

Portfolio

Selection of works 2003 – 2022

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Restauration du Lac de Montbel, 2003

Photo print, 70 x 50 cm.

Photo by Marjolijn Dijkman

(In the collection of the municipality of Montbel, France
and in private collections)

Every year the Montbel lake in the southwest of France, dries out a bit more. This is partly due to global warming and partly to the use of the lake by local fire department helicopters in fighting nearby forest fires. In a vain attempt to restore something that is broken both physically and metaphorically, Maarten Vanden Eynde tries to repair the bottom of the lake by filling up the cracks with plaster. The gesture, documented in this photograph, is of course futile and to no avail. *Restauration du lac de Montbel* hints at the loss of knowledge that is an inherent result and part of the passing of time. Consequently we are all doomed to make ridiculous gestures and draw false or incomplete conclusions in the future, because objective knowledge will always be outnumbered by subjective (mis)interpretation.



Genetologic Research Nr. 2 & 4, 2003
Different kinds of wood, wood glue,
30 x 50 x 180 cm.
(In private collection, Italy)

Lengths of wood from different trees are glued together so as to resemble a tree trunk. The growth rings are matched together like a puzzle, as if an attempt has been made to recreate a tree's original shape without any surviving point of reference, the growth rings being the only visible guidelines available. *Genetologic Research no. 2 & 4* are among the earliest examples of an imaginary journey into a fictional future past, where knowledge is lacking and frames of reference are flawed.



Genetologic Research N° 23, 2005
Different kinds of wood, wood glue, 50 x 50 x 5 cm.
(In private collection, The Netherlands)

In an attempt to restore a tree using the only pieces of wood left in a fictive future world, tree rings are used as clues in the puzzle. Although the various lengths of wood are diverse in origin and the arcs of the rings indicate different diameters, the growth principle is the same in every case: each year a tree adds another ring to its trunk and branches, and so it grows in size. In this respect the annual rings are like time capsules, indicating the age of the tree and by extension that of a found wooden object or building. Like ice core drills they also help us to understand how the climate changes over time, as atmospheric conditions influence a tree's growth.



The Earth Seen From The Moon, 2005

UN helmet, telescope and black marker, 30 x 20 x 20 cm.
(In private collection, Peru)



All the craters, mountains and 'seas' on the Moon are named after people, places, states of mind or weather systems on Earth, therefore referring exclusively to human history. The naming of lunar landmarks began in the early seventeenth century, when improvements in telescope technology enabled the first maps of the Moon to be drawn. This anthropocentric process of projecting Earth on the Moon still continues today.

The Moon Seen From Earth consists of a current moon map with the exact locations of every given name drawn on a used UN helmet, representing humanity's flawed efforts to manage the world. Another aspect of the work is the telescope's missing lens. When looking though the telescope to the helmet there is no more deformation or manipulation. What you see is what you get.



Preservation of IKEA Tea-cup, 2005

Photo print, 70 x 50 cm.

Photo by Arend Roelink

(In the collection of Nomas Foundation, Italy)

When, in 2005, the IKEA catalogue became the most printed and distributed book in human history, beating the Bible for the first time ever, Maarten Vanden Eynde unobtrusively buried an IKEA teacup in the Forum Romanum, the centre of the old city of Rome. The reason for that symbolic act was to help future archaeologists gain easy access to one of the most representative and widespread material remains of our times. Given the sheer quantity of IKEA items produced and their worldwide distribution, some of those consumer goods will inevitably find a place in future stratigraphic history.





IKEA Vase, 2011 A.D.

Ceramic and restoration plaster, variable sizes.

(In the collection of Zeeuws Museum, The Netherlands
and various private collections)



Historiography is inherently subjective. History is made, told, and retold by individuals whose memories may be selective and who may have an interest in manipulating or warping our perception of events so that we can never really be sure where truth lies. What we can be sure of, however, is that when reconstructing the past mistakes are constantly made, because the information available (which may be incomplete or biased) demands degrees of interpretation and speculation.

IKEA Vase is an amphora-shaped vessel made of restoration paste and incorporating the fragments of an IKEA mug. Given the unimaginable quantity of IKEA products that are spread all over the globe and the proven ability of ceramics to withstand the passing of time rather well, there are bound to be material leftovers of these mass-produced consumer goods in future geological strata. The work questions the capacity of historical artefacts to give an accurate impression of what life in an inherently unknowable past would have been like. Through this process it points out the hypothetically fallacious impressions a future archaeologist might formulate about our present, based on its surviving remnants.



Tribal Tree, 2008

Commissioned by Museum de Paviljoens,
Almere, The Netherlands

All over the world, rites, rituals and celebrations form the backbone of society and act as cornerstones of history and culture. They are events that urge us to remember and commemorate the past or look forward to the future; they are occasions for reflection, an enhanced presence of the present. Sometimes the history behind the rite is lost or forgotten but the event is still carried out because it has become a part of a community's life. Almere, a municipality in Flevoland in the Netherlands built in the 1970s on newly reclaimed polderland, has little in the way of history. This was what decided Maarten Vanden Eynde to introduce a new rite. A young oak from the first generation of trees planted in Almere (around 35 years old) was selected and its wood cut back until it was square in section – like a large beam bifurcating into smaller beams. Then it was clad with dry pinewood and set alight. The pinewood burned quickly, leaving the fresh and robust oak behind. What was intended to be an annual ritual was discontinued when the city authorities cut down the tree and removed it.



Tribal Tree, 2008. Commissioned by Museum de Paviljoens, Almere, The Netherlands



Taxonomic Trophies, 2005 - 2018 (ongoing)

Branches, wood and metal name tags, variable sizes.

(In collection of Verbeke Foundation, Belgium and various private collections)



Taxonomic Trophies, 2005 - 2022 (ongoing)

Branches, wood and metal name tags, variable sizes.
(In collection of Verbeke Foundation, Belgium
and various private collections)

Hunting and gathering is one of man's most fundamental activities. Originally a nomadic survival strategy, as humans settled in one spot and domesticated plants and animals, hunting became a sport or amusement. The 'trophies' from a successful kill were a way of impressing other people. In rarer cases hunting was organised for scientific purposes, to preserve a particular endangered species or prevent the spread of alien invasive species. *Taxonomic Trophies* is a growing collection of branches from all over the world, saved and presented as endangered or extinct species. They have been 'hunted' and 'gathered' during work periods, residencies, exhibitions or holidays abroad since 2005. They question values and status symbols of power and financial means, while confirming our insatiable desire to accumulate and collect.



Taxonomic Trophies, 2005 - 2019 (ongoing)
Installation at MuHKA, Antwerp, Belgium, 2012

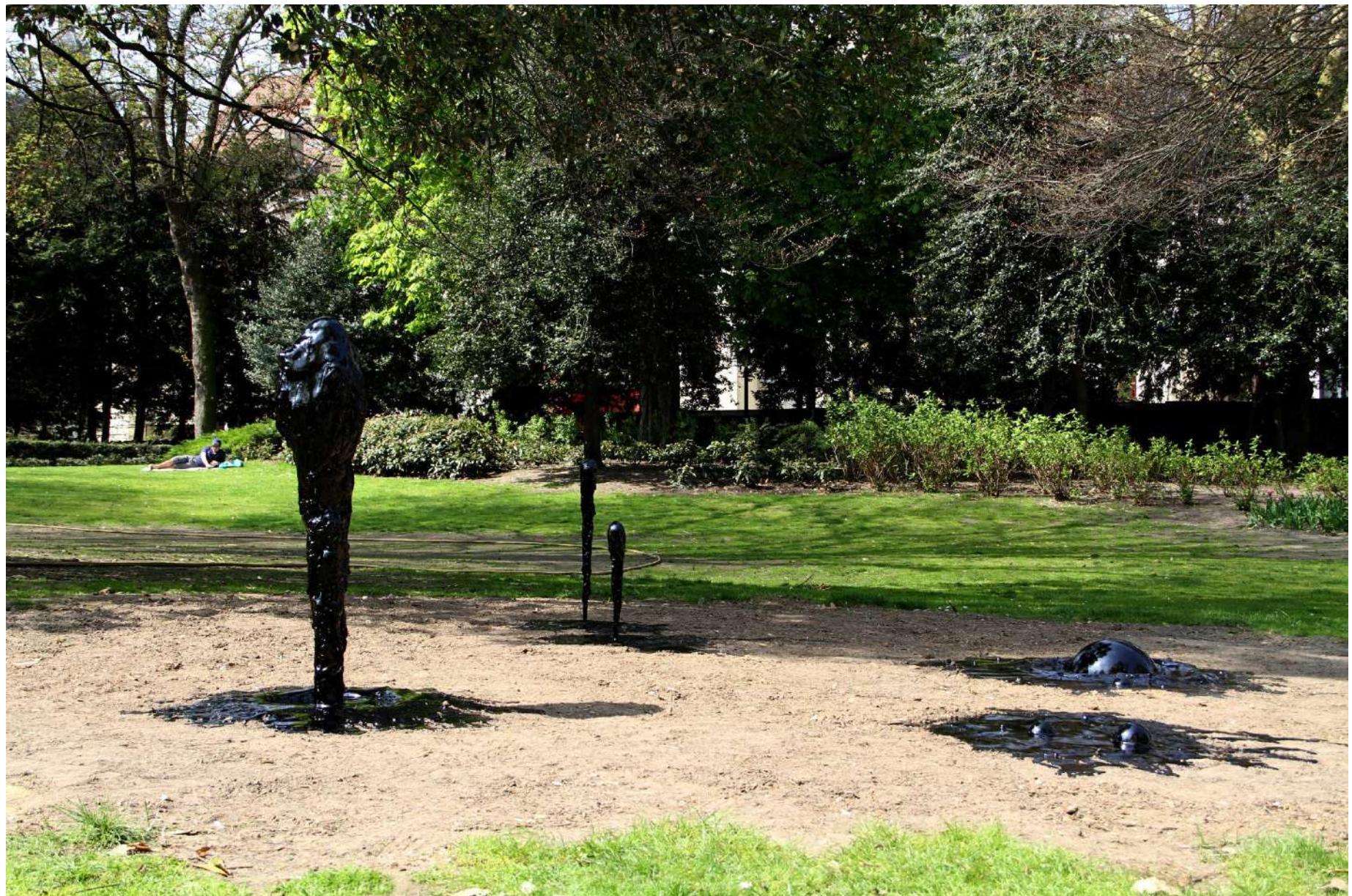


Oil Peak, 2006 - 2014 / Oil Bubble, 2012

Bronze, tar melted and shaped, metal bucket, variable sizes.
(In various private collections)



Oil Bubble and *Oil Peak* were conceived in 2006 in Tbilisi, Georgia, where the most severe protests since the 2003 Rose Revolution – which brought about a pro-Western peaceful change of power in the country – were taking place. The Rose Revolution was the result of widespread protests against the flawed results of a parliamentary election. It brought to power a new elected president, Mikhail Saakashvili, who called on fellow countrymen who had left Georgia in previous decades, to return and help rebuild the once prosperous and wealthy country into a modern Western democracy. In 2006, Enough Room for Space, a non-profit artist-run initiative co-founded by Maarten Vanden Eynde, also decided to respond to that call and went to Tbilisi with a group of artists, designers and curators, to explore how a new democracy was being introduced – or rather implanted – and what the side-effects of such an enormous political and sociological shift were. Ten 'oil eruptions' were planted in several locations throughout the city. The one installed in front of the parliament building caused a surprising commotion as the protesting crowd appropriated the work as a 'black rose', symbolising the failure of the Rose Revolution. In 2008, a portable unlimited edition was created, making the work available for everyone. In 2010, a series of five eruptions won the Art in the City Award during the contemporary art fair Art Brussels and subsequently the work was made in bronze and covered with black car paint to be placed as a permanent work in front of the Kaaitheteer in Brussels.



Oil Peak / Oil Bubble, 2010
Art in the City Award 2010, Egmont Park, Brussels, Belgium



Oil Peak, 2006 - 2014

Intervention in Tbilisi, Georgia, 2006 & Installation at Miami Basel, United States, 2014



Homo Stupidus Stupidus, 2008
Human skeleton, clay, 120 x 120 cm.
(In the Gensollen Collection, France and in various private collections)



Homo Stupidus Stupidus, 2008
Human skeleton, clay, 120 x 120 cm.
(In the Gensollen Collection, France
and in various private collections)

Seen from a distance in either time or space, we can only conclude that a species that initiates, studies and neglects its own decline by destroying its natural habitat is not greatly deserving of praise or acclaim. The only other organisms on earth that ruin their own environment to an extent that results in their self-destruction are bacteria and viruses. *Homo stupidus stupidus* is a human skeleton that has been taken apart and put back together again in a different and rather puzzling shape that bears little relationship to human anatomy despite our knowledge of it. It is a critical comment on the human arrogance that declares itself doubly wise – *Homo sapiens sapiens* – and names after itself an entire geological era, the Anthropocene, to represent its own influence on Earth. *Homo stupidus stupidus* questions the extent of human self-awareness, of self-knowledge of where we come from, how we evolved, and where we are going. The work symbolises our inherent failure in understanding ourselves or predicated our future on the basis of our past and present.



Mo(NU)mentum is made up of several layers of history, creating a massive column, 4.5 metres in height. The drill core is a visual intimation of deep time, excavated from the future Earth in order to hypothesise how the world evolved. Starting with a massive block of marble (in which the different geological layers are visible) the drill core contains samples of wood, copper, bronze, iron, aluminium, brick, concrete, asphalt, tar, epoxy and plastic, all materials in line with the evolution of tools, appliances and objects used or invented by humans. The layers become thinner and thinner the closer they get to the present, culminating in the plastic layer. Many of the materials created a foundation for the next one, but the plastic layer leaves a big question mark as to its evolution or replacement.

Mo(NU)mentum, 2008

Various materials, 450 x 60 cm.

Commissioned by Generali Group Innovation Academy, Germany
Permanent installation, Bensberg, Germany



Mo(NU)mentum, 2008

Various materials, 450 x 60 cm.

