

The Recent





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Eglė Budvytytė
Helen Cammock
Dorothy Cross
Regina de Miguel
Mikala Dwyer
Nicholas Mangan
Angelica Mesiti
Otobong Nkanga
Katie Paterson
Micol Roubini
Simon Starling

Tessa Giblin
Director at Talbot Rice Gallery

Curator's Intro

The Recent takes us into a conceptual world of geological, evolutionary, human and environmental time, exploring what art can do to stretch the human imagination, and situate our actions and impact in a deeper, future-oriented timeframe.

The geological ruminations that underpin the exhibition are deeply rooted in Edinburgh – a city punctuated by a dormant volcano – where eighteenth century geologists James Hutton, and later Charles Lyell (whose journals and geological specimens feature in the exhibition), developed the theory of deep time that is reflected in many of the artists' works.

Artists excavate and explore the bowels of the earth. Suspended particles of the oldest mineral on the planet, translucent boulder-like sculptures filled with air, a vivid stratigraphy wall-painting and a prepubescent chorister's song beneath an ancient stalactite all position our fleeting moment in this world against the deep, geological history of the planet. Artworks position us firmly within the

sixth mass extinction event: where we can smell the scent of the first and last forests, hypothesise on what the colonisers of the stars will want to save of human culture on earth, witness lichen growing symbiotically on human figures and ruefully acknowledge the self-defeating hunger of progress.

A community's dream testimony is gathered within the context of a barren asbestos mine, the future home of our ancestors and our children is mourned and lives lost at sea transform into coral. Fossilised rain prints evidencing climates millions of years in the past are carried forward evolving through technology and the sound of rain is revived by a children's game. Like a single drop of rain, philosopher William MacAskill appeals to each of us to embrace longtermism: "Mountains erode because of individual raindrops... This is a time when we can be pivotal in steering the future onto a better trajectory. There's no better time for a movement that will stand up, not just for our generation or even our children's generation, but for all of those who are yet to come." (*What We Owe the Future*, 2022)

One of the ways to stretch the human imagination, says Marcia Bjornerud in her book *Timefulness* (2020) is to think like a geologist: "While we as humans may never completely stop worrying about time and learn to love it... Perhaps we can develop the habit of timefulness – a clear-eyed view of our place in Time, both the past that came long before us and the future that will elapse without us." Danielle Celermajer, author of *Summertime* – written after the terrible wildfires that recently raged through Australia – also thinks the answer lies in developing a collective responsibility for the future: "It really has become clear, that we live or we die together. We have become disconnected from this entangled symbiotic relationship that we are in with all other life (and non-

life as well). Our collective responsibility is about the possibility of future generations of humans and other beings living meaningful and worthwhile lives. What does it mean to be responsible for the generations who won't even remember our names?"

The Recent presents an experience of life on this planet that is aged and complex, where the impact of our choices resonates beyond the short-termism that calcifies our ability to take responsibility. And we begin and end in Lyell's "Recent", at the dawn of the perception of deep time – with the provocation that for all of the mind-bending revelation of the naming of the Recent or the Anthropocene, we've been changing the geological processes of the planet for quite a while. Through the visions, provocations, research and poetics of artists, it connects the emotional anxiety of our present time with the need to stretch the human imagination into a deeper timeframe, to embrace long-termism, and radically shift our human perceptions and priorities.

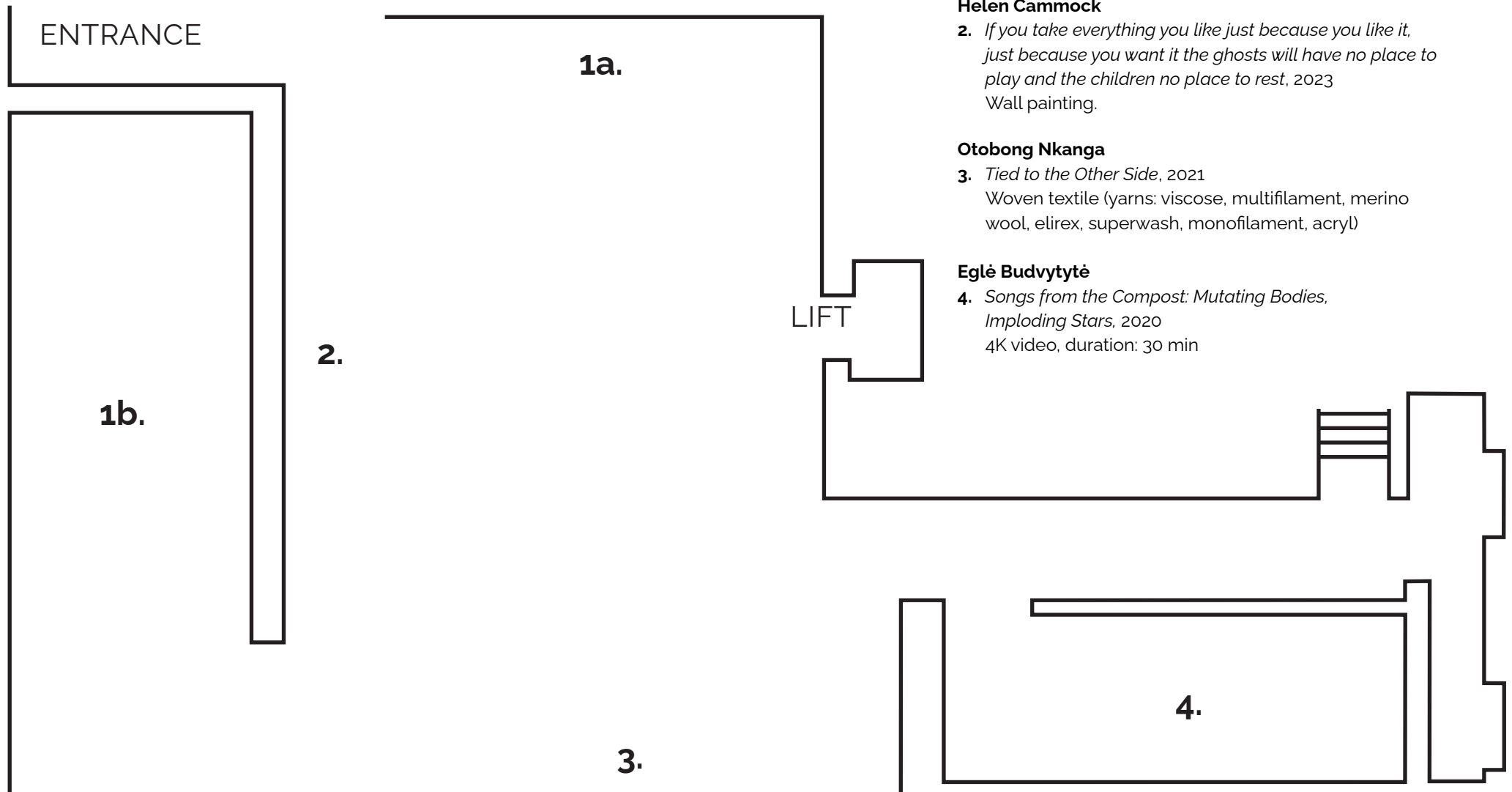
Please use this guide to read more about the artists and their artworks as you move through the exhibition.

