2018

Our Butterfly Effect

Victoria Ng

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OUR BUTTERFLY EFFECT

MASTER'S PROJECT DECEMBER 2018 CURATORIAL PROPOSAL

Victoria Ng
Sotheby’s Institute of Art, New York
This curatorial proposal accounts for an exhibition that investigates on the very delicate relationship between humans and nature, and how both systems intertwine symbiotically. Tiny changes from either side can have drastic impacts on both macro and micro levels, thus the butterfly effect. This exhibition aims to bring the American public's attention to the importance that every individual contributes to the bigger picture, and consequently has the power to alter the butterfly effect. This awareness is pertinent at a time when the climate change crisis heightens as global temperature levels continue to rise. It is thus in every individual human's responsibility to comprehend the urgency and act according. The pronoun “our” is especially crucial in the exhibition title as a reminder that we are all in this together and that climate change solutions require a collective effort from every individual.

Victoria Ng
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INSPIRATION

In signing the Paris Agreement\textsuperscript{1}, the world has committed preventing global average temperature from passing the thresholds of 1.5 to 2°C above pre-industrial averages, so as to avoid the most dangerous consequences of global warming. According to The Climate Clock\textsuperscript{2}, fossil fuel emissions are currently increasing by about 0.1\% (or 0.4 billion tonnes) per year and are expected to exceed 37 billion tons by the end of 2018. Based on the current emission trends, it is estimated that we will have approximately 15 years left before the temperatures go above 1.5°C, and 35 years above 2°C, and this is only if all signatory countries of the Paris Agreement meet their target emissions. That is not even half a lifetime for an average life expectancy in developed countries. Climate change is a pressing issue, and one that deserves the most important attention from governments, corporations and the general public.

As the creators of the Climate Clock suggests,

\begin{quote}
« Humanity has the power to add time to the Clock, but only if we work collectively and measure our progress against defined targets. »
\end{quote}

‘our butterfly effect’ is thus inspired by the urgency of global warming, the fragility of our environment, and the confidence in the power of humanity and its collective efforts.

\textsuperscript{1} The Paris Agreement is an agreement signed within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2015, dealing with greenhouse-gas-emissions mitigation, adaptation, and finance, with implementation scheduled to start in the year 2020. It aims to keep the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and to limit increase to 1.5°C, since it would significantly reduce risks and the impacts of climate change.

\textsuperscript{2} The Climate Clock is created by Human Impact Lab launched on November 2015 to monitor current global carbon emission levels and calculates the time until we emit the remaining allowable carbon budget.
In June 2017, U.S. President Trump announced his intention to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris Agreement. According to the Global Footprint Network, the U.S. actually ranks 46th as the greatest ecological debtor worldwide out of 151 countries evaluated, consuming more than 207 percent of its ecological capacity. One could only imagine the disastrous consequences of a major leading power to withdraw from the Agreement. How can we prevent this?

Sadly, an average U.S. citizen uses 11 times as many resources as the average Chinese, and 32 times as much as the average Kenyan. And in a 2010 survey of consumers in 17 developed and developing countries undertaken by the National Geographic, Americans ranked last in green consumption habits. The hopes that the public could impact the president’s intentions are evidently futile and it is hence the goal of this exhibition to firstly increase the American public’s awareness of the significance of the role of humans in altering the environment so as to increase their ultimate bargaining power in preventing the withdrawal of their country from the Agreement.

‘our butterfly effect’ aims to instigate reflection and awareness among its viewers on the symbiosis of human and nature through Anthropocene art and to ultimately facilitate the audience comprehension of their own significance in altering the environment.

3 World Watch
PROGRAM OVERVIEW

As the exhibition focuses on climate change and changing the perception of the American audience, it is ideal to have the exhibition curated during the week of Earth Day 2019 in April. Together with the end of the winter season, the targeted audience shall find themselves comfortably embracing the environmental ideas of regeneration, growth and sustainability.

Venue – Oculus Plaza at Westfield World Trade Center, New York

Exterior of Oculus Plaza at the 9/11 memorial site downtown New York.

The exhibition will take place inside Westfield World Trade Center shopping mall.