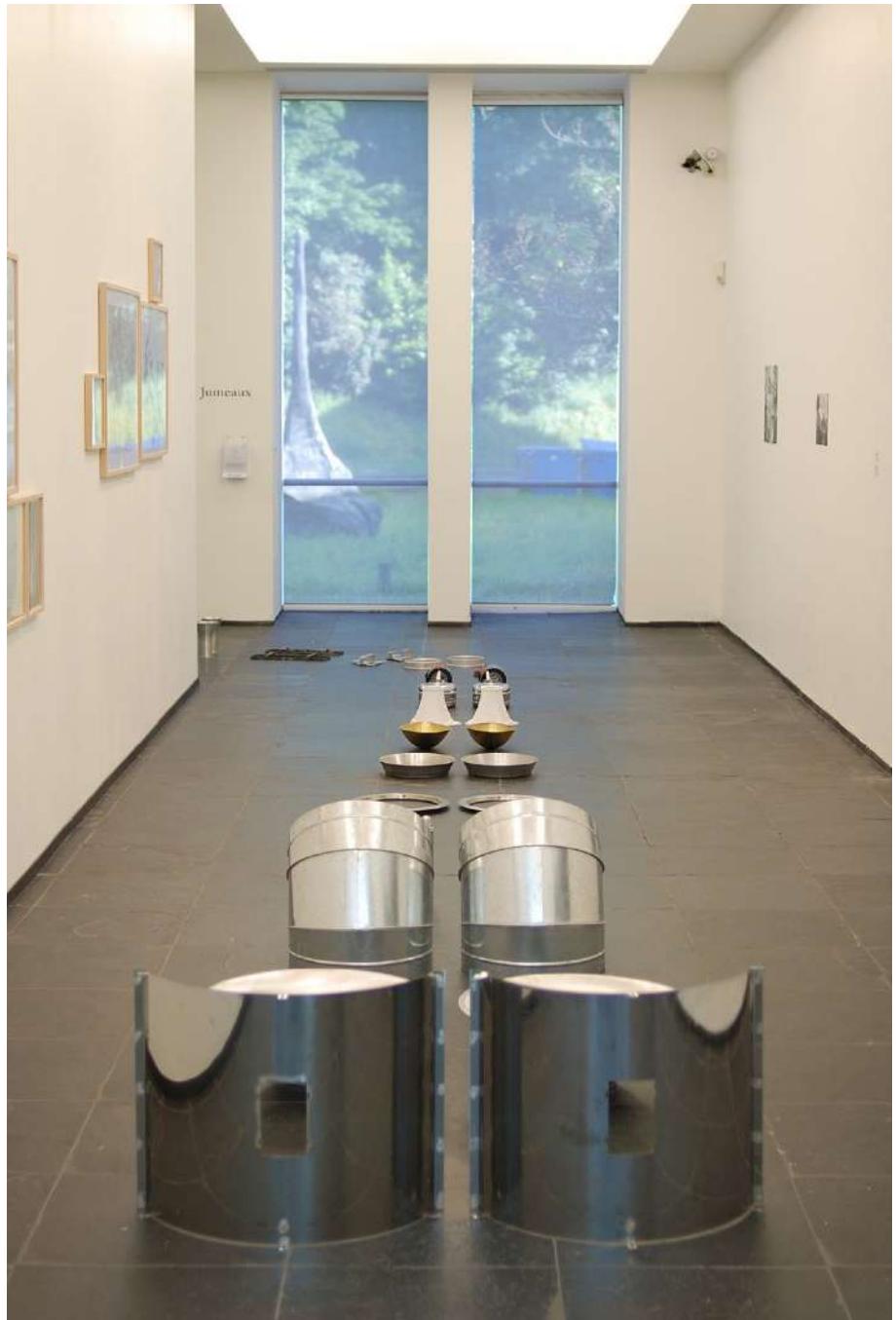
Commissioned by Generali Group Innovation Academy, Germany

Permanent installation, Bensberg, Germany



Industrial Evolution, 2007 - 2009 & Industrial Devolution, 2012

100 lambda prints on forex, 21 x 30 cm. each & two times 100 compressed pairs of manufactured items. Installation at Museum M, Leuven, Belgium
(In the collection of VBO / FEB, the Federation of Enterprises in Belgium)



Jumeaux



Birmingham played a leading role as frontrunner in the Industrial Revolution, an event that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries changed the world beyond recognition and paved the way for the largest population explosion in human history. By 2007, however, most of the manufacturing companies had moved out of Birmingham to other parts of the world where labour was cheaper. Together with the companies, the knowledge behind manufacturing also disappeared.

Industrial Evolution is a collection of 100 items that come from the twenty remaining manufacturing companies in Eastside, Birmingham, the last vestiges of manufacturing industry in the city. The objects are collected in pairs, referencing Noah's Ark as well as their mass-producibility. Yet when 'portrait' photos are taken of the pairs, tiny differences in size, colour and form become apparent, and they appear as two similar but distinct individuals. This discrepancy can be understood as the failure of the Industrial Revolution, as it is physically impossible to clone or mass-produce an object to the nanometre.

Industrial Evolution, 2007 - 2009

100 lambda prints on forex & two times 100 pairs of manufactured items
Installation at SMAK, Ghent, Belgium & Arnolfini, Bristol, England
(In the collection of VBO / FEB, the Federation of Enterprises in Belgium)



Brick Era +/-2000 A.D., 2013

Bricks and concrete, variable sizes

Artist Project at Art Brussels 2013, Belgium

(In the collection of the Municipality of Puurs, Belgium
and various private collections)

Naturally formed stones are omnipresent on our planet. They can be found almost anywhere on Earth, in the mountains, the deserts and even the oceans. Homo sapiens sapiens has created two new kinds of stone – brick and concrete – which have gradually taken over the natural environment. Bricks will probably survive us, as they are one of the strongest and longest lasting building materials used in human history. *Brick Era* is a series of copies of boulders that have been formed by the endless rolling of building debris in a river or on a rocky shoreline. By grinding off the edges the surface becomes smooth and soft, in striking contrast to the structured grid of mortar and bricks.



Modern Menhirs, 2015

Bricks and concrete, 200 x 60 x 50cm (one piece)
commissioned by MONS 2015, Mons, Belgium
(In various private collections)

In a future in which man has gone extinct, vestiges of human civilisation will remain around the globe. Over time buildings will crumble and infrastructure will fall into ruin and decay, before being covered by a new geological layer. Some material remains will survive as time capsules or tokens of mass production. *Modern Menhirs* merges two of the most widely used building materials – bricks and concrete, which date back to around 7000 BCE – with residues of rituals and mnemonic devices. Menhirs are tall upright stones erected in prehistoric times. Referred to as standing stones, orthostats or megaliths, they typically date from the middle Bronze Age (between 1500 and 1200 BCE) and are particularly numerous in western Europe, where they can sometimes be seen in the middle of a field or next to a road, or as part of a monumental group such as Stonehenge in England. *Modern Menhirs* can be seen as contemporary carriers of knowledge and memory, and as foundation pillars of a structure that once was.



Contradiccio In Terminarium under construction, 2017

Contradiccio In Terminarium, 2017

Bricks and concrete, various dimensions, commissioned by Ministry of Foreign Affairs Belgium
Permanent installation at the Belgian embassy, Kinshasa, D.R. Congo

All over the world earth is being transformed into building materials. The desire to build and own a house is one of the major factors fuelling the market economy. Belgians have a particularly strong urge to build their own homes, hence the common saying that 'every Belgian is born with a brick in the belly'. Most houses in Belgium are still built of bricks or at least faced or clad with very thin or composite bricks. In the DR Congo, bricks are also considered a good investment and an upgrade from houses made of clay and branches. The best way to obtain free, clean and abundant earth to make bricks is by setting up camp next to a large termite mound or termitarium. The houses are consequently constructed directly next to or around a kiln, which is itself built with the bricks that need to be fired. After the house is abandoned, nature can reclaim the earth and turn it back into dust, maybe with the help of a new termite colony.

Contradiccio In Terminarium connects both these stories. Local bricks are used to build and sculpt termite mounds, oscillating Belgian and Congolese brick traditions and honouring the ingenuity of two of the most intelligent and industrious animal species on the planet, termites and *Homo sapiens sapiens*.



Contradiccio In Terminarium, 2017

Bricks and concrete, various dimensions, commissioned by Ministry of Foreign Affairs Belgium
Permanent installation at the Belgian embassy, Kinshasa, D.R. Congo



I Want That You Want What I Want That You Want, 2010

Sculpted ebony wood, 24 x 70 x 21 cm.

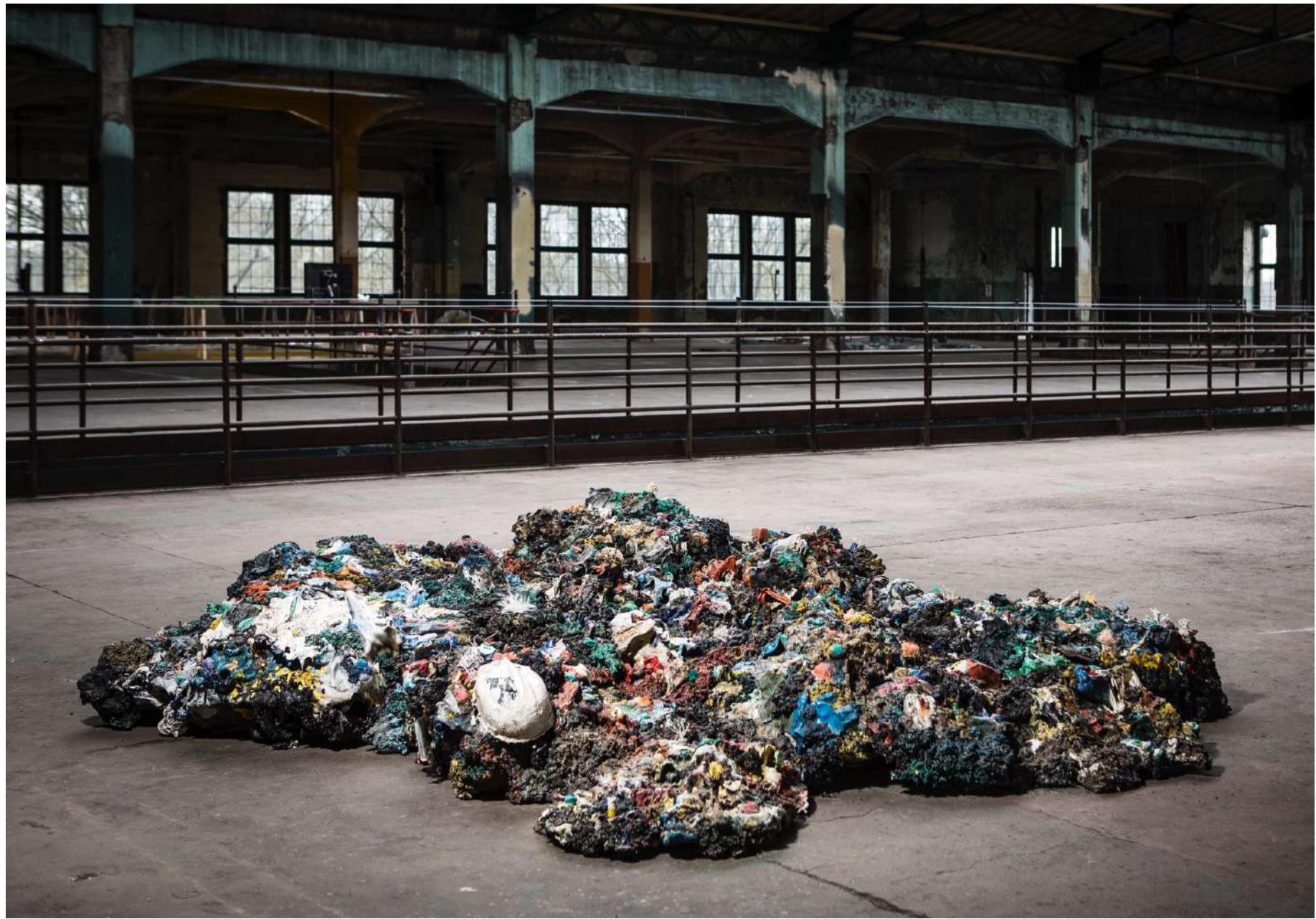
Produced in collaboration with Garba Tanko.

(In private collection, France)



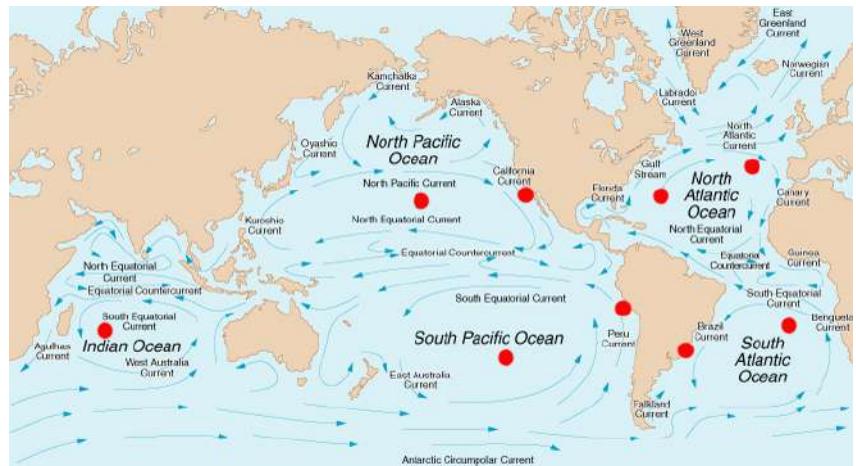
I Want That You Want What I Want That You Want, 2010
Sculpted ebony wood, 24 x 70 x 21 cm.
(In private collection, France)

Value is not universal and depends on the eye of the beholder as well as the beholder's circumstances. *I Want That You Want What I Want That You Want* is the title of a physical exchange in which an original STIHL chainsaw was swapped for an ebony copy, made in collaboration with two Cameroonian woodworkers, Haroun and Garba Tanko. On a micro level the exchange symbolises the daily import and export of machines, cars and tropical hardwood that takes place between Europe (Rotterdam/Antwerp) and Africa (Douala). After this 'equal' trade, Haroun and Garba continued to cut more trees, even faster than before as they now owned a chainsaw. In Belgium, Maarten Vanden Eynde exhibited the copy of the chainsaw as an art object at Art Brussels, the contemporary art fair.



Plastic Reef, 2009 - 2012

Melted plastic debris from the worlds oceans, 500 x 450 cm. Installation at Manifesta 9, Genk, Belgium, 2012



Plastic Reef, 2008 - 2012

The five major oceanic gyres – the North and South Pacific Gyres, the North and South Atlantic Gyres and the Indian Ocean Gyre – collect and contain plastic from around the world. It was in the North Pacific Gyre in 1997 that Captain Charles Moore discovered a vast accumulation of plastic debris which came to be called the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. It led him to set up the Algalita Marine Research and Education Foundation in Long Beach, California.

It was from Captain Moore that Vanden Eynde acquired his first samples of plastic. Back in his studio he found that when it was melted the plastic acquired a seemingly more natural form, resembling a colourful coral reef. The plastic rubbish gained a strange beauty whilst at the same time generating a double reference to both the worrying abundance of plastic in the ocean and the accelerating loss of coral reefs worldwide. Thus began the construction of *Plastic Reef*, a growing sculpture which over the next four years gained weight and size every time it was exhibited, helping to raise awareness of plastic pollution as well as alluding to its escalation. In total over 1000 kilograms of plastic debris from all five gyres was extracted from the oceans.

By 2012, when it was exhibited in the Manifesta9 Biennial in Genk, Belgium, *Plastic Reef* had attained its maximum size of 450 x 500 centimetres. Subsequently, several smaller plastic reefs were created. Ironically and tragically, in 2015 scientists discovered that natural coral was ingesting micro-plastics, poisoning itself in the process. Next to acidification and the rise in ocean temperatures, this is one of the main reasons why the Great Barrier Reef is disappearing.



Plastic Reef, 2009 - 2012

Melted plastic debris from the worlds oceans, 500 x 450 cm. Installation at Manifesta 9, Genk, Belgium, 2012



Plastic Reef, 2008 - 2012

Melted plastic debris from the worlds oceans, 500 x 450 cm. Installation at Art Space Pythagorion, Samos, Greece (2019)



Palaeontological Plastic, 2013. Assembled plastic debris from the worlds oceans and antique cabinet, variable sizes. (In various private collections)

Since the 1950s, plastics have become a major industry that affects all our lives, from providing improved packaging and creating new textiles, to permitting the production of wondrous new components and cutting-edge technologies used in things such as televisions, cars and computers. In short, it could be argued that the invention of plastic was the glue for globalisation. However, plastics are extremely durable and degrade very slowly or not at all; the molecular bonds that make plastic so durable make it equally resistant to natural processes of degradation.

Palaeontological Plastic is made of several kilograms of plastic debris taken from the world's oceans. In 2014 scientists first reported the ingestion of microplastics by scleractinian corals on Australia's Great Barrier Reef, positing it as a possible cause of the destruction of coral reefs worldwide.

In 2018 scientists discovered airborne nanoplastics capable of infiltrating all water and food sources. They are even present in raindrops, making it impossible to envision a world without plastic. *Palaeontological Plastic* puts on display the results of the degradation process, reminding us of the material's ominous longevity.



Palaeontological Plastic IV, 2014. Assembled plastic debris from the worlds oceans and antique cabinet, 186 x 130 x 60 cm.



