

'A.N.T.H.R.O.P.O.C.E.N.E.'

It is always a delight when a gallery assembles thoughtful works (19 of 32 participating artists are gallery artists) to address a serious subject matter. With 55% of the works dated 2015, this newsworthy theme clearly resonates this gallery's orbit. Later this spring, geologists will meet to determine whether the Anthropocene (the 'era of man') ought to follow the Holocene or replace it altogether, and which stratigraphic markers substantiate their decision.

Coinciding with COP21's closure, this exhibition takes Earth's remaining natural resources and manmade stuff as its starting point, as echoed atop the stairs in José Maria Sicilia's bronze memo, 'We have what's left.' Coherently organized, each of six rooms can be seen as explorations of one of five elements (earth, water, void, fire, air), five senses (touch, sound, taste, smell, sight), three phases (solid, liquid, gas), or varying ecosystems. In the room that seems to survey sight and air, Susan Collis' record of invisible particles that fell on paper masked by objects shares company with Hreinn Fridfinnsson's vertical line of windblown Ginkgo biloba leaves (a Permian-era plant considered a living fossil) and Thu Van Tran's hazy grey painting evocative of smog. Downstairs, one easily imagines the deafening sounds of bouncing ice balls, imploding glaciers, and hurricane winds evoked by Evariste Richer's massive grid comprised of 1600 online postings of hale sightings, Jorge Méndez Blake's vanishing rendition of Elizabeth Bishop's iceberg poem, and Ryan Foerster's painting altered by Hurricane Sandy.

Delicately interspersed throughout are 'dubious' 'Second Thoughts' (2015), pliable slices of Chaim van Luit's brain, cast in copper. In the room featuring manmade treasures, one finds Milena Bonilla's intriguing library, Vanessa Billy's trashed light bulbs floating in water, and Filip Gilissen's plastic ruins. In the room reminiscent of touch and earth, Adam Henry depicts human life as an imperceptible blip on the geological timeline, Maarten Vanden Eynde displays natural-looking geodes formed from plastic scraps, Nicolás Lamas pairs a 65 million-year old fossil with an iPad, and Ignasi Aballí's photo of engaged hands. There's no shortage here of gems characterizing human beings' impact. Fortunately, this open-ended exhibition avoids 'catastrophe art,' which titillate and distract, as horror flicks do. Like the crowds in Jordi Calomer's 2011 photograph 'L'Avenir', we leave hopeful, inspired to confront our future!

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