes forgotten aspect of the Anthropocene, namely the decades-long dynamics of empire. 'Climate change is absolutely an aspect of empire', he states.<sup>11</sup> The coupling of capitalism and empire created an

economy of extractivism that laid the foundations for the distribution of power that is in place today. Extractivism – the appropriation of natural resources for trade in the world market – can be seen as an extension of human relations and their connection to the natural environment.<sup>12</sup> Ghosh points out that this status quo in favour of the colonising countries also applies to the climate crisis. Added to that is the idea of 'climate justice' that is often overlooked. The dire state of the planet has been caused by the polluting lifestyle of a few countries, and it would be impossible for the rest of the world to live a similar lifestyle. An implicit and complicit dehumanisation has been baked into the economic system, a distancing from the other, that makes it impossible to see the effects of our consumption in other parts of the world.

Bruno Latour outlines in *Où suis-je? Leçons du confinement* à *l'usage des terrestres* (2021): 'contemporary man as a being alienated from coexistence, both with his peers and with other life forms [...] without business schools, accountants, lawyers, Excel spreadsheets, without the continuous work of the states to divide tasks between the public and the private, without the novels of Madame Rand, without the continuous training of the media, no one would have invented "individuals" capable of an egotism radical enough, continuous enough, coherent enough to "owe nothing to each other" and to consider all others as "strangers" and all forms of life as "resources".<sup>13</sup> We have lost the ability to be earthlings, Latour argues as he formulates how we relate to others as an extravagant invention.

In her practice, Otobong Nkanga creates landscapes that chronicle land use, in which she embeds the history of the oil industry in her native country Nigeria and uses corporeal forms in an ongoing research into the politics of land, body and time. At the 2019 Venice Biennale she showed the work *Veins Aligned* (2018) [fig. 2], an installation that mirrors an ore vein that runs through the soil and is accompanied by the poem that reads: 'A visible blanched form / If unleashed would be the ruin / Of everything / A lapse, a stain, a fall / A corruption before you see / Collisions, a kind of denial / Many ways to fall.' In an interview on *Landversation* (2014/20) [fig. 3], the artist notes: 'What I mean with regards to the notion of "Land" extends beyond just soil, territories, earth, etc. but relates to our connectivity and conflicts in relation to the spaces we live in and how we humans try to find solutions through simple gestures of innovation and repair.'<sup>14</sup>

In the triptych *Alterscapes: Playground* (2005–15) [p. 190], Nkanga sits with a landscape over her lap like a pliable tabletop. She cuts into the terrain, replicating the violence of the British colonisers in Nigeria and hinting at its long-term effects that left not only political upheaval, but also polluted soil and an impoverished population.



[fig. 2] Otobong Nkanga, *Veins Aligned*, 2018. Lasa Venato Fior di Melo marble, Murano glass and paint, 2590 × 50–70 cm; 'A lapse, a stain, a fall' poem engraved on black granite, 24 × 30.5 cm

[fig. 3] Otobong Nkanga, Landversation, 2014/20. Installation, mixed media, tables, chairs, plants, soil, bricks, concrete, vinyls and paper cards, variable dimensions. Installation view, Landversation, Himalayas Museum, Shanghai, 2016



[fig. 4] Sammy Baloji, Untitled 13, from the series Mémoire, 2006. Archival digital photograph on satin matte paper, 60 × 240 cm To understand the psychological basis of 'othering', it is essential to grasp its opposite, the conditions for responsibility and care. In *Totalité et infini* (Totality and Infinity, 1961) the Lithuanian philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas postulates that the expression of the other embraces truth, and compels humility and responsibility. He writes that the face of the other, an individual, emits such a powerful appeal that we cannot turn our back to it. By recognising the other in ourselves, difference disappears. Lévinas formulated his ideas in the aftermath of events that left humanity with a heightened feeling of self-loathing: the development of totalitarian regimes, the outbreak of World War II, the Holocaust. The other merged into the masses, both on the side of the perpetrator and the victim. This dynamics of alienation due to facelessness is also applicable to today's crisis.

Slow Violence Part of the climate crisis problem is that its violence impacts a group of anonymous individuals, 'strangers, people that don't have a face. They are the people in other places that are considered not part of "our" lifeworld, or the "future generations".' In 2011, Rob Nixon used the term 'slow violence' to identify harmful acts that roll out over time to the point where their consequences are difficult to trace back to their sources. In contrast to the victims, who are numerous and seemingly appear out of nowhere, the perpetrators of violence remain invisible.<sup>15</sup> The individual on the dominant side hides behind the 'structural inequality' in which his own responsibility seems to disappear; the Levinasian face of the individual casualty of slow violence becomes inaccessible due to the distance in time and space. In the same way the suffering of future generations is too abstract to bring about an important change in behaviour today. The art of Sammy Baloji delves into the memory of colonialism and its ongoing effects. Through the use of photography and archival material, he creates new photomontages of the colonial period that bring images of foreign dominion face to face with traces of its exploitation. In his hometown, Lubumbashi, natural resources were mined and shipped around the world in an economic web that favoured the colonisers and pushed Congolese workers into slavery. His long-term engagement with subjects caught in this dreadful cycle resulted in Mémoire (2006) [fig. 4], a series of portraits of miners whom he portrays in an attempt to give a face to the system that many economic sectors around the globe currently still depend on. What you cannot see does not affect you, and history is full of instances where suffering in other parts of the world is hidden from the people living in the countries that instigate this violence. By far the most notable historical example of this is colonialism and the slave trade, but there are also more recent examples, such as the Vietnam War.

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In Martha Rosler's series *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home*, the artist spliced together general-interest magazine images of the Vietnam war, and later the Iraq and Afghanistan wars – as in *The Gray Drape* (2008) [fig. 5] – with pictures from American home decoration magazines. In *Make up / Hands up* (1967–72) [p. 184], a horrific black and white photograph of a young, blindfolded Vietnamese girl held at gunpoint by a bare-chested African-American soldier is laid over a glossy magazine illustration of a white woman applying eye make up to her face. The image is collaged on top of the eye of the American woman. The psychological distance between both worlds becomes apparent, but also the blindness to the circumstances they find themselves in, and what happens outside their worlds, though all three wars were extensively televised.

Politics of the Armed Lifeboat The situation of global inequality among climate refugees shows that the 'us' who will survive the crisis are located in the West. It is not so much the low-lying Dutch coastal communities which will soon have to fear the effects of global warming, but the residents of the coastline around the Bay of Bengal, for example. For them, sandbags are often the only answer to rising seawater and cyclones, which experts fear will become increasingly destructive and less predictable. To tackle the climate crisis, characterised by strong global interdependencies, a strategy based on national borders seems almost laughable. Yet for now, no global policies have been agreed upon. The American investigative journalist Christian Parenti speaks of the politics of the armed lifeboat: 'Responding to climate change by arming, excluding, forgetting, repressing, policing, and killing.<sup>16</sup> He fears a green authoritarianism of rich countries fending off climate refugees, who in turn will be abandoned to total chaos.



[fig. 5] Martha Rosler, *The Gray Drape*, from the series *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home, New Series*, 2008. Photomontage, 101.6 × 76.2 cm

In this sense, the climate crisis puts existing inequalities on edge rather than transcending them. The principle of climate justice, therefore, goes beyond melting ice caps to include the rights of the vulnerable populations who are most severely affected by global warming.

Few works capture better the hopelessness and frustration of those who are forced to migrate than Adrian Paci's *Centro di permanenza temporanea* (2007) [p. 178]. In this short video shot at San Jose Airport in California, migrants are shown crossing the tarmac and climbing up a boarding stairs. As you look at their faces, and see them waiting, it slowly becomes clear that there is no aeroplane. They are trapped on the stairs, in a state of 'temporary permanence', a transition and at the same time a position of total immobility.

The challenge we must face is to entrust ourselves again as individuals to a community and regain a sense of responsibility. Shaking off the feeling of alienation from what surrounds us is the first hurdle we must clear if we want to attain a symbiosis on a planetary scale. This implies a more responsible relationship not only to other human beings, but also to animals and to the natural world as a whole. It also entails a cultural change, since even science - presumably objective - has unwittingly focused on Darwinist research that advocates the survival of the fittest. As Donna Haraway has pointed out in her essay on 'Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective' (1998), knowledge is heavily dependent on the worldview of the person creating it, and it is thus hardly ever really objective. In the past, scientific research in US universities was carried out by white middle-aged males, and this was considered the standard. Over the last years, with the rise of female scientists, it turns out that Haraway's criticism of the biases and societal stigmas of the research community were correct and we had ignored a whole side of evidence.

**Species Symbiosis** One of the scientists whose theories were largely overlooked was Lynn Margullis. In 1970 she published her theory of symbiogenesis (literally, 'becoming by being together'), which challenged the central tenets of neo-Darwinism. Margullis understood evolution as the result of the merging of bacteria instead of evolutionary selection. Together with James Lovelock, she developed the Gaia hypothesis that states that Earth functions as a self-regulating system, in which each small microorganism plays a vital role. This theory, which emphasises cooperation and symbiosis over competition, is being increasingly valued as we become more familiar with a series of species dying out. It is a vantage point to move towards when thinking away from anthropocentrism, moving in the direction of putting ourselves on the same level as animals and plants. More recently, writer and philosopher

Emanuele Coccia has gone so far as to say that plants are the most essential species on Earth, since without their physical processes humans would not be able to breathe. In his 2017 book *The Life of Plants: A Metaphysics of Mixture*, he makes so bold a statement as to say that humans, not plants, are by-products in the natural world.

A work in which the animal-human tension is felt strongly is Joel Sternfeld's Exhausted Renegade Elephant (1979) [p. 166]. The photograph looks like a still from the end of an action movie. The elevated vantage point, the lines of the road and the power lines suck the gaze into what, with eyes scrunched up, is merely a brown stain. A closer look reveals that stain to be composed of the rectangular shape of a truck, a huge puddle and in its midst, helpless and defeated, an elephant. Its skin shines in the burning sun, someone aims a garden hose at him. Bystanders look on, with more fascination than they would if the animal were behind fencing in the zoo. On the white car with the door open on the front we read 'sheriff', as if it were a blood-curdling chase. Soon the animal is hoisted into the truck, like a teenager plucked from a forbidden party by its parents. The life of the elephant, its very flight, is reduced to spectacle. Many a zoo or circus visitor, however, does not experience it that way, and even the tourist who pays to ride on its back feels in closer contact with wild nature for a moment.

In Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* (1915), the protagonist, Gregor Samsa, turns into a giant insect overnight. With his clumsy new legs he explores his familiar surroundings disoriented. This metamorphosis makes him almost annoyingly aware of his own form, and limits his freedom. In order to grasp the interdependencies with other life forms, it is useful to imagine becoming a termite. After all, a termite that isolates itself is in trouble: its survival depends on others. Symbiotic cohabitation entails recognition of that termite's nest, where one actor produces, say, clothing for the other, and where a second actor depends on the  $CO_2$ production of another.

Does the termite nest risk the same loss as the individual? No, because it assumes a radical recognition of the connectedness to what is outside ourselves.

#### CONSTRUCTED SELVES

On the morning of 14 July, I left Berlin by train to Brussels. As bad weather had been announced in the east of Belgium, two hours into the trip I got a gut feeling that maybe I should not be travelling westwards at all that day. I decided to ignore the feeling and trust the weather would not be so bad; quite frankly, the worst scenario I could conjure up in my head was heavy rainfall. Some hours later I found myself stuck in Cologne station, where train tracks in all directions were damaged. After two hours trying to continue my trip, my self-image slowly went from 'me stubbornly trying to get to Belgium' to 'me as a body that I should keep safe'. While I spent an unplanned night in a hotel in Cologne, the area suffered the heaviest floods in the history of the region that killed more than two hundred people. It was my most intimate encounter yet with the climate crisis, the first time I experienced an infrastructure breakdown due to extreme weather. To this day, I cannot make sense of why I decided to underestimate the weather.

The third chapter of this volume, 'Constructed Selves', surveys the psychological need to accept human vulnerability in the climate crisis on a personal level by exploring how the self-image is built in modern Western cultures, as a backdrop to the felt loss of identity that is one of the driving forces of climate crisis denial. It features pieces that look at the process of building a flawless image towards the outside world, the instilling of discipline in body and mind, and on the other hand includes artworks that purposely show cracks in the image. It also contains works that amplify the tension between the young and the aging, and between a male and a female perspective on the world.

**Make the World Greta Again** One of the images that circulated on the Internet after the floods in Germany and Belgium this summer was a picture of a black SUV stranded in one-meter high water. On the back window the car had a bumper sticker that read 'Fuck you Greta'. It was a manipulated image that circulated widely as a symbol for the tensions of our time.<sup>17</sup>

Global warming denial culminated in the figure of Donald Trump, who turned his back on the Paris Climate Agreement (his successor Joe Biden quickly reversed that decision) and bluntly promoted his anti-ecological stance. 'Today, almost nine out of ten Americans do not know that scientists agree, well beyond the threshold of consensus, that human beings have altered the global climate through the indiscriminate burning of fossil fuels', American writer Nathaniel Rich wrote in 2019. Although we knew perfectly well what to do as early as 1979, he argues, great opportunities were lost through blundering and negation.<sup>18</sup>

This cocktail of laxity and denial grew out of the political tension between local and global in which progress thinking has nestled. In direct opposition to the core idea of the limits to growth, the attitudinal out-ofthis-world approach ignores reality, denying that human actions have an impact on the planet and that sooner or later it retaliates. We need to land back on earth and become subordinate to the system of engendering, the dynamics of emergence and the natural course of things.

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In 2014, two scientists analysed these reactions and found that the threat that many men in particular perceived was not limited to the environment, but to a group identity they saw under attack from all sides. The movement inadvertently advanced gender equality, which threatened the male entitlement of their way of life. According to researcher Martin Hultman, 'There is a package of values and behaviors connected to a form of masculinity that I call "industrial breadwinner masculinity". They see the world as separated between humans and nature. They believe humans are obliged to use nature and its resources to make products out of them. And they have a risk perception that nature will tolerate all types of waste. It's a risk perception that doesn't think of nature as vulnerable and as something that is possible to be destroyed. For them, economic growth is more important than the environment.<sup>19</sup>

True to her interest in human relationships and social behaviour, Gillian Wearing disguised herself as different members of her family – her mother, sister, brother, father and uncle – as well as herself at different ages for her 2003–06 series *Album*. In this series in particular she examined the ambiguity of being connected to someone on a genetic level and yet being very different. In *Self-Portrait as my Father Brian Wearing* [p. 251], the image naturally represents the relationship between her father and herself, and the masculine image that the man tries to uphold. The photograph communicates the tension between two generations, and the everyday struggle between two related people of different gender and generation.

**Generation Gap** In *Progress vs. Regress* (2013) [p. 225], Melanie Bonajo explores the effect of technological inventions on human relationships. The protagonists in the film, who belong to a generation that was born shortly after World War II, speak about their experience of alienation from a digital society which 'digital natives' know how to navigate almost intuitively. Her video is a touching and humorous account that draws attention to the impact of technological progress on the ageing part of society in an environment that prioritises efficiency and progress. Bonajo made the video into a digital collage in the style of amateur image editing to comment on rites of seeing and communicating.

If the difference between the younger and the older generations has always been seen as a big mental gap, the gap today is fraught with tension. When it comes to climate change and taking action, young people are much better informed and willing to make sacrifices than elderly people. The elephant in the room is that due to the inertia of former generations, newer generations will be suffering a future in which climate catastrophe will be a regular part of their lives.

Having a seemingly rational grasp of the past in no way guarantees that we have the future in our hands. As Daniel Kahneman points out in Thinking, Fast and Slow (2011), 'the illusion that we understand the past fosters overconfidence in our ability to predict the future.<sup>20</sup> We walk a tightrope between past and future in full confidence that the rope is firmly tied at both ends of the temporal spectrum. We neither look back nor acknowledge the abyss. Our perception of the past fosters the false idea that we will never make the same mistakes again and advancing insight guards us from naiveté. We often adopt a dismissive attitude towards our ancestors, coming to the conclusion that they did not know any better. While in Eastern cultures older people gain respect in society for their accumulated wisdom, in Western cultures there is no such custom. Since 'youth' began to be commercialised as the ideal period of life in Western media, ageing has turned into a process of becoming vulnerable which Western culture has no taste for, and thus Western societies exert pressure, especially on women, to stay young or at least maintain a youthful appearance.

In Cindy Sherman's photo series, the artist pictures herself posing as different types of women [fig. 6]. *Untitled #477* [p. 248] is part of a period and series in which she portrayed women who are unwilling to age gracefully, and strive to continue giving an image of themselves as strong, seductive and youthful persons. The result is a group of pictures in which the first thing that catches our attention is the tireless efforts and the many layers of make-up the women put on to produce a particular image, rather than let their personality shine through in an honest image. In this portrait, the woman looking at the camera seems to be reliving a past version of herself, sitting with a cowboy hat, a sleeveless silk shirt with a deep V-neck and an artificial smile that keeps everything but the superficial at bay, making it more a forced image of a cowgirl than a real person.

**Self-Control and Discipline** The self is all about control; domination over inner and outer nature is a reflex that has been internalised in the individual, argue Adorno and Horkheimer. Impulse and intuition are wild traits that need to be tamed; if uncontrolled by reason, the difference between humans and animals ceases to exist.<sup>21</sup> One of the driving pressures in Western society during the past decades has been to lend great importance to a flawless image of the faster, stronger, more beautiful and ever better. The linear thinking of progress combined with human success in overcoming historical hurdles has veiled the fact that humans living in the Western world are suffering from the pressure they put on themselves to excel – the cold alienation built up not only in relation to the vulnerability of the 'other' but also in relation to one's own vulnerability as another side of the same coin.

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[fig. 6] Cindy Sherman, *Untitled*, 2000. C-print. 76.2 × 50.8 cm

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In Dora García's video *The Breathing Lesson* (2001) [p. 222], an adult woman – presumably the mother – gives instructions to a young girl about how she should be breathing. The woman's instructions are accompanied by her clapping her hands as if in a coded message, upon which the young girl obediently adapts her breathing to attain the required result. The exercise they do looks like a painful tour de force that tests the limits of the young girl's body, but also her willingness to be obedient to the mother and follow the lesson of discipline that does not have any clear use.

The Human Condition This alienation from our own nature is reinforced by the way our basic needs are met. Hannah Arendt, in The Human Condition (1958), outlines the distinction between humans as animal laborans (labourers) and as homo faber (makers of things). The former is directly concerned with survival. Its only interest is in sustaining life and as such it becomes enslaved to life; this submission to biological processes is common to humans and animals. Homo faber, on the other hand, acts from something outside the immediate compulsion of life's necessities. Its work is more enduring in nature and results in exchangeable goods of commercial value, artificial things that distinguish humans from nature. In capitalist societies, the amount of labour in a human life has been greatly reduced, so we have gained a certain freedom from the animal labourers. However, this relative independence comes at the cost of affinity with the immediate necessities of life.

In *Human Nature* (2013) [fig. 7], Ugo Rondinone refers to our impulse to build images in our own likeness, a practice that exists since the earliest civilisation. He uses basic natural materials, rough-hewn slabs of bluestone, to build human-like figures with legs, torso and head. Each colossal figure is endowed with a distinct personality, creating an interesting tension between the archetypal giants and their traits. The work, in all its mythical scale, reminds us of our human condition and reconnects the contemporary world with our distant origins.

A scenario of ultimate uncertainty, in which the entire human civilisation is disrupted, is not compatible with the image that we perpetuate of ourselves. 'Death is powerful and compelling; life is fragile and shivery', writes Timothy Morton.<sup>22</sup> Death is our Achilles' heel and the greatest threat to the project of progress.

But this vulnerability is ambivalent. Etymologically, the term derives from the Latin *vulnerare*, meaning 'to wound, damage or hurt'. From the same root comes the active *vulnerabilis*, meaning 'injurious or wounding', while the English *vulnerable* today is understood only passively: 'capable of being physically or emotionally wounded' (Merriam-Webster). According to Morton, climate warming falls into the category of hyperobjects: 'things that are huge and, as they say, "distributed" in time and space – that take place over many decades or centuries (or indeed millennia), and that happen all over Earth.'<sup>23</sup> The warming of a planet is too large and complex a concept for our imagination, so we only see separate phenomena. Human beings suffer from aphantasia when it comes to hyperobjects: we are unable to form a mental image of them. That limitation of scale, that lack of visual clues, can make us half-heartedly and unconsciously conclude that the unimaginable is not there.

[fig. 7] Ugo Rondinone, *Human Nature*, 2013. Bluestone (9 pieces), 488 to 610 cm tall (each). Installation view, Rockefeller Center, New York, 23 April–7 June 2013



Dealing with the topic of climate crisis means constantly working in flux. The situation inevitably requires continual editing. Since I got involved in the IACCCA project in 2018, many calamities that were unthinkable have taken place: there have been fires in the Arctic Circle, Canada has registered a record high temperature of 49.5°C and the village of Lytton simply went up in flames; a world-changing coronavirus crisis has brought activity as we knew it to a halt; unprecedented floods have wreaked havoc in western Europe, western India and in China, and forest fires have raged across southern Europe, Turkey and California. What we have not seen in the past years is the most polluting countries and economies getting on a zero-emission track. Even if important changes in mindset and intention are materialising, they are doing so too slowly.