Continental Drift, 2014

Vintage globe, melted plastic debris from the worlds oceans, variable sizes.
(In the collection of Maison Particulière, Brussels, Belgium and in various private collections)



Abraham Ortelius, a famed Flemish cartographer and, in 1570, the creator of the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* – the first modern atlas (though it was not then referred to as such) – was the first to speculate that the continents as we know them today might once have been part of a single vast supercontinent, later named Pangaea, from which they drifted away.

Continental Drift is a globe entirely covered by melted plastic taken from the huge accumulations of debris caught in the five major oceanic gyres. These massive aggregations of plastic waste are growing so greatly in size and mass that plastic is now the most common surface feature in the world's oceans.



1000 Miles Away From Home, 2010 - 2013 Glass
Snow globe, wooden base, distilled water, plastic
particles from the five major oceanic gyres,
10 x 10 x 12 cm. (In various private collections)





Globe, 2013

Various materials, 850 x 850 x 850 cm.

Permanent installation at Vent des Forêts, Lorraine, France



Globe, 2013

Various materials, 850 x 850 x 850 cm.

Permanent installation at Vent des Forêts, Lorraine, France



The notion of 'progressive obsolescence' entered product design strategy in the first half of the twentieth century as manufacturers started making calculated efforts to generate demand. They used constantly changing fashions and manipulated the popularity of particular colours in order to stimulate buying. In the 1930s the light bulb became the first product to have its function intentionally limited to a specific finite period as an impetus to sales. But it was not until the 1950s that built-in obsolescence began to be practiced on a scale so colossal that man-made consumer goods would form a new geological stratum.

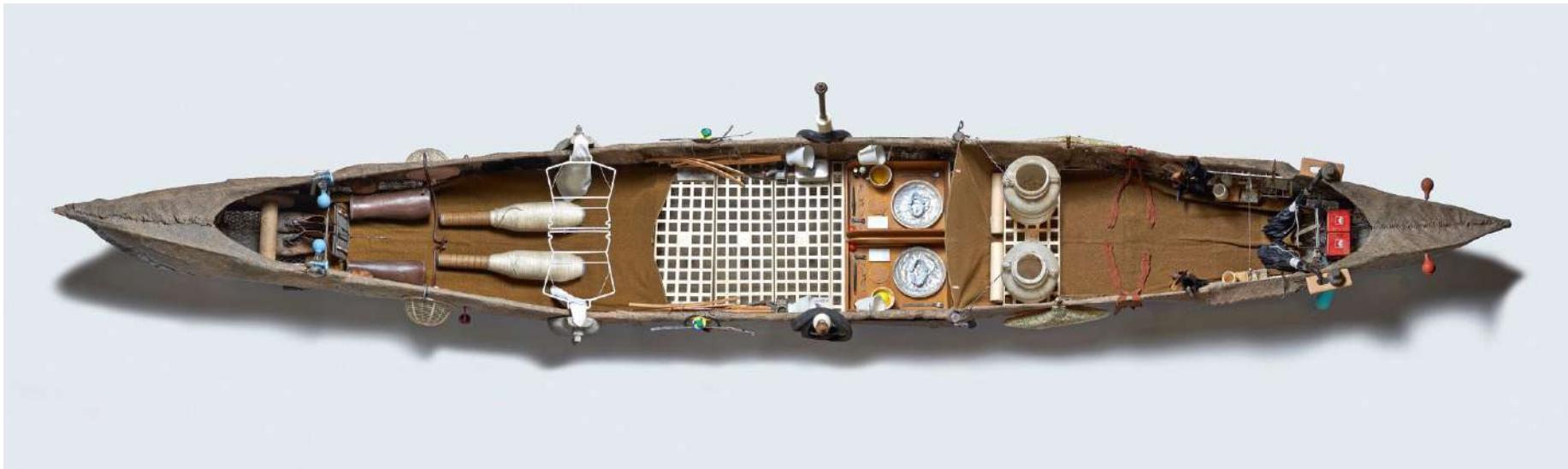
Today, as part of what is termed the 'Great Acceleration' – the dramatic exponential growth rate across a large range of measures of human activity – practically every product has a limited lifespan. *Globe* is a gigantic sphere, 8.5 metres in diameter, made from different kinds of scrap and rubbish found in and around Saint-Mihiel, France. It symbolises our constant urge to accumulate material goods, and the resulting problem of what to do with them when they break down or no longer serve their purpose. *Globe* is situated on the old rubbish dump of the small village Rupt-devant-Saint-Mihiel, both demarcating and commemorating that particular space and its history.



The Other Side, 2014

Various materials, 750 x 110 x 60 cm.

(In the collection of Zeeuws Museum, Middelburg, The Netherlands)



The Other Side, 2014

Various materials, 750 x 110 x 60 cm.

(In the collection of Zeeuws Museum, Middelburg, The Netherlands)

A long narrow boat is constructed entirely with pairs of objects, as if it were reflecting itself. It references the biblical story of Noah, who loaded the Ark with male and female pairs of animals so that once the impending floodwaters subsided they could multiply and restock Earth. Though it hints at a new deluge the title also suggests the possibility of an afterlife.

The Other Side is made up of vestiges of a person's life. It contains a vast number of things that Maarten Vanden Eynde's mother, Beatrijs Lauwaert, collected in the course of her life and career as an artist. It is both a reflection of herself and of the residue of a late-twentieth-century and early-twenty-first-century human. The Zeeuws Museum in the Netherlands catalogued every item that makes up the work, as it would with any other object in their historic collection, and also included personal stories from the artist's mother relating to the history, origin or specific use of the various objects.



End Game, 2015

Ivory tusk and billiard chalk on wooden display, 120 x 55 x 145 cm.



Ivory was the initial economic incentive for Leopold II of Belgium to claim the Kingdom of Congo at the end of the nineteenth century. As well as being used in small household items and electrical insulators it was also employed in the production of a wide variety of musical instruments (including pianos, guitars, violins and bassoons), and games such as billiards, dominoes and dice.

End Game tips an elephant tusk from the Belgian Congo (now the DR Congo) with a Master brand billiard chalk, either to sharpen it or put a protective barrier on it. The logo of the American company that makes the billiard chalk is the head of an elk. *End Game* alludes to the illegal trade in elephant ivory and rhino horn, a telling example of what Elizabeth Kolbert has called the 'sixth extinction' in her book 'The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History', in which she argues that Earth is in the midst of an unprecedented and ongoing diminution of biodiversity in the animal kingdom, caused by human activity.



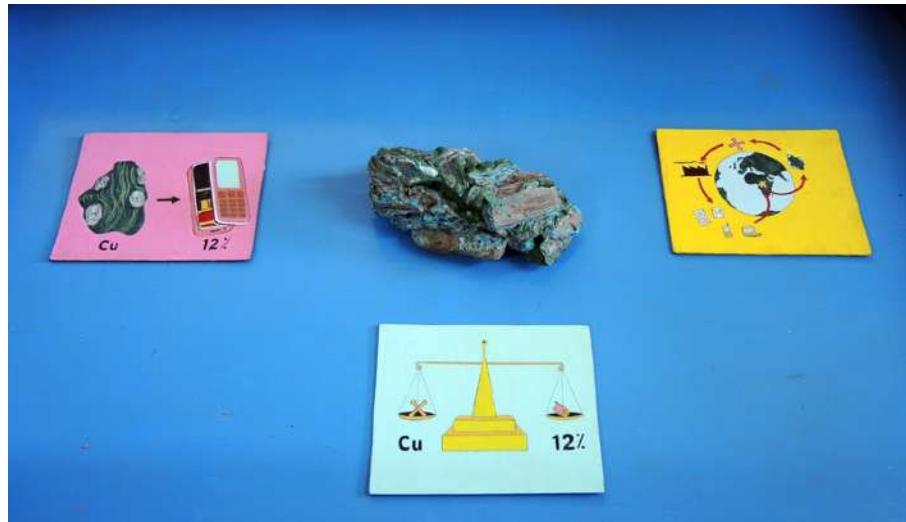
Technofossil, Billboard, 400 x 300 cm. Commissioned by the 4# Lumbumbashi Biennial, D.R. Congo, 2016



Technofossil, 2016

Sculpted malachite rocks, variable sizes.

Installation at the National Museum in Lubumbashi, D.R. Congo, 2016



As humans have colonised and modified Earth's surface they have progressively developed more sophisticated tools and technologies. These underpin a new kind of stratigraphy, for which Jan Zalasiewicz (Chair of the Anthropocene Working Group of the International Commission on Stratigraphy) coined the term 'technostratigraphy'. This is marked by the geologically accelerated evolution and diversification of 'technofossils' – the non-degradable material remains of the 'technosphere'.

Almost all electrical appliances are made out of electronic circuit boards, all of which have copper wiring that in many cases originates from copper mines in the DR Congo. Most mine workers or creuseurs have no idea themselves what the materials they extract are used for.

The global information revolution and knowledge distribution made possible by the Internet and the computers and smartphones that access it, does not connect to the material point of origin. The gap between the beginning and the end, between cause and consequence, is unbelievably big.

Technofossils brings both worlds closer together by sculpting the phones directly into the rocks, as if they were always there, waiting to be discovered or liberated.



Technofossil, 2016

Sculpted malachite rocks, variable sizes.

(In the collection of Mu.ZEE, Ostend, Belgium)



Malachite Mobiles (Samsung, iPhone, Nokia), 2015
Sculpted malachite from D.R. Congo, variable sizes.
Produced in collaboration with Fillot Ngoyi Makelele
and Augy Ngoyi Twite
(In various private collections)



Copper is the most commonly used metal in any telephone, weighing more than all the other metals combined. It represents on average 12% of the total weight of every phone. Malachite, a lucrative ore, contains a high percentage of copper (up to 57%), which gives it its characteristic dark green colour. *Malachite Mobiles* was an intervention in the local tourist sculpture market in Ruashi, DR Congo, and a proposal for possible mutual economic stimulation. Usually, local artisans make animals (elephants, crocodiles, frogs, amongst others), ashtrays and miniature maps of Congo or Africa from malachite but nothing relating to its industrial use. The malachite models of mobile phones that were introduced into the sculpture market were made in collaboration with Fillot Ngoyi Makelele and Augy Ngoyi Twite for the fourth Lubumbashi Biennial in the DR Congo in 2015. They refer to both the end product – the mobile phone – and the origins of the metal used in the manufacturing process. Malachite is also known for its healing powers in heart chakra rituals. It is said to block negative radiation from electrical devices like computers and phones.



Malachite Laptop (XO-OLPC), 2017

Sculpted malachite from D.R. Congo.

Produced in collaboration with Augy Ngoyi Twite
(In private collection, Belgium)

The XO-OLPC (One Laptop Per Child) initiative, previously known as the \$100 Laptop, aimed at providing inexpensive laptop computers to children in the Global South as a means of bridging the digital divide and providing them with access to knowledge. Before the project ended around three million XO laptops had been distributed worldwide. Laptops broke faster than foreseen, and in areas with limited access to electricity, charging was a continuous challenge. The cost of running the programme and training teachers was much greater than anticipated, and eventually funding dried up.



The Invisible Hand, 2015

Art Brussels 2015 (with Meessen De Clercq Gallery, Brussels, Belgium)

Natural rubber, Victorian mahogany display, 78 x 69 x 40 cm.

(In private collection, Belgium)



Making the mould of the right hand of Leopold II, 04:00 A.M.



The Invisible Hand is a rubber cast of the right hand of the equestrian statue of Leopold II made by Thomas Vinçotte in 1914 and completed in 1926 after his death the previous year, which stands facing the Regentlaan (Boulevard du Régent) in Brussels. The mould, necessarily made at dead of night, was taken to a former rubber plantation in Kasai Province (DR Congo), where it was filled with natural rubber. Back in Belgium again, the cast of the hand was presented at Art Brussels, the contemporary art fair, completing the problematic circle of colonial treasure hunting in relation to historical fetishisation.

The Invisible Hand also contains an allusion to a concept invoked by the eighteenth-century political economist Adam Smith. First mentioned in 'The Theory of Moral Sentiments' (1789), Smith's 'invisible hand' describes the unforeseen benefits to society of the self-interested actions of the individual, or the self-regulating effect of a market economy in which the pursuit of personal gain and profit boosts the entire economy, thus creating collective welfare. Leopold II used his ostensibly humanitarian International African Association (1877-1879) and later the Congo Free State (1885-1908) to pillage and plunder the abundant – and available – natural resources. Ironically, in doing so he involuntarily instigated local economic growth, though it came at a terribly high price – it is estimated that over 10 million people died as a result of Leopold's 'invisible hand'. The work also references the brutal custom of chopping off the hands of Congolese 'employees' to ensure obedience and rubber production quotas.



The Invisible Hand (making-off), Ngel Ikwok, Kasai-Occidental, D.R. Congo, 2015

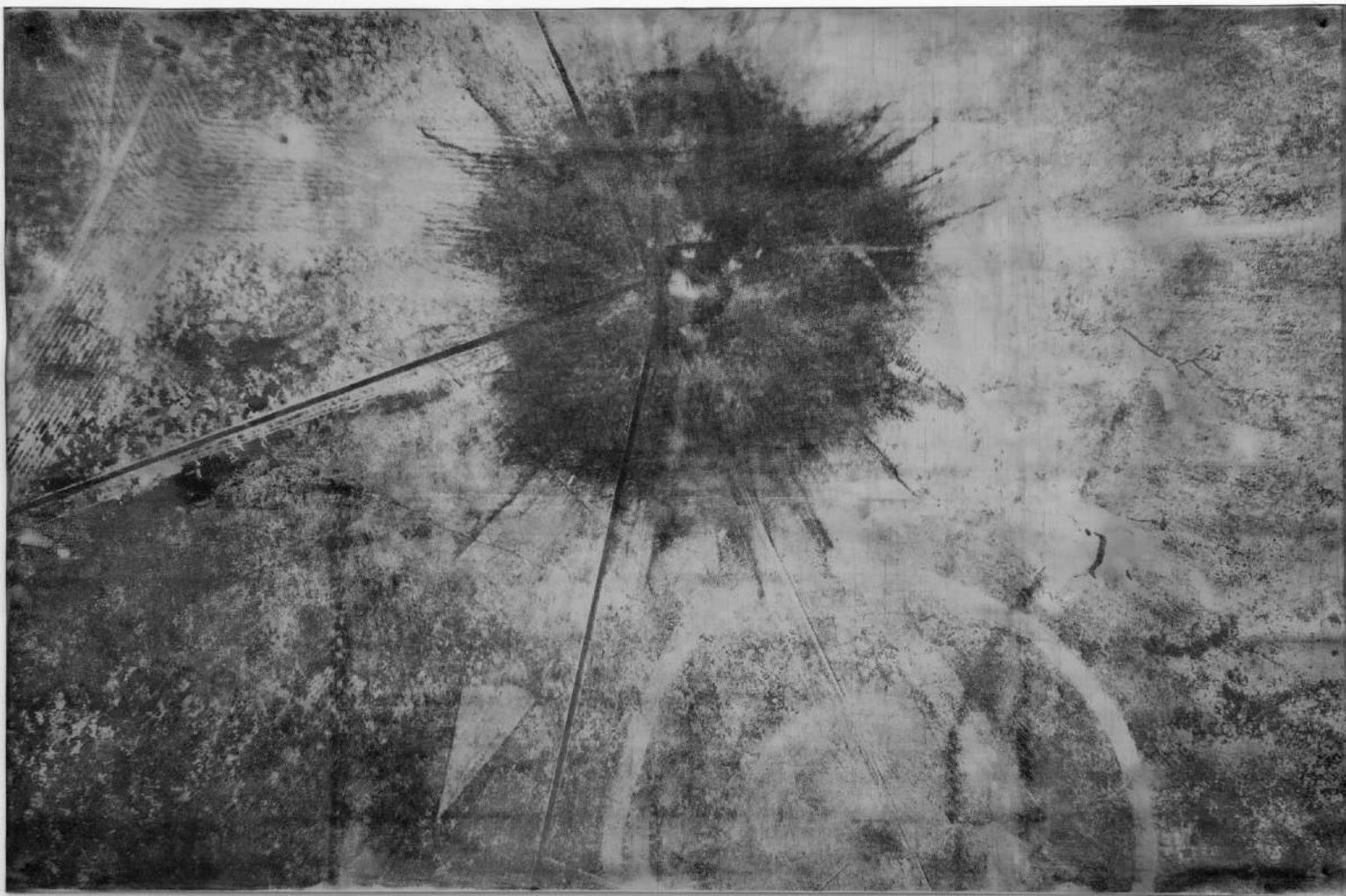


War on Terror is a collection of 212 different earplugs displayed in a cabinet, like bullets arranged by calibre. They exist in countless different colours and shapes and are used for a wide variety of activities such as sleeping, operating machinery, playing or listening to music, swimming, flying, hunting or shooting practice. Loud music or noise are commonly used as methods of torture, as is sleep deprivation.