Exhibition mock-up inside the building.
The interior of the shopping mall offers an atrium space of 365,000 square foot with abundant skylight. Its location at the memorial site in promoting hope and unity can also further facilitate in the exhibition’s mission in instigating collaborative proactivity to fight climate change. Over 300,000 daily commuters walk through the atrium, to and from train and subway lines which provides the exhibition with a target audience from all walks of American life: daily commuters on their way to work, shoppers at the mall, teenagers socializing at the mall, as well as both local and foreign tourists visiting the memorial site. According to Daisy Simmons from Yale Climate Connections, the best way to inspire is to put art at unexpected places to convey a power message. As the many commuters, shoppers, and tourists pass by the open space daily, they will be invited into the calm green open space offered by the exhibition to appreciate the beauty and intricacies of our natural landscapes and our role as humans in altering it.

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The exhibition features four American Anthropocene artists and a total of 12 works:

MEGHANN REIPENHOFF – LITTORAL DRIFT SERIES (2016)

(1) **Littoral Drift #09**

Rodeo Beach, CA 11.07.13, Three Waves, Buried and Flooded

Cyanotype

24x36”
(2) Littoral Drift #48

Tower Beach, Hilton Head, SC 06.14.13, Three Waves, Dipped and Buried

Cyanotype

14”x11”
(3) Littoral Drift Nearshore #472

Bainbridge Island, WA 10.18.16, Two Waves, Poured, Dawn to Dusk

24”x36”
(4) Littoral Drift #501
Mono Lake, CA 09.04.2016, Three Waves, Splashed
Cyanotype
21”x90”

Right-end section zoomed:
(5) Ocean/Reef/Paint

12 minutes 46 seconds video of footages of the ocean in Hawaii and American Samoa, collected from a lenticular process, and with materials provided by scientists from the Hawaiian Institute of Marine Biology and Scripps Institution of Oceanography.\(^5\)

Stills from video:

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(6) S4 Chroma Chimaera, 2017
Acid Mine Drainage (AMD)
pigments and other paints on
aluminum composite panel
48”x48”

(7) Chroma S4 Nebula, 2017
AMD pigments and other paints on
aluminum composite panel
54”x54”

(8) Chroma S4 Blue River, 2016
AMD pigments and other paints on
aluminum composite panel
36”x36”
(9) Chroma S4 Dragon, 2017
AMD pigments and other paints
on aluminum composite panel
48"x48"

(10) Tribute, 2017
AMD pigments and other paints
on aluminum composite panel
48"x48"

(11) Chroma S5 St. Francis, 2017
AMD pigments, gold leaf, and other
paints on aluminum composite panel
36"x36"
TREVOR PAGLEN – TRINITY CUBE (2015)

(12) Trinity Cube

Irradiated glass from Fukushima Exclusion Zone, Trinitite

20x20x20 cm

(a) Trinity Cube

(b) Melted irradiated broken glass from Fukushima Exclusion Zone (Detail)

(c) Photograph of Trinity Cube Installation in Fukushima Exclusion Zone
CURATING PLAN

The exhibition will be curated utilizing the open floor space of the atrium of Oculus Plaza. A slanting wheel-chair accessible podium will be created covered in artificial eco-friendly green grass as the base of the exhibition. On the base, smaller rounded podiums will also be erected as potential seating areas for the exhibition’s viewers. Diane Burko’s Ocean/Reef/Painting (see (5), p. 5) will be situated in the middle of the exhibition in a submerged level where curious viewers are again invited to look down into the portal and experience the ocean from an aerial view, or a close-up of the living marine organisms and coral reefs. Surrounding Burko’s work and forming the interior layer of the exhibition, Meghann Riepenhoff’s four works (see (1)-(4), pp.5-8) will be displayed: two on the left, and two on the right. The two spaces left on the remaining two interior displaying walls at the end of the exhibition space will feature the photograph of Trevor Paglen’s Trinity Cube (see (12c), p. 12), and the video documenting the installation processes of the cube in the artistic project Don’t Follow The Wind. The six exterior displaying walls, forming the outer layer of exhibition will feature six of John Sabraw’s paintings from his Chroma series (see (6)-(11), pp.10-11).
Interior of the exhibition.

Viewers will have ample space to roam around the exhibition space and look at the artworks of Rienpenhoff, Burko, and Paglen. The different mediums of these artists (Camera-less cyanotypes, time-based video installation, photography) will attract the attention of shoppers, commuters, and tourists and encourage discourse on the themes of the artwork as the open grassy space turns into a leisure and social environment.

Exterior view of the exhibition.