If one important insight has come from the coronavirus crisis, it is that things can effectively come to a halt for the sake of something that is larger than the economy. For the first time in the Western postwar period, for a period of time, governments stopped being efficient economic machines and turned their attention towards safeguarding their population, no matter at what cost. This might have triggered a crucial change in mindset towards the protection of citizens and living beings, one that will undoubtedly be necessary in the decades to come. Another positive change is that scientists are finally being listened to by politicians. After decades of climate blindness and even climate denial - at its saddest high under Trump - an important precedent has been created to let safety and wellbeing dictate policy. In this changed mindset might lie hope for the future. What the crisis unfortunately has also shown is that those who are economically the most vulnerable will suffer the most in a crisis, and that borders can and will be closed again in case of an emergency. The biggest challenge will be in defining the 'us' that needs protection, in a way that is more expansive than the people that were born in their own nation state.

The climate disasters of the past years and the pandemic are hopefully bringing about the painful but necessary dethroning of humans, erasing our image of omnipotence. In addition, we must let sink in the idea that the man-made infrastructure we live in can effectively break in extreme climate situations. This change in the way we understand ourselves might be the only positive avenue out of denial and fear. Fuelled with solidarity and courage, this new approach can become a more spiritually satisfying way of living. As the world goes through another big change yet again, we can choose to be led by writer Arundhati Roy, who writes: 'Either way, change will come. It could be bloody, or it could be beautiful. It depends on us.' <sup>24</sup> 1 • See https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/, accessed 20 August 2021. Under emissions in line with current pledges made under the Paris Agreement (known as Nationally Determined Contributions, or NDCs), global warming is expected to surpass 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, even if these pledges are supplemented with very challenging increases in the scale and ambition of mitigation after 2030 (high confidence). This increased action would need to achieve net zero CO<sub>2</sub>

2 • Michel Serres, *The Natural Contract*, trans. Elizabeth MacArthur and William Paulson (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 12.

**3** • Gaya Herrington, 'Update to limits to growth: Comparing the World3 model with empirical data', *Journal of Industrial Ecology* 25:3 (2021), 614.

4 • Cited in Nathaniel Rich, Losing Earth: A Recent History (New York: MCD/Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2019).

5 • JaBrea Patterson-West, 'Julie Mehretu: On Black Abstraction, Futurity and Opacity as a Space of Liberation', *Flash Art* 334 (Spring 2021), https://flash---art.com/article/julie-mehretu/, last accessed 12 September 2021.

6 • Serres, The Natural Contract, 33.

7 • Ibid., 34.

8 • Ibid., 39.

9 • See https://ccs.bard.edu/museum/exhibitions/249daniel-steegmann-mangrane-a-transparent-leafinstead-of-the-mouth, accessed 23 July 2021.

10 • Amitav Ghosh, The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 63.

11 • Ben Knight, 'Amitav Ghosh: What the West doesn't get about the climate crisis', *DW* 6 November 2019, https://www.dw.com/en/amitav-ghosh-what-the-west-

doesnt-get-about-the-climate-crisis/a-50823088, accessed 11 September 2021.

12 • Ghosh, The Great Derangement, 87.

13 • Bruno Latour, *Où suis-je*? (Paris: La Decouverte, 2021), 80.

14 • See https://www.otobong-nkanga.com/ landversation, accessed 28 July 2021.

15 • Rob Nixon, Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

16 • Christian Parenti, *Tropic of Chaos: Climate Change* and the New Geography of Violence (New York: Nation Books, 2011).

17 • The original photograph of the car published on 16 July in the German newspaper *Bild* had no sticker on the back window. The photoshopped image posted on Twitter on 17 July became viral.

18 • Nathaniel Rich, Losing Earth, section 8.6.

19 • Martin Gelin, The Misogyny of Climate Deniers', The New Republic, Apocalypse Soon section, 29 August 2019, https://newrepublic.com/article/154879/ misogyny-climate-deniers, accessed 22 July 2021.

20 • Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011).

21 • Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic* of *Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 95.

22 • Timothy Morton, *Being Ecological* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2018), 98.

23 · Ibid., 103.

24 • Arundhati Roy, *Listening to Grasshoppers: Field Notes on Democracy* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2009), 39.

As all things ecological have grown as urgent subjects of global concern, contemporary artists have also turned increasingly to address their implications, including in relation to representation, materiality, aesthetics and politics. This is hardly surprising, given that we are in a widely recognised era of climate breakdown. Indeed, the UN-convened Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), representing the world's leading climate experts, has stressed recently that we are running out of time to limit greenhouse gases and save our planet from runaway climate disaster (specifically by reaching net-zero emissions by 2030).<sup>1</sup> In fact we are already seeing evidence of climate transformation in the widespread catastrophic wildfires in Siberia and California, disastrous super-hurricanes in the southeast US and Bangladesh, and unprecedented flooding in China and western Europe, and much more.

Yet if the warming planet brings cascading tipping points, comprising an environmental emergency, it is anything but new. According to Indigenous environmentalists, present climate change connects to a deep history of racial and colonial capitalism that has long engaged in extractive and social violence, destroying habitats and burning through natural resources for hundreds of years. As Melanie Yazzie, of The Red Nation, explains, climate justice began in 1492 – originating in the Indigenous resistance that met the colonisation of the Americas.<sup>2</sup> Its ongoing struggle, joining climate action with socialjustice politics, involves the imperatives for rapid decarbonisation as much as decolonisation, together defining a necessary societal transformation towards collective wellbeing, ecological sustainability and multispecies flourishing.

While mounting social movement activism is doing everything possible - growing protests, electoral campaigns, direct action and civil disobedience - to reconfigure politics and enact meaningful climate governance, a growing number of contemporary artists are offering further ways of transforming consciousness through multisensory, material and perceptual relations to the world.<sup>3</sup> If, as scholar Andreas Malm suggests, we are all 'carbon subjects' - diversely shaped in deep subjective ways by our individual and collective formations within fossil capitalism - then we need to draw on all critical resources, including creative aesthetic experience, which can offer opportunities unavailable elsewhere for thinking, being and becoming otherwise.<sup>4</sup> Or, as the artist Otobong Nkanga notes, 'what artists do is open different portals', offering passages of experiential and conceptual transformation. With and through them, we can learn how matter and meaning are interlinked, if also obscured, so that we can connect the dots and think diverse histories and potential futures together.<sup>5</sup>

CONTEMPORARY ART AND ECOLOGY: AN ASSESSMENT REPORT Alterscapes Nkanga's In Pursuit of Bling [fig. 8], a mixed-media installation presented at the Berlin Biennial in 2014, delves deeply into the material basis of the flashy commodity object, excavating its sources of value, historical extractions and the social violence behind the shiny surface of capital. The multi-experiential aesthetic aspects of the piece match the complexity of the networks it investigates and represents. A double-sided tapestry shows abstract figures cut in half by images of mining topographies on which sit gemstone patterns and a ball-and-stick chemical diagram. Rendered in the artist's signature style and iconography, it rises above a gathering of metal-framed tables, each presenting sculptural forms, such as a pointed hat composed of malachite and a set of black-and-white archival photographs depicting historical mining operations in Namibia, a former German colony. In addition, there are two video screens, installed as low-lying table tops, showing images of the artist presenting different shiny objects and appearing on the streets of Berlin wearing the malachite crown.

Nkanga's art performs 'visibility's work', according to Denise Ferreira da Silva, casting light on otherwise hidden correspondences, including those that join Earth's elements to labour power and global markets: 'Today's most popular commodity, copper, nourishes global capital as it siphons labor power expended in its production through juridical and economic architectures of colonial and racial violence – namely, practices and methods of governance effecting displacement, dispossession, and death.'<sup>6</sup>

The piece produces what we might call 'alterscape stories', to borrow one of Nkanga's resonant terms that entitle another related work [p. 190], stories that 'uproot the past'. As such, it provides a materialist, representational repertoire for disclosing processes of exploitation (opportunising the difference between the value of labour and the exchange value of commodities) and expropriation (the violent usurpation of lands and bodies in the pursuit of profit), as described in Marxist analyses of capitalist social relations. Nkanga's alterscapes – geographies of land transformation linked to the formation of racial and colonial violence – connects those social relations to ecology as a natural science of connectivity, producing a sensible historical materialism, a geological network mediating social forms.

Nkanga's materialist cosmology extends further in *Double Plot* (2018) [fig. 9], a woven textile and mixed-media piece that appears as another wall-sized tapestry, its imagery similarly schematic and allegorical as *In Pursuit of Bling*: a headless figure, standing near a blue-leaved tree on the dark abyss of a vast star-scape, appears holding a line connecting to five circular shapes containing photographic images of tear gas and incendiary explosions. A wheel of six orange

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[fig. 8] Otobong Nkanga, In Pursuit of Bling, 2014. Inkjet prints, lightbox, metal modulated structure, minerals, objects, texts, videos with sound and woven textile pieces, variable dimensions. Installation view, *Otobong Nkanga: To Dig a Hole That Collapses Again*, MCA Chicago, 31 March-2 September 2018

[fig. 9] Otobong Nkanga, *Double Plot*, 2018. Woven textile (viscose bast, polyester, bio cotton and cashwool, acryl) and photograph (5 inkjet prints on laser cut Forex plates), 265 × 770 cm



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and purple arms assists with the rope. The background stars are joined, as if in diagrammatic formation, the resulting constellations unfamiliar and abstract, potentially cartographic or stratigraphic as much as astronomical and ecological.

Connecting elements and history, landscapes and social relations, Nkanga's work develops a methodology of social ecology. If ecology, at its most fundamental, defines the relationality between organisms and their environments, then her work proposes an ecology of forms, an aesthetic approximation of networked causes-and-effects. The figural abstraction, acephalic, elevates these forms to a structural level: these are not recognisable individuals, let alone specific people, but rather allegories of Anthropocene agency based in collective and depersonalised systems that carry outsized influence in the shaping of worlds over millennia.

Going still further, Nkanga's art puts the politics into ecology, expanding the latter's environmental and non-human entanglements to 'the interrelations among nature, culture, and power and politics, broadly speaking.'<sup>7</sup> As the writer Eric Otieno proposes, Nkanga's work relates to what geographer Kathryn Yusoff describes as 'Black Anthropocenes', defined as networks of 'inhuman proximity organised by historical geographies of extraction, grammars of geology, imperial global geographies and contemporary environmental racism.'<sup>8</sup>

**Extractive Zones** Extraction too defines a relationality, if more of a one-way street: the withdrawal of value without corresponding deposit (except in the form of pollution and exhaustion). Representing the central logic of our global economic arrangements, extraction lies at the root of fossil-fuel energy systems and the material basis of industrial supply chains.<sup>9</sup> Its geographies are further alterscapes, as documented, for instance, in Edward Burtynsky's *Oil Fields #19a & 19b: Belridge, California* (2003) [pp. 90–91]. The double-sided photograph shows a vast terrain of pumpjacks, a petro-scape geography shaped by oil drilling as far as the eye can see. Framed so that little else appears within the bird's-eye field of vision, save a sliver of cloudy horizon, the images depict the domination of the biosphere by fossil-fuel infrastructure, portraying a system that governs spatial conditions to the detriment of all else.

While the artist claims to avoid pointed political statement, the photographs read nonetheless as a condemnation of the world of the Anthropocene – or, more precisely, what some refer to as the Capitalocene, wherein Earth's natural resources have been completely overtaken by fossil capital. As with Nkanga's political ecology, Burtynsky's *Oil Fields* show a system built on Indigenous dispossession. Indeed, without depicting it directly, *Oil Fields* represents the extractive aftermath of the brutal colonisation of California, where geography, evacuated of all human presence, owes to a long history of forced removals, trails of tears and land grabs.

Like Burtynsky's petro-scapes, Doug Aitken's Diamond Sea (1997) [fig. 10] shows another part of the world given over to resource extraction, specifically diamond mining in Namibia. Eerily dispossessed of human presence, the desert geography appears haunted, its industrial and residential infrastructure fallen into disrepair, some of it overtaken by sand. Like Nkanga's excavation of the colonial scenes of mineral and rare earth mining, Aitken's video, operating more in the mode of experimental documentary, portrays a landscape shaped by former colonial atrocities, in this case at the hands of Germany during the early twentieth-century.<sup>10</sup> But he also goes further, in portraying how plants and animals have participated in the re-occupation of the former mining site, correlating with recent attempts by the postcolonial Namibian government to transform these former industrial geographies into nature reserves, even if the Indigenous peoples of the Ovaherero, San and Nama nations have yet to gain their own deserved reparations for a century of forced labour and genocide.

By offering meditative aesthetic experience, these pieces by Burtynsky and Aitken invite deepening awareness of extractive violence. If they are aesthetically compelling – dealing in the postindustrial sublime and the postcolonial picturesque – their 'visibility work' also objects to any naïve or romanticised celebration. In this sense, their

[fig. 10] Doug Aitken, *Diamond Sea*, 1997. Three-channel video installation (colour, sound), three projections, monitor, chromogenic transparency mounted on acrylic in aluminium lightbox with LEDs, variable dimensions. Installation view, *Diamond Sea*, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, 9 July–27 September 2015



eco-aesthetics is one where the sensual experience of the world is inextricable from the environmental insights gained by connecting representation to history. With visual pleasure accosted by the signs of social and ecological destruction, we encounter a familiar aesthetic conundrum within the conjuncture of contemporary art and ecology.

**Entangled Histories** Contemporary art's relation to ecology is, not surprisingly, fraught, especially where aesthetics intersects with politics – including where art's traditional tendency to beautify connects to portraying scenes of ecocide and genocide. This friction manifests too in the moving-image works of John Akomfrah. *Vertigo Sea* (2015) [fig. 11], Akomfrah's immersive three-channel video project, puts disparate histories and knowledge formations into proximity: specifically, the Blue Humanities (joining cultural studies and art history to oceanography and marine science) and the Black Atlantic (linking Afro-diasporic cultures and politics to research about transatlantic slavery, migration routes and re-settlement patterns).

The large-scale installation portrays the sea as a place of awesome beauty and amazing biodiverse existence, repurposing footage borrowed from David Attenborough's *Blue Planet* ocean documentary (minus the pedantic voice-over). Sumptuous imagery of whales, dolphins, orcas and coral reefs counterpoints stunning northern icescapes and gorgeous maritime sunsets. This apparent celebration of oceanic plenitude goes only so far, intercut with dramatised shots of Olaudah Equiano (1745–1797), the freed African slave and abolitionist who travelled the seas, explored the Arctic and lived in England, where he wrote an important autobiography in which the sea also figures as a place of multiple valences – of wondrous beauty, but also existential threat and watery captivity.<sup>11</sup> Akomfrah builds this complex iconography further with images of shackled Black figures lying in slave bunks, and scenes of bodies washed ashore on a beach, invoking contemporary

[fig. 11] John Akomfrah, *Vertigo Sea*, 2015. Stills from three-channel HD video installation (colour, 7.1 sound), 48:30 min.



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tragedies of drowned migrants. The brutality of slavery, echoed in the desperation of migration, connects to recent episodes of ecocide, presented in included clips from historical archives that show the industrial slaughter of whales by Soviet fishing boats during the twentieth century, when the largest animals on Earth experienced vast reductions in their populations.

Exquisitely presented in cinematic form, Akomfrah's conceptual proposition – 'the way of killing man and beast is the same', as one of the video's intertitles reads – troubles the piece's aesthetic delights. In other words, the artist's approach approximates a fundamental insight of social ecology: that social violence and environmental violence are two sides of the same coin, the result of vicious anthropocentric and hierarchical logics that subject the world and all forms of social difference to domination, and sometimes extermination.

Ursula Biemann's Deep Weather [fig. 12], a short single-channel video from 2013, provides another approach to entangled histories, where shots of Canada's Tar Sands - the largest extractive project on Earth, the size of England, visible from outer space – counterpoints scenes of coastal Bangladesh, where rising seas owing to climate change are threatening nearby communities, housing and agriculture with salt-water immersion and more frequent extreme cyclones. The connection is not arbitrary: Biemann's video poignantly marks the connection between the burning of fossil fuels, including the fuel-intensive extraction of dirty Tar Sands bitumen, and the negative environmental impacts of global warming and melting polar ice, bringing disastrous implications to places like Bangladesh's Brahmaputra Delta. The systemic transformation of the Earth's biogeochemical conditions, in other words, cannot be divorced from the differential socio-political implications, the entanglements of which artistic projects like Akomfrah's and Biemann's help us perceive, render conscious and visible, and feel with heightened awareness - all of which can move us to action.

> [fig. 12] Ursula Biemann, *Deep Weather*, 2013. Single-channel HD video essay (colour, sound), 8:58 min. Installation view, *Deep Weather*, 2014 Biennale de Montréal, MAC, 22 October 2014– 4 January 2015



Biemann's Forest Law, a

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Multispecies Assemblages 38-minute-long video from 2014 made in collaboration with Paulo Tavares, delves into another extractive zone: that of the Ecuadorian Amazon, which has been subjected to oil exploration over the last few decades.<sup>12</sup> As with the Tar Sands, Amazon extraction takes a heavy toll on Indigenous communities whose lives are severely impacted by the slow violence of oil industry environmental pollution, the irreparable destruction of the ecosystem owing to militarisation and industrial infrastructure, and the consequent loss of traditional local livelihoods. While Forest Law [fig. 13] explores the damage and the recent history of legal cases supporting the rights of nature, mounted against the Ecuadorian government and multinational oil companies, Biemann and Tavares also tapped into substantial research on Indigenous cosmologies - specifically of the Shuar and Sarayaku - that figure as radical alternatives to environmental living than that of petrocapitalist extractivism.

Among those interviewed in the two-channel video is Sarayaku spokesperson José Gualinga, who explains how the multispecies forest includes a biodiverse web of life on which Indigenous people rely, and without which Sarayaku life would lose all meaning. The forest community forms an indissoluble network of relations between diverse beings, the many perspectives of which - for Amazon anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, corresponding to Amerindian cosmologies - are translated into the multiple views of the video installation itself.<sup>13</sup>

Numerous other artists have participated in contemporary art's recent multispecies ethnographic turn, including the Sensory Ethnography Lab, members of whom 'dedicate themselves to the production of motion picture experiences that evoke the power and fascinations of the sensory world.'14 Based at Harvard University, SEL has developed cutting-edge documentary filmmaking approaches to best explore the aesthetics and ontologies of the more-than-human world. Most notable is Lucien Castaing-Taylor and Véréna Paravel's feature-length film Leviathan (2012) [fig. 14], which fitted a fishing boat shipping out of New Bedford, Massachusetts, with multiple GoPro cameras to capture the surprising inter-species intimacies of this industrial-maritime interface. Drawing on newfound possibilities of perceptual experience, the riveting footage - of fish hauled out of the sea and processed by hand, of opportunistic seagulls trailing the boat presents viewpoints never before experienced, afforded by the placing of cameras on the bow of the ship and on its underwater hull.

In recent years, art exhibitions have proliferated internationally that survey new experimental practices in sensing more-thanhuman multispecies environments, including Ecologies - lost, found





[fig. 13] Ursula Biemann and Paulo Tavares, Forest Law, 2014. Still from two-channel HD video installation (colour), 38 min.

[fig. 14] Lucien Castaing-Taylor and Véréna Paravel, Leviathan, 2012. Still from documentary film (colour, sound), 87 min.



[fig. 15] Marjolijn Dijkman and Toril Johannessen, Reclaiming Vision, 2018. Still from HD film (colour), 26:37 min.

[fig. 16] Saara Ekström, Phantasma, 2016. Still from HD video (colour), 9:49 min.

and continued, the Screen City Biennial of 2019 based in Stavanger, Norway.<sup>15</sup> Included were works such as Marjolijn Dijkman and Toril Johannessen's *Reclaiming Vision* (2018) [fig. 15], a video produced with a light microscope featuring a cast of micro-organisms sampled from the brackish waters of the inner Oslo Fjord, cultivated at the University of Oslo; and Saara Ekström's *Phantasma* (2016) [fig. 16], a three-channel video installation investigating the history and present circumstances of an aquarium that opened in Copenhagen in 1939.

Ecosexuality Another axis of contemporary art and ecology is ecosexuality, offering aesthetic forms with which to explore libidinal connections to environmental co-belonging. While environmentalism is often associated with serious protest, expressions of eco-melancholia, critical documentary practice, and nihilistic outrage, self-proclaimed ecosexuals Beth Stephens and Annie Sprinkle offer another option, declaring: 'The Earth is our lover. We are madly, passionately, and fiercely in love, and we are grateful for this relationship each and every day.'<sup>16</sup> Their commitment has generated a wide-ranging performance and mixed-media art practice over the last decade, with ecosexuality growing into an international movement. Stephens and Sprinkle's work has included various performative weddings where they ceremonially join in commitment to the Earth, the sky, and the moon, proposing a relationship of love and care with each that strongly contrasts with the extractive and militarised violence visited upon the Earth by industrial and colonial modernity.

Their feature-length experimental film, *Goodbye Gauley Mountain: An Ecosexual Love Story* (2013) [fig. 17], juxtaposes ecosexuality and its ethics of care to the mountain-top removal mining that has so scarred West Virginia in the US. In the process, they join environmentalism to social justice in the critique of heteronormativity and queer-phobia: 'In choosing "love" as one of the driving forces behind our art-making, highlighting the strangeness of corporations bombing the mountains [...] our performances work towards denormalizing state practices of environmental destruction while also denormalizing the institution of marriage itself.<sup>17</sup>

Working in the Asian context of Taiwan, Zheng Bo has developed his own ecosexualist practice, creating *Pteridophilia* [fig. 18] in 2016–18. The performance piece and corresponding video documentation expands ecosexuality to the love of ferns (*pterid*, 'fern,' + *phuton*, 'plant,' + *philia*, 'love'), connecting queer plants with queer people.<sup>18</sup> For the piece, the artist invited BDSM practitioners to establish emotional and physical relationships with ferns, resulting in intimate interactions recorded on video. In one passage, a man makes love to a Bird's Nest Fern (*Asplenium nidus*), and then starts eating what is actually a popular delicacy in Taiwan. [fig. 17] Beth Stephens and Annie Sprinkle, Goodbye Gauley Mountain: An Ecosexual Love Story, 2013. Still from film (colour, sound), 70 min.