In *War on Terror* only one of each pair of earplugs is displayed, symbolising the bias and one-sidedness of the common Western view of terrorism and the war on terror that is disseminated via diverse media. In general, people favour hearing one side of a story and are deaf to the alternative and often opposing voice. The work also alludes to the terror of mass consumption and single use or throwaway items, generating an unprecedented waste disposal problem. And at the same time it confronts us with the endless variety of choice in the consumer culture of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, for which the earplugs are arguably one of the least known but most symbolic and pertinent items.

War on Terror, 2016

212 different earplugs, glass and wood vitrine, 80 x 60 x 8 cm.
(In private collections, Belgium)



Trinity Test, 2016
Thinner print on lead.
66 x 100 cm.

The first atomic bomb, nicknamed 'The Gadget', was detonated at the Trinity Test Site near Alamagordo in New Mexico (US) on 16 July 1945. It was part of the Manhattan Project, set up to develop a new weapon of unprecedented power. *Trinity Test* is an aerial view of the site after the explosion. The black and white image is transferred on a slab of lead, the final stage of all uranium. The half-life with which uranium (U) decays to form lead (Pb) is 4.46 billion years, making uranium-lead or U-Pb dating one of the most refined and exact methods for determining the age of materials such as rocks or carbon. This radiometric dating technique looks for traces of radioactive impurities which allow the precise calculation of when matter was created or formed. *Trinity Test* is a triptych dealing with the subjectivity of history and memory, visualising the inherently different accounts of this world-changing event.



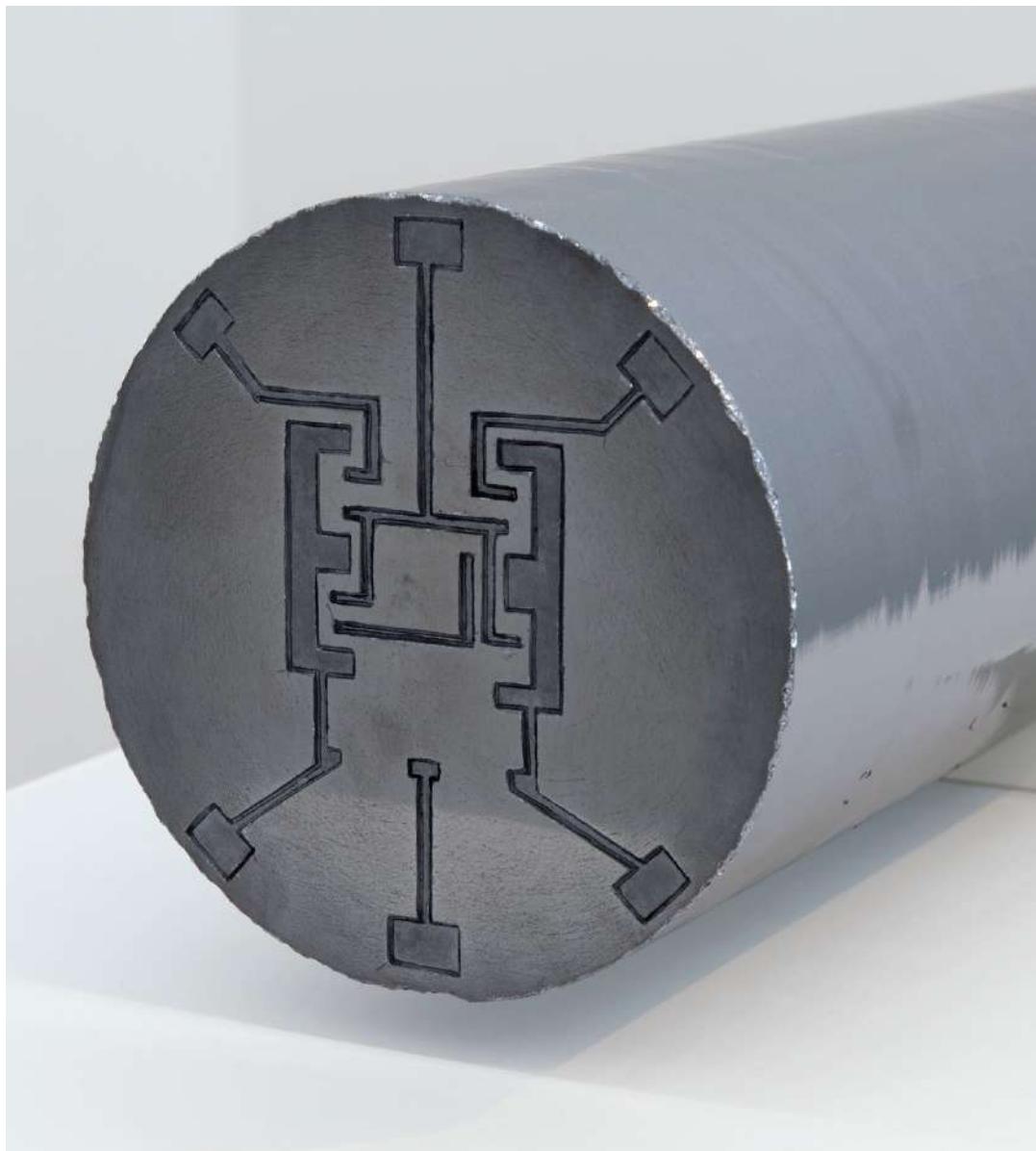
Copper Country (Bingham Canyon, Chuquicamata, El Morro), 2016.
Copper circuit boards, ferric chloride, varnish. 21 x 21 cm.
(In private collection, Belgium)



Copper Country, 2016.

(Bingham Canyon, Chuquicamata, El Morro)
Copper circuit boards, ferric chloride, varnish
21 x 21 cm. (In private collection, Belgium)

Copper was the first metal to be smelted from its ore and the first to be cast into a shape using a mould. At present, however, most copper, both mined and recycled, goes into electronic devices owing to its high conductivity. There is more copper than any other metal in phones and computers – in fact it weighs more than all the other metals combined. *Copper Country* is a series of three topographic drawings of the largest copper mines in the world, Bingham Canyon in the United States, and Chuquicamata and El Morro in Chile. The drawings are made by etching printed circuit boards (PCB) with ferric chloride (FeCl_3), a technique normally used in making copper circuits for electronic appliances. The chemical process is interrupted and frozen with varnish, creating an unpredictable variation of the 'natural' background in contrast to the graphic human intervention of open-pit mineral mining.



Silicon Age, 2016

Silicon ingot, bas relief image, 145 x 15 x 15 cm.



Ever since the digital revolution began, microchips made of silicon have been getting smaller. 'Moore's Law', based on a forecast made by Intel founder Gordon E. Moore in 1965, predicted that the number of transistors that can be fitted onto a microchip would double every 18 to 24 months, constantly increasing computer speed and efficiency. By the start of the twenty-first century the traditional chip circuitry made of silicon had become too microscopic to work reliably. It marked the end of the silicon age. Over 90% of Earth's crust is composed of silicate minerals. That makes silicon the second most abundant element in the Earth's crust, after oxygen. It is most widely distributed in dusts, sands, planetoids and planets as various forms of silicon dioxide (silica) or silicates. Silicon is the basic material used in the production of integrated circuits, which in turn are used in computers, televisions, mobile phones and every kind of electronic equipment and semiconductor device. Mono-crystalline silicon is also used in large quantities by the photovoltaic industry in the production of conventional solar cells.

Silicon Age consists of a pure silicon ingot or boule, using a special process to obtain 99.9999% pure single crystals. On one side the image of the first monolithic silicon integrated circuit chip, invented by Robert Noyce in 1961, is engraved as a bas-relief. On the other side, the crystal comes to a natural end, in the physical form of the ingot, at the point where it cannot get any smaller



Cosmic Connection, 2017

Recycled telephone and computer circuit boards, metal

700 x 700 x 350 cm.

Installation at Verbeke Foundation, Belgium

Several thousand satellites are orbiting Earth but very few are still operational. *Cosmic Connection* visualises a Utopian attempt in the distant future to reconnect to the sky, with vestiges of the technological revolution (in the form of phone and computer circuit boards) soldered together to form a potential receiver for signals from lost satellites. It also draws inspiration from humanity's eternal quest for other life forms in the universe and looks at our own origin and evolution as stardust. *Cosmic Connection* references issues of technological progress and the increasing waste produced by our society, as well as the growing amount of satellite debris orbiting the planet – our future archaeology.



Cosmic Connection, 2017

Recycled telephone and computer circuit boards, metal, 700 x 700 x 350 cm.

Installation at Verbeke Foundation, Belgium



The Last Human, 2017

Human skull, computer elements
(In private collection, Belgium)



The Last Human suggests the last representative of the human race. Two separate currents are flowing towards what Ray Kurzweil calls ‘the Singularity.’ According to this contested trans-humanist vision of the future, by 2045 artificial intelligence will be able to improve itself and in consequence gain more influence on the direction civilisation and the human race are taking. When DNA computing overtakes conventional silicon-based IT, brain implants will foreshadow the end of *Homo sapiens sapiens*. Biologically we will become a different species. *The Last Human* previsions this cataclysmic shift by being made from what can be considered as the final conventional attempt to enhance brain capabilities – old-fashioned computer parts, neatly integrated into a skull, as if they were part of a burial ritual.

The Last Human, 2017

Human skeleton, computer elements, variable dimensions



The Last Human, 2017

Human skeleton, computer elements, concrete, 180 x 100 x 20 cm.



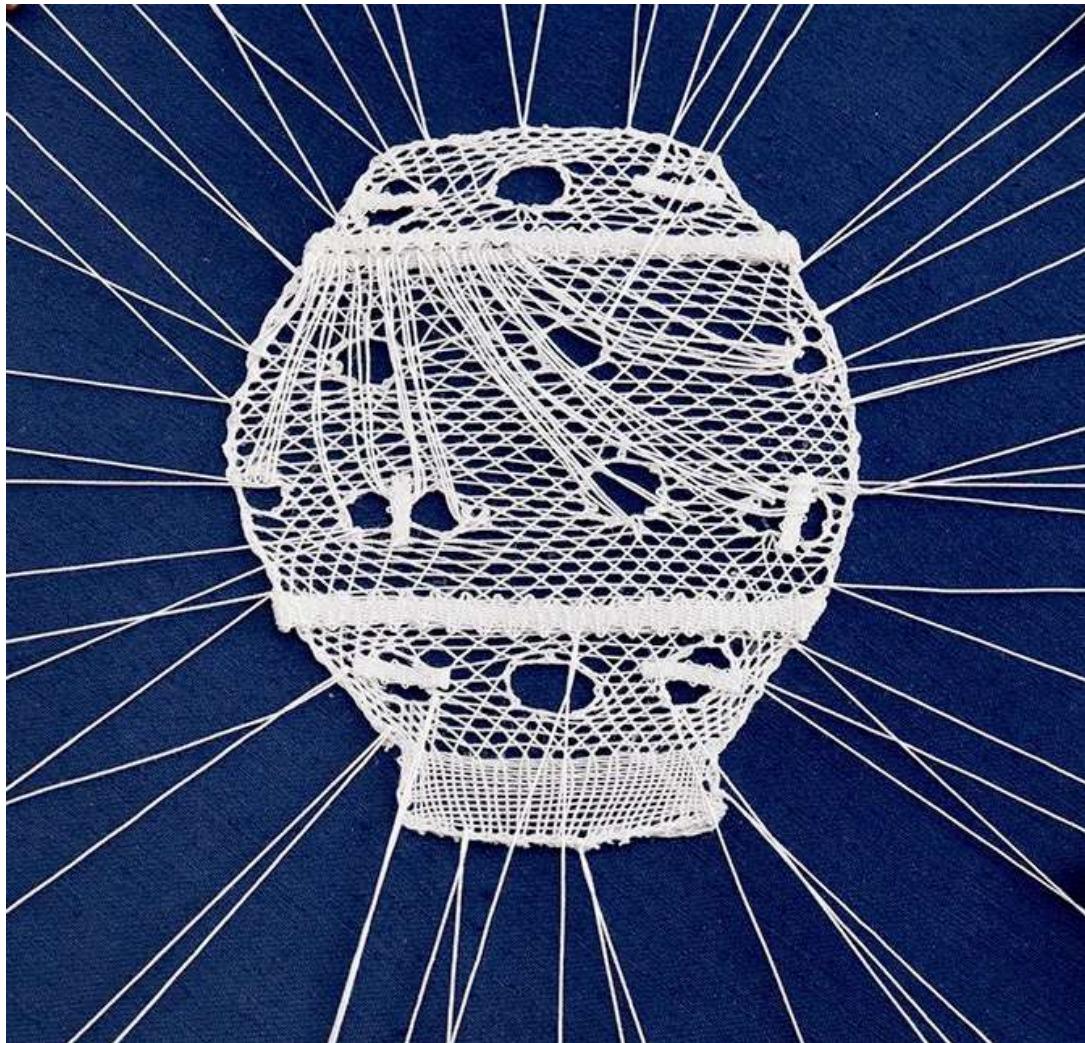
Civilising Conflict is made in collaboration with Augy Ngoyi Twite, a Congolese artisan working for the local tourist sculpture market in Ruashi, D.R. Congo. So far, they make animals (elephants, crocodiles, frogs, amongst others), ashtrays and miniature maps of Congo or Africa, but nothing relating to the industrial use of the material. They are, however, all made of malachite, a precious mineral containing a high percentage of copper (up to 57%), giving it its known dark green colour. Copper is used in huge amounts for wiring every piece of rolling floating, or flying equipment produced for war. Small arm shell casings are made of brass, a mixture of copper and zinc, and most bullets have a copper 'jacket' to keep them from fouling in the gun barrel. Both during WWI and WW2 D.R. Congo was a major supplier of copper ore, that was shipped to the US to be melted and transformed. During the famous Battle of the Somme and the Battle of the Ardennes, 70 to 80% of all the bullets that were fired were made with copper coming from Congo. And still today, warfare and mineral extraction go hand in hand when Congo is concerned. Malachite is however also known for its special 'healing powers' in Chakra rituals. It helps to connect to the heart and has the extraordinary ability to block negative radiation from electrical equipment. *Civilising Conflict* consists of a cut off finger holding the pin of a hand grenade. It is a creative solution to an immediate threat without a permanent resolve.

Civilising Conflict (2019)
Hand carved malachite.
12 x 7 x 8 cm



Fat Man, 2016

Cotton lace, wooden bobbins, traditional straw cookie pillow, 60 x 60 x 5 cm.