John Sabraw’s colorful and enigmatic Chrome paintings shall on the other hand serve as an attractive opening and invitation to passers-by of the exhibition.
The exhibition is free flow and viewers are invited to walk in and out through the space. This free-flow design renounces the formalist art curation style offered by traditional art institutions in the hopes of offering the general public, who might judge the conventional art-viewing system unrelatable, a welcoming and non-threatening place to think about the important issues represented through the artists’ works. This is decided taking into consideration the claim of visual scientist and ecopsychologist pioneer Sewall, who argues that the flexibility of opening one’s mind to climate reality as new information comes in can actually be activated when something important or surprising activates the visual-processing parts of our brains\(^6\). This suggests that the opening and unpretentious setting of the exhibition space could inspire even people who are not interested in learning about climate change\(^7\).

Persuaded viewers are then invited to scan the QR codes on the exhibit labels to listen to the exhibition audio guides including artist biographies and inspirations, work analyses, as well as to educate themselves on the current status quo of global warming and climate change.

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\(^7\) Simmons, *Yale Climate Connections*, 2017
EXHIBITION PARTNERSHIPS AND SPONSORSHIPS

The exhibition looks to partner with Westfield Art Programs, as part of Unibal-Rodamco-Westfield Group’s sustainability initiative programs. According to the Westfield Group’s Sustainability Report in 2017, the program supports ranges of cultural and art initiatives, and is already partnered with the New Museum of Contemporary Art through corporate donations and collaborations.

As part of an Earth Day celebration, the exhibition are looking also to partner with organizations who actively support:

- increasing the awareness of climate change
- instigating climate change solutions
- implementing the circular economy model

Organizations such as the Ellen Macarthur Foundation is the ideal candidate for such a collaboration as it actively promotes sustainable practices in businesses and in applying the circular economy model, and is very well-established in the field of public education and event fundraising. Moreover, it has long-term partnerships with global brands such as Danone, H&M, Nike, Philips, and Unilever, which could all provide potential sponsorships for the exhibition.

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EXHIBITION ESTIMATED COSTS

- As the exhibition venue shall be sponsored by Westfield shopping mall in collaboration with its corporate Westfield Arts Program, the venue costs are not calculated in the proposed budget.

- The below budget is calculated with the estimation of an exhibition duration of 1 month:

<table>
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<th>ITEM</th>
<th>DETAILS</th>
<th>USD$</th>
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<tr>
<td>Shipping</td>
<td>Malca-Amit including insurance</td>
<td>10,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>Vave includes design &amp; equipment rentals &amp; installation fees</td>
<td>130,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio Guide</td>
<td>Recording commission fee 1-month QR code generator</td>
<td>1,050.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Furniture</td>
<td>Lighting</td>
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<td>Manpower</td>
<td>4 security guards 2 staff</td>
<td>17,680.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preview Night</td>
<td>Deborah Miller Catering includes serving, bartender fees</td>
<td>6,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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<td>167,074.00</td>
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According to a Reuters/Ipsos poll conducted after U.S. President Trump announced in 2017 that the U.S. would withdraw from the Paris Agreement, 72 percent of Americans agree that “given the amount of greenhouse gases that it produces, the United States should take aggressive action to slow global warming.” However, few actually see climate change as a priority. When compared to economy and security, the poll shows that only 4 percent of Americans ranked ‘environment’ above healthcare, the economy, terrorism, immigration, education, crime and morality. While many world leaders and business chefs are worried that a U.S. exit would put the planet at risk and leave the States behind in a global shift away from fossil fuels, poll results confirm that the American public ranks the environment at the bottom of their priority list, and the President’s decision will unlikely be penalized. The Climate Clock suggests that the planet has less than forty years left before global warming affects produces disastrous effects on humans. It is therefore of the utmost urgency and importance that as one of the world’s leading countries, Americans are aware of the need to act and be proactive in climate change solutions. our butterfly effect is a response to this unfortunate disregard among the American public on climate change and thus curated in the hopes of increasing the importance of ‘environment’ on their priority list.