[fig. 18] Zheng Bo, *Pteridophilia 1*, 2016. Still from video (colour, sound), 17 min.





[fig. 19] Wangechi Mutu, Second Born, 2013. 24 kt gold, collagraph, relief, digital printing, collage with hand-colouring, 91.4 × 109.2 cm



Bo's ecosexuality raises questions about consent, typically considered an ethics of practice establishing shared agreement in advance of sexual activity. But what does that mean for a plant? *Pteridophilia* queries multispecies consent (from the Latin, *con*, 'together' + *sentire*, 'feel'), beginning with asking why consent is relevant to an ecosexual context when it is generally not considered so in the gustatory context? While any farmer knows what plants like and don't like – including through well-honed practices of agricultural 'feeling together' – it's another matter entirely when it comes to sexuality. But Bo's project also questions humans' capacity for expressing consent, given their multispecies being, according to which the botany of desire is always a more-than-human affair.

As Jane Bennett reminds us, the human microbiome contains trillions of microorganisms, and 100 times more genes than the human genome's 20,000. The human 'individual' is actually a multiplicity of bodies, including fungi, archaea and bacteria, which have been found to produce compounds that activate sweet taste receptors.<sup>19</sup> In this sense, all sex is multispecies ecosexuality. As the hybrid figurations of the painter Wangechi Mutu show (such as *Second Born*, 2013 [fig. 19]), 'human nature is an interspecies relationship', as ethnographer Anna Tsing notes.<sup>20</sup> That fundamental insight, indicating an ecological paradigm shift in our understandings of humanity, is the first step towards overcoming the domination of anthropocentrism and moving towards cultivating the mutuality of multispecies relationalities, about which artistic experimentation has been at the forefront.

**The Art of Noticing** In her book *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*, Naomi Klein articulates the stakes of the current environmental emergency, according to which nothing is left untouched. The ecological turn literally changes everything, including our material and sensible relations to the world, in addition to how 'we' conceive of ourselves and the world around us. The challenge is enormous in enacting a great transition beyond the ruling economic order of fossil capital.

The ecological turn in contemporary art is like no other stylistic trend, conceptual occupation or theoretical concern. As we face the world-changing transformation of our planet, it is widely recognised as imperative that we must figure out how to live sustainably. And, as the fundamental insights of social ecology show, that means living with social equity in relation to human and multispecies justice. While artists will continue to contribute to innovative conceptual and sensory explorations of what sustainable and socially just ecological living ultimately means, it begins by noticing the world around us. 'How can we repurpose the tools of modernity against the terrors of Progress to make visible the other worlds it has ignored and damaged?', Tsing and her collaborators write. 'Living in a time of planetary catastrophe thus begins with a practice at once humble and difficult: noticing the worlds around us.<sup>21</sup> As so much contemporary art shows us, we are living through an epochal transformation, and must now figure out how to live within a caring relationship to our world and ourselves – or ignore it at our peril.

1 • See IPCC, 'Summary for Policymakers', Sixth Assessment Report, 2021, https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ ar6/wg1/; and Fiona Harvey, 'What is the IPCC and why is its new climate report different from others?', *The Guardian*, 9 August 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/ environment/2021/aug/09/what-is-ipcc-why-newclimate-report-different.

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2 • Melanie Yazzie, interviewed in 'Decolonization or Extinction: Indigenous Red Deal Lays Out Plan to Save the Earth', *Democracy Now!*, 22 April 2021, https://www. democracynow.org/2021/4/22/the\_red\_deal\_book.

3 • For scholarly approaches to this global convergence, see T. J. Demos, *Beyond the World's End: Arts of Living at the Crossing* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020); and T. J. Demos, Emily Eliza Scott and Subhankar Banerjee, eds., *The Routledge Companion to Contemporary Art, Visual Culture, and Climate Change* (New York: Routledge, 2021).

4 • Andreas Malm, Fossil Capital: The Rise of Steam Power and the Roots of Global Warming (London: Verso, 2016).

5 • See 'Otobong Nkanga Interview: Portals to Other Worlds', Louisiana Channel, 2019, https://vimeo. com/361779192.

6 • Denise Ferreira da Silva, 'Blacklight', in *Otobong Nkanga: Luster and Lucre*, ed. Philippe Pirotte et al. (Berlin: Sternberg, 2017), 245.

7 • See the definition for 'political ecology' by anthropologists Mario Blaser and Arturo Escobar in *Keywords for Environmental Studies*, ed. Joni Adamson, David Naguib Pellow and William A. Gleason (New York: Routledge, 2016), 165–66.

8 - Kathryn Yusoff, cited in Eric Otieno, ' "To care is a form of resistance" – On breathing, landscape and repair in the work of Otobong Nkanga', *Sleek*, 20 July 2020, https://www.sleek-mag.com/article/otobongnkanga-gropius-bau-breathing-landscape-repair/. See also Kathryn Yusoff, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2018).

9 • See T. J. Demos, Emily Eliza Scott and Subhankar Banerjee, 'Extraction', in *The Routledge Companion to Contemporary Art, Visual Culture, and Climate Change* (New York: Routledge, 2021), 11–14.

10 • Zoé Samudzi, 'Reparative Futurities: Thinking from the Ovaherero and Nama Colonial Genocide', *Funambulist* 30 (2020), 34. 11 • Olaudah Equiano, The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African [orig. publ. 1789], ed. Werner Sollors (New York: Norton, 2001); and T. J. Demos, 'Feeding the Ghost: John Akomfrah's Vertigo Sea', in Beyond the World's End: Arts of Living at the Crossing, 23–42.

12 • Ursula Biemann and Paulo Tavares, Forest Law / Selva Jurídica: On the Cosmopolitics of Amazonia (East Lansing, MI: Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum / Michigan State University, 2014).

13 • Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, 'Perspectivism', in Cannibal Metaphysics: For a Post-Structural Anthropology, trans. and ed. Peter Skafish (Minneapolis, MN: Univocal, 2014).

14 • Scott MacDonald, 'Lucien Castaing-Taylor and Sensory Ethnography', *American Ethnographic Film and Personal Documentary: The Cambridge Turn* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 314–38, here 335.

**15** • Curated by Daniela Arriado and Vanina Saracino, http://2019.screencitybiennial.org.

**16** • Beth Stephens and Annie Sprinkle, 'Ecosex Manifesto' (2011), http://sexecology.org/research-writing/ecosex-manifesto/.

**17** • Beth Stephens and Annie Sprinkle, 'On Becoming Appalachian Moonshine', *Performance Research* 17:4 (2012), 64.

18 • http://zhengbo.org/2018\_PP3.html. Also see: Zheng Bo with Beth Stephens and Annie Sprinkle, 'A Conversation between Three Ecosexuals', in *The Routledge Companion to Contemporary Art, Visual Culture, and Climate Change*, 164–72.

19 • Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology* of *Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 112–13.

20 • Anna Tsing, 'Unruly Edges: Mushrooms as Companion Species', *Environmental Humanities* 1 (2012), 144.

**21** • Anna Tsing, Heather Swanson, Elaine Gan and Nils Bubandt, eds., 'Introduction', in *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), M7.

'Literature has to be combative. You cannot have art for art's sake. This art must do something to transform the lives of a community, of a nation. And for that reason, literature has a different purpose altogether...'

Ken Saro-Wiwa<sup>1</sup>

It is very clear we are at a turning point. The ending of something, or the beginning. The language of eco-anxiety perhaps best encapsulates our growing fears to the jolt of increasingly extreme weather conditions, worsening headlines and statistics, and the ongoing unknowable. The fear that it will all get worse than this. Writing about the climate crisis is an unfolding creative and existential challenge. While writers have a responsibility to write at these times well, we too are human beings, also navigating our own fears through the unknown terrain of what the future holds. We too survive by denial and deflection. The writer Amitav Ghosh's words often haunt the writer in me:

'When future generations look back [...] they will certainly blame the leaders and politicians of this time for their failure to address the climate crisis. But they may well hold artists and writers to be equally culpable – for the imagining of possibilities is not, after all, the job of politicians and bureaucrats.'<sup>2</sup>

So many of us struggle to tell the story of how we have come this far, the threat that we are likely to face, and the road we might take out of it. Far from the rigid associations many have of climate change, writing thoughtfully about the crisis requires an unpicking of every aspect of our lives as we know them. It requires an interrogation of our habits and histories, and ultimately our art. It is a slow process, perhaps slower than we have time for. As a writer, who has written about climate crisis through the lens of social justice for over 10 years now, the moment we are living in is a complex position to be in. On the one hand, I am glad that more people are waking up (or should that be, have been woken up?) to the realities of the crisis, but another part of me questions, why only now? The alarm has been sounding for a long time, why are more people only listening now?

Much of the issue around the inertia of the crisis is that the most widespread climate change narratives run to a Western timeframe. If that weren't the case, we would have all collectively called this a crisis a long time ago. The exploitation and grave oil spills in the Niger Delta and its deadly knock-on effects, food insecurity in Burundi and flooding

WHO AND WHO MATTERS? HOW WE WRITE ABOUT THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Selina Nwulu –

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in Bangladesh have all been happening decades before now. There is a long and harrowing list of incidences like this happening all over the world. My feeling is that when we talk and write about the climate crisis, we have to start there; at the places where the pain and crisis lived long before any collective, and I might add Western, awakening we may be experiencing now. A dominating issue within a Western understanding of the climate crisis has very often been passivity. Unless coming from communities directly affected, the language around the crisis leaves us to grapple with the climate by some ominous unknown force so surreal and distorted it becomes a fiction.

The reality is that while there are some causes of climate change we may not fully comprehend, there are also very clear root causes. Colonialism is intricately connected to climate change. Though this has historically taken place in many iterations, when European powers extracted land and resources across the world to bolster their power and empire, they commodified the exploitation of people and natural resources on a mass and global scale. They sent out a glorified message that these were things to pilfer and conquer without any moral or environmental consequence. The legacy of this is crucial in our understanding of the climate crisis, in the things that we do and don't give value to today. This is so apparent when we exclude the global South in our thinking around the crisis, and when we offer the language of urgency and injustice according to a Western timeframe, yet not to Indigenous and frontline communities whose worlds have long been crumbling, in large part as a result of colonial violence. It continues a colonial legacy of erasure around who matters and which bodies continue to be excluded and undermined in our action and our sympathies. Changing this requires deep and structural unlearning, as well as meaningful solidarity and accountability. This is no small task, given that Western culture, historically and currently, offers no real precedent of this; in all the benefits the global North continues to reap from colonialism through its hierarchies of wealth and power, there has been no suitable reparation towards the communities and peoples exploited to account for this violence.

An Overwhelm of (Mis)information How do socially engaged artists make sense of this information and all its complexities as a starting point? How do we explain why the world turns the way it does, and envision alternatives for living? It is important that our ideas and language around the crisis are both backward and forward facing; that we bring our buried, often suppressed histories to the fore, to examine and reconfigure our current and future realities. This is aptly encapsulated by the word *Sankofa*, originating from the Akan tribe of

Ghana, which means 'go back and get it'.<sup>3</sup> It is commonly symbolised by a bird flying forward, with its head looking backwards. It is altogether possible to move forward while understanding our past in order to right historical wrongs and construct newer, more equitable realities.

But it is all so complicated, knowing how to speak of the past and understanding how to weave this into bold and new artistic visions for the future. Moreover, we exist in an overwhelm of competing information. We've never lived in a time with more access to people's ideas, thoughts and knowledge. It is fascinating that we live in a time where an answer to any obscure or popular question can be resolved via a nearby device in a matter of seconds. While there is an immense privilege to living in this era and the potential capacity we have to understand the world around us in greater depth, we are also drowning in information that so often dilutes the important messages that matter. As our news feeds reel out crisis after crisis at an alarming pace, the level of cognitive dissonance we all experience is unsurprising, given how key it can feel to our daily survival. If we were able to fully realise the scope of every crisis we are living in, we might never get out of bed.

As artists, we have the power to present information in new and meaningful ways. Good art can rise above the heavy obligation of a news report or academic presentation. Artists are able to tap into the heart of a situation. I have often called this *feeling knowledge*, the idea that we are capable of understanding something on an intuitive level and emotional level, as opposed to leading with our minds. Some academics may call this *affect*, but I like the visceral quality the term *feeling knowledge* offers, like every figure and fact has the potential to infiltrate our emotional core. This, perhaps, offers some antidote to the growing agenda of misinformation and ongoing culture wars that would unpick an argument till rendered meaningless. After all, how can we argue with the quiet truth of our inner knowing? Good art can bring us to this place.

**Our Gentle Unravelling** The climate crisis calls on us to inspect every part of our lives past and present, and understand that climate change is a result of the rigid capitalist cultures that prioritise profit and resource extraction over people and community. How can artists meaningfully embed how this capitalistic ideology affects our collective and individual psyches into their creative practice? How do normalised ideas around land as a commodity to be owned, or our passive acceptance of extreme inequality, affect how we all view one another and live together? While art that solely focuses on the big ideas of climate change has its place, it also divorces the subject from the habitual routines of our lives. Creative and artistic thought offers the opportunity and necessity to weave it into our day-to-day experiences as well as reflect on the quiet ways this crisis affects us. For every forest fire and flood, there are also slow and devasting ways things are changing. This is powerfully reflected by writer Zadie Smith in her essay 'Elegy for a Country's Seasons' in *The New York Review of Books*, in which she writes:

'What "used to be" is painful to remember. Forcing the spike of an unlit firework into the cold, dry ground. Admiring the frost on the holly berries, en route to school. Taking a long, restorative walk on Boxing Day in the winter glare. Whole football pitches crunching underfoot. A bit of sun on Pancake Day; a little more for the Grand National. Chilly April showers, Wimbledon warmth. July weddings that could trust in fine weather. The distinct possibility of a Glastonbury sunburn. At least, we say to each other, at least August is still reliably ablaze – in Cornwall if not at carnival. And it's nice that the Scots can take a little more heat with them when they pack up and leave.'<sup>4</sup>

How are we gently unravelling? And how do we, as artists, capture this during this time? I am largely motivated to start from the simple and day to day rather than with the blazing apocalyptic, because it requires so much of the individual to get to a catastrophic level of understanding and to stay there beyond the bitesize cinematic flashes we are used to. Also, there is nothing like a global pandemic to illustrate the different shapes and forms a crisis can take. For the privileged with the choice to stay at home during a pandemic, crisis looks like stillness, small daily routines played over and over.

So, when writing about climate change, I gravitate towards writing about familiar subjects such as the food we eat, the places we live in and how satisfied we feel in our lives, with an understanding of how the climate crisis affects this. The power of this approach became very apparent to me when I created a project with the Wellcome Trust. a charitable foundation in London, called Who's Full? It looked at the complexities of the globalised food system through the lens of social and climate justice. Within this work, I collaborated with a number of scientists, delivered workshops for young people and wrote a pamphlet of poems. The conversations that emerged from this work centred on the origins of the food we eat as well as the norms around the convenience and disposability of food, often at the expense of small-scale farmers who produce these goods from across the world. I also explored how our access to food is likely to change in line with extreme weather conditions leading to food shortages and increasing prices, which brought to light issues around equality and wealth and who can afford 'good food'. These conversations are by no means light, but began at an accessible starting point. Who's Full? was a striking example of how to address

issues of global inequality, privilege and the ways in which climate change may exacerbate existing levels of injustice. Much like Smith's essay, these are conversations that speak of the crisis without using the trappings of the climate change language we have been given. After all, it is within a writer's grasp to expand language and create new paths of comprehension, so that we may all be better informed and called to act.

Likewise, a project I also created around loneliness in 2019 had a similar impact. Loneliness: A Climate Change Story was based on deep previous engagement and thinking on both issues within my own practice. I wrote a series of six poems [see fig. 20] in which I took the growing social phenomenon of loneliness and brought it centrally to a climate change narrative. In these poems I focus on issues of denial, fear, the loneliness of asking questions around climate change no one seems to guite have the answers to, as well as the idea of the UK's increasing national isolation, as an island, and what that means when thinking about collective action around the climate crisis. The poems were exhibited in London in the historical building and arts centre, Somerset House, where I also did a connecting series of events. This work preceded the global pandemic which has brought new resonance to themes of community and isolation, and only reinforced these ideas. How can we move past isolating and individualistic ways of living? How can notions of solidarity and developing collective shared values and ways of living open the door to navigating the literal and figurative storms that await us? I don't believe I have answered any of these questions in creating this work, but sometimes asking them, as good art so often does, is enough.

[fig. 20] Selina Nwulu, 'The words we don't want to hear (lest we drown in them)', part of Loneliness: A Climate Change Story, 2019



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A Time to be Loud and a Time to be Disobedient There is also. of course, a time and place to be loud in our art. The story of Ken Saro-Wiwa is an impactful example of this. A well-known writer and activist, Saro-Wiwa, along with 8 other activists, collectively called the Ogoni 9,5 protested against the oil exploitation in the Niger Delta, Nigeria, at the hands of the multinational oil and gas company Shell. Saro-Wiwa used his texts to critique and hold a mirror to the injustices of Nigerian life. His writing formed a fundamental part of his activism, and this bolstered his ability to communicate with those around him. With the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP). he led the biggest protest of its kind, with 300,000 coming together to protest against the actions of Shell and calling for reparations and environmental justice for the damage done to Ogoniland in the Niger Delta. As his quote at the beginning of this essay reflects, powerful art can have a subversive quality in order to challenge and transform. There is a real necessity to speak loudly about the climate injustices that surround us unapologetically and demand deep radical change, as these times call for.

For Ghosh, climate change is little discussed in the literary realm. And those that do write fiction on the subject often have their work relegated to the genre of science fiction, reinforcing ideas of the climate change as distant and otherworldly. While, as I have argued, we need a multitude of ways to write about and understand the climate crisis, science fiction also has its place.<sup>6</sup> Not as a method to deny and separate ourselves from the deepening realities of climate change, but rather as a means to bravely re-envision the future. The visionary sci-fi writer Octavia Butler talked about science fiction as a way to decolonise our imaginations. It is a genre that has limitless potential in how it offers a literary space to dismantle taken-forgranted norms around race, gender and structures of power without laborious explanation. To write science fiction is literally to write a new world, and it is by nature inherently disobedient in its potential to shun and rewrite passing norms. By extension, visionary fiction, a term developed by the writer and scholar Walidah Imarisha, is literature with an emphasis on the future. In Imarisha's words:

'Visionary fiction encompasses science fiction, fantasy, horror, magical realism, alternative timelines, and more. It is fantastical literature that helps us to understand existing power dynamics, and helps us imagine paths to creating more just futures.'<sup>7</sup>

What strikes me about this genre is its recognition of both past and future. There is no negotiation of one over another, but the ultimate

direction of travel must be forwards. While there is a need and time to think about the incremental changes we need to make, visionary fiction offers an opportunity for us to create a bigger picture, that within its surrealism can offer real and potential ideas for re-shifting and reimagining our world. So often within art and discussion around the climate crisis there is an absence of hope. While increasingly understandable as the climate crisis worsens, it is crucial that this remains a tenet of understanding as we take steps to move forward. As someone who often struggles with this, I come back to the writer, activist and historian Rebecca Solnit's work:

'[Hope] is not the belief that everything was, is or will be fine. The evidence is all around us of tremendous suffering and destruction [...]. It is also not a sunny everything-is-getting-better narrative, though it may be a counter to the everything-is-getting-worse one. You could call it an account of complexities and uncertainties, with openings.'<sup>8</sup>

It is important that artists do not lose sight of this. That inasmuch as we can critique and question overlooked issues around the climate crisis, we can also forge new openings for how we understand the world. We can create new visions, new ways of speaking and carve new norms that surpass the limited possibilities within the rigid mindset of academic theory. We need to reflect both on what we are losing, that which many of us have already lost, as well as on what there is to gain. How might the climate crisis offer us alternative ways of living in solidarity with and compassion for one another? If it is within our gift to create work that can both inform and evoke emotion, let us make space to hold our collective grief and fears, as well as some glimpse of another better future that we all so desperately need.

1 • https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/73872-in-thiscountry-england-writers-write-to-entertain-they-raise.

2 • Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 135.

3 • https://www.uis.edu/africanamericanstudies/ students/sankofa/.

4 • Zadie Smith, 'Elegy for a Country's Seasons', *The New York Review of Books*, 3 April 2014, https://www. nybooks.com/articles/2014/04/03/elegy-countrysseasons/.

5 • They were: Ken Saro-Wiwa, Saturday Dobee, Nordu Eawo, Daniel Gbooko, Paul Levera, Felix Nuate, Baribor Bera, Barinem Kiobel and John Kpuine. 6 • To be clear, I do not think Ghosh necessarily denies this, but rather voices a frustration that much of the literary work around climate change is automatically assumed as science fiction, regardless of the work's intention.

7 • Exangel, 'What is "Visionary Fiction"? An Interview with Walidah Imarisha', *EAP: The Magazine*, 31 March 2016, https://exterminatingangel.com/ what-is-visionary-fiction-an-interview-with-walidahimarisha/.