In a city surrounded and interrupted by immediate geological evidence, we have partnered with Fruitmarket: *Deep Time* festival of music and *Project Paradise*, and the University's Centre for Research Collections' exhibition *Time Traveller: Charles Lyell at Work* as the most important issues of our time will need to be addressed together.



if you take everything you like just because you like it, just because you want it the ghosts will have no place to play
and the children no place to rest,

WHITE GALLERY

**Angelica Mesiti**

- 1a.** *The rain that fell in the faint light of the young Sun*, 2022
Pigment print on cotton rag, dry mounted on aluminium,
5:1 surround sound
- 1b.** *Future Perfect Continuous*, 2022
HD video, 16:9, black and white, surround sound,
duration: 8 min

Helen Cammock

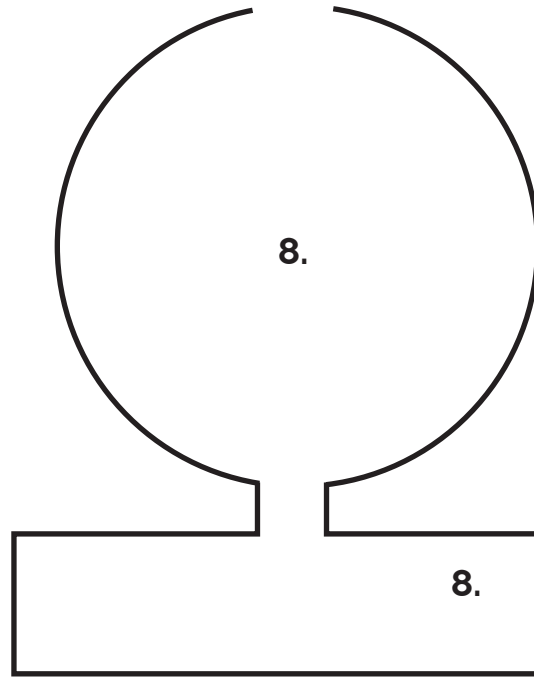
- 2.** *If you take everything you like just because you like it, just because you want it the ghosts will have no place to play and the children no place to rest*, 2023
Wall painting.

Otobong Nkanga

- 3.** *Tied to the Other Side*, 2021
Woven textile (yarns: viscose, multifilament, merino wool, elirex, superwash, monofilament, acryl)

Eglė Budvytė

- 4.** *Songs from the Compost: Mutating Bodies, Imploding Stars*, 2020
4K video, duration: 30 min

UPPER WHITE
GALLERY
AND ROUND ROOM

8.

8.

Mikala Dwyer8. *Diamonds*, 2023

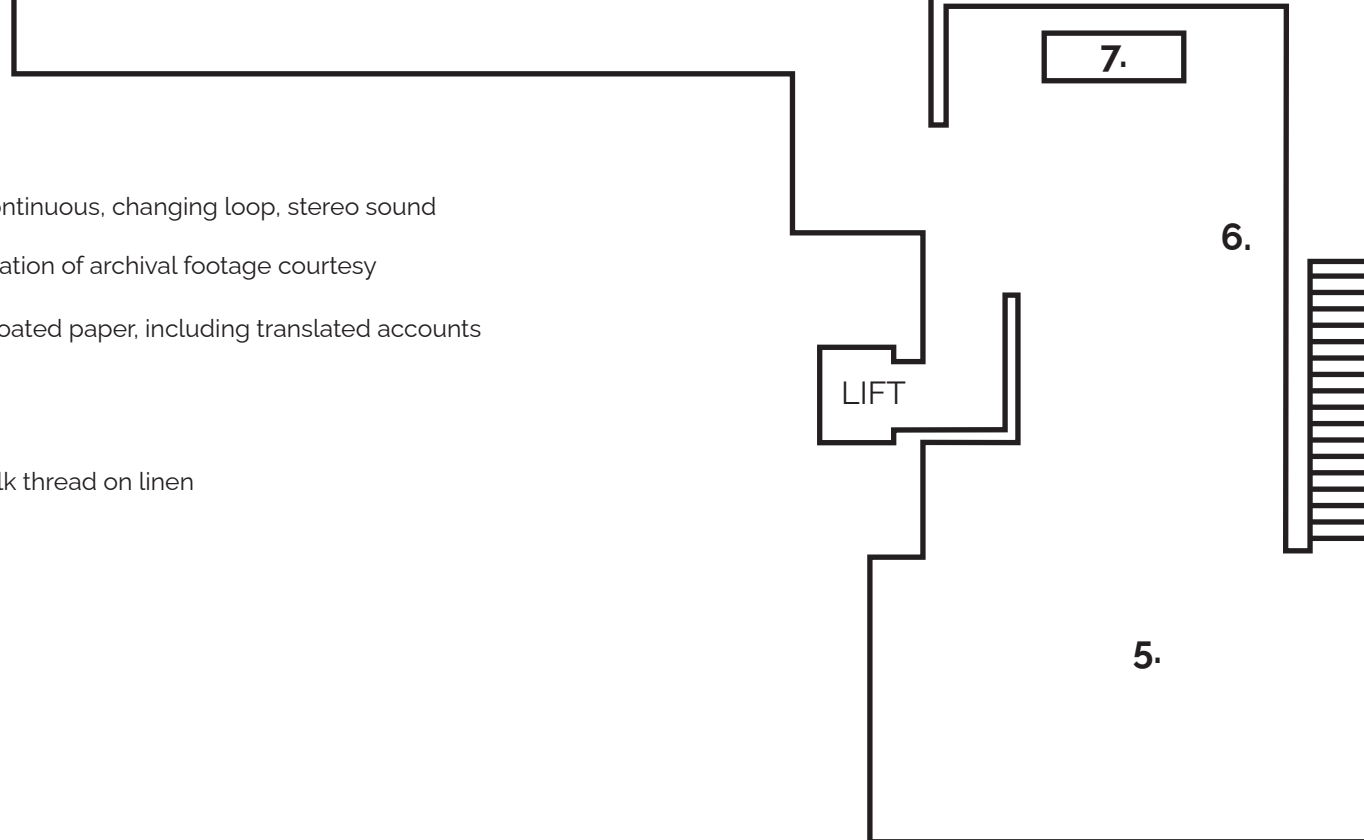
Plastic, mirrored acrylic, paint, tree branches

Micol Roubini5. *The Magic Mountain*, 20234-channel video installation on a continuous, changing loop, stereo sound
dialogue, duration: 25 minSingle-channel, silent video compilation of archival footage courtesy
Ivan Cavalli.A1 poster. Full colour image on uncoated paper, including translated accounts
of dreams.**Katie Paterson**6. *Evergreen*, 2022

351 extinct plants embroidered in silk thread on linen

7. Charles Lyell Collection

See page 34 for details.