Daisy Simmons on Yale Climate Connections suggests that art has the power as teacher and provocateur, to help us see what is difficult to see, and even act as a rallying base for climate change. There are ‘artists in all media increasingly conveying important climate change messages in ways that can inform, empower,

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10 CNBC.com, 2017
and lead to more collective action.”¹¹ This is why our butterfly effect aims to act as the bridge between science and art, as teacher and provocateur, and offer a non-threatening place where people can reflect on these deeper issues and connect emotionally through visual participation. With the aid of four American Anthropocene artists, viewers shall be invited to reevaluate the relationships between humans and their environment. The Anthropocene defines Earth’s most recent geologic time period as being human-influenced, or anthropogenic, based on overwhelming global evidence that atmospheric, geologic, hydrologic, biospheric and other earth system processes are now altered by humans.¹² The word combines the root "anthropo", meaning "human" with the root "cene", the standard suffix for "epoch" in geologic time. Many of the anthropogenic ideas in art are derived from enchantment. Referencing Tim Morton, the author of Ecological Thought, Alan Macpherson suggests that anthropogenic events like global warming produces enchantment:

“It represents a newly signifying power of a previously disregarded entity like weather, something that has local effects, where we can feel the raindrops on our hands and see them dotting the street, but that also signifies an entity at a much larger scale, in terms of both spatiality and complexity, of which it is an effect: climate, something that, as Morton notes, “you can’t visualize.”¹³”

Anthropocene artists are thus enchanted by ecology, and are eager to explore what Morton calls ‘the profound and wonderful openness and intimacy of the mesh.’¹⁴ The mesh which Morton refers to is ‘a complex situation or series of events in which a person is entangled; a concatenation of constraining or restricting forces or

¹¹ Simmons, Yale Climate Connections, 2017
¹³ Alan Macpherson, ‘Art, Trees, and the Enchantment of the Anthropocene, Caroline Wendling’s White Wood’, Environmental Humanities, 10 (1), 2018, 244
circumstances; a snare\textsuperscript{15}, inspiration to the exhibition’s title ‘our butterfly effect’. The metaphor of a butterfly caught in its surroundings is analogous to humans caught in the midst of their own actions and consequences—global warming. The pronoun ‘our’ is thus added as an invitation to enliven both the topic and its subjects, guiding viewers through the reexamination of their role in this “mesh” as individuals, and participate collectively with the Anthropocene exploring themes of regeneration, participation and layering of temporalities. As Jane Bennett suggests, enchantment produced through the Anthropocene occurs both as affect and as a condition of what she terms the “liveliness” of matter\textsuperscript{16}. \textit{our butterfly effect} firstly enchants viewers of the beauty and fragility of nature with the works of Meghann Riepenhoff and Diane Burko, then of the disastrous impacts that mankind could have on their environment through the work of Trevor Paglen, and finally a model solution of environmental consciousness and proactivity offered through the works of John Sabraw.

Based in Bainbridge Island and San Francisco, Meghann Riepenoff grew up in Atlanta and received her MFA in 2006 from San Francisco Art Institute, where she is now a visiting faculty member. Riepenoff’s work is inspired by her the ideas of mutability, the beauty of nature and thus impermanence of both life and art. For her series \textit{Littoral Drift}, a collection of camera-less cyanotypes is made by exposing photo paper to waves, weather and other elements (see Photo. 1. Next page).

\textsuperscript{15} Morton, \textit{The Ecological Thought}, 28
Cyanotypes is an old photo technique that involves placing objects on paper coated with iron and potassium ferrocyanide. When exposed to light, the light-sensitive turns to brilliant blue. She takes inspiration from the works of Anna Atkins who made cyanotypes of seaweed in the 1840s\(^\text{17}\). Littoral Drift is in fact a geologic term describing the action of wind-driven waves transporting sand and gravel, and Riepenhoff's employment of waves, wind, and sediment, leaves physical inscriptions through direct contact with photographic materials. She dunks her treated papers in salt water waves, hangs them over tree branches in rainstorms, and buries them in melting ice, allowing the natural processes and chance deposits of salt, sand, dirt, and other materials to participate in generating her patterns and abstractions.\(^\text{18}\) Her chosen locations include the unpredictable shorelines of the Pacific and Atlantic oceans and various rivers and lakes in both the US and Europe. Rodeo Beach’s coarse sand for example creates a distinct, fractured pattern (see (1) p.5), while Mono Lake’s alkalinity resulted in an interesting palette of ferrous ochre and gold (see (4) p.8). Photochemically, the pieces are never wholly processed; they will continue to respond slowly to the changing environments that they encounter over