8 · 'Excerpts of Wisdom, from Hope in the Dark', *The Green Spotlight*, 30 December 2016, https://www. thegreenspotlight.com/2016/12/hope-in-the-dark/.



POEMS

### SOLASTALGIA \*

What solace can be found from living in a crumbling skeleton? Ghost towns and villages that have lost their skins to the atmosphere. It is grief that will turn us into living memorials of our fallen landscapes, given we do not yet have words for the eulogy, we might well embody our loss. Like this, we will become a drought when there is no clean water, our skin parched like abandoned land, faces dull and ready for wildfire. When the crops fail, our limbs will wilt like stalks giving up, our hair imitate the weeds. It is perhaps the earthquakes that will crack open our chests, help us understand how we, the living, show love in the aftershocks.

\* A form of homesickness experienced when a person's natural environment has been irreparably changed

## HOME IS A HOSTILE LOVER

#### Remember

Remember when our Delta waters were clean? How we washed our faces in rivers and chased fish with our bare hands? Remember before Delta had its throat slit and bled its oily pipes into soil, when we hummed words into the water and it would laugh and sing back?

#### Noose

We are burning alive in this village. The oil pipes spew open like bowels and stain our home land with curses. Our mouths have become coated in oil, drops make liquid nooses round our necks and our words buried and left for remains. We will never speak the same again

#### Eaten

Look how obese the ocean has become. The waves ingest my fertile land vicious and devour my home to its bones. The ocean leaves its off-cuts when sated and I am left a half-lit emblem. Tell me, where does one turn to when their home becomes a hostile lover?

#### Sinking

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They're all sinking in the Mediterranean Sea. Our borders have become dense and long and their ships have burst into splints. The sea is bloated with people's limbs, their memories did not make it either. They're all sinking in the Mediterranean Sea watch how the bubbles float and pop

#### Funeral

Does my alarm clock wake me or the nightmares? I often cannot tell, both remind me of a lonely funeral. I share a room with strangers, we breathe in damp and each other's lungs. We are wheezes who will not complain. We are still sinking on dry land

#### Future

I work long to send money home, they are sure of the future here. At home everything is on quick sand so we speak in the present tense for home is an exposed nerve, waiting. I work long here, saving my money, hoping to send the future back home

#### Danger

You tell me to save the planet to reduce my carbon foot print, buy local and to turn my lights off. My foot prints are not wanted here, I buy but you think I steal, I'm afraid of what darkness might bring. You speak like I don't know danger

'What makes art a unique contributor is its freedom to pursue open-ended explorations of any topic through an ever-expanding set of practices not wedded to finished "outcomes" or "solutions".'

Diego Galafassi<sup>2</sup>

## FROM ARTIST TO COLLECTION TO THE WORLD

In keeping with IACCCA core values, María Aguilera (MA), Nimfa Bisbe (NB), Loa Haagen Pictet (LHP), Kika Kyriakakou (KK), Athanasios Polychronopoulos (AP), Sophie Roose (SR), Javier Quilis (JQ) and Caroline Stein (Cs)<sup>1</sup> are convinced that art can be a vector of change in times of ecological crisis. Clearly, science presents a rational analysis of the world in terms of data that appeals to the mind, but art transforms that information into an evocative message that entices the senses. By making scientific data more accessible and engaging the imagination, art renders complex situations visible, awakening consciousness and connecting us to the world on an emotional level that not only heightens awareness but also inspires action. The ripple effects of this action can inspire the collective mobilisation and widespread change needed to tackle the current climate crisis.

THE RIPPLE EFFECTS

OF ART:

## On the trajectory of art as a tool to denounce human impact on nature

**KK** Art as a tool to denounce the impact of humans on nature is nothing new. One only needs to look back to the 1960s and '70s, when Eco-feminism, Earth Art, Land Art and Video Art emerged. Several artists of those decades, like Ana Mendieta and Richard Long, were pioneers of their time in their attempt to raise awareness of the need to protect our planet. And there was also Arte Povera and Jannis Kounellis, who approached the subject of materiality and nature in a unique manner, and to whom we have dedicated PCAI's latest educational programme. I feel there is a continuity between the 1960s and '70s, when artists approached topics like Earth and ecology for the first time, and what is happening now. The urgency of the environmental crisis is something that definitely concerns a great many artists today.

LHP Ana Mendieta and Richard Long differed in their approach: Mendieta explored the ephemeral interrelationship between the body and the existing world, whereas Long picked pieces of wood or rocks that existed in the world, had them shaped and placed them in a man-made circle, so in essence what he did was mould nature into man-made forms. One of the topics that Heidi Ballet, T. J. Demos and Selina Nwulu discuss in this publication is the humility we should adopt in our interaction with the environment, where for a long time we have dreamt of omnipotence and have exploited nature indiscriminately. Can it be that contemporary artists are less interested in the idea of transforming nature in man's image and more in interacting with the complexity of erosion or pollution and climate change as an effect of man-made elements?

JQ I think it is less a matter of time, a difference between then and now, as a question of the artist. For example, Hamish Fulton is an established artist who has always worked without intervening on nature and his objective has always been to leave the smallest possible footprint in this world – he just walks. He reinterprets the paths and roads on which he walks, and in so doing he breaks all the rules, establishing a different way to interact with the Earth. You can find examples of artists like him in every decade.

LHP Yes, but we have transitioned from an anthropocentric to an Anthropocene world. Do you think this change is reflected in the way contemporary artists approach the human-nature relationship? If you look back at artists from Land Art, do you detect a different approach?

**cs** There is a marked change of approach, as the Neuflize OBC Corporate Collection of photography and video art illustrates. Some 25 years ago, when the collection

started to be formed, photographers worked in a documentary style. I am thinking, for example, of Jurgen Nefzger and his pictures of the mountain snowmelt. Today their approach is more interventionist. Last year we bought another work featuring mountains by a young artist, Douglas Mandry. His work is not printed on paper, like Nefzger's, but on geotextile, the synthetic permeable fabric placed on a mountaintop to protect it from the effects of the sun. He chose to print an old picture of the mountain on the geotextile to raise awareness of the problem of the disappearance of snow. Putting in perspective Nefzger, a documentary photographer, and Mandry, a more plastic one, both exploring the same topic but in a different way, is a telling comparison.

**KK** Moving from the past to the future, I believe that concern for the planet and the environment will dominate the artistic as well as the political agenda in the decades to come. This is an issue that involves political parties, companies, the whole art system, educational institutions as well as individuals. Ecological concern should definitely be part of everyone's agenda. It is important not only to reinforce an environmental legislation, but also to try to alter people's views, mentality and lifestyle. Art and education can definitely be vehicles towards that cause.

AP The ecological issue is not just simple concern for our planet; it will be a matter of survival in the decades to come. The idea that we are leaving behind an era of waste management and moving into one of resource management must be transmitted. We have to stop regarding waste as refuse and start considering it as a resource that has to be recycled. This agenda will definitely inspire and dominate the artistic sector as well. JQ We have an obligation to provide the next generation with the necessary means to face the ecological challenges of the future. This is one of the things that art and the political agenda are going to be discussing – not only showing concern but also looking into what can be done.

# On corporate support of artists to increase environmental awareness

**AP** That art is a vector of change and artists play an important role in raising awareness in times of crisis is incontestable. That is why large corporations like ours with a strong commitment to the environment are continuously expanding their art projects and support. In the case of Polyeco and Polygreen, in addition to an established art programme, we have recently renovated a cultural site in Delphi to create a space where artists can seek inspiration and create works that will engage the community and visitors alike and promote critical consciousness of the future of our planet.

KK In order to increase awareness it is also vital to help artists expand their research on the topic of environmental degradation and gain in-depth knowledge of crucial ecological issues. In an effort to bring them closer to the sector of waste management, which is our main line of business, we invite artists to sites of environmental interest, to contaminated areas undergoing cleaning and to our R&D facilities and labs around the world. These field visits enable artists to obtain information they can then use in their artworks or in the commissions they receive from us and other corporations.

**AP** To give you an example, our company was awarded a project through the United Nations to clear of pesticide-related chemical waste an area near Tbilisi, in Georgia. On that

occasion we invited a renowned artist from Greece, George Drivas, who also participated in the Greek pavilion in the 57th Biennale some years ago, to see all the procedures: how we cleaned the land, extracted the chemicals from the soil and packaged and sent the waste away for final disposal. George Drivas found the whole process extremely inspiring and produced our first commission, a piece of video art called Kepler which has won several prizes in film competitions and festivals. **KK** Additionally, we have developed an annual cultural programme around our art collection that includes very diverse events and projects designed to bring the environmental crisis to the fore. For instance, we stage exhibitions, produce online projects, discussions and publications, organise talks and conferences on the topic of environmental sustainability with other institutions in Greece and abroad, develop affiliated projects and a series of educational programmes and workshops, all of which address the topic of ecological disruption and showcase the seriousness and urgency of the situation. Moreover, since 2019 we support artists through the PCAI artist-in-residence programme, which focuses on the interaction between contemporary art and environmental consciousness. Believing that art is the best way to stimulate dialogue about sustainable thinking and the crucial matter of toxic waste, PCAI invites artists from all over the world to reside for a week in Athens and create a video work on the topic. In our first residency programme we invited video artists to participate through an open call. A committee comprised of Athanasios Polychronopoulos, Hans Ulrich Obrist from the Serpentine Galleries, Krist Gruijthuijsen from KW in Berlin and myself were in charge of selecting the artists. We are currently developing another residency programme that is going to

focus on upcycling and the circular economy, so we are going to invite designers, visual artists and sculptors to approach the topic of zero waste and sustainability. **CS** At Neuflize OBC we, too, organise workshops, conferences and meetings with artists featured in our holdings, for we believe that our art collection is one of the best vectors of change and awareness. Indeed, our collection is one of the CSR supports: by helping artists and showing our committment through art, we act on society for the benefit of future generations. This is our legacy and patrimony.

**AP** It is also worth mentioning that in the society and era we are living in, artists are in a position to play an important part in the circular economy. Despite our efforts to reuse or recycle all things, there is always a residue that can gain a new dimension through an artist's work. In this way artists can play a starring role in the economy for the first time in the last decades, and this is promising.

# On the creation of corporate collections and their rippling effect

JQ It is important to keep in mind that companies and corporations are made of people, and if we can influence them – the people – we can also have an impact on the activities of enterprises on an internal level and on their products. If in addition to this we open up part of our companies to the outside world through art collections that display our engagement with a sustainable future, then our sphere of influence grows exponentially, like the circular ripple that travels outward from a stone dropped into a lake. At INELCOM there is no separation between the art world and the company: we bring them together

into a coherent whole, where art helps the company to grow, selling what we do, and the company enhances the collection with its revenues. It is another kind of sustainability. We are always speaking of sustainability referring to the planet, but if we integrate it into our way of thinking so that we are always looking for sustainability in everything we do, we can change the world step by step. Even so, we are better known for our collection than for our work as a company that has sustainability built into its DNA, because we make devices to make an optimal use of primal resources. And our collection of artworks upholds the company's values of sustainability, respect, innovation and environmental awareness, among others. All our employees share these values and all the people who visit our collection experience them and are influenced by them. This is the key to engage employees, customers and visitors. **cs** Like your firm, Neuflize OBC believes it is important to engage employees in sustainable strategies and to create educative actions through art. The key idea is to raise awareness through education and to share the challenge we have. Our private bank is genuinely committed to the sustainability challenge. We have found that by means of our collection we can exert greater influence on these topics, because through art we can increase ecological consciousness. Let me give you an example. Last year we bought a picture by Bruno Serralongue, a French photographer who produced a series on a group of American Indian people who are fighting for water access in their territory. The photograph is a big portrait of Cherri Foytlin, an Indian woman who leads a movement of opposition and makes its petitions heard through conferences and publications. It is encouraging for me to see collaborators and colleagues standing in front of this picture and realising

for the first time that this is an important issue which must be addressed – it is an example of reality and of the power of the art collection to raise awareness.

KK Employment engagement is vital: it constitutes part of our commissions and cultural projects for it is our employees' day-to-day activities that inspire the PCAI collection. What is more, artists often work hand in hand with our employees, particularly with our scientific team and our R&D personnel, as the latter provide artists with scientific consulting. From time to time our employees even act as ambassadors of our collection and our cultural practices and projects through their networks and communities, contributing to its rippling effect. In this way our art collection becomes a source of inspiration to develop programmes and events and invite audiences to contribute with their views. This is one of the best ways to have an impact and change people's mentality on the subject of ecological destruction. JQ Indeed. The Colección INELCOM Arte Contemporáneo is based on four ideas that are strongly linked to the company's departments - we try to show what the firm is through the works that form part of our holdings. The four themes of the collection are Communication/Incommunication (related to our area of networks and communications), Energy (linked to our area of energy efficiency and lighting), Memory (coupled with another cultural project, an archaeological site at the Hotel Montsant in Xàtiva, our hometown in Valencia), and Natural Environment: Strength, Life and Landscape (connected to our environment and smart water activity). Of these four areas, two, energy and natural environment, are associated with ecological disruption. Here we cover two viewpoints: the denunciation of unsustainable situations and the solution to the challenges that we

as a technological company have to create a sustainable world. Our collection is always working around this – around lighting, around the natural environment – because what we try to do is make devices that help the environment.

# On corporate responsibility to reduce the carbon footprint

JQ Corporate art collections have the same responsibility to reduce the carbon footprint as any other type of organisation, whether it is a family, an institution or a business. This means that we must counteract the effects of ecological disruption and adapt to the new circumstances with measures that can be divided into three large groups: generation, consumption and management. For all of these, technology is essential. Let us look at an example: we all have a place where we show our collections, and for this we need energy. Today we can buy energy through a traditional concern, an ordinary power supply company that provides electricity, or from an operation that guarantees that the electricity is being generated through renewable energies. The latter offers us a chance to improve, to do a little something about the energy we use. We can also buy new devices or systems that reduce water, electricity, air conditioning and waste consumption – we can be more efficient in the use of our resources, and that is important. But it is not enough to buy a device, we must use it correctly - with management technology we can use it more efficiently and optimise even further, defining appropriate procedures with sustainability in mind. Before, Athanasios mentioned the circular economy with regard to waste: it is important for us to know that instead of

buying something that we will have to throw away we can acquire something that we can reuse or update so that we do not have to bin it, and with the new technologies we are moving in this direction. All these actions are possible today, and it is our responsibility, and everybody else's, to adopt them. **NB** The goal of being more efficient and reducing the carbon footprint has given rise to a heated debate in the museum world, which has escalated after the coronavirus outbreak. The pandemic lockdown has done much to raise awareness of the ecological emergency. Take flights, for instance: we have to diminish the number of trips we make every year, and thanks to the new digital tools in the market we can. Museums are now exchanging views about the sustainability of big exhibitions composed of loans from all over the globe because these involve a large number of shipments. And some museums are planning and have even started to install shows remotely, without the presence of artists and the need of couriers to avoid trips. An aspect that has always been a matter of concern at "la Caixa" Foundation is reutilising modular wall panels and exhibition furniture. We have a system of temporary modular walls for all our exhibitions and we constantly reuse display cases. The environmental conditions in galleries and art storage spaces are another important issue of reconsideration in the last years. Temperature and relative humidity have traditionally been tightly controlled to provide a safe and stable environment for artworks. But recently several museums have started to expand the ranges to values which are still safe for objects but are less energy-consuming in order reduce both the carbon footprint and the use of energy. JQ You can also maintain traditional levels of temperature and humidity using techniques such as free cooling, which we use in our building, automatically opening windows

when it is cooler outside. And you can take steps to create near perfect conditions for artworks without consuming so much by installing solar panels on the roof to generate the energy needed to bring down the temperature in the exhibition rooms. **AP** To sum up, to create a sustainable world

there simply must be zero carbon and zero waste.

**KK** What we all have to realise is that this is a process, and as such it requires adjustments and monitoring from us as corporate art collections. There are already some tools out there used to measure and reduce the carbon footprint of museum exhibitions, international environmental standards to follow, and consultants who provide assistance on how to limit energy consumption and waste production during art shows, for instance. What I find really interesting is that it is not only important how we measure our activities and whether they are impacting the environment or not, but that this might also be a challenge in the way that we perceive or approach art. We might even see some changes in the future in curatorial approaches or on the way that we produce art fairs or art events or biennials even. During the pandemic, for example, many festivals and fairs have adopted a hybrid format where in addition to physical presence there is a digital programme. I think all this might lead to more sustainable and resilient projects in the near future.

# On the capacity of art to instigate technological innovations for a better world

JQ Beyond raising awareness and shifting outlooks, art can also trigger technological innovation. I would like to tell you about a mind-opening experience in this regard. INELCOM is related to the art world not only through its collection but also through its activity. We sell lighting products and energy efficiency solutions to museums, repair artworks, and collaborate with artists in the creation of art installations through our engineering and manufacturing capacity. In this role, we have collaborated with Carsten Höller on four occasions. The first time we had to create a device and the software needed to manage the lighting of the Centro Botín's Jardínes de Pereda in Santander, Spain. The city park's lights had been made by an Italian company specialising in street lamps. Höller wanted to control these lights: at set intervals, he wanted them to start flickering in an increasing number until the entire park was flashing. He asked the Italian luminaire manufacturer to do this. When they said it was impossible, he contacted us, and we made the impossible possible, creating a device that controls each lamppost from a mobile phone. This enabled the artist to change the frequency of the flicker to 7.8 Hrz, which is the frequency of both the magnetic field of the Earth and our brainwaves, a frequency that heightens awareness and makes you go into a state of alert. This equipment, which we originally created for an artwork, was the kernel of a system that we developed for smart cities where public lighting can be controlled point to point. Take the case of Pozuelo de Alarcón, near Madrid, where INELCOM made the new LED street luminaires and controls the lighting of the whole town. Say it is 2:00 am and there is nobody on the street; we can bring down the intensity of the light slightly and in that way we can optimise energy consumption up to 25–30%. The device that we use to control the street lights is an evolved version of the one we made for Höller, and the system that controls them is a new

version of the system that we developed to control his installation. He was thinking about an artwork but in order to enable him to do what he wanted, we had to create something completely new - something that did not exist before we invented it. The device we created in artisanal fashion for Höller, once industrialised, can be used to control city lighting around the world. The art world is always at the forefront in this kind of invention. Artists usually think ahead: when we work with them, they ask us to do things that are on the limit of technology. This is marvellous because it calls for innovation, and this innovation that comes from the art world can be used in other sectors of society, one of which is the environment. Two completely different worlds come together to create something completely new. And as a result of an artwork we did 5 years ago, we now have one of the first LED Lighting Systems in the world.

On the contribution of *Art in the Time* of *Ecological Disruption* to highlight corporate collections' responsiveness to the inspirational power of art

**KK** This IACCCA publication aligns with what is happening here and now. Most of us have been unable to physically attend cultural events over the course of the pandemic, so the fact that the association has decided to produce a publication, and particularly

an online sustainable book about a topical issue at this period of time is significant. It approaches the subject of corporate art collecting and sustainability, which is something that we in PCAI have been doing for years. It is actually our mission statement: we focus on environmental awareness through contemporary art. I am intrigued to find out how other collections approach the same topic, so it is interesting that this publication is going to present different artistic curatorial approaches. It is clearly going to have a lot of variety - different artworks, different artists - so it is something to look forward to, and I believe that the public's response is going to be overwhelming.

**CS** I concur. The book is a valuable channel for each of us to give our point of view. **JQ** The most important aspect of this publication is that it sheds light on an activity that unrelated corporate collections are carrying out, showing that ecological disruption is a matter that our different companies, and therefore our collections, are concerned with and committed to. This is the most remarkable thing: that such different companies and business all come together on this issue.

**AP** Just one more thing. Our whole collection is based on the concept of the involvement of art in the time of ecological disruption that we are living through right now. We believe that this book will inspire other organisations to be more involved in this topic too.

1 • María Aguilera is curator of Colección Bergé; Nimfa Bisbe is Head of the Art Collection at Fundación "la Caixa"; Loa Haagen Pictet is Head of Arts & Collection Pictet Chief Curator at Pictet, Banque Pictet & Cie and Chair of IACCCA; Kika Kyriakakou is Artistic Director at Polyeco; Athanasios Polychronopoulos is Executive Chairman of Polyeco; Sophie Roose is General Secretary and Coordinator of IACCCA; Javier Quilis is CEO of

INELCOM Technology; and Caroline Stein is Head of Cultural Patronship and Curator of the Corporate Collection at Banque Neuflize OBC.

2 • Diego Galafassi et al., 'Raising the Temperature: The Arts in a Warming Planet', *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* 31 (2018): 71–79, here 75, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cosust.2017.12.010.



## DREAMING

1.

## OF OMNIPOTENCE

'Dreaming of Omnipotence' takes as its starting point the image that has been built of humans in relation to their environment. The representation of humans at the top of the pyramid of species that has been promoted in Western culture gives us the right to rule over our natural environment, its resources and all its species. This approach stands in contrast to a coexistence that relies on conscious awareness of our interdependence, or a relationship on equal terms. Based on an art history in which the character of nature has been defined by whether it is depicted as object or as subject, this section includes several artworks that portray nature and in so doing, consciously or unconsciously give it a certain stature. Other pieces illustrate our struggle to master nature, and the power play between humans and the forces of nature, in which humans keep dreaming of omnipotence.