7.

6.

LIFT

5.

GEORGIAN GALLERY

Regina de Miguel

25 paintings displayed around the upper bays

9. *EXVOTO / Arrecife (EXVOTO / Reef) 1-15, 2021*
Watercolour and gouache on Hahnemühle paper

Arbustos de nervios como bosques de coral (Nerve bushes like coral forests) 1, 3, 4, 7 & 11, 2021

Watercolour, gouache and pencil on Arches paper

Abrazo simbiote (Symbiote hug), 2022

Watercolour, gouache and pencil on Arches paper

Mater Suspiriorum (The Mother of Sighs), 2022

Mixed technique on 7 mm board

Astro lacustre (Lake star), 2021

Acrylic on wood

Empusa, Medusa, Medea, 2023

Watercolour, gouache and pencil on paper

Las videntes (The seers), 2023

Watercolour, gouache and pencil on paper

Nicholas Mangan

10. *A World Undone, 2012*

HD colour video, silent, duration: 12 min

Dorothy Cross

11. *Stalactite, 2010*

Single-channel HD video with sound, duration: 5 min 22 sec

Katie Paterson

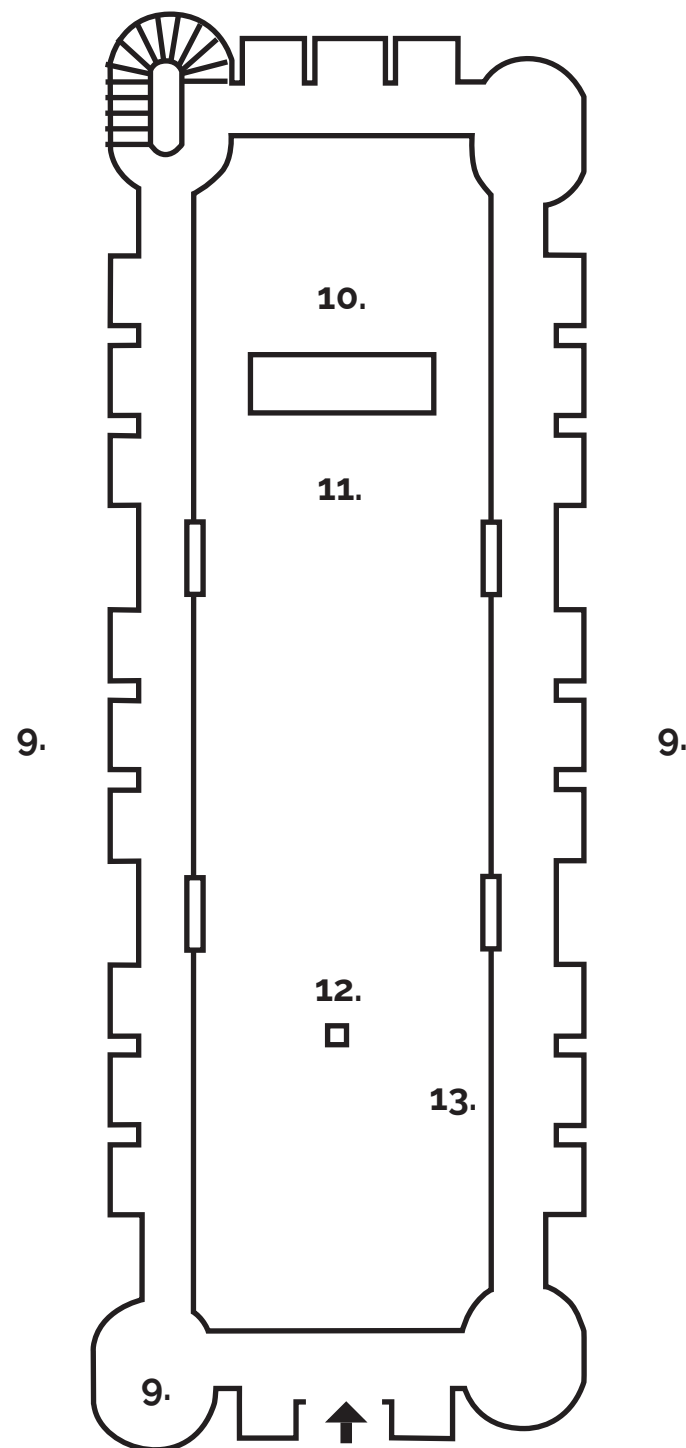
12. *To Burn, Forest, Fire, 2021*

Bespoke Incense

Simon Starling

13. *Autoxylopyrocycloboros (Billboard), 2006/2023*

Inkjet print



Eglė Budvytytė

Songs from the compost: mutating bodies, imploding stars, 2022

Collaboration with Marija Olšauskaitė and
Julija Steponaitytė

4K video, commissioned by Riga International Biennial of
Contemporary Art (RIBOCA), Nida Art Colony
Duration: 30 min

Spending days in the forests of the Curonian Spit – a vast coastal sand dune that connects Lithuania and Russia – Eglė Budvytytė experienced a symbiotic entanglement between decay, growth, death and life, played out in the fungus and bacteria of the forest floor. Her film *Songs from the Compost: Mutating Bodies, Imploding Stars* was shot in this shifting landscape. The cast, comprised of local youth, alongside performer and choreographer Mami Kang, wear clothing previously buried by Olšauskaitė to allow it to enter into the early stages of decomposition. Lichen – itself a symbiotic partnership between fungus and algae, and essential to the development of plant life – is seen throughout the forest and clinging to the performers' skin as they writhe, crawl and worm through the forest and sand-dune landscape.



In this co-dependent, mutualistic and entangled world, the individualism of the survival of the fittest is unsustainable.

Mutually supportive growth is what survives and evolves in Budvytytė's world – with cyborg voices, shapeshifting genders and echoes of science fiction author Octavia Butler's interspecies visions of the future pulsing through the music, movement and landscape of the film.

(b. 1981 Kaunas, Lithuania. Lives and works in Vilnius, Lithuania and Amsterdam, Netherlands)

Budvytytė has presented solo exhibitions and performances at Ariel Feminisms, Copenhagen (2021); The Renaissance Society, Chicago (2019); Kiasma Theatre, Helsinki (2018); Album Arte, Rome (2017); Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius (2016). Selected group exhibitions include Jelsa Art Biennial, Hvar (2023); 59th Venice Biennale (2022); Riga Biennial of International Art (2020); Quaz Arts Festival, Dubai (2020); *The Exhaustion Project*, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2018); *Do Disturb*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2017) among other venues.