time, and potentially self-destruct. If left unfixed, the residual seawater can form salt crystals on the cyanotypes, the Prussian blues remaining subtly reactive to ambient light. The use of fugitive cyanotypes are analogies of a terrifyingly fleeting and beautiful existence, enchanting viewers of the natural system that is yet to be fully grasped by humans and science. Riepenhoff’s cyanotypes encourage humans to reconsider the impacts of external elements and natural forces to be inextricably woven with the imaginary being captured\(^\text{19}\). As one stands in front of her works, the collaboration between Riepenhoff and nature feels elemental and wild, and the chanced outcome produced during the process remind us of the mutability of her approach. Each work represents the specific mix of conditions at a particular moment in time, each a fleeting representation of forces that are inherently uncontrollable.\(^\text{20}\) Jessy Zack suggests that her work can elicit an intentional, pleasurable disorientation in viewers, making them wonder if it is a satellite, a tidle whitecap, or perhaps a microscopic cellular reaction.\(^\text{21}\) Riephenhoff affectionately calls her work a representation of “chaos with a dash of control”, as they sometimes get caught by the waves and collected by surfers, or walked on by children and dogs. Internationally acclaimed landscape photographer Richard Misrach praises the rarity of Riephenhoff’s work thanks to its complex and uncontrolled process, which echoes a perfect metaphor of life.

Complementing the work of Riephenhoff, Philadelphia-based Diane Burko is a painter and photographer who places herself at the intersection of science and art, imparting imaginative and emotional dimensions to the statistics on climate change. Her work acts as ‘urgent reminders of the vanishing beauty and peril of a warming

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\(^{20}\) Knoblack, Collector Daily, 2018

Since the 1970s, Burko’s work has evolved from photographing and printing monumental landscapes to documenting glacial recession, using the power of art to capture its reality. Her current work focuses on the ocean and the dramatic bleaching of the coral reef ecosystem. The increased acidification and warming waters caused by rising carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere is one of the primary causes for this dire situation. Ocean/Reef/Paint is a video installation of multi-layered images made in 2018 by Burko that combines her recent aerial and lenticular works and paintings (see (5) p. 8). It was first installed at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington D.C., which integrates drone and go-pro technology taken in a month-long excursion in Hawaii and American Samoa. The resulted work is a combination of footage collected from a lenticular process and with materials provided by scientists from the Hawaiian Institute of Marine Biology and Scripps Institution of Oceanography. The video is installed in a circular drum (Photo 2 next page), giving the viewer an experience of looking down into a portal, referencing the aerial perspective of a satellite, a tide pool, or a microscopic glance into the movements of polyps - the living organisms of a coral.

Burko’s works successfully cultivate enchantment and attune viewers to the Anthropocene emotionally, tactilely, and intelligently. The aerial views of the beauty of the landscapes captured are juxtaposed by the fascinating detailed microcosm of ocean life, employing an effective discursive, visual, and sensual strategy, compelling viewers to take notice and action and to protect the beautiful landscape. Burko states that “in order to persuade or educate, art has to be grounded in science and fact”, and that by visually introducing facts that can create a bridge between art and climate science. As a visual artist, Burko’s incorporation of research and activism in her own creative practice act as a great benchmark solution to how each individual can respond to climate change – incorporating mindfulness of the issue into our daily and professional practices. Aside from bearing witness to the Anthropocene, Burko gains knowledge through visiting research labs and engaging with scientists at various established institutions such as Norwegian Polar Institute and Scripps Institute of Oceanography. She is also a speaker at various conferences including the GSA (Geological Society of America) and AGU (American geophysical Union), as she is also very committed to engaging with the public, to convey her experiences as well.

25 Simmons, Yale Climate Communications, 2017
as sharing her knowledge. Her combination of both scientific facts and images has enabled her to create a fascinating range of visual materials that take viewers with her through her lens and paintings in her excursions with nature, making the invisible threats of climate change visual and visceral.