MELANIE BONAJO (Heerlen, Netherlands 1978)

in collaboration with

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KINGA KIELCZYNSKA (Warsaw, Poland 1972)

After the Afterlife, 2007

UltraChrome print, Canson, Dibond, museum glass, 150 × 113 cm ABN AMRO Art & Heritage Foundation



# EDWIN ZWAKMAN (The Hague, Netherlands 1969)

Pond, 2013

C-print mounted on Dibond, 130 × 123.4 cm Colección Banco de España

# DANIEL STEEGMANN MANGRANÉ (Barcelona, Spain 1977)

A Transparent Leaf Instead of the Mouth, 2016-17

Glass, metal, ecosystem with stick and leaf insects and plants, 250 × 500 × 500 cm Colección INELCOM Arte Contemporáneo







DANIEL STEEGMANN MANGRANÉ (Barcelona, Spain 1977)

Spiral Forest Gimbal (Kingdom of all the animals and all the beasts is my name), 2014-15

Installation: custom-made gimbal camera, 179.5 × 80 × 80 cm, and 16 mm film (colour, silent), 11 min. Collection of Contemporary Art "la Caixa" Foundation

The film was shot with a custom-made gimbal that can film while rotating 360° in any axis. This camera was placed in the densely leafed underbrush near the trunk of a giant tree in the Mata Atlântica rainforest in Brazil. It was left to run on a continuous role of film, with simple self-imposed rules: one axis at a time, a pan followed by a tilt or a roll. Thus, the camera changed orientation at irregular intervals (according to a score pre-determined by the artist), every time shooting at a new angle. Outside of the changes in direction created by the camera's movements there was no editing.

The film shows the delicate foliage and branches, the forest's floor with layers of brown leaves and green ferns. The unusual point of view and the apparent magnification of the surroundings recreate the imaginary perspective of an insect or small animal.

Spanish artist Daniel Steegmann Mangrané draws on the notion of Amerindian perspectivism, a term developed by the anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro to describe Indigenous cosmologies that assume the world to be inhabited by different beings, animal and human, who perceive reality from distinct points of view of which none is privileged. Steegmann Mangrané's work is immersive in the sense that its perspective is imposed on the viewer and entails a vivid physical experience, but at the same time its structures continue to remind the spectator of the separation between gaze and corporeal being. In 2015, after visiting the largest mine in the city of Tsumeb in Namibia, Nigerian artist Otobong Nkanga stated: 'It made me realise [...] how we have accelerated the process of destruction, of scarification, of wounding.'

After We Are Gone is a large, shimmering tapestry that harnesses the power of technology for production as opposed to destruction. It is unsurprising that Nkanga should use a mechanical weaving process, as she is interested in 'the way technology changes the way we extract materials'. She traces the rapid development of extraction tools, from carving and digging to dynamite, particularly in colonised countries where such processes were imposed inorganically and at great speed. The nature of the tapestry technique - interweaving stitches - provides a beautiful metaphor for the healing of wounds that the artist perceives in the landscape. Rich greens intertwine with shimmering tributes to Nkanga's precious mica mineral, mined in Nigeria and used in a variety of sectors ranging from electronics to cosmetics. She is conscientious about her choice of materials, mixing natural and synthetic threads to symbolise the utopic union between humans and Earth. She uses yarns at the forefront of technological innovation, such as silk-based Techno yarn, sustainable Sidero yarn and 100% recycled and antimicrobial Trevira yarn. Beyond its staggering aesthetic impact, the piece is also richly symbolic, celebrating the possibilities of green technological advancement.



OTOBONG NKANGA (Kano, Nigeria 1974)

After We Are Gone, 2020

Woven textile, 250 × 180 cm EIB art collection



RODNEY GRAHAM (Abbotsford, Canada 1949)

Ponderosa Pine II and Ponderosa Pine III, 1991

Photograph, 234 × 190 cm (each) Proximus Art collection 79

RICHARD PRINCE (Canal Zone, Panama 1949)

Untitled (Cowboys), 1989

Ektacolor C-print, 120.4 × 180.2 cm Lhoist Art Collection



RICHARD MOSSE (Kilkenny, Ireland 1980)

Sugar Ray, from the series The Enclave, 2012

C-print, 182.9 × 228.6 cm Deutsche Bank Collection





YANN GROSS (Vevey, Switzerland 1981)

Buena Vista, 2015

Diptych, pigment print on bagasse paper, 120 × 90 cm (each) BNP Paribas Swiss Foundation Collection



# SUSANNE KRIEMANN (Erlangen, Germany 1972)

Wilde Möhre aus: Falsche Kamille, Wilde Möhre, Bitterkraut (Zyklus 2), 2017

Heliogravure with wild carrot pigment and 0.5 g soot on paper, 80 × 60 cm Baloise Group Art Collection

# Bitterkraut aus: Falsche Kamille, Wilde Möhre, Bitterkraut (Zyklus 2), 2017

Photogravure with ox-tongue pigment and 0.6 g soot on paper, 80 × 60 cm Baloise Group Art Collection





MARIANNE ENGEL (Wettingen, Switzerland 1972)

Carnivoren, 2015

C-Print, 125 × 125 cm Helvetia Art Collection

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CRISTINA IGLESIAS (San Sebastián, Spain 1956)

Untitled (Habitación vegetal XII), 2004

Polyptich (12 pieces), bronze-filled polyester resin, 250 × 50 cm Fundació Sorigué Collection







MICOL ASSAËL (Rome, Italy 1979)

432Hz, 2009-14

Mixed media: wood, beeswax, honey, electrical audio system, 330 × 475 × 575 cm Colección INELCOM Arte Contemporáneo



# PER KIRKEBY (Copenhagen, Denmark 1938-2018)

Untitled, 1995

Oil on canvas, 122 × 102 cm BPD Art Collection



ALEXANDRA NAVRATIL (Zurich, Switzerland 1978)

Grafted Land, 2017

Aluminium, 98.5 × 148.5 cm Die Kunstsammlung der Mobiliar Genossenschaft

# Bitterfeld, 2016

Polyester, aluminium, silver nitrate and lacquer, 140 × 230 cm Die Kunstsammlung der Mobiliar Genossenschaft







EDWARD BURTYNSKY (St Catharines, Canada 1955)

Rice Terraces #3a & #3b, 2012

Dyptich, C-print, 163 × 214 cm (each) Borusan Contemporary Art Collection EDWARD BURTYNSKY (St Catharines, Canada 1955)

Oil Fields #19a & #19b: Belridge, California, 2003

Dyptich, C-print, 160 × 198 cm (each) Borusan Contemporary Art Collection





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The duo formed by the American artist Jennifer Allora and the Cuban Guillermo Calzadilla lives in Puerto Rico. Largely unknown, the island is commonly perceived as a state representing what is Latin and Caribbean, with emigrants from the United States, gangs of local kids and taverns, all wrapped up in typical Latin American beaches and sunshine.

This colonial unfamiliarity is what Allora & Calzadilla work with in their films, installations, projects, communities, sculptures, drawings and photographs. The image of footprints in the sand is a fragile and fleeting version of a wound, made eternal through photography. The artists enlisted the help of protesters, who wore customdesigned shoes to impress a design and text that makes reference to the American military tests carried out on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques, whose soil is contaminated by chemical weapon experiments, and which is now divided into Caribbean tourist resorts. The texts in the footprints allude to the conflicts of 2000, when a group of activists demanding an end to weapon testing on the island fasted until they got a commitment to decontaminate the soil.

Allora & Calzadilla's work is conceived as a fragile monument to this violence and destruction: this is the meaning of these eternal marks in the sand.



#### ALLORA & CALZADILLA

Jennifer Allora (Philadelphia, PA, USA 1974) & Guillermo Calzadilla (Havana, Cuba 1971)

Land Mark (Foot Prints) #7, 2002

C-print, 60.5 × 74 cm Novo Banco Contemporary Photography Collection



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JOÃO MARIA GUSMÃO (Lisbon, Portugal 1979)

and

PEDRO PAIVA (Lisbon, Portugal 1977)

Mercury, 2009

C-print, 170 × 210 cm Norac collection



DAVID FAVROD (Kobe, Japan 1982)

Vent divin, 2012

Archival pigment print, 113 × 142 cm Helvetia Art Collection





## BALTHASAR BURKHARD (Bern, Switzerland 1944–2010)

Veines, 1991

Polyptych (5 pieces), photograph, 166 × 60 cm (each) Proximus Art collection

Namibie, 2000

Photograph, 127 × 252 cm Lhoist Art Collection



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EDWARD WESTON (Highland Park, IL, USA 1886–1958 Carmel, CA, USA)

Shell, 1931

Gelatin silver print, signed, 18.8 × 23.5 cm FOTOGRAFIS Collection, Bank Austria Kunstforum Wien

> Initially creating soft-focused pictorial images, American photographer Edward Weston began to experiment in a more modernist manner around 1922. First in New Mexico and later in California capturing images of settings and items that ranged from desert landscapes and portraits to ordinary household objects, he changed the way that photography is viewed in modern art by promoting the medium as something to be experimented with, rather than just attempting to create a pictorial or painterly image.

His crisp, clean black and white photographs were able to capture vast landscapes that dissolved into flattened patterns, his nudes turned into soft shapes against darkened backgrounds, and his still lifes of vegetables took on the qualities of human portraits. By changing the way we see the everyday, Weston encouraged the viewer to look at the mundane under an abstracted lens, turning the quotidian into something more noteworthy.





CARLA VAN DE PUTTELAAR (Zaandam, Netherlands, 1967)

Untitled, 1999

C-print, 76 × 62 cm Collection AMC/Amsterdam UMC 100

MAGDALENA JETELOVÁ (Semily, Czech Republic 1946)

Iceland Project, 1992

Barite silver print on Alucobond, 124 × 185 cm EIB art collection





MAGDALENA JETELOVÁ (Semily, Czech Republic 1946)

Iceland Project, 1992

C-print in light box, 185 × 125 × 25 cm EPO art collection

A laser beam projects a dazzling line onto the Icelandic landscape, a vast expanse of pristine nature: mountains, grasslands and springs. The line makes visible part of the boundary between two tectonic plates, the Eurasian and the North American. In total, this boundary extends some 15,000 kilometres, mostly along the bottom of the Arctic and Atlantic oceans, but also right through Iceland. The line may seem all too geometric, arbitrary and manmade, but it actually follows a real geological boundary in the Earth's surface, between the organic forms of the ever-shifting tectonic plates.

Czech artist Magdalena Jetelová calculated the location of the boundary with great precision. She plotted the line on a digital map and used a laser beam to draw it across the physical landscape, thus providing a glimpse of the Earth's structure. There is also an implicit contrast between the largely hidden, natural phenomenon and current social concepts of boundaries and borders. Jetelová's work of performative photography is displayed in a large lightbox, which further emphasises the importance of light in her oeuvre and the artist's urge to bring into view what otherwise tends to remain largely unseen.





Psycho Hitchhiker, 1993

Photograph, 33 × 60 cm evn collection

# LOIS WEINBERGER (Stams, Austria 1947–2020 Vienna, Austria)

Ruderal Society: Excavating a Garden, 2019-21

Site-specific work at the headquarters of EVN, soil and spontaneous vegetation,  $0.2 \times 2 \times 157.46$  m evn collection





## VIK MUNIZ (São Paulo, Brazil 1961)

Hanger, from the series Pictures of Earthworks (The Sarzedo Drawings), 2002

Gelatin silver print, 101.6 × 127 cm Lhoist Art Collection

# 107

RICHARD LONG (Bristol, United Kingdom 1945)

Circle of Standing Stones, before 1990

Sandstone (27 pieces), ø 150 cm Banco Santander Collection









PAULO NAZARETH (Governador Valadares, Brazil 1977)

*Untitled,* from the series *Notícias de América,* 2011

Digital print on cotton paper (4 pieces), 69.6 × 92.2 × 4.2 cm (each) Banco Itaú Collection

After a journey of several thousand miles across more than 15 countries in the Americas, artist Paulo Nazareth returned to Brazil in 2012. He had left Minas Gerais in March 2011 and had made his way northward on foot and by bus, arriving in the United States in October of that same year.

*Noticias de América* is the result of a year's elaboration of a living body of work concerned with the web of human affairs and the social and personal ties that exist from household to household, village to village, and city to city on both sides of the Rio Grande. Through documented performances, social sculptures, drawings and biographical portraits in video and on film, Nazareth reveals an unseen vision of the Americas – uncovering a plurality of overlapping Americas and a profusion of ways of being. In a practice without preconceived strategies or formulas, Nazareth relies on the immediacy of life itself to create an impression of the overall shape of experience and being.

[Partly based on a text in Mendes Wood DM, https://mendeswooddm.com/en/exhibition/notcias-de-amrica]



There is something jarring about the birds, even at first sight. While some species admittedly look familiar, we are bewildered by the great variety of shapes and above all by the feathery coats. Little wonder, since the animals depicted in the works of German conceptual artist Carsten Höller, who has a doctorate in agricultural sciences, are in fact artificially bred in captivity - in other words, these species do not exist in the wild. Portrayed are hybrids combining two species of finch as well as mutations that have deliberately been bred out in a single type of finch. The birds were originally photographed by Leone Giuliano Pidalà, who specialises in animal photography. Höller selected the pictures that interested him and used a two-colour engraving technique to place the almost artificial-seeming images on the borderline between colour and black-and-white, giving them a spatial character against the flat background. The process employed to create the images can also be read as an analogy for the artificiality with which the birds were bred, with the artist choosing existing graphic material, making a selection of it and then reworking the chosen images in the print studio.

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# CARSTEN HÖLLER

(Brussels, Belgium 1961)

Birds, 2006

Polyptych (10 pieces), photoengraving on paper,  $75 \times 58$  cm (each) EPO art collection



CARSTEN HÖLLER (Brussels, Belgium 1961)

Light Corridor, 2016

LED lights, LED bulbs, steel, laminated glass and stainless steel, digital control system, 307 × 255 × 452 cm Colección INELCOM Arte Contemporáneo

# TOMÁS SARACENO

(San Miguel de Tucumán, Argentina 1973)

Flying Garden (M32), 2007

Balloons, rope, quartz sand, tubes and compressor, approx. Ø 400 cm EPO art collection













NAOYA HATAKEYAMA

(Rikuzentakata, Iwate, Japan 1958)

Findling series, 2009

Gr.stein von Nardevitz, Rügen / Markgrafensteine, Rauen / Hennickendorf / Klein Helgoland, Sassnitz, Rügen / Schwanenstein, Lohne Rügen, 2009

Lambda print, 60 × 122.7 cm (each) Collection of Shiseido Company, Limited

Japanese photographer Naoya Hatakeyama produces a series of photographs that show the relationship between nature, cities and photography. *Findling* – named after the German term for glacial erratics, the giant boulders carried by the expansion of glaciers 25,000 years ago – captures the erratic blocks Hatakeyama saw in Germany in 2009, and indirectly connects the immense power of nature and the eternal flow of time. Since 2011, the photographer has been focusing his lens primarily on his hometown of Rikuzentakata, lwate Prefecture, which was severely damaged by that year's earthquake and tsunami.



ESTER VONPLON (Zurich, Switzerland 1980)

Untitled #12, from the series Gelescherfahrt, 2013-15

Carbon ink on Innova cotton paper, 74 × 95 cm BNP Paribas Swiss Foundation Collection PHILIPPE PARRENO (Oran, Algeria 1964)

Welcome to Reality Park, 2005

Lambda print on Dibond, 103 × 122 cm EFG Bank Switzerland - Art Collection



GUIDO VAN DER WERVE (Papendrecht, Netherlands 1977)

Number Nine: The day I didn't turn with the world, 2007-19

Polyptych (25 pieces), C-print on Barite paper Rabo Art Collection, Utrecht, The Netherlands 119













For 24 hours starting on 28 April 2007, our blue planet rotated one way and Dutch artist Guido van der Werve the other. The compression of that day into a film in 2007 and into 25 photographs in 2019 shows the artist dressed in black standing on tundra in the North Pole, dwarfed - in the static composition - by a blank icescape and endless blue sky. Making gestures that signal frozen discomfort, the artist slowly shuffles clockwise. Meanwhile, as evidenced by the sun's accelerated passage from left to right behind him, the Earth spins counter-clockwise on its axis. The worldly half of us understands that Number Nine takes some beating as an overripe analogy for away-from-the-pack contrarianism, with its outmoded, Caspar David Friedrich-indebted conception of the solitary sublime. But the other half – the unhip half, which responds almost involuntarily to gestures that evoke both human insignificance and our contrary potential to broach self-knowledge by communing with vastness - is seduced. Conflicted? Absolutely, and we have to assume the artist who engineered this balancing act is too.







### GUIDO VAN DER WERVE (Papendrecht, Netherlands 1977)

Number Eight: Everything is going to be alright, 2007

Video, 10:10 min. loop Rabo Art Collection, Utrecht, The Netherlands Number Thirteen Effugio No.b Aconcagua Triptych, 2011

Triptych, C-print, (2x) 42 × 56 cm, and text on paper, 28 × 20 cm Collection AMC/Amsterdam UMC Dutch filmmaker and artist Guido van der Werve is best known for his documented performances in which he pushes his body to its physical limits, accompanied by classical musical arrangements often composed by himself. Van der Werve started out as a performance artist but unwilling to perform live more than once, he began to document his interventions. In the course of this practice, he became interested in film and cinematography, where he found a similar emotional directness as in music.

The Aconcagua Triptych documents a 2010 trip to the Andes, where the artist climbed a 6,962 metre-high mountain. The piece consists of two photographs taken at the summit – one of the sky, close to heaven, and the other a self-portrait that captures his fatigue, disbelief and relief – and a short text that looks into the reasons why people are exhausted, including the desire to escape the daily grind, to transcend themselves or to conquer a proverbial Mount Everest – a mountain that Van der Werve found was physically too high for him.



Effueio b

dated Forest Oliversize on or Questiongue Teley Mader', Chinese Physics Zhandilager, Phys. Syster Signarolati. It is worth higher scenario, white a park at 1344 meres (20169) is above an lower. It is located in the biologane sector of the limitaries on the lower place of the Napel Column Data State of the State State State State State State State 1 is noised reflexes willing to him professional paties. While it resum administrational distribution and the state state state administration of the state state state state state state states and administration of the state state state state state states and administration of the state state state state state states and administration of the state state state states and states. These proves the attribution discover and states states instands.

Durrent is de sammer of 2011. The expeditive taux meconemoded live is of dath Assences in a fragment finter, with a height of 9922 meteors, it would preve to be a pool rent. Van der Werre sammented Accoregan on January 18th 2011, and subsequently decided out to circle Exerce. In October 2011, her restancested to citabi the height of Mount Everent an any indukris in factor the house hey new goar is the popularity. Resting the second second second second second second second second Neutrile Second secon

Exception: a mental diversion by means of entertainment or recreation, as an "escape" from the perceived unplemant ce banal supects of daily life. It can also be used as a terms to define the actions proughe take to help relieve persisting feelings of depression or general address.

whiever - a personal or organizational desired end-point in scene tort of assumed development. Many people underset to reach goals within a Thint time window by setting deadlines. Coall is couply similar to 'purpose' or 'aim', the autoiquated reach which guides reaction, or an end, which is an object, either a physical object or an abstract object, that has a natrino; value.



SOPHIA AL-MARIA (Tacoma, WA, USA 1983)

The Magical State, 2017

Single-channel video (colour, sound), 7 min. PCAI Collection

> Shot in Colombia's La Guajira peninsula, the location of one of the world's largest open-pit coal mines, this film by Qatari-American artist Sophia Al-Maria addresses the issue of fossil fuel extraction. A young woman from the Wayuu tribe indigenous to the area (performed by Ziruma Morales) is interrogated by an unseen Spanish-speaking man. As she answers she becomes possessed by the angry spirit of a 40-million-year-old oil demon awakened by mining. Speaking in the Wayuunaiki language, she terrifies the man and the viewer. The film is intended to awaken the spectator to the knowledge that we are the exploiters, and we must be stopped. *The Magical State* is a PCAl commission.





JULES SPINATSCH (Davos, Switzerland 1964)

Snow Management 12M, 2005

C-print mounted on aluminium, 80 × 100 cm Collection Pictet 125

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OLAFUR ELIASSON (Copenhagen, Denmark 1967)

The Hole Series, 1997

Coupler print in artist's frame (15 pieces), 27.9 × 34.3 cm (each) The Mirabaud Art Collection





# THOMAS HOEPKER (Munich, Germany 1936)

View from Williamsburg, Brooklyn, towards Manhattan, September 11, 2001, 2001

Archival pigment print, 50 × 70 cm Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation

# PHILIPPE RAMETTE (Auxerre, France 1961)

Le Balcon II (Hong Kong), 2001

Digital print, 155 × 125 cm Neuflize OBC Corporate Collection



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LARA ALMARCEGUI (Zaragoza, Spain 1972)

Guide to Ruined Buildings in the Netherlands XIX-XXI Century, 2008

C-print, 30 × 45 cm (each) BPD Art Collection

A guide in which almost 150 ruins are included accompanies the photographs by Spanish artist Lara Almarcegui, who travelled across the Netherlands looking for ruins in various states of decay. In her view a building has become a ruin when its windows or doors are no longer intact or its walls or roofs have gaping holes. When this happens, the construction becomes exposed to the weather, to the erosion of the wind and rain or the encroachment of wildlife and vegetation. These abandoned buildings have no use, no function, which means that they are open to all kinds of possibilities. In a country such as the Netherlands, where every inch of land seems to be used with utmost efficiency, the existence of these blank spaces is something to be grateful for.