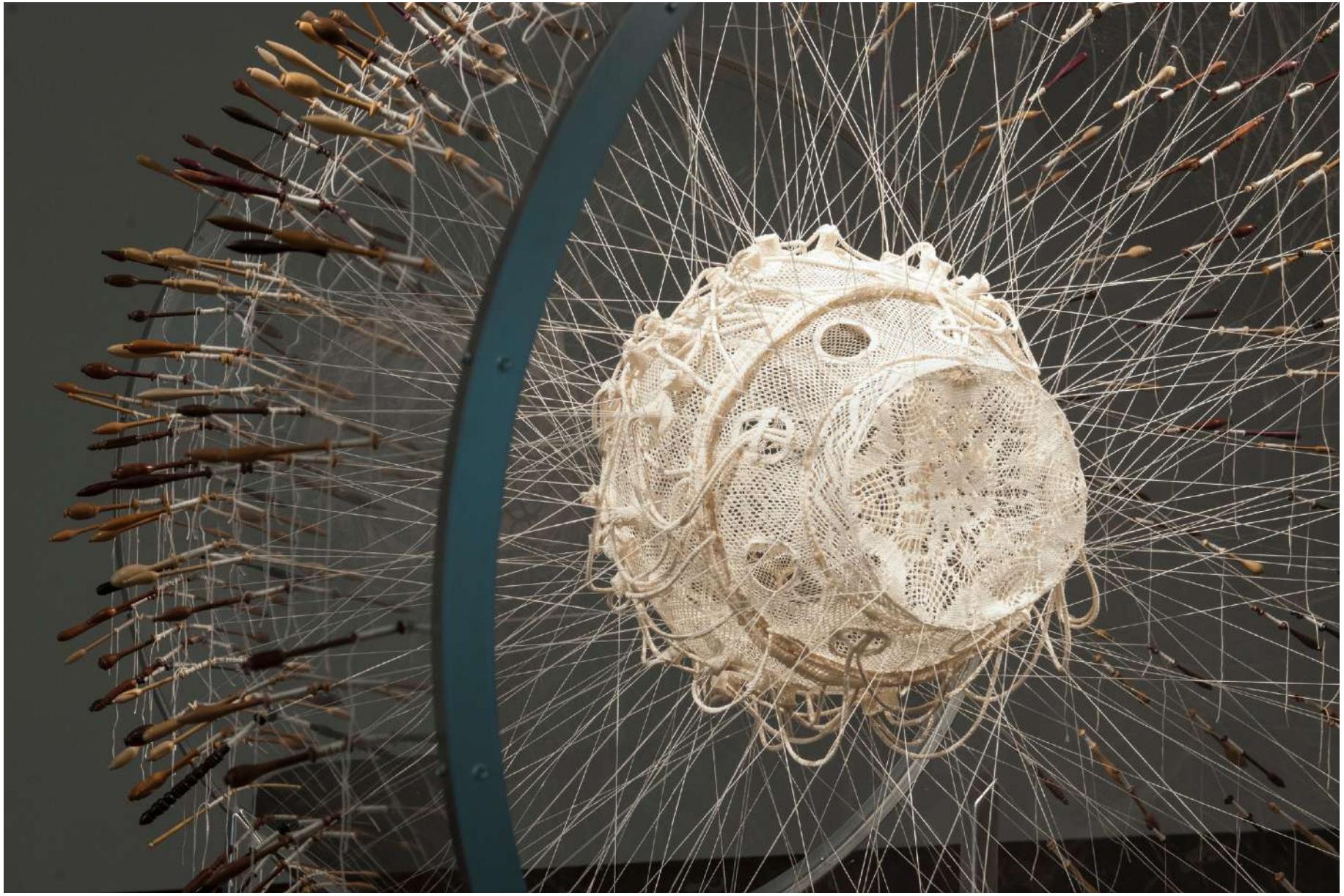


The Gadget / Fat Man / Little Boy, 2016

Cotton lace, wooden bobbins, traditional straw cookie pillow, 60 x 60 x 5 cm.



Fat Man, which takes its name from the atom bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan, on 9 August 1945, is part of a series of three works named after the first three atomic bombs, *The Gadget*, *Fat Man* and *Little Boy*. The wooden bobbins used in the work, which vary in size, shape and colour, are made from different types of wood, symbolising the hands that helped create the nuclear weapons. Some look like shells or missiles. The bobbins are still attached to the lace, suggesting that the bomb that nestles at the centre of each work is in mid-explosion. There is a real and historic link between atomic bombs and bobbin lace. Both are made from raw materials – uranium and cotton respectively – that inflected world history and helped the United States become the most powerful nation on Earth. And in both cases, Congo and Belgium were involved. Most of the uranium ore that was used in the Manhattan project to develop *The Gadget*, *Fat Man* and *Little Boy*, came from the Shinkolobwe mine in the Belgian Congo. It was initially exported to Belgium for the extraction of radium. Similarly, the cotton produced in America's southern states, was planted, harvested and processed by enslaved people, most of whom came from the Kingdom of Kongo. It was then shipped to Britain and Belgium where it was turned into cloth and bobbin lace.



The Gadget, 2017

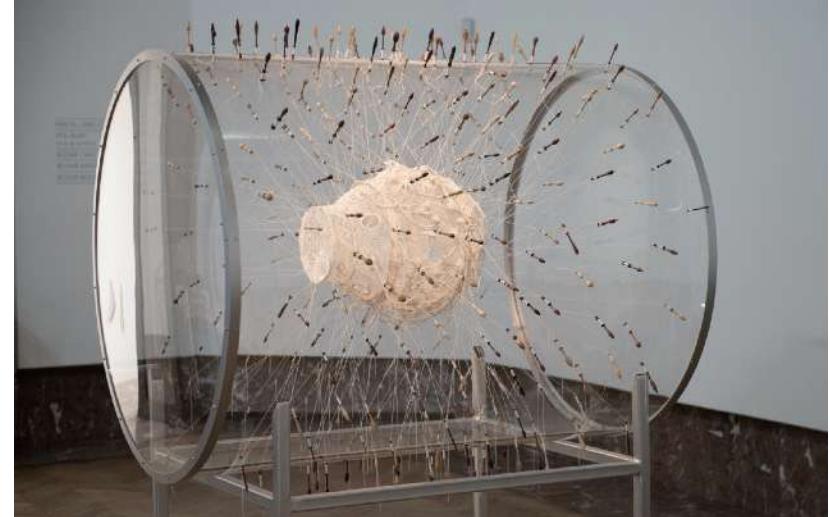
Cotton lace, wooden bobbins, acrylic glass cylinder, metal base structure, 140 x 150 x 200 cm.

Produced for Belgian Art Prize 2017, Bozar, Brussels, BE (In private collection, Belgium)



The Gadget, 2017

Cotton lace, wooden bobbins, acrylic glass cylinder, metal base structure, 140 x 150 x 200 cm.
Produced for Belgian Art Prize 2017, Bozar, Brussels, BE (In private collection, Belgium)



The Gadget was the nickname given to the first atomic bomb, tested in New Mexico (US) in July 1945. Most of the uranium used in the first atom bombs came from the Shinkolobwe mine in Katanga, in what was then the Belgian Congo (now the DR Congo). It was processed in America's southern states and shipped to Antwerp in Belgium, by the Belgian businessman Edgar Sengier, the director of the Union Minière du Haute-Katanga, an Anglo-Belgian mining company operating in the Congo's copper belt between 1906 and 1966. A similar route was followed in the past by cotton. Enslaved people transported from the Kingdom of Kongo in central Africa and elsewhere planted and picked cotton in America's southern states, whence it was shipped to the cotton mills of the United Kingdom and also to Belgium and the rest of western Europe to be used in the bobbin lace industry. An odd encounter between the particularly female work of bobbin-lace-making and the predominantly male occupation of bomb-making, woven into the tangle of threads in *The Gadget 3D*.

That is not the only ironic link between the histories of cotton and uranium. When the Second World War broke out, Japan was one of the world's major cotton producers and traders, almost surpassing Britain. Dropping *Little Boy* and *Fat Man* – the code names of the second and third atomic bombs made by the US as part of the same Manhattan Project that produced *The Gadget* – on Hiroshima and Nagasaki heralded a definite end to the cotton empire of Japan. *The Gadget 3D* was made in collaboration with Rita Van Cotthem, a highly skilled bobbin lace expert, who spent more than 1000 hours on its creation. The 300-plus wooden bobbins are all unique pairs, referencing the many hands that facilitated the creation of the first atomic bomb. Shaped like bullets or bombs and radiating outwards they seem suspended in mid-trajectory, adding to the installation's explosive force.



Around the World, 2017

40,015 kilometres cotton thread, A320 jet engine, wood and metal, 210 x 210 x 500 cm. Produced for Belgian Art Prize 2017, Bozar, Brussels, BE



Still of documentary about the making off 'Around the World'

Around the World is a huge bobbin in the shape of a rocket. Spun around it is cotton thread measuring in total 40,015 kilometres, a figure that represents the average equatorial circumference of Earth. War and cotton have long been connected, starting with guncotton, used as a propellant in firearms and in the warheads of torpedoes, mines and grenades. Cotton was used as an aircraft covering – for the first flight of the Wright brothers, the aerial dogfights of the First World War; even for the famous German zeppelin Hindenburg – and in the first gas masks as protection against chemical weapons. It has thus been key in both the taking and saving of human lives. *Around the World* symbolises the significant role that cotton played and still plays not only on a global but also a personal scale, being the first material a human newborn feels when it is wrapped in cotton cloth and also, in many cultures, the last material bodies come into contact with when they are shrouded in cotton to prevent post-mortem leakage and contamination. British and European cotton spinning and weaving was the first major industry in human history to lack locally produced raw materials, making it the first globally integrated manufacturing industry. Cotton fuelled the Industrial Revolution both in England and the United States and was a major influence on the creation of wealth throughout most of Western Europe. It made cotton plantation owners the richest and most powerful men in the New World, enabling them to invest in the building of astronomical observatories (like the Lowell Observatory, where the expansion of the universe was discovered and whose data helped to find a spot on the Moon where Apollo 11's lunar module could safely land) as well as universities and stock markets (like the cotton exchanges where futures were being introduced for the first time, offering investment in crops that were not yet planted). *Around the World* visualises the potential of a single thread encircling the globe and at the same time it shows that no matter which path you choose the end and the beginning are in the same spot. What goes around, comes around.



Around the World, 2017

40,015 kilometres cotton thread, A320 jet engine, wood and metal, 210 x 210 x 500 cm. Produced for Belgian Art Prize 2017, Bozar, Brussels, BE



Manhattan Project, 2017

Metal, aluminum, glass, white sand, UV light, uranium glass, 210 x 210 x 160 cm.



Manhattan Project, 2017
Metal, aluminum, white sand,
UV light, uranium glass
210 x 210 x 160 cm.

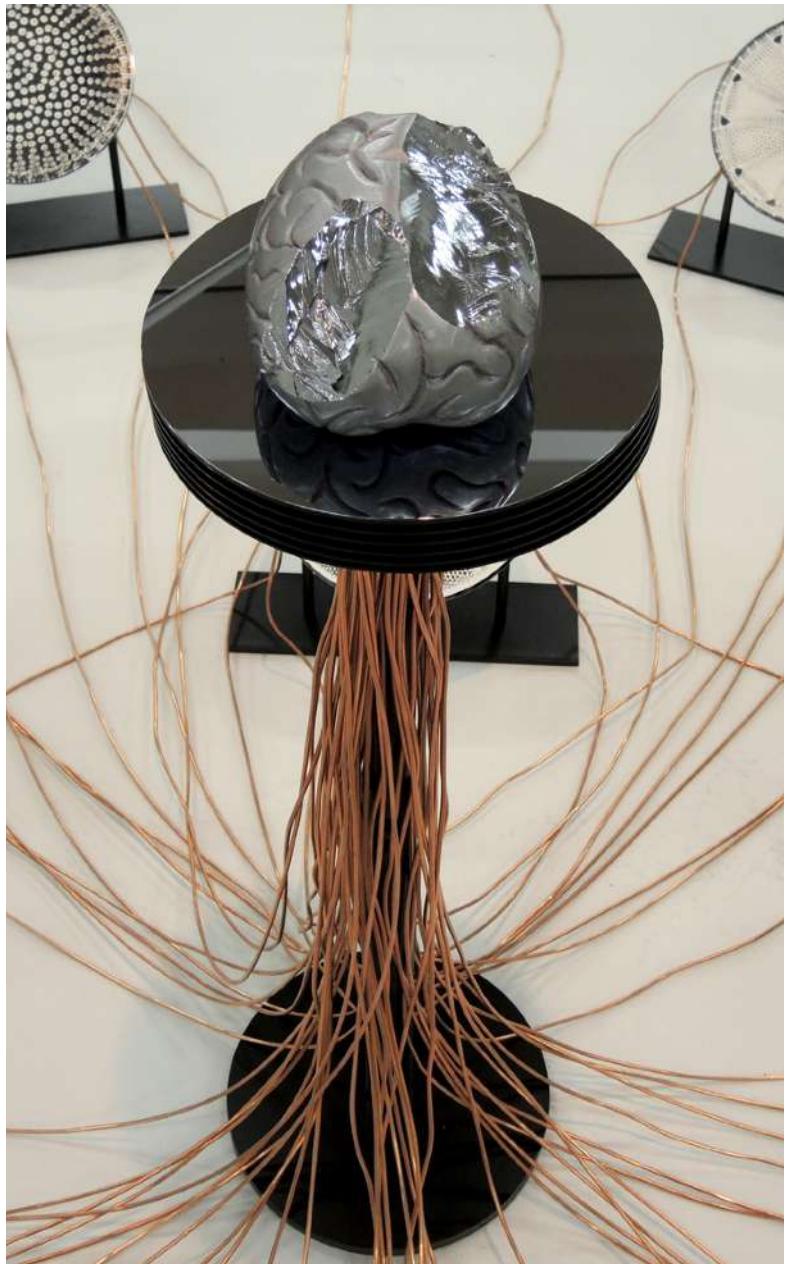
Manhattan Project is a model of several tests – successful and failed – to recreate the perfect dome that occurs 0.025 seconds after an atomic bomb is detonated. Antique uranium glass, sometimes known as 'Vaseline glass', was melted and blown to form a perfect bubble in order to imitate the miniature explosions. Before it was used to fuel nuclear power plants or produce atomic bombs, uranium was employed as a colouring agent in the manufacture of tableware and household items. Yellow or light green in colour, it fluoresces bright green under UV light. The white sand, which comes from the White Sands Missile Range, where the first atomic bomb was exploded, covers the bottom of the dome and becomes phosphorescent purple, completing the macabre but also wondrous model. It is very possible that the detonation of the first atomic bomb will be agreed upon as the event that marks the end of the Holocene and the start of the Anthropocene, the age in which human activity is the dominant influence on the planet. From that moment radioactive isotopes such as strontium-90 start to be present in the geological layer that we are now creating, representing the perfect 'golden spike'. A 'golden spike', more formally called a Global Boundary Stratotype Section and Point (GSSP), is a marker in the environment created by a global event that leads to long-lasting global changes signalled in the geological record and which can be said to epitomise the start of a new geological epoch.



The Power of None, 2018

Wood, metal, copper wire, printed silicon wafers, silicon sculpted brain

500 x 500 x 120 cm



The Power of None (details), 2018

Wood, metal, copper wire, printed silicon wafers, silicon sculpted brain.

500 x 500 x 120 cm



The Power of None is a multifaceted installation that deals with the different agencies of silicon, tracing its past, present and future potential. It is the basic material in the production of integrated circuits used in computers, TVs, mobile phones and all types of electronic equipment and semiconductor devices, and is also used in large quantities for the production of photovoltaic solar cells. Since the beginning of the digital revolution, microchips made of silicon have consistently been reducing in size, as articulated in Moore's Law in 1965 (Intel founder Gordon E. Moore predicted that the number of transistors on a microchip would double every two years, though the cost of computers has halved). By the beginning of the twenty-first century the traditional chip circuitry made of silicon had become too microscopic to work reliably, marking the end of the silicon age.