Following Rienpenhoff’s and Burko’s enchanting reminders of the sublimity and fragility of nature, Trevor Paglen’s work inspires viewers in investigating the role of humans in altering the environment. Paglen is an American artist and geographer whose art spans many different disciplines including image-making, sculpture, and investigative journalism, many of his works tackle mass surveillance and data collection. One of his major concern is to learn how to see the historical moment we live in and developing means to imagine alternative futures\(^\text{26}\). In 2015, Trevor Paglen was invited by Japanese art collective Chim↑Pom to participate in their project \textit{Don’t Follow The Wind}, which was to feature and produce radioactive art installations in the Fukushima Exclusion Zone. Paglen was among a group of invited international artists including Ai Wei Wei, Eva and Franco Mattes to build installations that serve as a monument to the Fukushima Nuclear Disaster and its ongoing consequences. The formation of an art exhibition in the exclusion zone means that the works will not be viewable in person, Chim↑Pom comments that ‘by putting the artworks in a zone that no one can enter, we could possibly dispatch to the world that this is an ongoing reality.’\(^\text{27}\) Paglen’s installation is a public sculpture called \textit{Trinity Cube} that is made from irradiated broken glass and trinitite. Irradiated broken glass are collected from Fukushima (see Photo. 3. next page), which forms the outer layer of the Trinity Cube, while the inner core is made out of trinitite (see Photo. 4 next page), a mineral created on July 16, 1945 when the U.S. exploded the first atomic bomb near

\(^\text{27}\) Chim↑Pom, \textit{Radioactive Art in Fukushima|Don’t Follow the Wind}, video, 4:57, 2015, accessed 10 December 2018, By putting the artworks in a zone that no one can enter, we could possibly dispatch to the world that this is an ongoing reality.”
Alamogrodo, New Mexico. The bomb heated the desert surface and turned surface sand into greenish glass.

Photo. 3. Irradiated broken glass collected from the Zone and brought back to Paglen’s lab.

Photo. 4. Trinitite

Trinity Cube is formed by melting these two materials together and put back into the zone where the already irradiated cube will continue to be irradiated and change over time, becoming more and more poisonous as it were (see (12a-c) p.11). The artwork will be viewable when the zone reopens anytime between 3 and 300,000 years from the present. For Paglen, *Trinity Cube* is about geology, about man-made minerals, and about the history of nuclear power and weapons that had begun in New Mexico. Even if the works rot away before the zone opens, Chim↑Pom believes that art is beyond what you can see, and has the ability to retain some kind of strong power over viewers. Co-curator of *Don’t Follow The Wind* Jason Waite tells the story of one of the victims of the disaster, that the greatest concern for her was that radioactivity
had no colour, and how she wished there were colours to identify what is safe and what isn’t. Waite sees the project representative of humans in search of the proper tools for something that we don’t have the faculty to understand and comprehend. Radiation actually has no borders, it is spreading into the oceans, reaching other countries, and Fukushima has in fact become a petri dish for all the future struggles of humankind. Chim↑Pom argues through Don’t Follow the Wind that collectively as humans, we need to consider our history, and consider it in a global scale, in order to address the issue of radiation. As Paglen was the only American artist who participated in this project, it is important that Trinity Cube be publicized in American soil through documentary photographs and video works of the installation process. Commenting on the representation of hyper-disasters, Emily Jones argues that they are necessarily fragmentary, frequently focusing on individual victims, isolated geographies, and individual phenomena that result from them:

"While fragments perhaps invite the audience to generalize and extrapolate a more universal depiction of such a disaster, such representations fail to convey the complex interactions and incomprehensible timescales and geographies involved."

Jones argument of the irrepresentability of hyper-disasters is in fact cleverly countered by the nature of Don’t Follow The Wind as it has successfully linked together the normally fragmented representations of global disasters through the collaboration of artists from the U.S., Japan, China, and Germany. Paglen’s Trinity Cube further solves Jones’ problematic as its core and exterior materials link the American narrative with the Japanese one, poignantly reminding the American

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28 Jason Waite, Radioactive Art in Fukushima|Don’t Follow the Wind, video, 19:25, 2015, accessed 10 December 2018, By putting the artworks in a zone that no one can enter, we could possibly dispatch to the world that this is an ongoing reality.”
29 Chim↑Pom, Radioactive Art in Fukushima|Don’t Follow the Wind, 2015, 10:57
30 Emily Jones, ‘Writing the Hyper-Disaster: Embodied and Endangered Narrative after Nuclear Disaster’, The Comparatist, Volume 41, Oct 2017, 94
audience that nuclear energy originated from the U.S., and that their voice and actions do have an impact on global affairs.

Lastly, as individual Americans, artist John Sabraw offers a positive alternative to pollution through his philosophy and production as an artist and can inspire viewers of the capability of humankind when taking responsibility and interdisciplinary collaboration. Based in Ohio, John Sabraw is an American artist, professor, environmentalist and activist whose paintings, drawings and collaborative installations are produced and inspired by:

“the fundamental metaphysical dilemmas we face as a conscious species… idiosyncratic connections between things, the compression of time and distance, the glory in our universe, and natural and cosmological processes.”