Almarcegui researches wastelands, ruins and building materials. In her work, she shows the traces of society that have become visible in the landscape. At first sight, her work appears to be a register of the passage of time in the landscape, but it also raises questions about how we organise space. What are the consequences of economic growth on the landscape and environment? On a more personal level, her photographs make viewers wonder about the former inhabitants of these ruins: who lived in this mansion? Her work shows how inseparable we, as a society, are from the space around us.







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DIETER ROTH (Hannover, Germany 1930–1998 Basel, Switzerland)

Islandschaft, 1969

Oil paint and loose tobacco on canvas, 51 × 75 cm EFG Bank Switzerland - Art Collection



ROSA BARBA (Agrigento, Italy 1972)

The Colour Out of Space, 2015

HD video (colour, stereo sound), 5 coloured glass filters and steel base, 36 min. loop Colección INELCOM Arte Contemporáneo



# BASIM MAGDY (Asyut, Egypt 1977)

A Portrait of a Landscape of Short-lived Waves with their Dead Magician Cousin, 2014

C-print, 82 × 82 cm Deutsche Bank Collection

# THEASTER GATES (Chicago, IL, USA 1973)

Bitumen Patchwork, 2015

Wood, roofing substrate and tar, 185.4 × 94 × 15.2 cm The Krause Collection





THEASTER GATES (Chicago, IL, USA 1973)

Tar Baby, 2016

Lime wood doused with tar, 20 × 22 cm, approx. ø 20 cm evn collection

Theaster Gates is an American urbanist, collector, artist, professor and curator. The son of a hot tar roofer, in 2016 he dedicated an exhibition at the Kunsthaus Bregenz to the material of tar. References to the substance were found in various different works on several floors of the show. The black baby head in the evn collection also originates from that event. It was made by a wood carver from the Bregenzerwald region and poured over with hot tar by the artist. There are several variants of the head sculpture in different sizes. Gates, who provided for the mingling of art and crafts into urban life by transforming the so-called 'Huguenot House' in Kassel into an academy for documenta 13 (2012), took the model for his sculpture from a piece of the collection of Chicago-based black bank executive Edward Williams, who started buying up all sorts of racist everyday objects in the 1970s and '80s in order to take them off the market. Gates has preserved this collection in his Rebuild Foundation, together with volumes of Ebony and Jet magazines, record collections and many other items that represent and characterise Afro-American life and culture. The building on the Chicago South Side was opened to the public by Gates, who thus established a significant cultural archive, an educational centre for present-day and future generations.

DAMIÁN ORTEGA (Mexico City, Mexico 1967)

Viaje al Centro de la Tierra: Penetrable, 2014

Metallic structure and suspended objects: tubular leather, pumice stone, zamak, baked ceramics, glass and red tezontle, approx. 300 × 300 × 400 cm Colección INELCOM Arte Contemporáneo







JULIAN CHARRIÈRE (Morges, Switzerland 1987)

Polygon XXI, 2014

Medium-format film, double exposure on Baryta paper, 120 × 140 cm Julius Baer Art Collection



JULIAN CHARRIÈRE (Morges, Switzerland 1987)

and

JULIUS VON BISMARCK (Breisach am Rhein, Germany 1983)

Objects in Mirror Might Be Closer Than They Appear IV / Objects in Mirror Might Be Closer Than They Appear VII, 2016

Archival pigment print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag paper, 82 × 62 cm (each) Julius Baer Art Collection



# **RELATIONSHIP TO**

# THE OTHER

JULIAN CHARRIÈRE (Morges, Switzerland 1987)

An Invitation to Disappear – Kotawaringin, 2018

Archival pigment print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag paper, mounted on aluminium Dibond, framed (walnut), Mirogard anti-reflective glass, 153.8 × 191.3 cm UBS Art Collection

2.
'Relationship to the Other' centres on the questions of belonging and responsibility towards others. The artworks in this section touch on the subject of solidarity at several levels. One is the global, marked by a power imbalance that follows the fault lines of colonisation and to this day operates with the unjust status quo of 'the West and the rest'. The artworks in this chapter look for clues as to how this emotional distance from 'the other' was created, and ponder about whether it is possible to expand notions of 'us' to care for people in all parts of the world as a shared responsibility, and to regard non-human species as part of the 'us'. The works in this section also examine the economies based on extraction. whether of labour or of natural resources.



NOÉ SENDAS (Brussels, Belgium 1972)

Sr. Central, 2005

Epoxy resin and clothing, 175 × 47.5 × 37 cm PLMJ Foundation



#### ALEIX PLADEMUNT (Girona, Spain 1980)

Cacique Quimbaya / La conquista de México / Leopoldo II, from the series Matter, 2018

Giclee print, 90 × 70 cm (each) Colección Banco de España



Spanish artist Aleix Plademunt approached the photography project *Matter*, of which *Cacique Quimbaya* forms part, as a retreat to review, explore and draw new conclusions about the conditions under which some consumer goods are produced and the origins and meanings of raw materials in today's world. From the Latin *mater* (mother), the term 'matter' (the series' title) refers to the primary substance forming all tangible things. More broadly, the word 'matter' can also mean a problem, an issue, something important and even worrying. Etymologically, the implicit message is one of conflict.

The project thus delves into one of the oldest questions surrounding existence and the heart of debates on physics and theology: not just the origin of matter, but also its transformation and some of its uses. Plademunt is interested in the way humans, who occupy a minuscule and ephemeral patch of the cosmos, insist on continually transforming and controlling matter, confirming the existence of a new era: the Anthropocene.

The series *Matter* invites us to reflect on the complexity of Western progress. The photographs are therefore not stand-alone pieces; rather, they function as visual phrases that tell a complex narrative interweaving historical moments whose common thread is 'matter', the root of the combination of conflicts, violence, slavery, consumption and environmental destruction shaping some of the most flagrant contradictions of today's world.



#### KATINKA BOCK (Frankfurt, Germany 1976)

Le Grand Bleu (elle), 2012

Sculpture, 20 × 202 × 20 cm Norac collection





SANTIAGO SIERRA (Madrid, Spain 1966)

Object measuring 600 × 57 × 52 cm constructed to be held horizontally to a wall, 2001

Photograph, 228 × 150 cm Deutsche Bank Collection

'I am only an artist and I only make art, and notwithstanding that I am asked to do so, I don't want to be an accomplice to the monumental self-deceptive collective of changing the world.'

Santiago Sierra

The photograph Object measuring  $600 \times 57 \times 52$  cm constructed to be held horizontally to a wall relates to a performance of the same title that took place on 27 April 2001 at the Galerie Peter Kilchmann in Zurich. 'A sculpture made of materials like wood and asphalt was lifted horizontally. One end rested on a wooden socket on the wall of the gallery and the other end was supported by four workers – two workers at a time. They were paid 20 Swiss francs per hour, about \$12, during the opening of the show. Political exiles from different countries were employed for this work, having been contacted directly through the local authorities. The laws in this country do not allow exiles to work but the authorities are fairly permissive in this matter.'

Spanish artist Santiago Sierra directs his attention to situations where people agree to perform certain unusual actions in exchange for payment, without being consciously involved in the process. In doing so, he raises questions concerning menial labour. Simultaneously using and exposing exploitative aspects in his work gives further substance and depth to his performances.

[Partly based on texts in Diego Sileo and Lutz Henke, *Santiago Sierra: Mea Culpa* (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana, 2017), 46; https://www.santiago-sierra.com and a Liutaurus Psibiliskis interview with Santiago Sierra; and https://www.artlog.net/de/kunstbulletin-10-2001/es-macht-sie-wirklich-wuetend]

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The Italian self-taught artist Alighiero Boetti moved to Paris in 1962 to study engraving. There he started making objects with unusual, ephemeral or industrial materials such as aluminium, corrugated cardboard or glass. Five years later he became associated with the Arte Povera movement, which owed its name to an exhibition organised in Genoa in 1967 by Germano Celant. Fascinated by non-Western cultures and keenly aware of the sociological reality of the world around him, Boetti travelled to Afghanistan for the first time in 1971. This crucial trip led him to set up a creative experiment with craftswomen in Kabul to make tapestries. In 1973 he started signing his works with the 'dualistic', twinned name of Alighiero e Boetti, which was his way of highlighting

Among the best known of Boetti's works are these tapestries, which were ongoing collaborative works with Afghan weavers until the Soviet occupation, and from 1979 with Pakistani dressmakers. The *Mappe* are embroidered world maps where each country is marked with its flag. This 'serial' project enabled the artist to evoke, in ornamental mode, the gravity of the evolution of states' geo-political borders and shifting global influences, while at the same time dissolving the frontier between fine arts and crafts.

human's dialectical tensions confronted with the plurality of the world.



ALIGHIERO BOETTI (Turin, Italy 1940-1994 Rome, Italy)

Mappa, 1983

Tapestry, 115 × 170 cm Nestlé Art Collection

HANS EIJKELBOOM (Arnhem, Netherlands 1949)

Photo Note 7 November 2007, 14.00-15.30 Fifth Avenue, New York, 2007

Photograph, 90 × 50 (each) Collection De Nederlandsche Bank





The perception of the other, which tends to be charged with prejudices in the Western tradition, takes a central role in the triptych *Wir*. By photographing himself in different European national costumes, the Burundian-born Belgian artist Aimé Ntakiyica challenges this dominating and dualistic Western perception, closely interlinked with territories and nationalities. Playfully he questions the concept of identity and the common patterns of expectation by decoding traditional dress codes. Who can wear the suit of a matador? Does a kilt preserve its meaning outside the Scottish border? Today, this dose of satirical humour imbued with critical and irrational elements helps us to see that 'we are the others'.

*Wir* was shown for the first time in 2001 in the exhibition *Wir sind die anderen* held in MARTa, Herford, Germany. The series interacts with the employees of the National Bank of Belgium since 2009, and has been shown with the Deutsche Bundesbank collection in the joint exhibition *Building a Dialogue: Two Corporate Collections of Contemporary Art* organised in Brussels.



AIMÉ NTAKIYICA (Kayanza, Burundi 1960)

Wir, 2001

Triptych, print on Forex, 200 × 142 cm (each) Contemporary Art Collection of the National Bank of Belgium



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DANH VO (Bà Ria, Vietnam 1975)

America, 2008

Triptych of ready-made pieces EFG Bank Switzerland - Art Collection

> 'The meaning of the objects I use only exists because they have taken a detour from the usual route they travel.'

Danh Vo

In his work, which frequently resorts to ready-mades, Vietnamese-born Danish artist Danh Vo uses objects that refer to his family history as well as geopolitical themes and bureaucratic structures. This can be seen in the cross, the outfit and the mask that originally formed a single installation titled America.

The white wooden cross served as a temporary grave marker for the artist's paternal grandmother. Vo's father fashioned the rudimentary cross to identify her burial plot. Although the rest of the members of Vo's family were initially embarrassed by the simplicity of the handmade object, they were equally vexed to find that it had been discarded when the permanent stone was installed and salvaged it.

In the mid-1960s, affordable, single-use paper clothing enjoyed a burst of widespread popularity. This dress was produced during the 1968 US presidential election. Richard Nixon's surname is emblasoned across the white garment in red uppercase letters along with alternating blue stars, transforming its wearer into a walking endorsement of the Republican candidate.

The papier-mâché mask is painted with the thirteen-star flag that was the first official insignia of the united American nation after it freed itself from colonial rule. Against this fraught political backdrop, the use of the flag by its unknown maker might be alternately viewed as ardent patriotism or a caustic repudiation.



### PHUNG VO

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Grave Marker for Maria Ngo Thi Ha, 2008

MARS OF ASHEVILLE

ANONYMOUS ARTIST Mask (America), 1969

Richard Nixon's Campaign

Paperboard varnish,

Enamel on wood, 100 × 60 × 3 cm

Synthetic fabric, 40 × 20 cm

Dress, 1968

107.5 × 54 × 5 cm



# SILVIA BÄCHLI (Baden, Switzerland 1956)

Untitled, 1984

Charcoal on paper, 24.9 × 37.8 cm Collection Pictet

#### LUBAINA HIMID (Sultanate of Zanzibar 1954)

Dreaming Has a Share in History / The Truth Is Never Watertight, 2016

Acrylic and pencil on paper, 72 × 102 cm (each) Deutsche Bank Collection





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### KILUANJI KIA HENDA (Luanda, Angola 1979)

Redefining the Power III, 2011

Triptych, photographic print mounted on aluminium, 120 × 81 cm (each) Die Kunstsammlung der Mobiliar Genossenschaft



The works of Angolan artist Kiluanji Kia Henda are closely linked to the history of his homeland. Angola was under Portuguese colonial rule until 1975, after which a Marxist regime was established. Civil war was waged until 2002. Critical reflection on his origins and identity characterises Henda's way of working.

Redefining the Power is a series of photographs in which Henda's friends from the capital Luanda pose on former colonialist monuments' empty plinths. The camera angles match those in a series of historical postcards from the time of Portugal's occupation of Angola. The bronze statues of the Portuguese King Afonso I or General Pedro Alexandrino da Cunha were removed from their bases after Luanda gained independence. Since then, the monuments' pedestals have stood empty while the Ministry of Culture initiates attempts to redesign the public squares in the city. In his photo series, Henda takes up this challenge and defines his idea of role models for society by placing Luanda's young creative generation on the plinths.

























ARMIN LINKE (Milan, Italy 1966)

Blind Sensorium, 2019

Video installation, 103 min. loop Fundació Sorigué Collection

The work of photographer and filmmaker Armin Linke documents the effects of globalisation and infrastructure transformation on different local populations.

Blind Sensorium is a synthesis of more than ten years of fieldwork undertaken by Linke and his collaborators, Giulia Bruno (Milan 1978) and Giuseppe lelasi (1974), following and interviewing scientists, politicians and activists, and gaining access to US laboratories, data centres and trading rooms, resource extraction sites and important locations for the Earth's ecosystems. Through this piece, the artist proposes a visual approach to climate change and its material landscape from both a rigorous and reflective perspective. Blind Sensorium is conceived as an artistic essay that examines the many aspects of the Anthropocene, proposed as a visual anthropology, inviting us to become aware of the critical situation of the Earth and the conflictive role that human beings and modern societies play in its transformation. The images invite us to reflect on our actions and to observe and interpret the new natural and artificial landscapes that we inhabit.

Fundació Sorigué, through its PLANTA project, has supported for the last years the research carried out by this artist together with his collaborators on the forces that are impacting the face of the Earth.

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SANDRA GAMARRA (Lima, Peru 1972)

Recurso I (paisaje), 2018

Sand on canvas, 161 × 201 cm Colección Banco de España 163

INGE RAMBOW (Marienburg, Germany 1940)

Near Klettwitz, Brandenburg, 1991

C-print, 180 × 230 cm Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation



Born and raised in a large city in the mineral-rich Katanga Province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo – an important mining centre under Belgian rule – artist Sammy Baloji has a keen awareness of the country's brutal colonial history and post-colonial decline. By employing appropriation, Baloji focuses on the powerful role that images play in shaping our understanding of global power structures both past and present.

This work is one of a series of montages from 2011, *Congo Far West, Retracing Charles Lemaire's Expedition*, where Baloji presents fragments of photographs taken by the Belgian explorer Charles Lemaire during a scientific expedition from 1898 to 1900. Lemaire was accompanied on the trip by the artist Léon Dardenne, and it is Dardenne's watercolour that is reproduced in the background. One of the aims of the expedition was to collect material for a major exhibition at the Congo Museum (now the Royal Museum of Central Africa) in Tervuren, Belgium, as a follow up to the Congo Free State exhibit presented at the Brussels International Exhibition in 1897. The image tells us not only about Belgium's territorial conquests, but also about the way that Baloji reconquers both artistically and intellectually a part of colonial history as it is preserved in Western art collections, and makes it relevant for our times.



#### SAMMY BALOJI

(Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo 1978)

Portrait #1: Kalamata, Chief of the Luba against Watercolor by Dardenne, 2011

Archival digital print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag paper, 100 × 128 cm Equinor Art Programme

CONGO Portrait # 3 - Cité de Kawama, 2011, 2011

Photograph, 80 × 120.5 cm Proximus Art collection



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MITCH EPSTEIN (Holyoke, MA, USA 1952)

Amos Coal Power Plant, Poca, West Virginia, 2004

C-Print, 117 × 150 cm Novo Banco Contemporary Photography Collection JOEL STERNFELD (New York, NY, USA 1944)

Exhausted Renegade Elephant, Woodland, Washington, June 1979, 1979 / Abandoned Freighter, Homer, Alaska, July 1984, 1984

Photograph, 106.7 × 133.4 cm (each) Proximus Art collection









## EDWARD BURTYNSKY (St Catharines, Canada 1955)

Shipbreaking 2, Chittagong, Bangladesh, 2000

C-print, 107.5 × 90 cm Borusan Contemporary Art Collection

# CRISTINA LUCAS (Jaén, Spain 1973)

The People that Is Missing, 2019

Single-channel HD video (colour, sound), 8:04 min. Collection of Contemporary Art "la Caixa" Foundation











TAL R [Tal Schlomo Rosenzweig (Tel Aviv, Israel 1967)]

Apple and Apple, 2006

Bronze, 170 × 96 × 50 cm

'My art always finds its point of departure in contemporary life... I'd say that most of my works are about things I've picked up in all imaginable places other than in the world of art.'

Tal R

'Kolbojnik', a Yiddish term that captured the imagination of Danish artist Tal R while on kibbutz in Israel, is used to describe the rubbish generated after dinner in the collective dining hall. Making a parallelism with this word repeatedly used in his work, the artist collects what other people would perhaps refer to as refuse, suggesting the creative potential of what is thrown out. In his work Tal R freely combines techniques and materials: he paints, draws and makes sculptures and collages from images of both high and low culture borrowed from art history books, porno magazines, comics, private photos, childhood pictures, sketches and picture book illustrations.

Irony and humour are common denominators in his work: both his paintings and sculptures give the false impression of childlike simplicity, belying a subtle complexity that revolves around his attempts to reconcile pictorial traditions with expressionism. Interested in creation myths and darker themes, Tal R's work is consistent in its display of joy and playfulness, with a constant reflection on consumerism, alluding to humans as masters of cultural waste.







GEERT GOIRIS (Bornem, Belgium 1971)

Solitary Tree, 2006, 100 × 125 cm / Eugene's Neighborhood, 2002, 100 × 145 cm

Lambda print ING Collection

> ERIC BAUDELAIRE (Salt Lake City, UT, USA 1973)

Attente, from the series Etats Imaginés, 2004

C-print on Diasec, 110 × 141.4 cm Collection d'art Société Générale



DOUG AITKEN (Redondo Beach, CA, USA 1968)

Night Train, 2004

C-print mounted on aluminium, 96.5 × 244 cm Novo Banco Contemporary Photography Collection

American artist Doug Aitken shows the city of angels and of dreams on a silver screen, at night. His view of Los Angeles is similar to Simone de Beauvoir's: a kaleidoscopic 'hall of mirrors'. *Night Train*, the original title of this photograph, is the city and its symmetry, reflected in a mirror. It reveals the excess of a metropolis that grows in every direction with no centre.

Like the photograph, Los Angeles has a virtual existence, cemented by paradox and contradiction. Aitken admits he is fascinated by the electrified structure of its atmosphere and views the city as a magical place, radiating light. The urban lighting's fluorescent veins are its central nervous system. Now, thanks to symmetry, the infinite metropolis has acquired an umbilical hub.

Seen this way, Los Angeles looks like a bird of prey with a massive wingspan and sharp beak; or a flying saucer hovering in the darkness, anticipating close encounters of various kinds.

The photograph is also a return to roots. According to the Book of Genesis, 'In the beginning, God said, "Let there be light": and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness' (Genesis 1:3). Photography can exist without camera or film. But without light, there can be no photography.













#### MARTIN PARR (Epsom, United Kingdom 1952)

The Last Resort 1 / The Last Resort 9 / The Last Resort 23 / The Last Resort 31 / The Last Resort 35, 1986

C-Print, 51 × 61 cm (each) EPO art collection



WANG JIN (Datong City, China 1962)

100% Performance Self-Portrait, 1999

C-Print, 120 × 150 cm Novartis Art Collection 177

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**EL ANATSUI** (Anyako, Ghana 1944)

Tismemskiblo (Wall Sculpture), 2011

Aluminium and copper wire and other materials selected by the artist, 8.4 × 15 m Novartis Art Collection



ADRIAN PACI (Shkodër, Albania 1969)

Centro di permanenza temporanea, 2007

Video projection on DVD (colour, sound), 5:30 min. Collection of Contemporary Art "la Caixa" Foundation













# JOÃO MARIA GUSMÃO (Lisbon, Portugal 1979)

and

PEDRO PAIVA (Lisbon, Portugal 1977)

The Horse of the Prophet, 2011

16 mm film (colour, silent), 2:02 min. Colección INELCOM Arte Contemporáneo 180

VASCO ARAÚJO (Lisbon, Portugal 1975)

O percurso, 2009

Polyptych (6 pieces), digital print, 88.5 × 115 cm (each) Colección Banco de España

> O percurso (The Path) is a short film directed by Portuguese media artist Vasco Araújo depicting the journey of a gipsy father and son across Andalusian fields. As they traverse the harvested terrain, the father establishes a mental monologue conceived as a kind of generational dialogue on losing one's roots (a reference to the nomadism of the Romany people), life and death. The text, by Portuguese playwright José Maria Vieira Mendes (Lisbon, Portugal 1976), alludes to the loss of land and migration to a new location in a territory that must never belong to the person travelling through it, since settling on land entails stagnation, death and burial. Between scenes of the father and son walking, Araújo inserts close-up static shots of La Macarena, the Virgin repeatedly named by the film's characters. A woman's voice is then heard over the father's recital, establishing a second layer that speaks of life as progress, as pursuit, and urges the boy - a metaphorical embodiment of the future - to press on. The maternal image of the Virgin and the recited text's recurring reference to the 'here and now' of life heighten the mysticism of the discourse in Araújo's video, which encourages the search for wisdom and freedom, framed by a strange aura of nostalgia and theatricality inherent in the Portuguese artist's poetry.