In the centre of *The Power of None* is a silicon copy of a human brain, commemorating humans as the first computers, or 'calculators' as they were called in the mid-twentieth century. Surrounding it is a field of silicon wafers – the raw material used to produce transistors – mounted on supports such as circular solar panels and connected to the central brain by raw copper wires, arranged to resemble a devoted army or cult. Made visible on the silicon wafers is a variety of centric diatoms. Diatoms form a major group of micro-algae and are one of the commonest types of phytoplankton; uniquely, their cell wall is made of silica. Researchers use diatoms and other single-celled algae as templates for developing new solar cells that can produce up to three times as much energy as conventional ones. The diatoms in *The Power of None* are derived from the world-famous 'Universum Diatomacearum Möllerianum', which is housed in a vault in the Meise Botanic Garden in Belgium. Made by Johann Diedrich Möller in 1890 and consisting of 4026 different species of diatom, it is the micro-biologists' holy grail. The original images of the individual diatoms, each with a unique ornamental form, are scanned and transferred onto the silicon wafers using specialised photography and printing techniques.





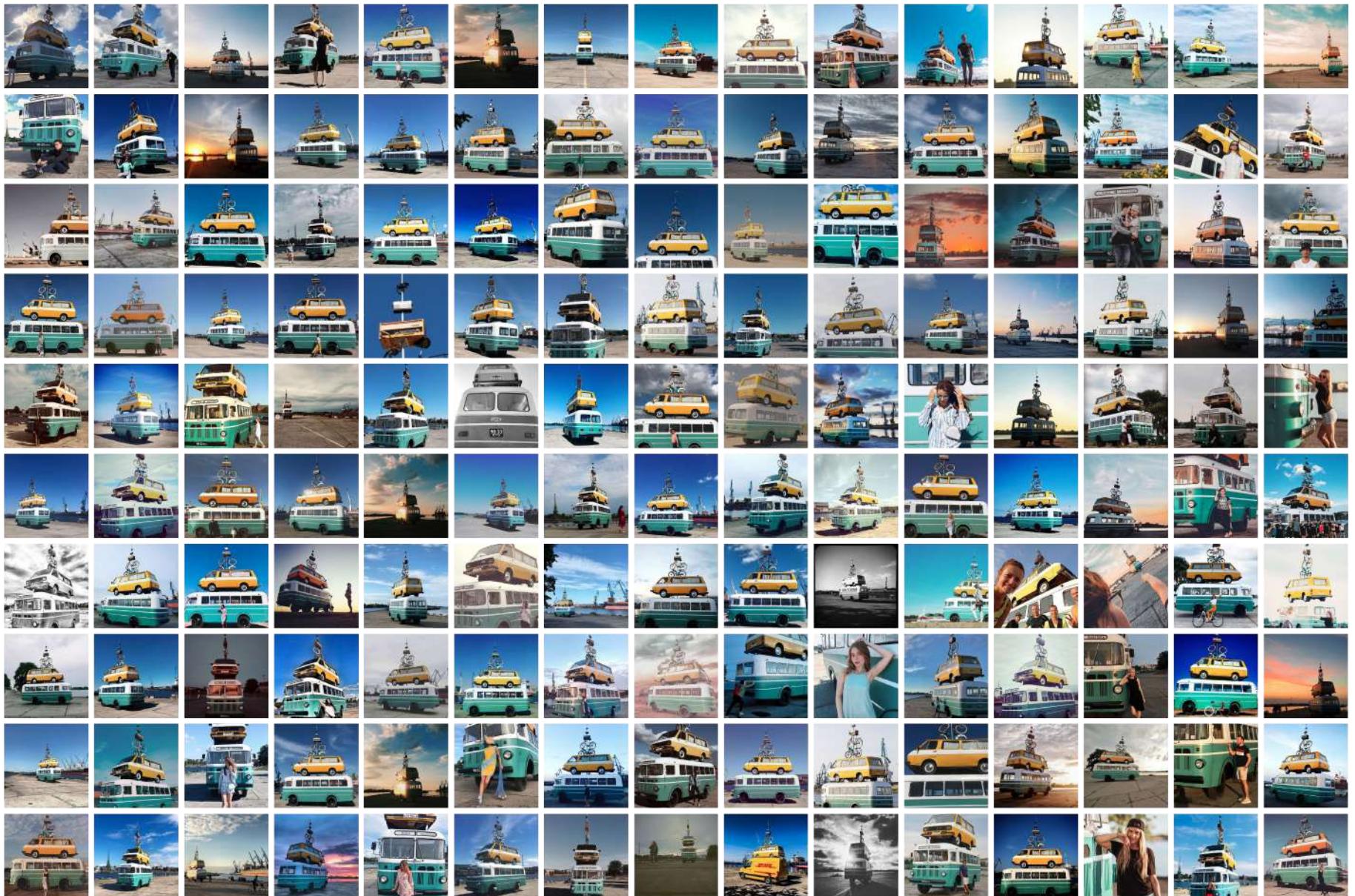
Pinpointing Progress, 2018

Various vehicles and electronic devices spiked on a metal needle

960 x 740 x 240 cm

Progress is understood as forward or onward movement towards an improved or more advanced condition, generally assumed to be for the better. As such, it is frequently used to sugar-coat evolution, its step-sibling. Evolution happens anyway, with or without our interference or even our presence. It is the inescapable force of the future. Progress is the promise that evolution is a good thing, and should therefore be encouraged, stimulated and even speeded up. Bigger better, smaller stronger. New inventions follow one another with increasing speed, generally shrinking in size and in sublime synchronicity. Nanotechnology is the new holy grail, allowing magical manipulation on a microscale with unimaginable implications for the macroscale. Invisible to the human eye, these technologies make believing more important than seeing. At the same time, information and data have replaced matter as the most valuable resource in capitalist society.

Pinpointing Progress is a sculpture 'tower' that stacks the main modern technological wonders that were produced in Riga, Latvia – one of the industrial powerhouses of the former Soviet Union – and exported throughout the USSR, and even beyond. Following size and (usually) production date, the objects become smaller and smaller, visualising the speed of evolution. A bus, car, moped, bicycle, record player, radio, telephone, camera and a transistor are impaled on a spike like insects in a museum display. Only the smallest item, the transistor, is still being made in Riga. The rest are now obsolete, a part of history. The installation is also a subtle homage to the Latvian version of the iconic sculpture of the Town Musicians of Bremen in Germany. Situated in Riga it is based on a story by the Brothers Grimm in which four ill-treated and worn out animals join forces to escape and find freedom. *Pinpointing Progress* is a silent monument to both local production history and the speed of industrialised evolution. It preserves the most vital specimens of progress on a spike, saving them for future generations.



Pinpointing Progress (A selection of more than a 1000 images found on Instagram), 2018

Various vehicles and electronic devices spiked on a metal needle

960 x 740 x 240 cm



Half Life, 2019

Ceramic vessels made with Boom Clay (Dessel, BE).

800 x 50 x 240 cm.



Half Life, 2019

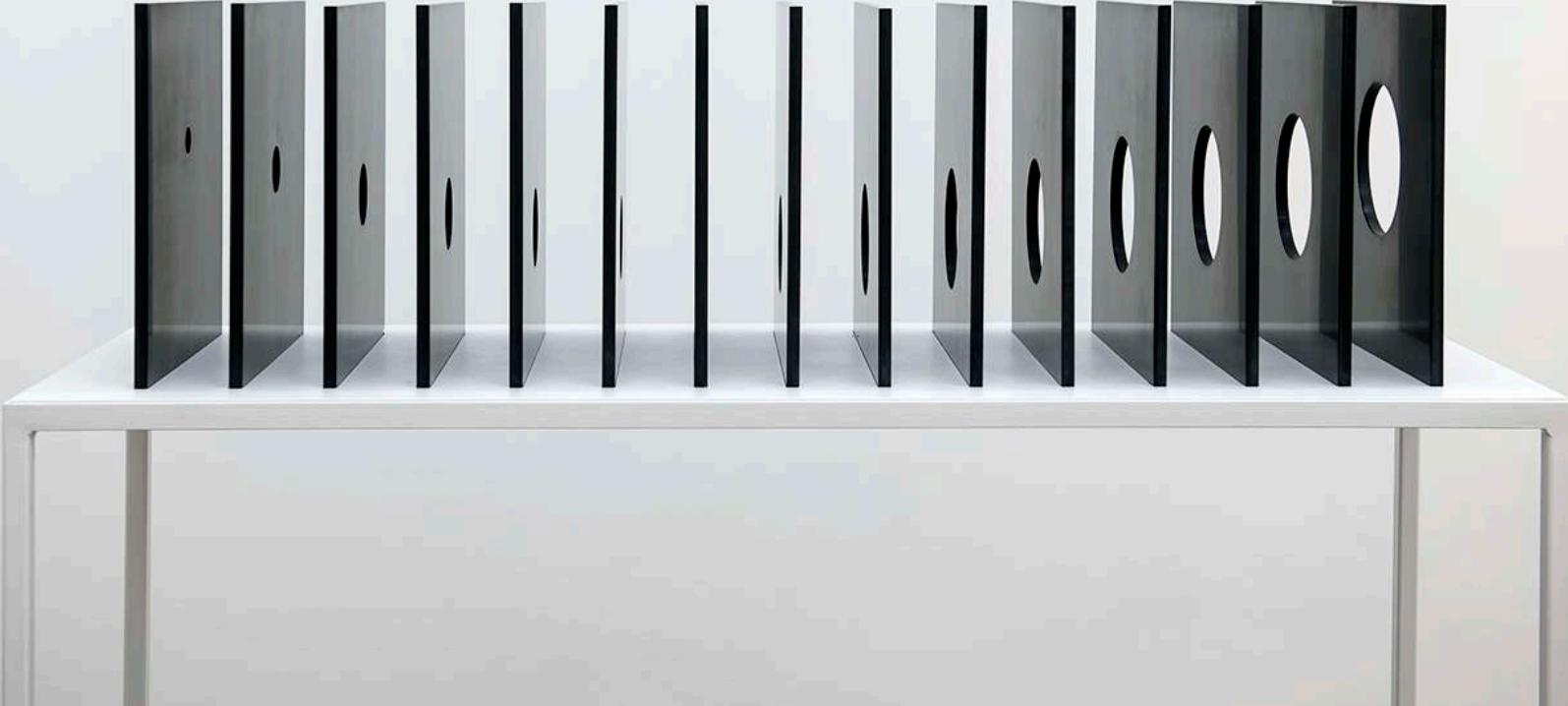
Ceramic vessels made with Boom Clay (Dessel, BE).

800 x 50 x 240 cm.

Half-Life consists of a series of copies, in ever-decreasing size, of the storage containers used for nuclear waste in Belgium. They are made of Boom clay – named after Boom, a town in Flanders – that comes from clay strata between two and four hundred metres deep. Belgium is currently carrying out tests to determine the clay's potential as a host formation for the geological disposal of radioactive waste. The clay from which the containers are made is also used here for the full-size copy. The next one in the series is exactly half the size, referencing the decrease in radioactivity, visualised by the diminishing size of the containers. After nine steps, or nine lives, the original 1335-millimetre-high container has shrunk to 5.21 millimetres, after which it becomes practically invisible to the human eye. Each step is presented on a separate but identical pedestal, reinforcing the shrinking curve of the installation.

Half-Life simultaneously visualises the process that takes place underground and the material that protects (us from) it. In an uncertain future, in which every known language might have disappeared, a visualisation like this could help to transmit vital information about what lies beneath the ground. The work fuses natural materials (the Boom clay and natural uranium), with human intervention (uranium processing and the manufacture of standardised capsules for the storage of nuclear waste). Form and content become one.

Commissioned by Z33, Hasselt, Belgium
with ONDRAF/NIRAS, Dessel, Belgium and
SCK•CEN, Mol, Belgium



The word ‘cornutopia’ is a combination of ‘cornucopia’ (a horn of plenty) and ‘utopia’ (a place where everything is perfect). The work *Cornutopia* consists of a series of 15 sheets of Bakelite, each pierced by a hole of decreasing diameter. When plastic was first invented it was hailed as the answer to problems of material scarcity. But that original promise has turned into an ever-expanding nightmare: plastic pollution is now one of the most pressing global issues whose true depth and scope is becoming clearer by the day. Bakelite, invented in 1907 by the Belgian-born chemist Leo Baekeland, was the first synthetic mouldable plastic. One of its many uses was as an alternative to ivory, which was becoming increasingly scarce due to the large-scale killing of elephants for their tusks in what was then the Congo Free State and later the Belgian Congo. The ‘horn of plenty’ was being emptied of ivory and Bakelite seemed to be the future. Not only did it provide an alternative to ivory, it also facilitated modern industry. As the first synthetic malleable material it could be used to mass-produce a wide variety of articles: telephones, radios, kitchenware, jewellery, toys and even firearms came rolling off the assembly line. The world began mass-producing plastic and mass consumerism was born. In *Cornutopia* the outline of an elephant’s tusk is created by the voids in the Bakelite sheets, making a mould, as it were, of what once was.

Cornutopia, 2019
Bakelite sheets.
115 x 40 x 130 cm.



The Overview Effect, 2019

Polyester globe cut in the 38 existing different timezones.

200 x 200 x 25 cm



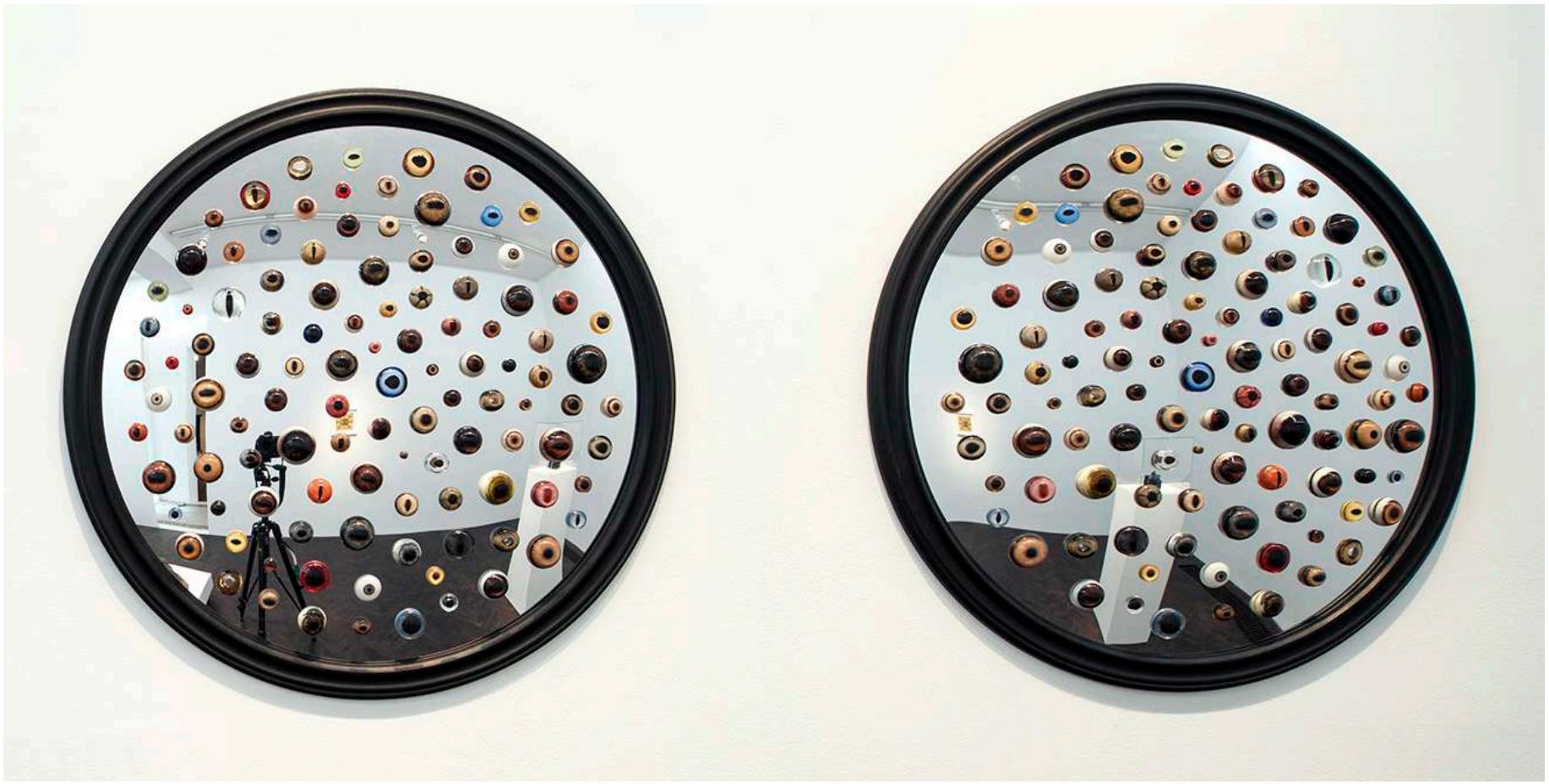
In 1884 an International Prime Meridian Conference was held to standardise time and establish twenty-four-hour time zones, each spaced 15 degrees of longitude apart. That was also the year of the notorious Berlin Conference that regulated European colonisation and trade in Africa. Time and space were divided almost simultaneously, creating a systemic structure for the world that still dominates the balance of power today. With the passage of time, individual countries have added additional time zones to the puzzle, including half- and even quarter-hour differences. Some countries use rivers and mountain ranges to determine how late it is. Others, like China, have, for the sake of convenience, opted to have just one time zone for the whole country, which stretches across almost 75 degrees of longitude, representing five geographically-split time zones. Territorial claims from colonial times have further added to the complexity that is visualised in *The Overview Effect* by establishing the 38 currently existing local time zones.