Helen Cammock

If you take everything you like just because you like it, just because you want it the ghosts will have no place to play and the children no place to rest, 2022

Wall painting, originally produced for the exhibition *I Will Keep My Soul* at Art + Practice, Los Angeles, 2022 and UNO Gallery, New Orleans, 2023. Commissioned and supported by Rivers Institute for Contemporary Art & Thought, New Orleans, Amistad Archive and California African American Museum.

Helen Cammock's large-scale wall painting is part of a body of work that grew from research in the Amistad Archives, New Orleans and a citywide residency that offered conversation and connection with artists and musicians in contemporary New Orleans.

The project explores a deeply embedded civil rights movement and its relationship to the art and music so vital to the city's existence. The project involved wide-ranging discussions with both residents and archives, offering up reflections on poverty, brutality, enslavement, gentrification, geography, music, art, literature, integrity and resistance.

The work speaks directly to actions taken today to preserve the future – and their relational consequence to the past. It also speaks of cultures – often indigenous, or those displaced from indigenous lands – that communicate with ghosts or ancestors and therefore understand generational time as just one layer of a deep and complex history.

While speaking directly to each of us, the work aims to situate our belonging within a vast expanse of time that extends both behind and in front of us.

(b. 1970 Staffordshire, UK. Lives and works in Wales and London, UK)

In 2017, Cammock won the Max Mara Art Prize for Women and in 2019 was the joint recipient of The Turner Prize. She has exhibited and performed worldwide with recent solo shows at Art + Practice, Los Angeles (2023); Oakville Galleries, Ontario (2023); Kestner Gesellschaft, Hannover (2022); The Photographer's Gallery, London (2021); STUK Art Centre, Leuven (2021); Whitechapel Gallery, London (2019); Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia (2019); Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (2019); VOID, Derry (2018). Group shows include *Breathing*, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg (2022) and *Radio Ballads*, Serpentine Galleries, London (2022).

if you take everything you like just because you like it just because you want it the ghosts will have no place to play and the children no place to rest

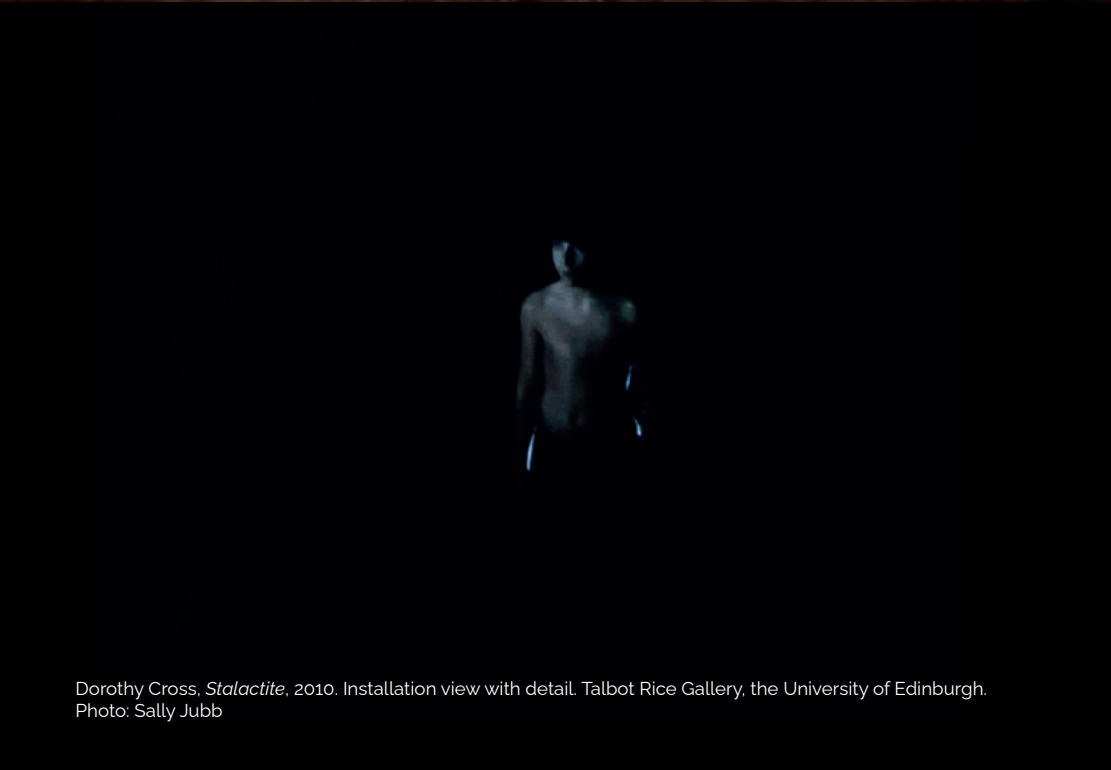
Dorothy Cross

Stalactite, 2010

Single-channel HD video with sound

Duration: 5 min 22 sec

Pol an Ionain is situated near Doolin in County Clare in the west of Ireland. It is a natural cave, undiscovered until 1952, and home to one of the world's largest stalactites. The great limestone ribbon, formed over the ages by the accumulative dripping of water and sedimentation of calcium is attached to the cave by a mere 0.3m², making it all the more impressive and vulnerable in its appearance. Dorothy Cross has made a film deliberately intended for a large, vertical projection. Beneath the "Great Stalactite" as it is known, stands a young chorister. At the artist's request, he uses his voice and the control he has over it to perform non-linguistic sounds. Dorothy Cross describes the boy's performance as like "a baby bird finding its voice", ringing out in the cave, accompanied only by the gradual dripping of liquid on limestone. The stalactite is estimated to be 7 metres in length, and approximately 500,000 years old, while the cavernous chamber is thought to be 2 million years old. The young boy, whose delicate vocal cords fill the cave with sound, is on the brink of physical change. He is evolving into manhood, a stark reminder of youth and the inevitable ageing that marks humanity's grapple to come to terms with itself, yet paling into insignificance beneath the awesome and beautiful evidence of time that is the Great Stalactite.



When thinking about deep time, we understand that language in the future will not bear any resemblance to those languages spoken today. There may not even be spoken language that resembles the forms and consonants, rhythmic structures and logic that are used in various forms all around us. The chorister's soundings prefigure this age, bringing ideas of language, human time and geological time into a humbling dialogue.