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Hoy y ahora samos hacia donde tas pirs nos llev





# ALFREDO JAAR (Santiago, Chile 1956)

*1+1+1*, 1987

Triptych, gelatin silver print, 13 × 13 cm (each) Lhoist Art Collection

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MARTHA ROSLER (Brooklyn, NY, USA 1943)

Cleaning the Drapes, from the series House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home, 1967–72

Photomontage, 44 × 63 cm Novo Banco Contemporary Photography Collection

Make up / Hands up, from the series House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home, 1967-72

Photomontage, 58.5 × 33.5 cm Neuflize OBC Corporate Collection





FERNANDO BRYCE (Lima, Peru 1965)

Work in Progress, 2006

Series of 80 drawings, ink on paper, 30 × 21 cm (each) Colección INELCOM Arte Contemporáneo



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**BROGNON ROLLIN** 

David Brognon (Messancy, Belgium 1978) & Stéphanie Rollin (Luxembourg 1980)

Famous People Have No Stories (Leonardo da Vinci, Dante Alighieri, Napoleon Bonaparte, Cosimo I de' Medici (II), Robert Schuman, Benjamin Franklin, Diderot, Dina Vierny (II), Amerigo Vespucci), 2013

Inkjet print, 45 × 35 cm (each) Collection Arendt Art

'Frozen by glory, smoothed by time, the palms of the statues offer an exercise in reverse palmistry.'

Anthony van den Bossche

In the series *Famous People Have No Stories* appropriation takes on an objectivist dimension for the Belgian-French artist duo David Brognon and Stéphanie Rollin. Over several years this team based in Paris and Luxembourg photographed the hands of sculpted writers, philosophers and other famous historical characters, which they then decontextualized in order to create a personal archive, a collection of details that they make visible and which testify to an existing reality that is generally not perceptible.

In 'Contre-Temps', a text in *Brognon Rollin: L'avant dernière version de la realité*, the monographic catalogue of the *Brognon Rollin* exhibition organised at the Mac/Val in Val-de-Marne in 2020, curator Julien Blanpied evokes the thwarted relationship to time and space in this series of photographs:

'From a divinatory art whose playground is the palm of the hand and whose object is the prediction of notable events in a life, the artist duo resolves to read these lines knowing the epilogue. They look for the event (which has taken place and is known) in a line of destiny reproduced a posteriori, but whose existence is assumed a priori.' MARLENE DUMAS (Cape Town, South Africa 1953)

The Refugee, 2006

Digital print, 45 × 35 cm Collection De Nederlandsche Bank





MICHÈLE MAGEMA (Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo 1977)

Fleurs de lys, 2006

Single-channel video (colour), 2 min. Attijariwafa Bank Collection

'The fugitive slave who has been on the run for one month from the day his master denounces him before the law shall have his ears cut off and shall be branded with a fleur de lys on one shoulder. If he repeats the offense for another month, counting again from the day he is denounced, he shall have his hock cut off and be branded with a fleur de lys on the other shoulder. The third time he shall be put to death.'

Jean-Baptiste Colbert, art. 38, Code noir, 1681

*Fleurs de lys* (Lilies) conjures up the ambiguous character of this flower in French history. In the video, Congolese artist Michèle Magema presents two parallel views confronting each other. The chain buried in the ground echoes the violent practice of chaining slaves, lost forever. The use of lilies, the *fleur de lys* charged with a double symbol, subtly reawakens a painful memory of history: branding. This technique was usually reserved for cattle, but it was also used to mark slaves. However, the planting of these flowers is a poetic reminder of the cycle of existence, like the metaphor of the earth that gives and takes life. With this video, the artist looks to remember these people who were robbed of their rights and invokes a broken, still fragile African memory.





OTOBONG NKANGA (Kano, Nigeria 1974)

Alterscapes: Playground, 2005–15

Triptych, Lambda print, 50 × 67 cm (each) AkzoNobel Art Foundation

Alterscapes: Playground features Nigerian artist Otobong Nkanga seated with a barren landscape draped over her knees as if it were an animal skin carried off as a hunting trophy – a clear reference to the dramatically changing landscape of Nigeria, a country rich in oil. Nkanga's work takes the memory, environment and postcolonial history of her homeland as its themes. In this piece she reflects on the way humankind has economically and politically reshaped landscapes, oftentimes unthinkingly, using their resources for short-term commercial gain. CHRISTINE SUN KIM (Orange County, CA, USA 1980)

When I Pretend To Be Hearing, 2019

Charcoal and oil pastel on paper, 125 × 125 cm TD Bank Corporate Art Collection



ELENA KOVYLINA (Moscow, Russia 1971)

Égalité, 2008

Video (colour, sound), 9:10 min. Gazprombank Collection

> The video Égalité (Equality) shows men and women of different ages, ethnic backgrounds and professions arranged in a row standing on stools, the legs of which have been variously cut down so that all these people appear to be very similar to each other, equal in height. The line formed by the crowns of the participants' heads is, in the opinion of Russian artist Elena Kovylina, the illusory line of a social 'level playing field' that has nothing in common with reality. According to Kovylina's concept, the video demonstrates the impossibility of achieving a 'Golden Age' of equality 'right here and now'. In this project the quest for liberty, equality and fraternity, all-embracing social security, and also other aspirations of humanity is rendered concrete and 'humanised'. In order to see the true level of equality, one has to shift one's gaze from the aligned sullen smiles down to the wobbly stools.









PAUL STRAND (Brooklyn, NY, USA 1890–1976 Orgeval, France)

Blind Woman, 1916

Photogravure, 22.3 × 16.1 cm FOTOGRAFIS Collection, Bank Austria Kunstforum Wien

In 1916 American photographer Paul Strand made a series of candid street portraits with a handheld camera fitted with a false lens attached to its side, allowing him to point the camera in one direction while actually taking the photograph in another. This seminal image of a street peddler was published in 1917 in Alfred Stieglitz's magazine *Camera Work*. It immediately became an icon of the new American photography, which integrated the humanism of social documentation with the boldly simplified forms of modernism. This large platinum print is the only known vintage exhibition print of this image. 194

RÉMY ZAUGG (Courgenay, Switzerland 1943–2005 Basel, Switzerland)

De la cécité; n° 7: MAIS MOI JE TE VOIS, 66.4 × 56.7 × 2.7 cm / De la cécité; n° 10: MAIS MOI JE TE VOIS, 66.5 × 56.5 × 3 cm, 1994–99/2000–01

Varnish, lacquer and silkscreen on aluminium Collection Pictet



DANA CLAXTON

(Yorkton, Canada 1959)

Headdress-Jeneen, 2018

LED firebox with transmounted chromogenic transparency, 386 × 259 × 45.7 cm TD Bank Corporate Art Collection

> Known for her expansive multidisciplinary approach to art making, Hunkapapa Lakota (Sioux) filmmaker, photographer and performance artist Dana Claxton investigates notions of Indigenous identity, beauty, gender, the body, the socio-political and the spiritual.

Claxton's LED 'fireboxes' are an attestation to the beauty and resilience of Indigenous women. In these portraits the face of each sitter is extravagantly covered in layers of their cultural belongings – beaded necklaces, hats, barettes, bracelets, embroidered bags, fringed hairpieces and embellished earrings – reminding us that identity is formed by relations, conversation and exchange. Most of the belongings obstructing the sitter's gaze are gifts, suggesting that each woman's identity has been shaped and formed by respect, honour of family lineage. The items also reflect the care, time and labour that has gone into their making, as well as their important roots in Indigenous culture and traditions, bridging over thousands of years.

At first glance, the provocative *Headdress–Jeneen*, an image of the young performance artist Jeneen Frei Njootli, is both intriguing and ambiguous. Covering the sitter's eyes, which to Claxton are 'a place of spirit', creates an unsettling impact on the viewer. On closer look, however, we realise that the past and the present are formidable and ever present in this portrait where the sitter is not the direct object, but the subject of tradition and the enduring presence and power of Indigenous women. Through her critique of stereotypes and colonial issues, Claxton has become an important voice reclaiming and sharing narratives of Indigenous culture.



PHILIPPE PARRENO (Oran, Algeria 1964)

Imaginary Friends, 2005

Lambda print on Dibond, 113 × 150 cm EFG Bank Switzerland – Art Collection ROY VILLEVOYE (Maastricht, Netherlands 1960)

Markus Bini with Palette, 2007

Inkjet print, 130 × 100 cm (each) Collection De Nederlandsche Bank



In the 1990s, after travelling to India and Papua New Guinea, Dutch artist Roy Villevoye felt the need to leave behind the painterly career on which he had embarked in 1984. His stay with the Asmat people in Papua inspired him to turn instead to photography, film and installationart to represent his key concern, the meeting of asynchronous cultures, and a returning subject of interest, the meaning of colour.

Villevoye regards art making as a way of life and uses his art as a means to meet others. It is, most likely, the source of his fascination with skin and skin tones. *The Making of Madonna* references the lifelike sculpture of a dark-skinned man holding a white-skinned baby. It is a portrait of Villevoye's Asmat friend Omomá and the artist's daughter Céline, and expresses the essential character of Villevoye's work. Interestingly, the Asmat people are culturally prohibited from producing imagery of live people. In 2009, in response to the sculpture, Omomá sent a videomessage to Villevoye in which he attempts to find redemption for breaking the taboo of representing the living, after a spirit visited him in a dream demanding clarification.

Two photographs currently in the DNB collection expose part of the sculpture's production process. In one image we see Omomá's skin tone compared to the paint used for the sculpture. On the other Markus Bini shows us the full colour palette.





ZANELE MUHOLI (Umlazi, South Africa 1972)

Phumula Paris, from the series Somnyama Ngonyama, 2019

Silver gelatin print, 71 × 48 cm Collection Arendt Art ANNIKA LARSSON (Stockholm, Sweden 1972)

D.I.E., 2000

DVD (colour, sound), 31:26 min. Colección Bergé, Spain



The central theme in the work of Swedish visual artist Annika Larsson is the dialectic of power and the different ways in which it manifests itself. Projected at the Venice Biennale in 2001, *D.I.E.* belongs to this line of investigation. In the video the characters do not speak; rather, the action flows to the music by Tobias Bernstrup (Gothenburg, Sweden 1970) composed specially for this piece. *D.I.E.* shows a hired killer meticulously preparing a gun before shooting three men. The murderer then approaches the bodies and caresses their cheeks, necks and hands. His movements are characteristically slow, evoking an atmosphere of seduction and also of perversion in the expression of power. But Larsson goes a step further. By controlling every detail, every stage of a process whose final result the viewer contemplates in utter fascination, perhaps what we are being told is that the artist is the one who really holds power here, and that she is terribly conscious of her omnipotent position.



Counter Music is made up of two synchronised sound screens that suggest a new meditation on the status of images. The piece fashions a dialogue between sequences extracted from a film by Dizga Vertov with industrial images and video surveillance cameras. According to the Czech-born German video artist Harun Farocki, this device seeks to confront images from a variety of sources and functions as a crosssectional message that overlaps the film montage.

Reflecting on his work, the artist stated: 'The city today is as rationalised and regulated as a production process. The images which today determine the day of the city are operative images, control images. Representations of traffic regulation, by car, train or metro, representations determining the height at which mobile phone network transmitters are fixed [...]. Images from thermo-cameras to discover heat loss from buildings [...]. Despite their boulevards, promenades, market places, arcades and churches, these cities are already machines for living and working. I too want to "remake" the city films, but with different images. Limited time and means themselves demand concentration on just a few, archetypal chapters. Fragments, or preliminary studies.'



HARUN FAROCKI (Nový Jicin, Czech Republic 1944-2014 Berlin, Germany)

Counter Music, 2004

Two-channel video installation (colour, sound), 23 min. Colección Bergé, Spain



ISAAC JULIEN (London, United Kingdom 1960)

Stones against Diamonds, 2016

Premier photograph, 160 × 160 cm AkzoNobel Art Foundation THOMAS DEMAND (Munich, Germany 1964)

Desk, 1994

C-print, Diasec and Plexiglass, 172 × 100 cm Collection d'art Société Générale



LYNN HERSHMAN LEESON (Cleveland, OH, USA 1941)

The Infinity Engine – Room 8, 2018

Antibody and DNA mixed-media installation, variable dimensions Novartis Art Collection

> 'While the vials containing DNA and antibodies in Room 8 are physically small, they represent much of what I've ever lived and most of what I've thought.'

Lynn Hershman Leeson

Installation *Room 8* of *The Infinity Engine* by American artist Lynn Hershman Leeson is the culmination of years of creative work focusing on the relationship between technologies, media and identity, and the changing relationship between the body and technology. The artwork comprises the last and final setup of the complex multi-room installation entitled *The Infinity Engine*, which stages and recreates a genetics laboratory and provides a critical look at developments in the biosciences.

A narrow glass window in a locked laboratory door offers a glimpse into an indefinable space bathed in intense blue light. A mirror box containing two glass vials sits on a pedestal. One vial contains the LYNNHERSHMAN antibody, the result of a collaboration between the artist and Thomas Huber, then Senior Investigator at NIBR Biologics Center at Novartis. Using the amino acid sequence of the key HCDR3 loop, they spelled out LYNN HERSHMAN at the molecular level. The other vial holds 300 nanograms of DNA that stores all the digital material used for *The Infinity Engine* and the artist's video journal *The Electronic Diaries* (1986–94).

The installation is completed by *The Infinity Engine* video (1:50 min.) and four original photographs.





LOTHAR BAUMGARTEN (Rheinsberg, Germany 1944)

Pilgrim, 1969

C-print, 64.8 × 82.6 cm Colección Banco de España

German artist Lothar Baumgarten made *Pilgrim* in 1969, before he had completed his studies at the Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf. A student of Joseph Beuys, his first forays into conceptual art were strongly influenced by Claude Lévi-Strauss. The questioning of the languages and disciplines of 2-D and 3-D representation, the opposition between nature and culture, and the rejection of the art market all appear in his early work, characterised by the creation of ephemeral sculptures of which only photographic evidence remains. This was a political stratagem, his aim being not to make objects that could be sold.

This practice prefigured Baumgarten's later career as an artist whose work centred on ethnography and anthropology; however, unlike his later travels – he lived alongside the Yanomami Indians in the Amazon rainforest for several months in the 1970s – in this case the journey was metaphorical, a simulation in which he took snapshots in his back garden, in a forest close to the Rhine, and fashioned found objects into small sculptures. In *Pilgrim* he used a toy fawn which he altered slightly by placing what appears to be a tropical flower atop it. In this series, entitled *Kultur-Natur, Manipulierte Realität* (Culture-Nature, Manipulated Reality), which he completed in 1972, he sought a reading that fused the two objects in the composition: in this case he leads the viewer to interpret the image as a mythological animal, a winged mammal.



GAURI GILL (Chandigarh, India 1970)

Untitled (23), from the series Acts of Appearance, 2015-ongoing

Inkjet print, 106.7 × 71.1 cm Deutsche Bank Collection

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JOAN JONAS (New York, NY, USA 1936)

In the Trees, 2015

Mixed media installation: 2 videos, 6 mirrors, 64 drawings (watercolour on paper), variable dimensions, 2:08 min. loop Colección INELCOM Arte Contemporáneo COOKING SECTIONS Daniel Fernández Pascual (Burgos, Spain 1984) & Alon Schwabe (Tel Aviv, Israel 1984)

Speculations on Disappearance, 2016

Site-specific sound installation, variable dimensions EIB art collection





This site-specific sound installation by Cooking Sections deals with the invisibility of protected and unprotected species. Coos, growls, hee-haws, chirps and twitters emitted by Swainson's hawks, western burrowing owls, California gnatcatchers, red-legged frogs and Florida panthers fill up the space. Even if largely unknown to the general public, these are some of the world's top *banked* animals: species that are attractive for investment institutions dealing with ecological preservation. Different from traditional animals in mainstream environmental discourses, like pandas, whales or giraffes, other lesser-known species have become increasingly popular within the nature market.

Habitat banking is rethinking the way in which to extract and preserve the value of endangered species that are on the verge of disappearing. Since the 1980s, especially after the collapse of the housing market in 2007, a number of international investors have shifted their activity from real estate into 'natural capital'. This latter form of capital, which encompasses financial services provided by the environment, includes different types of biodiversity resources ranging from water to geology or non-human species. The phenomenon known as mitigation banking in the US, or habitat banking in Europe, speculates on the restoration of damaged habitats: when a developer modifies a landscape he has to commit to pay for the restoration of an equivalent amount of equivalent territory elsewhere. This approach follows the 'No net loss' policy, whereby the total net amount of biodiversity in the world theoretically remains the same in terms of quantity.



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AGNIESZKA POLSKA (Lublin, Poland 1985)

What the Sun Has Seen, 2017

HD animation (colour, sound), 10 min. PCAI Collection

Polish artist Agnieszka Polska uses computer-generated media paired with an intricate blend of language, science and history to focus on individual and social responsibility. Her films, composed largely of digitally found manipulated images, often take a hallucinatory form. The short animation *What the Sun Has Seen* presents the figure of a helpless observer, witness to the environmental collapse on Earth. In a poetic, enigmatic and unsettling manner the film becomes a commentary on the state of our world and poses the question of our ethical responsibility in the present. *What the Sun Has Seen* is a PCAI commission.

# CONSTRUCTED

3.
'Constructed Selves' surveys the psychological need to accept human vulnerability in the climate crisis on a personal level by exploring how the self-image is built in modern Western cultures, as a backdrop to the felt loss of identity that is one of the driving forces of climate crisis denial. It features pieces that look at the process of building a flawless image towards the outside world, the instilling of discipline in body and mind, and on the other hand includes artworks that purposely show cracks in the image. It also contains works that amplify the tension between the young and the ageing, and between a male and a female perspective of the world.





UGO RONDINONE (Brunnen, Switzerland 1964)

The Clear, 2013

Bluestone and stainless steel with concrete pedestal; sculpture: 140.5 × 50 × 34.5 cm; pedestal: 36 × 63.5 × 63.5 cm Collection Pictet

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JAN VERCRUYSSE (Ostend, Belgium 1948-2018 Bruges, Belgium)

Camera Oscura #5 (Alice), 1989

Cibachrome, 30.2 × 24.4 cm (each) Lhoist Art Collection

MARTINE FRANCK (Antwerp, Belgium 1938-2012 Paris, France)

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lle de Tory (le saut), 1995

Silver print from 1997, 60 × 50 cm Neuflize OBC Corporate Collection





Martine Franke

The Ivorian artist Frédéric Bruly Bouabré, also known as Cheik Nadro, was brought up in the oral culture and traditions of his village. From a very young age his thirst for knowledge led him to ask his uncle Lebato to enroll him in the French School, which he attended from 1931 to 1940, when he joined the Navy to do his military service. After the war, he undertook different jobs before becoming a clerk in the colonial administration offices. Several years later, on 11 March 1948, a life-changing event revealed to him his new mission: 'The heavens opened before my eyes and seven colourful suns described a circle of beauty around their Mother-Sun, I became Cheik Nadro: he who does not forget.' From that point on, Bruly Bouabré performed a dual role as encyclopaedist and translator of the world he lived in. Retaining from his vision the mission not to let his people forget and to pacify humanity, the wise man sought to pass on the knowledge of the Bété and the languages of the world. In order to achieve this, he invented a unique universal alphabet to enable people to convey every existing language. This major undertaking resulted in the elaboration of over 440 monosyllabic pictograms representing phonemes. In the introduction of this 'Bété syllabary', Bruly Bouabré outlines the motivation behind his project: 'The alphabet is the indisputable pillar of human language. It is the living

crucible of man's memory and the remedy against loss of this memory which is a formidable factor in ignorance. My aim is to find a specifically African script on the stage of human life.'

[Partly based on a text by Cyril K. Daaddeh, *Historical Dictionary of Cote d'Ivoire* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016)]







## FRÉDÉRIC BRULY BOUABRÉ (Zépréguhé, Ivory Coast 1923–2014 Abidjan, Ivory Coast)

La nuit de la liberté/Un esprit de Nestlé, 19 × 14.6 cm / Black and white, deux amoureux en forme de cacao! Voici un sublime amour, 15 × 10.5 cm / La nuit de la liberté/Un esprit de Nestlé, 19 × 14.6 cm / L'art du divin révélé sur une cabosse de cacao/Une belle parure, 15 × 10.5 cm / Dieu manifeste son art sur une cabosse de cacao, 14.7 × 10.5 cm / Les enfants s'amusent joyeusement autour d'une cabosse de cacao, 15 × 10.5 cm / Le cacao ou la fierté de tout un peuple! Voici le nouveau miracle ivoirien, 14 × 11 cm / Une belle cabosse de cacao mûre, 14.7 × 10.5 cm, 2012

Colour pencil and ballpoint on paper Nestlé Art Collection

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DORA GARCÍA (Valladolid, Spain 1965)

The Breathing Lesson, 2001

Video projection on DVD (colour, sound), variable dimensions, 16:18 min. Collection of Contemporary Art "la Caixa" Foundation FERNANDO SÁNCHEZ CASTILLO (Madrid, Spain 1970)

Untitled (Guernica), 2011

Photograph, 57.5 × 74 cm Collection De Nederlandsche Bank





JORGE PERIS (Alzira, Spain 1969)

Olmo, Juan Ulpiano, 2017–19

Salt, water, ropes and copper sulphate, variable dimensions Colección INELCOM Arte Contemporáneo

MELANIE BONAJO (Heerlen, Netherlands 1978)

Progress vs. Regress, 2013

C-print, 75 × 50 cm AkzoNobel Art Foundation 225

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MELANIE BONAJO

(Heerlen, Netherlands 1978)

Melissiër / Jahazara / Daisy, from the series Last Child in the Woods

UltraChrome print on Canon Pro Luster paper, 110 × 73 cm (each) ING Collection

> Dutch artist Melanie Bonajo inquires into the relationship that the next generation of human beings will have with nature. Through her art she speculates on whether our children will break the established balance of power and turn to nature again, and questions whether a new era is dawning in which the next generation will move further away from the human or if they are secretly working on a new mystical world.