The title of the work is inspired by Frank White's 1987 book *The Overview Effect – Space Exploration and Human Evolution* in which he describes the cognitive shift in awareness experienced by astronauts when they see Earth from outer space. This rare and valuable change of perspective is reflected in the installation, which highlights a largely unknown artificial phenomenon in a rather charged and disconcerting way.



Natural Capital, 2017
Marker on carved wooden branch.
70 x 30 x 5 cm

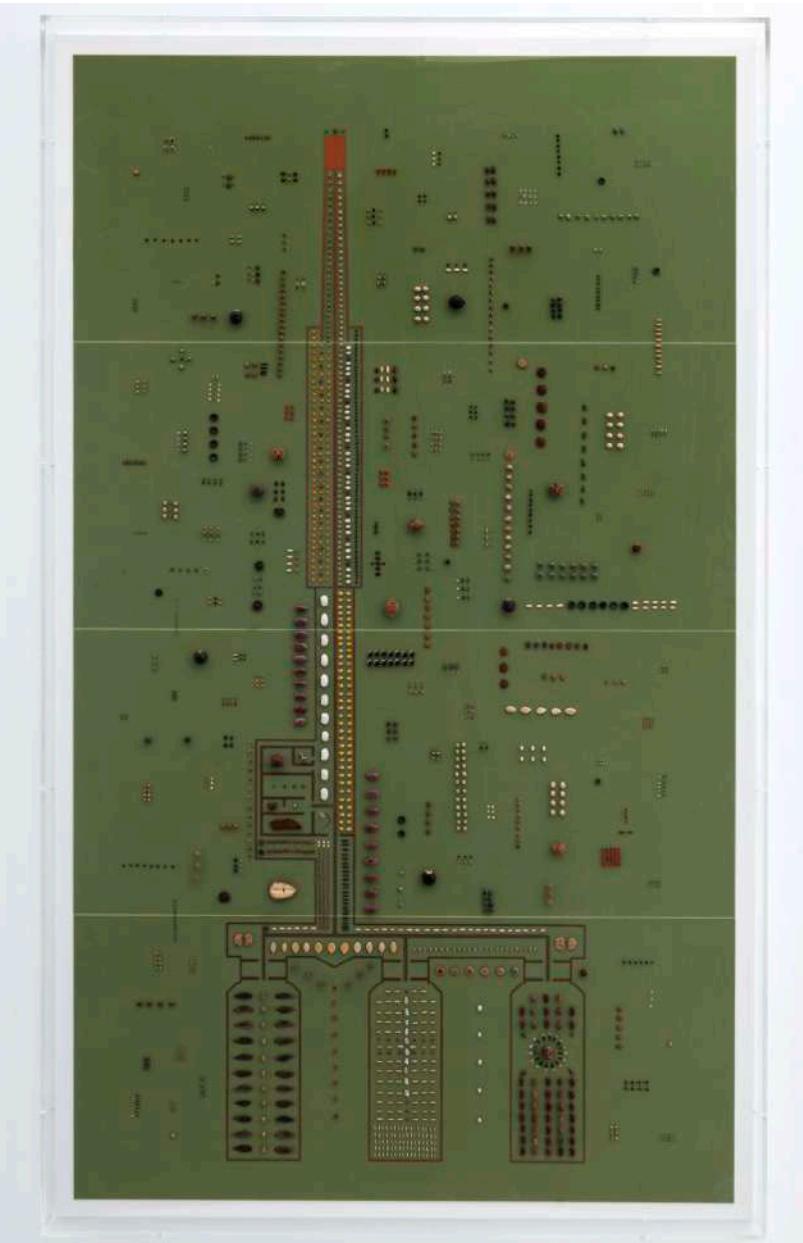
All natural products and even phenomena are given a monetary value. According to the WWF's Living Planet Index of 2018, nature is worth an estimated US\$ 125 trillion. This obvious arbitrary and surreal methodology to put a number on the value of nature is however telling and exemplary for humanities anthropocentric worldview and at the same time our dependency on natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystem stability for long term survival. *Natural Capital* is a sculpted branch, visualising the rupture and the overlap between nature and culture, or chaos and order, trash and treasure. Thin black lines, representing a ruler or measuring tool, used in schools as corporal punishing implement and educational learning device, contrast with its immeasurable natural counter fact, the free ranging natural branch. *Natural Capital* symbolises humanities eternal attempt to manipulate and master the world. The rules of the ruler overrule the rural; capital becomes king.



And Then There Were None..., 2019

Polyester mirror, wooden frame, taxidermy eyes from: African Lion, Antelope, Albino Deer, Albino Raccoon, Barred Owl, Bear, Bobcat, Wild Boar, Brown Trout, Brook Trout, Cat, Caribou, Cheetah, Coyote, Deer, Dark Coyote, Dolphin, Elephant, Elk, Fallow Deer, Fawn, Gray Shark, Gray Fox, Hartebeest, Human, Leopard, Lynx, Lizards, Largemouth Bass, Light Whitetail, Marlin, Mountain Lion, Mouth Bass, Muskie, Owl, Palomino Trout, Panfish, Pheasant, Pike, Raccoon, Red Fox, Sheep, Shark, Smallmouth Bass, Snakes, Steel Head, Tiger, Trout, Walleyes, Warthog, Wildebeest, Wolf, Yellow Perch, and other Amphibians, Birds, Fish, Large and Small Mammals, and Reptiles.
66 x 66 x 10 cm

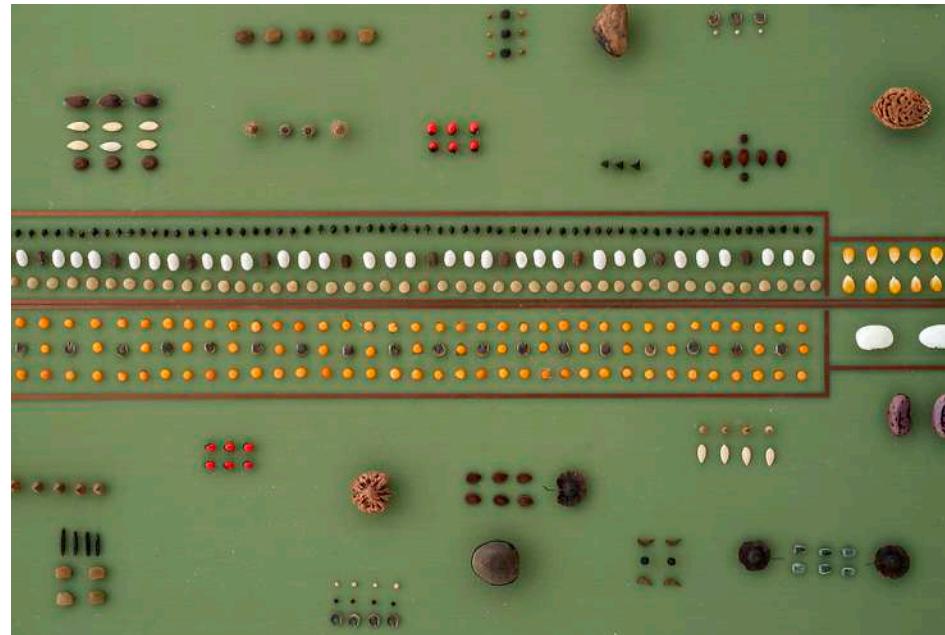
And Then There Were None... alludes to what Elizabeth Kolbert has described as the 'sixth extinction'. In her non-fiction book, 'The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History' (2014), she states that this is the first ever mass extinction event to be caused by human activity. The current extinction rate is estimated to be 100 to 1000 times higher than the natural background level – this being the standard rate of extinction in geological and biological history before humans became a primary contributor to the extinguishing of species, and pertains to periods between major extinction events. To give just one instance of human impact, in 2018 96% of the total biomass of mammals was made up of livestock (mainly cattle and pigs) and humans. Only the remaining 4% consisted of wild animals. *And Then There Were None...* affixes a collection of over 100 different taxidermy eyes made for a wide variety of animals – including humans, since they are part of the animal kingdom and might one day disappear as well – onto two convex mirrors, mimicking the curve of most animal eyeballs and making us see ourselves twice: *Homo 'sapiens sapiens'*, the double wise man.



The Great Decline, 2019

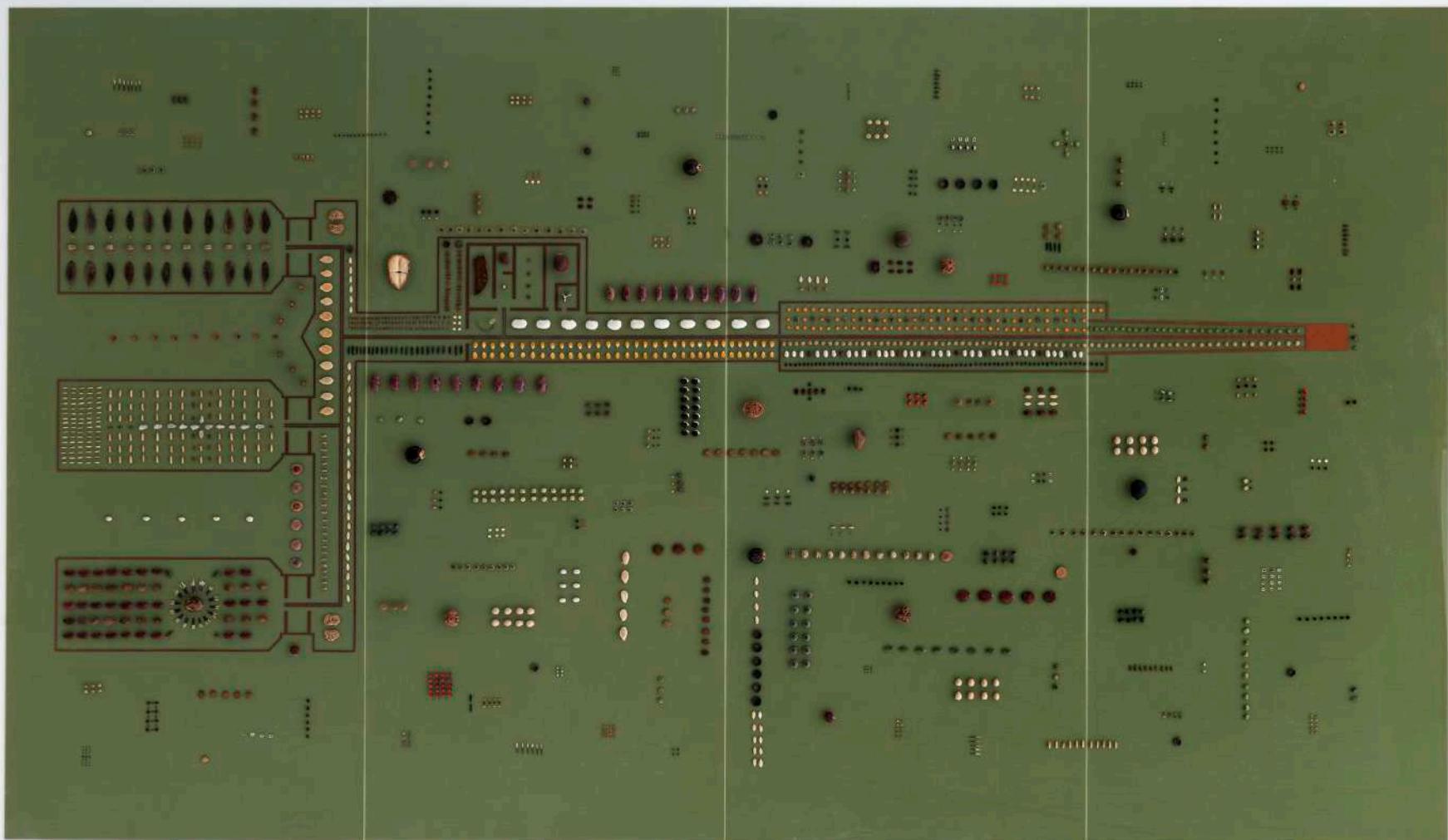
Printed circuit boards (PCB), various seeds.

125 x 214 x 8 cm



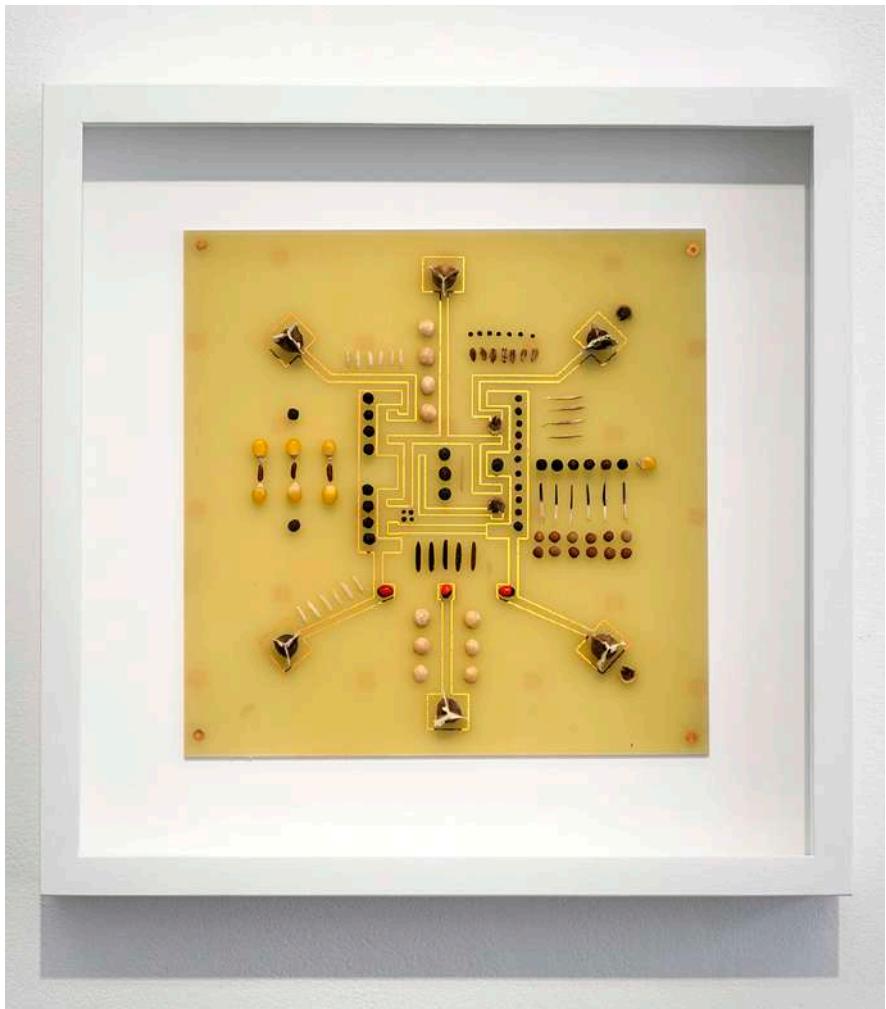
Biodiversity is in dangerous decline in both the animal and plant kingdoms. One of the ways in which the survival of as many different plant species as possible is, hopefully, being secured is the creation of gene banks in seed vaults and time capsules. In 2008, Norway opened the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, which stores a collection of duplicate samples, or 'spare copies', of seeds held in gene banks around the world, as a backup in case of regional or global disasters. In 2018, the collection surpassed one million samples, comprising more than one third of the world's most important food crop varieties.