(b. 1956 Cork, Ireland. Lives and works in Connemara, Ireland)

Cross has presented solo exhibitions at Frith Street Gallery, London (2022); Kerlin Gallery, Dublin (2019); Libby Leshgold Gallery, Vancouver (2018); New Art Centre, Roche Court, Salisbury (2017); Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (2015); Lismore Castle Arts, Co. Waterford (2014); Turner Contemporary, Margate, Kent (2013). Selected group exhibitions include *Total Recall: Myth and Memory*, Mercer Art Gallery, Harrogate (2023); *girls girls girls* curated by Simone Rocha, Lismore Castle Arts (2022); *Bones in the Attic*, The Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin (2022); *Other:Worldly*, Fries Museum, Leeuwarden (2020). Forthcoming projects include *On Art and Motherhood*, curated by Hayward Touring, Arnolfini Arts, Bristol (2024).



Dorothy Cross, *Stalactite*, 2010. Installation view. Talbot Rice Gallery, the University of Edinburgh. Photo: Sally Jubb

Regina de Miguel

EXVOTO / Arrecife (EXVOTO / Reef) 1-15, 2021

Watercolour and gouache on Hahnemühle paper

Arbustos de nervios como bosques de coral (Nerve bushes like coral forests) 1, 3, 4, 7* & 11, 2021*

Watercolour, gouache and pencil on Arches paper

Abrazo simbiote (Symbiote hug), 2022

Watercolour, gouache and pencil on Arches paper*

Mater Suspiriorum (The Mother of Sighs), 2022

Mixed technique on 7 mm board*

Astro lacustre (Lake star), 2021

Acrylic on wood*

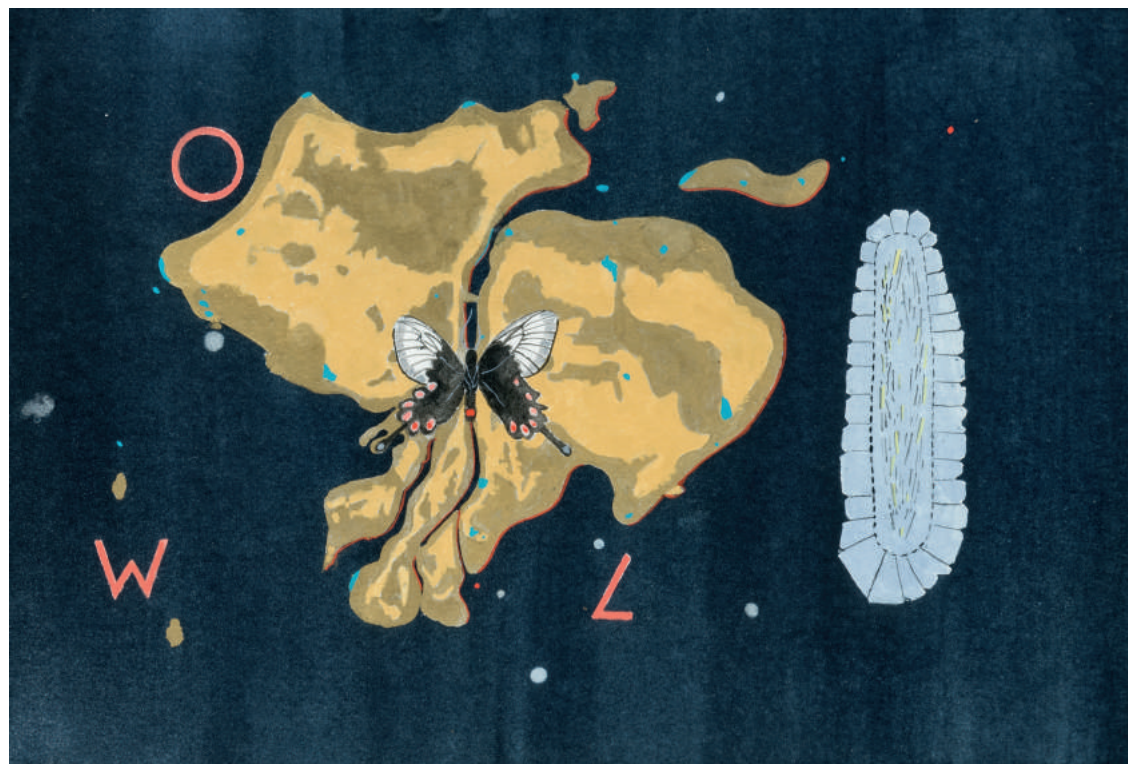
Empusa, Medusa, Medea, 2023

Watercolour, gouache and pencil on paper

Las videntes (The seers), 2023

Watercolour, gouache and pencil on paper

*Commissioned by TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary



This presentation of paintings by Regina de Miguel comprises three bodies of work with interconnected themes and iconography.

The series of inky blue watercolours, *EXVOTO / Reef* reflects on the vulnerability of islands and coral reefs in the South Pacific, particularly the Tuvalu archipelago and Australia's Great Barrier Reef. Painted as though from above, these aerial studies depict fragile land masses that are highly susceptible to the catastrophic effects of climate change, in particular the threat of rising sea levels. De Miguel's intricately painted artworks act as votive offerings that detail internal organs, plants, animal species, remnants of culture and language. She refers to Thaumaturgy: miracles wrought by saints or gurus, magicians and healers.

While Tuvalu has announced plans to build digital replicas of the island nation to preserve its natural and cultural heritage, de Miguel appeals to other, mystical powers in an effort to preserve and protect the language, landmass, biodiversity and ethnicity of these vulnerable reefs and islands.

De Miguel states that these places, scattered across the oceans represent "a violence, like that suffered by many bodies, occurring slowly, gradually and out of sight, dispersed in time". With these votive artworks she invokes magic, as if to say: it would require a miracle to save us now.

Top: Regina de Miguel, *EXVOTO / Arecife (EXVOTO / Reef) 1-15*, 2021, with *Abrazo simbiote (Symbiote hug)*, 2022. Installation view. Talbot Rice Gallery, the University of Edinburgh. Photo: Sally Jubb

Bottom: Regina de Miguel, *EXVOTO / Arecife (EXVOTO / Reef) 3*, 2021. Courtesy of the artist and Maisterravalbuena, Madrid. Photo: Roberto Ruiz



Like many of us during the pandemic, de Miguel's ecological anxiety and emotional entanglement with our planetary politics gave birth to new coping strategies and imaginaries. Her larger series of paintings are based on a science fiction story written by the artist in April of the "strange year" 2020. It evokes a future world in which remnants of earth's flora and fauna, living beings, cultural heritage and knowledge have been preserved and catalogued in newly colonised homes in the stars, undergoing weird mutations and meaning-change as they adjust to their new environments.

Assemblages of votive offerings, archaeological remains, plants, organs and animals levitate on fields of colour. This is a reference to holy relics or icons, presented as though floating, and in her paintings, connects humanity's obsession with unlocking the secrets of the cosmos, with the extractivist attitude to conquering the land and oceans we see at the bottom.