His artworks reflect a 'catalytic visual coalition that generates a paradox revealing the fragile connection between technology, nature, and man. Similar to Riepenhoff and Burko, Sabraw’s philosophy of art also echoes a kind of enchantment in nature and an investigation into human’s relationship with it. Through his Chroma series (see (6)-(11) pp.9-10), viewers definitely experience the sublimity of nature, but also the fragility of humans’ relationship to it. Sabraw claims that he is always reflecting on how everything is intertwined, and a closer look at his Chroma series sees a very honest portrayal and juxtaposition of the micro and the macro levels of subjects. The pigments extracted from the streams represent a tiny part of the ecosystem, which then forms part of the acrylic oil-base colours that are used to paint the stream-like and ocean-like paintings of Sabraw. As Sabraw explains, ‘one can isolate and examine moments on a micro scale but if you pull back, you can see that they all

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32 Sabraw, johnsabraw.com, 2018
connect in a wholly-dependent macro system. Viewers can witness Sabraw’s exploration of micro movements of natural elements like water in his works, which are all presented in a big context together for viewers to comprehend and appreciate the bigger picture.

Nonetheless, Sabraw’s practice as an artist well surpasses that of the many other Anthropocene artists and serves as a perfect example for the general public. Sabraw is very proactive in making art in the most eco-friendly manner, and aims to work towards a fully circular and sustainable art practice. As of today, Sabraw has already successfully neutralized his carbon emission levels for the next two years. Furthermore, he collaborates frequently with scientists on many projects, intersecting science with art, and is currently working on a project creating paint and paintings from iron oxide extracted during the process of rejuvenating the Ohio streams polluted by acid mine drainage (AMD). Sabraw has collaborated with engineer Guy Riefler to create viable paint from toxic sludge, and found out that after extracting the iron from the water, and firing the pigment at different temperatures, different colors can be achieved. Their team has in fact successfully partnered with Portland artists’ oil colors company Gamblin to produce 500 shades from the pigments extracted, and all proceeds from the sale would go to restoring the streams. Sabraw’s and Riefler’s collaboration are significant examples of how through collaboration and collective efforts, humans do have the power to reverse the effects of pollution and climate change. The iron leaking from the abandoned coal mines amounts to 4000 pounds daily, equivalent to junking two cars into the streams. Yet, with time, knowledge, expertise, and practice, an artist and an engineer alone can gradually achieve their mission in a local stream’s rejuvenation, not to underestimate the power of larger collaborative efforts in implementing future environmental clean-up solutions.

our butterfly effect presents viewers four varying but honest American approaches in rethinking the symbioses of humans and their environments. These four artists are living examples of how individuals can engage themselves in the discourse on climate change. Their subjects and materials can also very relatable to audiences’ personal history and background as they all originate from an American context. As Burko suggests,

“\[1\] don’t think you can exist in the 21st century without having a conscience about the context that you’re living in, about the world that we have created, and about the world that we can still have if we change the trajectory.\[34\]”

Sabraw would definitely support Burko’s claim as he sees sustainability and environmentalism intrinsic to human’s very presence within the system of Earth and the universe at large. Most importantly, all four artists can remind viewers that through cross-disciplinary collaboration and creativity, solutions can be created. Referencing the philosophy of Resonance, the butterfly effect, cause and effect – humans need to do the best possible action in moments and situations where a positive effect is produced. This is why the exhibition our butterfly effect is crucial in creating awareness and dialogue in the urgency of climate change, in appreciating the sublimity of nature, and most importantly, in inspiring collectivity and unity in its audiences that the power of change lies in every individual human being, and what the likely consequences can be if we don’t make use of this power properly.


Chim↑Pom, *Radioactive Art in Fukushima|Don’t Follow the Wind*, video, 4:57, 2015, accessed 10 December 2018, By putting the artworks in a zone that no one can enter, we could possibly dispatch to the world that this is an ongoing reality.”


Jason Waite, *Radioactive Art in Fukushima|Don’t Follow the Wind*, video, 19:25, 2015, accessed 10 December 2018, By putting the artworks in a zone that no one can enter, we could possibly dispatch to the world that this is an ongoing reality.”
Emily Jones, ‘Writing the Hyper-Disaster: Embodied and Endangered Narrative after Nuclear Disaster’, *The Comparatist*, Volume 41, Oct 2017, 94