The Great Decline combines the blueprints of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, visualised as a copper circuit on large-scale PCBs (printed circuit boards), with a wide variety of seeds collected from different parts of the world. Together they make up a huge lukasa, or memory board, reminiscent of those used by members of the Mbudye association in the Kingdom of Luba (now part of the DR Congo) as an archive for the topographical and chronological mapping of political histories and a means of remembering important people, places and mythical migration routes. The seeds in *The Great Decline* were collected from the Meise Botanic Garden (Belgium), the Jardin Botanique de Lubumbashi (DR Congo), and various other places around the world. Their organisation on the circuit board relates to the graphic outlines of the blueprint of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault and mimics transistors and other electrical components that are mounted on PCBs. They allude to seed collection, preservation, modification and militarisation.



The Great Decline, 2019

Printed circuit boards (PCB), various seeds.
125 x 214 x 8 cm



Immortality Drive 1&2, 2019
Printed circuit boards (PCB), various seeds.
30 x 30 x 5 cm

Immortality Drive is a combination of a graphic translation in a copper circuit of the image of the first monolithic silicon integrated circuit chip, invented by Robert Noyce of Fairchild in 1961. This world changing invention is immortalised on a PCB (Printed Circuit Board) and decorated with a wide variety of seeds and grains from around the world, representing transistors and electrical components. Together they create a Lukasa, or memory board, that was used by the Bambudye within the Luba Kingdom in the Democratic Republic of Congo throughout the 19th and 20th Century, as an archive for the topographical and chronological mapping of political histories, to recollect important people, places and mythical migration routes. The seeds are collected at the Botanical Garden of Meise (Belgium), Jardin Botanique de Lubumbashi (D.R. Congo), and various other places around the world. They are organised in relation to the graphical outlines of the first monolithic silicon integrated circuit chip and evoke the memory of seed collection, preservation, modification and militarisation.



Check-Mate, 2020 - (ongoing)
Chess board, plastic hurdles
Variable size

According to legend, the game of chess was invented by a courtier for a king. So delighted was the king by the game that he swore to reward its inventor with whatever he asked for. 'Just put one grain of rice on the first square, two on the second, four on the third, eight on the fourth, and go on doubling like that till the last square is reached,' came the answer. The king laughed at this seemingly modest request and ordered it to be fulfilled. But his laughter soon turned to lamentation as it became clear that not all the rice in his kingdom or even in the whole world would fill so much as half the board. Thus the potential peril of exponential growth. Each time *Check Mate* is exhibited the chessboard is enlarged as a new square is filled with an exponentially increasing number of plastic pellets: 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, 512, 1024 (and so on). The work visualises the scale of the problem of plastic pollution – over 300 million tons are produced annually – and at the same time amplifies worldwide efforts to raise awareness and find solutions to this complex and multilayered global threat.



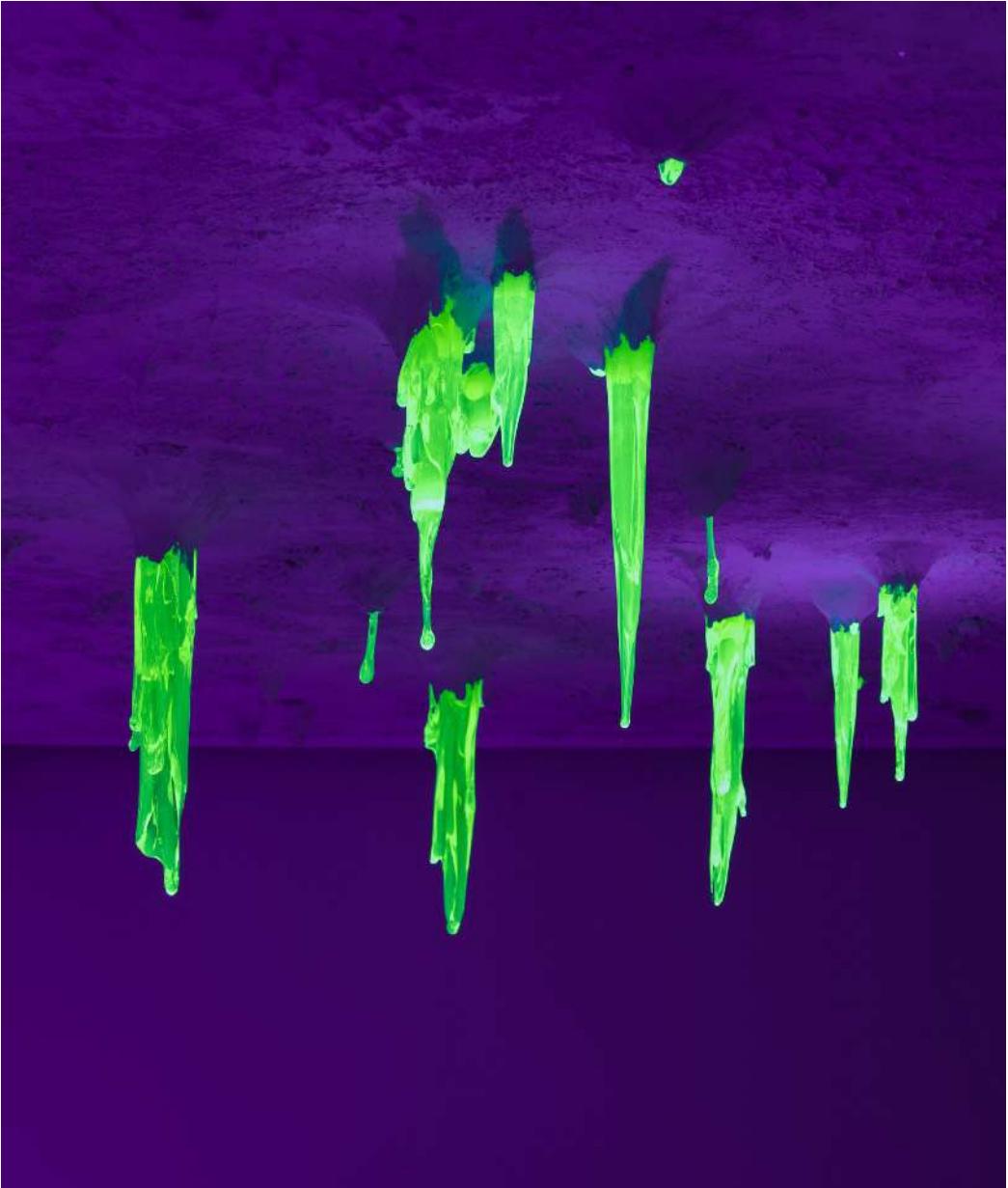
Check-Mate, 2020 - (ongoing)
Chess board, plastic hurdles
Variable size



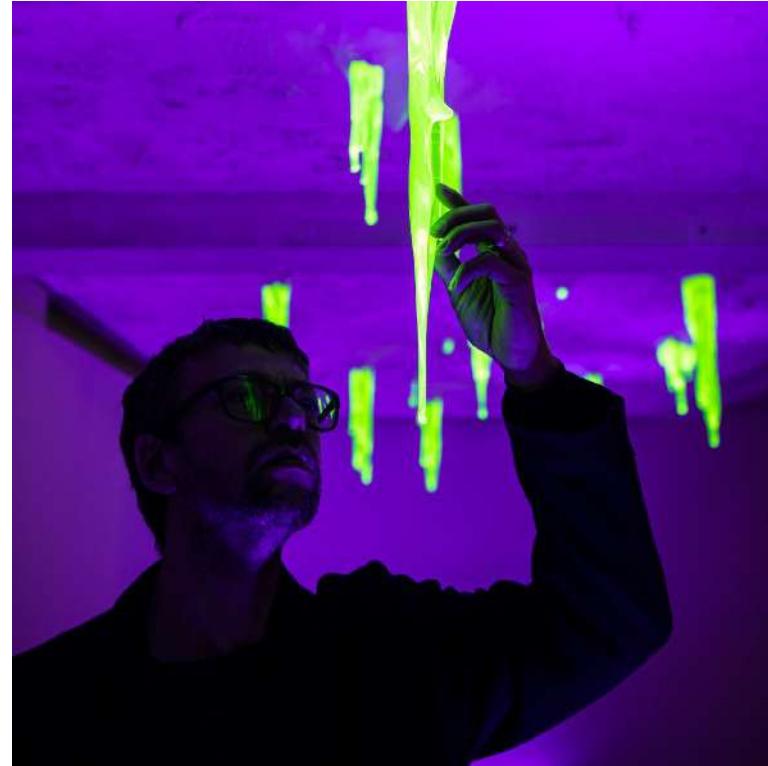
The Points of No Return, 2021

Uranium glass stalactites

Variable sizes



The Points of No Return, 2021
Uranium glass stalactites
Variable sizes



There is a kind of stratum that geologists like to stumble across, as they walk the hills. It is called an event stratum, and has a beautiful simplicity, as each tells of a single happening. Some reflect the most banal occurrence, such as a sudden rain-shower imprinting splash-marks onto some prehistoric mudflat. Others are more dramatic, such as an ash-layer spread continent-wide by a volcanic super-eruption. Most iconic of all is the worldwide layer rich in iridium and frozen rock-melt droplets from the giant meteorite impact that ended the Cretaceous Era, 66 million years ago. Now, this list has been expanded by trinitite from the Alamogordo nuclear test site (and its Soviet counterpart kharitonchik, from the Semipalatinsk testing grounds). Made of desert sands flash-melted by nuclear blast, it brought, like the Cretaceous meteorite, wider changes—among them perturbation of Earth's radiocarbon balance, and of the scientific dating based on this. Will it bring, too, the final traces of human presence on Earth? Only time will tell.



Chain of Events, 2021
Various materials
1500 x 200 x 30 cm

History is not an amalgam of separate events and inventions, but rather a rhizome or chain of interconnected activities that influence its course, both anthropocentric and without human interaction in origin. A *Chain of Events* is a sculptural installation that consists of a string of interconnected objects ranging from enlarged electrical insulators, Venetian trade beads, glass fishing floats, healing crystals and ball and chain prison shackles. Ceramic insulators and beads are covered with colourful glazing, including Cobalt blue, and mango red or Fiesta red, that was made using natural uranium as a colouring agent.

The rope functions as a value chain that changes from one material into the next as different natural elements become dominant in a certain period of time. Raffia and other plant based ropes are intertwined with copper wires that become a rubber coated transatlantic communication cable, turning into metal chains and stainless steel wire ropes from the shipping industry. As an ancient memory device, the cord is knotted and makes reference to the use of rope, beads and crystals as money for trade, a practice that was most widespread in a broad band of societies worldwide, and as a means to collect data relating to mathematical measurements (knots), keep records relating to population census, tax obligations, military organisation and calendrical information. It weaves together a wide variety of global trading and communication tradition that is built on scarcity, keeping in place economic growth based on inequality and exploitation.



Chain of Events, 2021

Various materials

1500 x 200 x 30 cm



Chain of Events, 2021

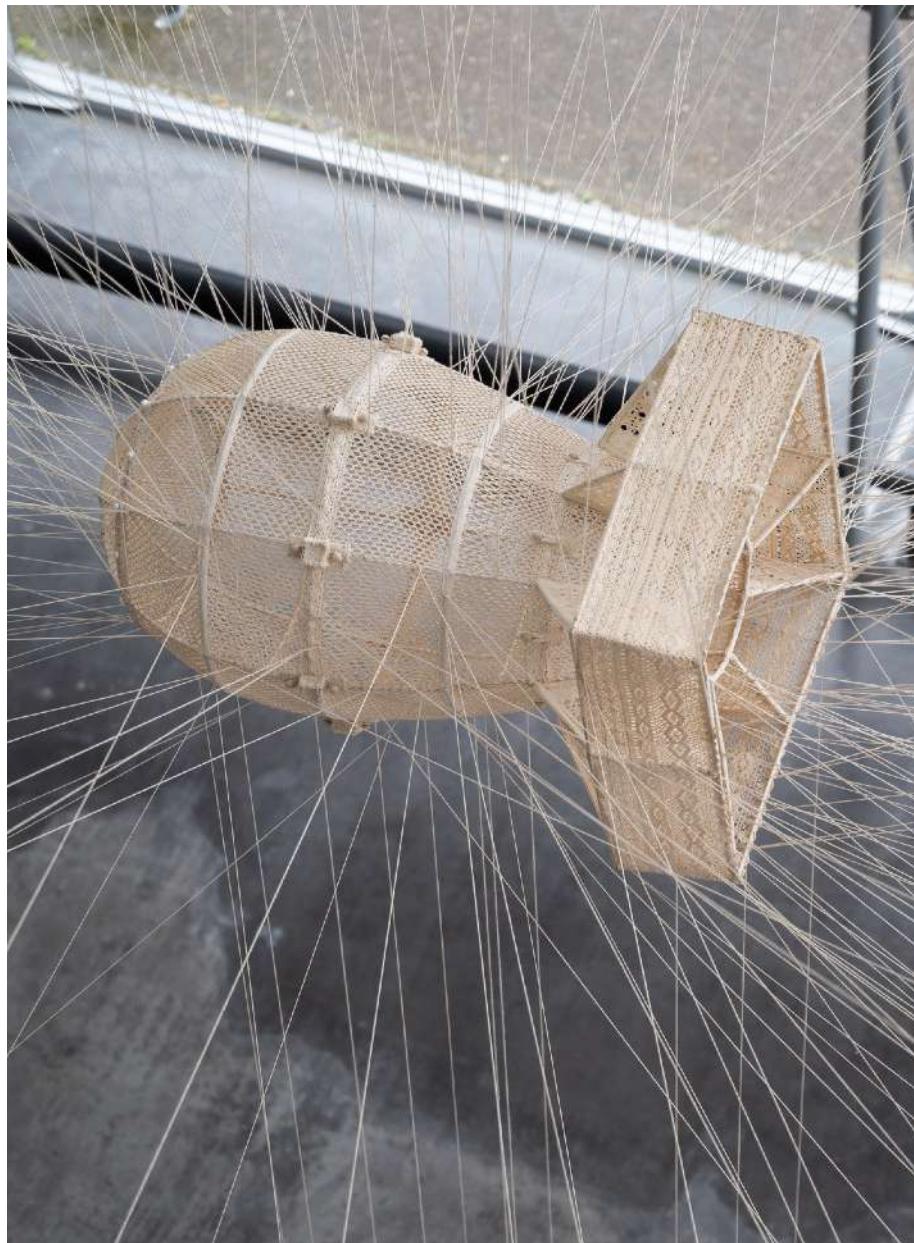
Various materials

1500 x 200 x 30 cm



Fat Man 3D, 2022

Cotton lace, wooden bobbins



Fat Man 3D, 2022

Cotton lace, wooden bobbins

www.maartenvandeneynde.com