Each painting explores different life forms – some mutated, some extinct, and in de Miguel's words, portraying "multi-species beings, 'holobionts' with the nervous system of a cuttlefish, corals, fungi, flowers, insects, fragments of vessels, masks, necklaces or representations of the cosmos; like animist totems that appeal to co-dependence. As Donna Haraway says, species cannot be disentangled."

Displayed within the University's former natural history museum – the paintings project the idea of a collection and archiving of the natural world into a radically evolved future. De Miguel's paintings capture a mutated visual world, and, like the appeal for miracles in *EXVOTO / Reef*, offer hope. In the hybridised life forms and vestiges of culture, she reminds us that no species can survive alone, but together we may be able to create the community required to survive the current climate crisis.



(b. 1977 Málaga, Spain. Lives and works in Berlin, Germany)

De Miguel has presented her work in solo exhibitions in institutions such as The Green Parrot, Barcelona (2021); C3A, Córdoba (2018); Arte Santa Monica, Barcelona (2016); Maisterravalbuena, Madrid (2019) and Kunsthalle São Paulo (2014). Her filmography has been shown in numerous museums and institutions internationally and she recently contributed to the volume *140 Artists' Ideas for Planet Earth* (2021), edited by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Kostas Stasinopoulos. Her work is held in several public and private collections, including Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary and the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid.

Mikala Dwyer

Diamonds, 2023

Plastic, mirrored acrylic, paint, tree branches

In a newly commissioned installation featuring wall and ceiling-mounted sculptures and a large-scale wall painting, Mikala Dwyer explores the material density of the earth. Stratigraphy is laid bare in a craggy landscape, exposing layers of earth and compressed carbon, with reflective diamond shapes at the heart of each mountain. Suspended in the Round Room, Dwyer has created a transparent, boulder-like sculpture that holds a giant void of air: materially at odds with molten rocks that have been spewed from the deep during volcanic eruptions, that also bring billion-year-old diamonds closer to the surface. In the wall mural, Dwyer reflects on cave paintings, particularly the abstract imagery of the Grotte de Lascaux in France and Indigenous Australian art that can be more than 40,000 years old.



Painted by ancient Aboriginal peoples who have lived on the land for more than 65,000 years, their cave paintings are embedded with fungus and bacteria that symbiotically feed off one another. In doing so they ensured the paintings would continue to survive into the deep future.

As we strive to consider the consequence of our actions, Dwyer unmoors symbols, landscapes and structures from their natural habitats, creating windows through time, through which to both receive ancient messages and to project into the future.



(b. 1959 Sydney, Australia. Lives and works in Melbourne, Australia)

Recent solo exhibitions include Chau Chak Wing Museum, The University of Sydney (2023); Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington (2022); Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney (2021); Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (2017); Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2016). Dwyer has participated in many group exhibitions including *nightshifts*, Contemporary Art Museum, Melbourne (2023); *AMPLIFY*, Carriageworks, Sydney (2022); *Know My Name: Australian Women Artists 1900 to Now*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (2021); *The Great Invocation*, Garage Rotterdam (2021); Adelaide Biennial of Art, Art Gallery of South Australia (2020); *Blessed Be: Mysticism, Spirituality, and the Occult in Contemporary Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tuscon, Arizona (2018).



Nicholas Mangan

A World Undone, 2012

HD colour video, silent
Duration: 12 min

A World Undone by Nicholas Mangan shows particles swirling in slow motion through space. These particles come from Zircon, a 4.4-billion-year-old mineral unearthed from bedrock deep within Western Australia's remote Jack Hills (Watjarri Yamatji Country). Zircon is the oldest mineral on the planet. It was formed in the earth's crust, an ancient skin that developed during a period of intense meteorite bombardment. Filming at 2500 frames per second, Mangan has captured the mineral as it disintegrates.

A World Undone takes a tiny piece of this primeval matter and destroys it, creating a fantastical image of the very universe from which it was born. To introduce this project, Mangan uses the words of geologist James Hutton, who concluded his findings of an ever-evolving geological world with: "We find no vestige



of a beginning – no prospect of an end." Naming epochs and exploring deep time, it is geologists and stratigraphers who warn of the geological evidence that shows the irreversible effect humans are having on the biosphere and planet.



Mangan disperses fragments of Zircon in the air for only a smidgen of time, but glistening like stars, they transport us deep into the belly of the earth, when the world was being made and unmade, as it continues to be today.

(b. 1979 Wathaurong Country, Geelong, Australia. Lives and works in Melbourne, Australia)

Solo exhibitions include Sutton Gallery, Melbourne (2023); Labor, Mexico City (2020); Kunst-Werke, Berlin (2017); Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne (2016); Institute for Modern Art, Brisbane (2016); Dowse Art Museum (2016); Chisenhale Gallery, London (2015). Group exhibitions include *Melbourne Now*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (2023); *A Biography of Daphne*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne (2021); Biennale of Sydney (2018); *Let's Talk About the Weather*, Guangdong Times Museum, Guangzhou (2018); *74 million million million tons*, SculptureCenter, New York (2018); *4.543 billion: the matter of matter*, CAPC, Bordeaux (2017); 11th Gwangju Biennale (2016); *Art in the Age of...*, Witte de With, Rotterdam (2015).

Angelica Mesiti

The rain that fell in the faint light of the young Sun, 2022

Pigment print on cotton rag, dry mounted on aluminium,
5:1 surround sound

The fossilised rain prints in Angelica Mesiti's *The rain that fell in the faint light of the young Sun* have been sourced from various archives and collections, including the Charles Lyell Collection here at the University of Edinburgh. These imprints of raindrops or hail are preserved from rain and storms that occurred millions of years ago, and can teach geologists about weather patterns and the environment in different geological epochs. For Mesiti, they are also a recording of the sounds of rain – grooves that contain sound waves. By first printing an image of one of these objects in black and white, then photographing the print against coloured paper (with reference to museological documentation), Mesiti passes the simple rain print through different materials and technologies, with each process stepping further away from the original raw material.

The sound we hear at the same time is of a children's clapping game, in which the sound of rain is passed down from generation to generation. Like the children's game, the geological evidence of an ancient rainstorm in Mesiti's images is a faithful representative of the rain that fell when the sun was younger, but also a messenger of the means of its own production.