With their pointy ears, flowers and plastic decorations, the children in the artworks walk on the edge of the natural and the artificial. The costumes, plants, stickers and balls – everything in the photographs is made of or consists of waste. The series shows a world that seems beautiful but is actually made from refuse. This is also how people in holistic communities define their aesthetics: using whatever presents itself at any given time. The only object that Bonajo manufactured is the elf ears to show that in the series, the world as we know it has been left behind. The children in Bonajo's *Last Child in the Woods* series seem to move away from humanity and become part of nature.

With this series, Bonajo highlights the loss of our deep-rooted connection with nature as we grow older.







GABRIEL ABRANTES (North Carolina, USA 1984)

Os Humores Artificiais, 2016

16mm film, transferred to 2K video, 30 min. Colección INELCOM Arte Contemporáneo 229

MATHILDE TER HEIJNE (Strasbourg, France 1969)

Untitled, from the series Domestication, 2005

Inkjet print, 66.7 × 50 cm Deutsche Bank Collection



MARKUS SCHINWALD (Salzburg, Austria 1973)

Dictio pii, 2001

35 mm film (colour, sound), 16 min. evn collection

> 'We are utopian craftsmen...' Sentences such as this are spoken in the film by Austrian visual artist Markus Schinwald. In actual fact the piece is made up of five films with the same soundtrack but different visuals that run in parallel. They show a lobby, corridors and decrepit rooms in 1960s designs - hotel rooms in which Formica is omnipresent. In these transitory non-places that could be everywhere and nowhere, actors perform a script that has no plot, but stipulates a repertoire of gestures, enigmatic signs that fall into a void. The five films are cut synchronously and at certain points one glides from one level to the next, as when an actor places a finger on a mirror. The loop in the depths of time stands for the actor's inner monologue, accompanied by a science fiction-like soundtrack. The actors are fitted out with a strange chrome frame; one of them moves the corner of a man's mouth upwards and freezes a smile into a clown-like mask; another fixes index and middle finger in an oath-taking position - a reference to divine iconography. The script is delivered in a deep male voice, which at the end of 16 minutes has morphed into a high female one. The photo series of film stills is also uncanny and oppressive - Schinwald has sealed them behind a thick layer of acrylic, which stands for the screen of the television monitor and the interface between reality and media image.



MARC QUINN (London, United Kingdom 1964)

Template for my Plastic Surgery, 1992

Silkscreen (4-colour) and varnish, 86 × 68 cm AkzoNobel Art Foundation







BENI BISCHOF (Widnau, Switzerland 1976)

Nose, 29.6 × 23.1 cm / Scratched Vogue, 27.6 × 21.2 cm, 2013

Scratching on magazine AkzoNobel Art Foundation 234

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VALÉRIE BELIN (Boulogne-Billancourt, France 1964)

Michael Jackson #5, 2003

Silver print, 100 × 80 cm (this series includes two other portraits) Neuflize OBC Corporate Collection AURA ROSENBERG (New York, NY, USA 1949)

Dennis Kardon / Julia Kardon, 1997

C-print, 40.6 × 35.6 cm Lhoist Art Collection





The photograph from the series *Who am I? What am I? Where am I?* by American artist Aura Rosenberg explores in a seemingly playful way the identity of the model and the role of the portraitist. In the artist's words, 'the identities brought into question are not only those of the children but also those of the artists as stylists'. The child with the painted face personifies the ideal subject for this game of hide-and-seek and disguised identity given the very malleability of so pure and untarnished an individual. The child's face serves as a support, a backcloth for the work, a living mask to which the artist adds successive layers of colours and materials. The objectivity of the shot seeks to parody the commercial image of the photo booth. Nevertheless, it remains difficult to perceive the personality of each of the participants working on the collective portrait coming to be on the palimpsest face. The model, the make-up artist and the photographer engage in a game of masks from which an imaginary and eclectic character ultimately emerges.



MONA HATOUM (Beirut, Lebanon 1952)

Static Portraits (Galen, Karl, Lisa), 2000

Set of 3 Polaroids, 72 × 56 cm (each) Novo Banco Contemporary Photography Collection





## ANRI SALA (Tirana, Albania 1974)

Uomo Duomo, 2000

Video, 1:41 min. evn collection

The Albanian video artist Anri Sala works in between geographies. In *Uomo Duomo*, he shows the old man asleep in Milan cathedral that he fortuitously 'came upon' on consecutive days. With discretion and consideration for those at prayer, Sala succeeded in taking a picture of the man using a hand-held camera. The stillness of the shot is interrupted by the jerky movements of the central figure. The work's title refers to the concrete location of the event, though the diffuse light produces an indefinite setting with a surreal quality reminiscent of scenes from Beckett's dramas. Like Beckett, whose work achieved great popularity, especially in post-communist Albania of the 1990s, Sala poses questions about time, space and change or the common quest for the existence of humanity. The reality of the scene is difficult for the viewer to judge and so the man in the cathedral becomes a symbol of the impenetrable, the infinite. ENRIQUE MARTÍNEZ CELAYA (Nueva Paz, Cuba 1964)

Accumulation of Tiredness, 1998

Oil on canvas, 167.6 × 167.6 cm Royal Bank of Canada Human Touch Collection



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ROMAN SIGNER (Appenzell, Switzerland 1938)

Zelt, 2002

Photograph, 28.5 × 21.5 cm (each) Die Kunstsammlung der Mobiliar Genossenschaft





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CLAUDE CAHUN (Nantes, France 1894-1954 Saint Helier, Jersey)

Self-Portrait with Mirror, 1928

Vintage gelatin silver print, 55 × 42 cm Neuflize OBC Corporate Collection

> Born Lucy Schwob, as an artist this niece of the well-known French symbolist writer Marcel Schwob chose to adopt the gender-neutral (or unisex) name of Claude as her first name and the surname of her grandmother, Cahun, which in French is phonetically the same as the name of Adam and Eve's fratricidal son, Cain.

Cahun is a Freudian figure, closely linked to the Surrealist group, with whom she exhibited as well as signed most of their political and art manifestos. Her photographic work explores the subject of the multiple identities that make up each person. 'I will never finish removing all these faces', she wrote, photographing herself in different disguises over more than 35 years, whether as a German doll, an androgynous dandy, a manly sailor, an Oriental dancer, with her head shaven, under a glass dome or hidden behind a magnifying glass, eyes shut, etc.

Her self-portraits, executed with her friend Suzanne Malherbe (aka Marcel Moore, Nantes, France 1892–1972 Saint Helier, Jersey), with no attempt to hide the homosexual nature of their relationship, are striking for their frankness and depth of feeling despite the props and settings sometimes used. *Self-Portrait with Mirror*, one of the artist's best-known works, of which there are versions from three different angles, is strangely paradoxical in its combination of masculine and feminine, exhibitionism and introversion, fixity and elusiveness. Nonetheless, the ambiguity of the picture and its mirror image leave no doubts as to the artist's integrity thus captured in a single photograph that by itself sums up Rimbaud's famous dichotomy according to which 'I is another'.





BERLINDE DE BRUYCKER (Ghent, Belgium 1964)

# MARLENE DUMAS (Cape Town, South Africa 1953)

V. Eeman (1999), 1999

Mixed media, 200 × 100 × 60 cm Belfius Art Collection

Untitled, 1993–94

India ink and watercolour, approx. 32 × 24 cm (each) Collection AMC/Amsterdam UMC









URS LÜTHI (Kriens, Switzerland 1947)

Self-Portrait, 1971

Photographic canvas, 155 × 120 cm EFG Bank Switzerland – Art Collection





LAURENT HURET (Paris, France 1984)

Face Swap (present), 2017

Video (colour), 1:40 min. Die Kunstsammlung der Mobiliar Genossenschaft



CINDY SHERMAN (Glen Ridge, NJ, USA 1954)

Untitled #354, 2000

C-print, 83.8 × 55.9 cm Norac collection

Untitled #477, 2008

C-print, 148 × 146.7 cm Novo Banco Contemporary Photography Collection

Untitled #119, 1983

C-print, 44.5 × 91.5 cm Lhoist Art Collection

Untitled #85, 1981

C-print, 61 × 121.9 cm Collection of Contemporary Art "la Caixa" Foundation









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GILLIAN WEARING (Birmingham, United Kingdom 1963)

Album series, 2006

Self-Portrait as my Grandmother Nancy Gregory, 2006, 161 × 130 cm / Self-Portrait as my Grandfather George Gregory, 2006, 161 × 130 cm / Self-Portrait as my Uncle Bryan Gregory, 2003, 124 × 82.5 cm / Self-Portrait as my Mother Jean Gregory, 2003, 149 × 130 cm / Self-Portrait as my Sister Jean Gregory, 2003. 141 × 116 cm / Self-Portrait as my Father Brian Gregory, 2003, 164 × 130.5 cm / Self-Portrait as my Brother Richard Gregory, 2003, 191 × 130.5 cm / Self-Portrait at 17 Years Old, 2003, 115.2 × 92 cm

Photographs and wooden frames designed and painted by the artist Collection of Contemporary Art "la Caixa" Foundation















PEPA HRISTOVA (Sevlievo, Bulgaria 1977)

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Diana #1, from the series Sworn Virgins, 2008-10

Inkjet print, 90 × 123 cm Deutsche Bank Collection

> 'Tradition offers women in Albanian mountains the opportunity to liberate themselves [...] a kind of emancipation through tradition.'

Pepa Hristova

In Northern Albania the tradition of *sworn virgins* is still alive to this day, the last men-women of Europe. Adult women may swear an oath to take the place of the deceased father or brother. But even newborn girls can be declared sons and raised as boys for the purpose of providing the family with a male heir. Occasionally, girls also take the vow to escape a prearranged marriage. Filling the roles of men, these women can also expect to gain more recognition in the male-dominated society of Albania. These so-called oath-virgins, or *burrnesha*, are men in a social rather than in a sexual sense. *Sworn virgins* adopt their roles so perfectly that, over time, they are no longer recognised as women outside of their family. Over the years, the woman in them is lost.

Between 2008 und 2010, Bulgarian photographer based in Germany Pepa Hristova established a close rapport with several *burrneshas* that is captured in the intimate photographs from the series *Sworn Virgins* represented in the Deutsche Bank Collection. This photograph is a portrait of Diana, 54, who has been living as a man since she was 17 years old, when she refused to accept that men were allowed to do everything and women were not. Diana does not like to speak about her feelings – it would damage her reputation as a man.

[Partly based on texts in https://db-artmag.com/en/101/feature/emancipation-through-traditionpepa-hristovas-eastern-european-p/ and https://www.pepahristova.com/sworn-virgins/info/]

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## PIERRE GONNORD (Cholet, France 1963)

*Julia*, 2011

Epson PhotolinE digigraphie, 150 × 113 cm Novo Banco Contemporary Photography Collection 254

EVA MARATHAKI (Athens, Greece 1977)

Self-Portrait III, proximity is carried out in repetition, 2011

Digital print, pencil drawing and watercolour, 84 × 58.6 cm Alpha Bank Collection



MIRIAM CAHN (Basel, Switzerland 1949)

burka.ich, 2010

Oil on canvas, 71.5 × 64.5 cm Helvetia Art Collection

> Swiss artist Miriam Cahn has been addressing gender relations and socially driven gender roles from a feminist perspective since her early works. Through her art she questions stereotypical female images and develops a new relationship to one's own physique by making her experience of the body evident in her works. She counters the 'male gaze' with her conscious female view, with the naked body always at the centre of her art.

> Given current events, the painting *burka.ich* is particularly topical. In the wake of refugee migration and in reaction to discussions in Switzerland on banning the burka, Cahn began to paint veiled women. Covering the entire body is viewed as provocative in enlightened Western society. The title of the painting links the burka wearer with the feminine 'ich' (me) of the artist. It is a portrait of a woman draped in blue strokes viewed from the front. Her naked upper body, which is shrouded by a transparent veil, remains visible, as do her sensual lips. Her eyes are completely uncovered. The burka wearer both observes and is observed. She stares at the (male) observer confidently and defiantly. The contradictory figure of the burka wearer in Cahn's painting confronts the viewer with the unfamiliar.



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## MIRIAM CAHN (Basel, Switzerland 1949)

Morgengrauen, 1981

Charcoal pencil and yellow chalk on transparent paper (11 pieces), variable dimensions Helvetia Art Collection an der grenze, 2015

Pencil on paper, 60 × 90 cm Colección Banco de España WU TSANG (Worcester, MA, USA, 1982)

We Hold Where Study, 2017

Two-channel HD video installation (colour, stereo sound), variable dimensions, 19 min. PCAI Collection

In the short experimental film *We Hold Where Study*, Chinese-American artist Wu Tsang adopts a choreographic approach to image-making and mourning. The film enacts a series of duets in which participants use touch instead of sight to generate movement, both within and between images, featuring choreography by boychild with Josh Johnson and Ligia Lewis with Jonathan Gonzalez, and original music by Bendik Giske. Inspired by the essay 'Leave Our Mics Alone' by Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, authors of *The Undercommons*, the film researches the passage to sociality through the creation of impossible images. *We Hold Where Study* is a PCAI commission.







BARTHÉLÉMY TOGUO (M'Balmayo, Cameroon 1967)

Nude Amazon, 2009

Lithograph on wove (vellum) paper, 57 × 76.5 cm Collection d'art Société Générale

Metamorphosis at Dawn, 2009

Lithograph on paper, 57 × 76.5 cm Collection d'art Société Générale

## Wild Hopes, 2009

Lithograph on wove (vellum) paper, 81 × 121.5 cm Collection d'art Société Générale





IRVING PENN (Plainfield, NJ, USA 1917–2009 New York, NY, USA)

Football Face, 2002

C-Print on Fuji Crystal Archive paper, 75 × 63 cm Novo Banco Contemporary Photography Collection 262

**CÉLINE VAN BALEN** (Amsterdam, Netherlands 1965)

Fatma, 1998

C-print on aluminium, 156 × 128 cm Colección Bergé, Spain

Sarah, 1996

Photograph, 63.5 × 50 cm Collection De Nederlandsche Bank







# ELMGREEN & DRAGSET

Michael Elmgreen (Copenhagen, Denmark 1961) & Ingar Dragset (Trondheim, Norway 1969)

Jason (Briefs) / Ganymede (Shorts) / Adonis (Backpack) / Ganymede (T-shirt), 2009

Laserchrome print mounted on 4 mm aluminium with 8 mm Plexiglass, 200 × 150 cm (each) Equinor Art Programme VIBEKE TANDBERG (Oslo, Norway 1967)

Living Together #13, 1996

C-print, digital collage, 66 × 100 cm Equinor Art Programme





TAUS MAKHACHEVA (Moscow, Russia 1983)

Carpet, 2006

Video (colour, silent), 1:06 min. Gazprombank Collection

'The work *Carpet* was shot on a MiniDV videocamera in 2006,' states Russian artist Taus Makhacheva. 'No photos were taken during the filming, so the only still we have is the one exported from the video. Unfortunately the quality is not great, but it is true to the format and I have no objection to it looking a little lowres in print due to the technologies of 2006.'

*Carpet* features the artist wrapping and unwrapping herself in a rug, in the process revealing the beautiful design of the kilim, a traditional Dagestan carpet. Through these actions she illustrates the search for Dagestan national identity in the 'globalist' environment of today's world, where national roots do not shelter anyone anymore; sometimes they even restrict the freedom of movement or choice, but still one cannot and should not do away with them. TAUS MAKHACHEVA (Moscow, Russia 1983)

Baida, 2017

Single-channel video (colour, sound), subtitles in Russian and English, 16:09 min. Gazprombank Collection

In the hope of a good catch local fishermen sail far out into the Caspian Sea before disappearing into the horizon. These 'invisible' boats navigate into a grey zone – a state of being present and at the same time impossible to locate.

The fishermen say that in an emergency it is not their death that they dread but the fact that their families would harbour hopes of their survival even if they never returned to shore. Therefore in the event that a boat capsizes, the fishermen tie themselves to the prow that remains floating above the surface of the water as a buoy. This enables their families to find their bodies and mourn their passing. The stories of these people who reconcile themselves to death and are able to speak about it with coldness and detachment lie at the core of the work *Baida* (the name of a Dagestan fishing boat) by Russian artist Taus Makhacheva premiered at the 57th Venice Biennale.



TAUS MAKHACHEVA (Moscow, Russia 1983)

Gamsutl, 2012

Single-channel HD video (colour, sound), subtitles in English, 16:01 min. Gazprombank Collection















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Gamsutl is an ancient Avarian settlement carved out of the mountains in Dagestan. Today it has only one remaining resident. In this video by Russian artist Taus Makhacheva, a young man moves among the picturesque

ruins, re-enacting poses from paintings by Franz

same place from an old photograph.

Roubaud (Odessa, Ukraine 1856–1928 Munich, Germany) that depict the Caucasian War of 1817–1864, fought in this region, and a dance of collective farm brigade leaders from 1939. The dancer is alternately an invader and a defender, a tombstone and a watchtower. Yet his frozen poses are impossible to assemble into a coherent dance or convincing movement. They are like the debris of a forgotten past, hard to put together to create a holistic picture. It is no longer possible to tell one layer from another and to establish who belongs and who is an alien, what is today's reality and what is an impression of the SERGEY SHESTAKOV

(Moscow, Russia 1968)

Stop #1 (Chernobyl), from the series Journey to the Future, 80 × 53 cm / Stop #1 (Chernobyl), 60 × 80 cm, from the series Journey to the Future, 2010

Print on Barite paper Gazprombank Collection





Chernobyl is a place that has become synonymous with absolute horror, with the presence of an invisible death corroding the dimensions of time and space. It also stands for a technological, political and thus human failure, for dystopia as such. In 2010 the Russian photographer Sergey Shestakov set out to document the 30 kilometre-radius exclusion zone around Chernobyl, where life had been extinguished for nearly 25 years. His images confront us with deserted streets, abandoned houses and objects left behind in a city going to ruin, a lifeless wasteland where nothing stirs. The title of the series, *Journey into the Future*, suggests that the terror of the past also implies a warning concerning a possible future: Chernobyl and Fukushima are not really far from each other. Shestakov's works do not so much refer to the past as provoke feelings and thoughts about the future.

[Partly based on a text by Olga Sviblova in kunsthalle wien, https://kunsthallewien.at/en/exhibition/ sergey-shestakov]







# PIERRE HUYGHE (Paris, France 1962)

Streamside Day, 2003

Installation with natural tree, variable dimensions, and 16 mm film transferred to DVD (colour, sound), 26 min. Collection of Contemporary Art "la Caixa" Foundation















l am in you, 2000

3 DVD, 5 video projections (colour, stereo), variable dimensions, 11 min. EFG Bank Switzerland - Art Collection



JENNY HOLZER (Gallipolis, OH, USA 1950)

For Novartis (1000 Sayings), 2006

LED installation, text on custom-made LED screen, 3.2 × 30.8 × 5.8 m Novartis Art Collection 276

JUAN MUÑOZ (Madrid, Spain 1953)

Conversation Piece I, 2001

Bronze (4 pieces), 140 × 90 × 80 cm (each) Banco Santander Collection



THOMAS HIRSCHHORN (Bern, Switzerland 1957)

Ruins Ahead, 2016

Triptych, cardboard, prints, adhesive and coins, 240 × 480 cm (total) Collection Pictet





GIUSEPPE PENONE (Garessio, Italy 1947)

Albero a forma di spirale, 1988

Wood, 33 × 790 × 27.5 cm Lhoist Art Collection

The long wooden object, its branches cut right back, is but a tree in appearance. In fact it is a single construction beam measuring almost 8 metres in length. The Italian artist Giuseppe Penone meticulously recaptures the log beam's previous natural condition through a growth ring. In this way the artist reverses the process whereby nature is exploited and reconstitutes the tree disfigured by the saw or the planer. The unveiling of the central column of a tree trunk thus creates a contrast between the perfection of the orthogonal and the fragility mixed with the whims of the organic form. This work of art constitutes a strong and highly symbolic image of this powerful, regenerative nature, which is in perpetual growth, at once cyclical, automatic and imperturbable.

An Arte Povera pioneer, Penone is interested in a general way in the phenomena of evolution and tirelessly seeks to highlight the points of intersection where nature and technique meet. Through his art, he offers us a way of seeing nature, memory and time, as well as humankind and its relationship with the environment. PHILIP-LORCA DICORCIA (Hartford, CT, USA 1951)

W. September 1999, #13, 1999

Ektacolor professional print, 122 × 152 cm Lhoist Art Collection



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Sanne ten Brink ING Collection, The Netherlands

Heike Maier-Rieper evn sammlung, Austria

Claudia Schicktanz Deutsche Bank Collection, Germany