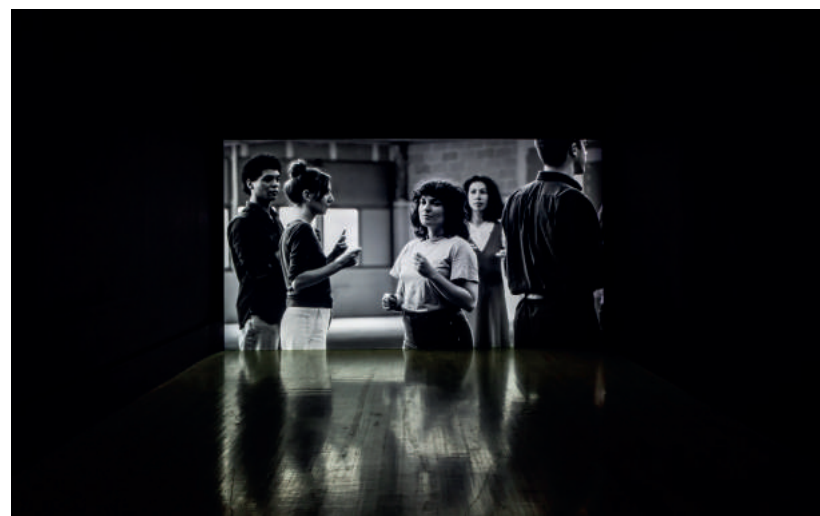
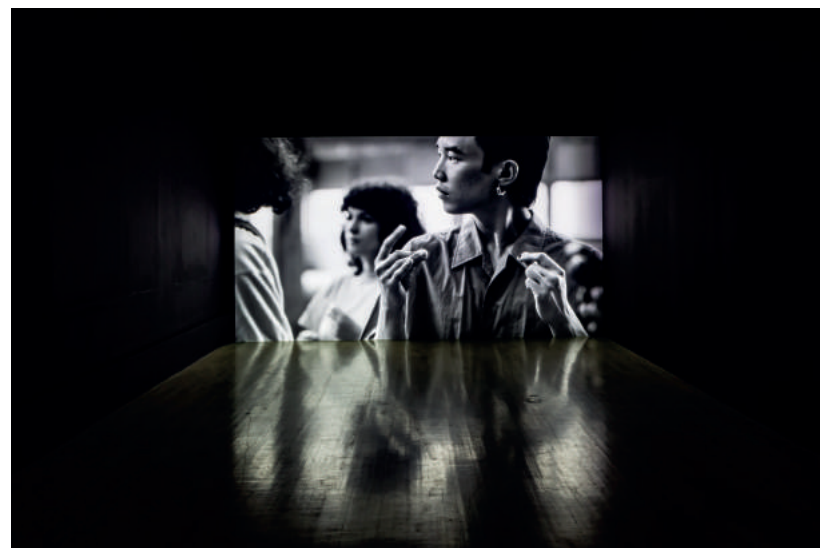
Future Perfect Continuous, 2022

HD video, 16:9, black and white, surround sound, duration: 8 min

The slowly evolving sound of a rainstorm is performed by a group of young adults in Angelica Mesiti's *Future Perfect Continuous*. By clicking, slapping, clapping and rubbing – listening and evolving their sound – they emulate the shifting patterns of rain. In this way they collaboratively become one with weather and connect to its rhythms, timbre and force in an embodied way. Mesiti overheard a version of this performance as a game in a local schoolground (Paris), where the game is used as a bonding exercise, to teach children to listen, cooperate and work as a team. Knowledge of rain – an essential ingredient for the development of life on earth – is passed from child to child, carried forward from generation to generation. Games, like fossils, carry meaning and information across expanses of time, in which language, signs, signifiers and messages would all be lost. Whispering across generations, carried by migration and evolution, play charges us to listen to each other, cooperate and work together, whilst also acknowledging the cacophony of nature and ebbing, soft patter of the rain.

(b. 1976 Sydney, Australia. Lives and works in Paris, France)

Mesiti represented Australia at the Venice Biennale (2019). She has presented solo exhibitions at National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (2022); Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh (2021); Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne (2021); *A Hundred Years*, Australian War Memorial Commission (2021); Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki (2020); Arnolfini, Bristol (2020). Selected group exhibitions include *Aller contre le vent*, FRAC Bourgogne Franche-Comté, Besançon (2022); *The Musical Brain*, Highline Art, New York (2021); *The Future of Silence*, Nam June Paik Art Centre (2020); Busan Biennale (2020); *When doing is saying*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2019); Atelier e Progetti, Museo d'arte contemporanea di Roma, MACRO (2019); Adelaide Biennale of Australian Art (2018); 19th Biennale of Sydney (2014); 13th Istanbul Biennial (2013).



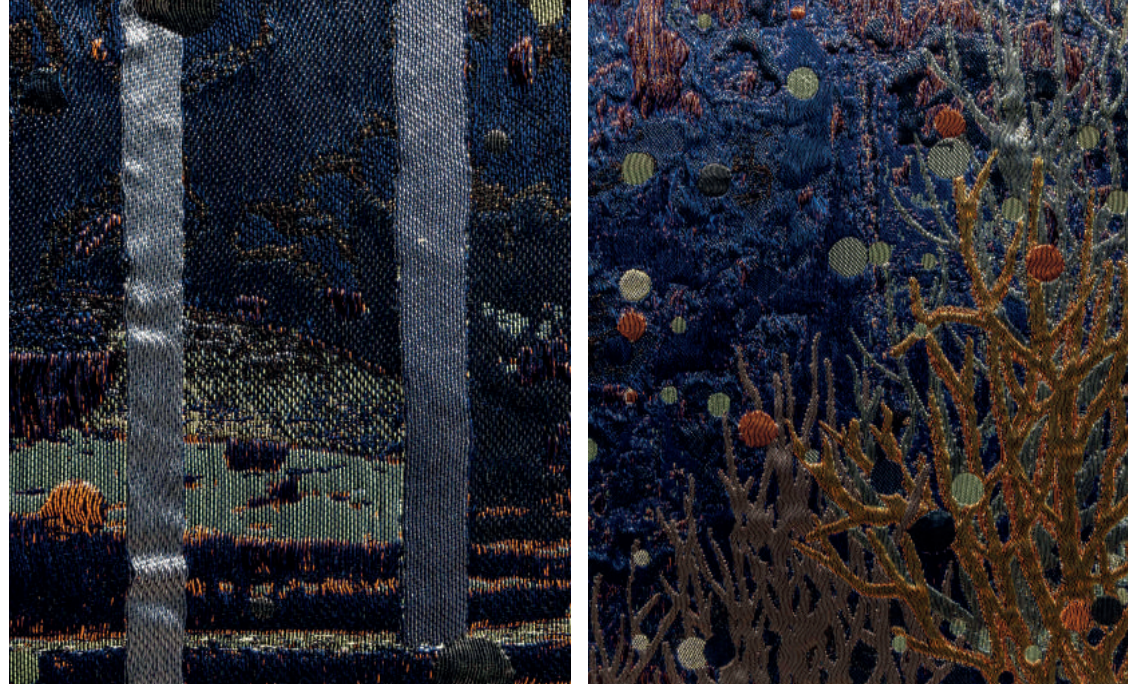
Otobong Nkanga

Tied to the Other Side, 2021

Woven textile (yarns: viscose, multifilament, merino wool, elirex, superwash, monofilament, acryl)

In much of her practice, Otobong Nkanga connects histories, geographies and ecologies to reflect on the interwoven, natural forces that both divide and unite us. *Tied to the Other Side* manifests this idea of interconnectedness with the nature of tapestry connecting the surface image to a wealth of hidden, tangled strands. Nkanga's scene reflects the natural world in general, including the darkest depths of the ocean, which in the past was an unknowable domain, but, with the march of technology and demand for ores and minerals, has become the site of aggressive mineral extraction. This is an industry that seeks to carve up territory and will disturb anything that lies on the ocean floor.

In *Tied to the Other Side* we see strange human limbs strewn about, recalling lives brutally lost during ocean crossings and now morphing into coral and plant life. The needle-like rod that pierces the composition from above represents for Nkanga the machinery and systems which exploit people, land and sea, while the grouping of measuring rods that beam light into the darkness represent the yet unknown future – gazing into a non-visible world.

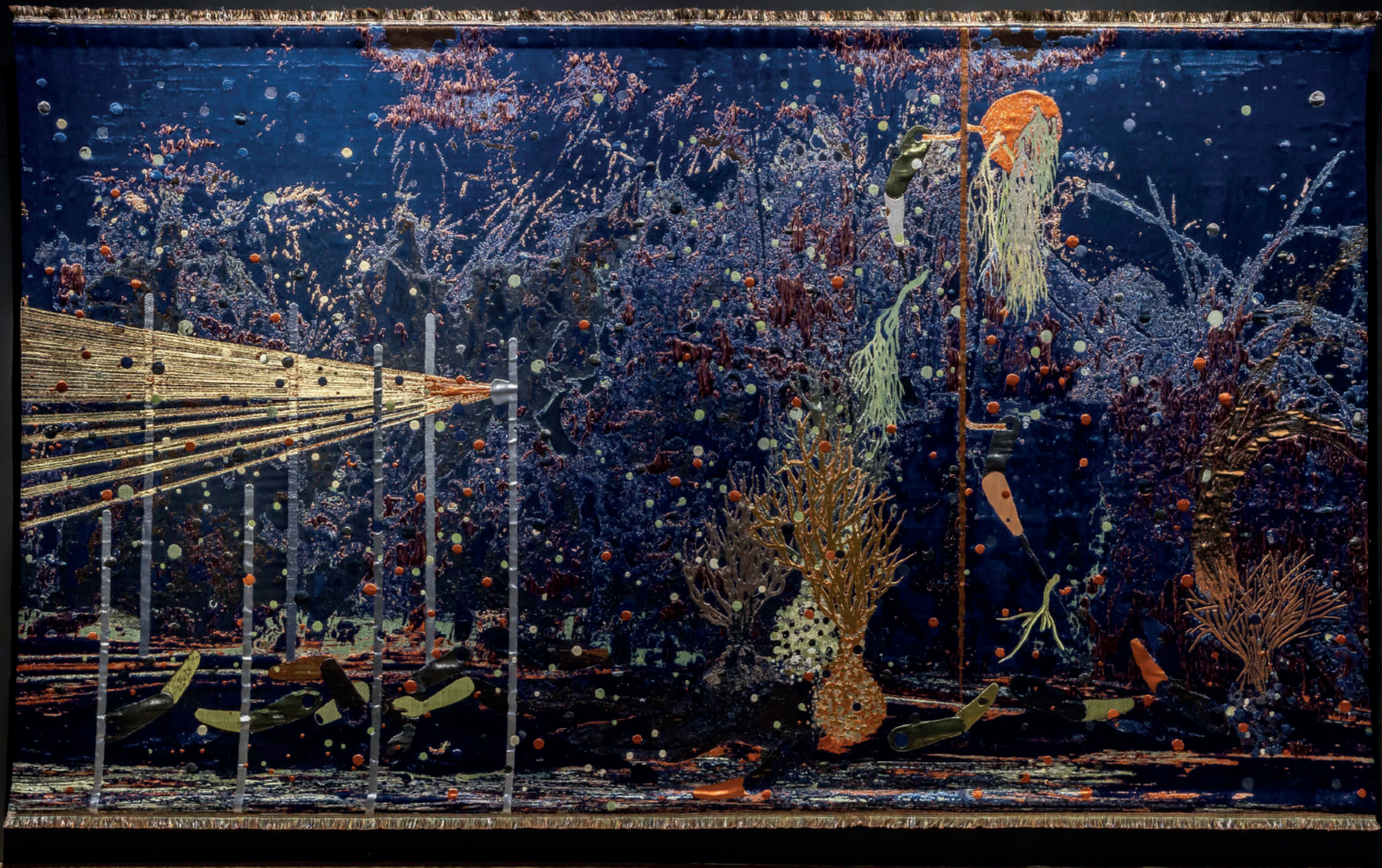


Otobong Nkanga, *Tied to the Other Side*, 2021. Detail view. Talbot Rice Gallery, the University of Edinburgh. Photo: Sally Jubb

Nkanga likens the depths of the ocean to the depths of time and reminds us that while there is a global need to take action together to reduce our impact on the ecosystem, not everyone has benefitted equally from modernity.

(b. 1974 Kano, Nigeria. Lives and works in Antwerp, Belgium)

Nkanga's most recent solo exhibitions include Frist Art Museum, Nashville (2023); Sint-Janshospitaal, Bruges (2022); Kunsthau Bregenz (2021); Castello di Rivoli Museum of Contemporary Art, Turin (2021-2022); Villa Arson, Nice (2021); Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Høvikodden (2020-2021); Gropius Bau, Berlin (2020); MIMA, Middlesbrough (2020); Tate St Ives (2019); Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa, Cape Town (2019); Ar/Ge Kunst Galleria Museo, Bolzano (2018); MCA Chicago (2018); Kunsthau Aarhus (2017); Nottingham Contemporary (2016); Beirut Art Center (2016); Tate Modern, London (2015); Museum Folkwang, Essen (2015); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2015). Nkanga was given the Special Mention Award at the 58th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, Italy, 2019 and won the 2017 Belgium Art Prize.



Otobong Nkanga, *Tied to the Other Side*, 2021. Installation view. Talbot Rice Gallery, the University of Edinburgh. Photo: Sally Jubb



Katie Paterson

Evergreen, 2022

351 extinct plants embroidered in silk thread on linen

Katie Paterson's *Evergreen* represents every extinct flower known at the time of its making in 2022. The number of plants that have disappeared during this, current, sixth mass extinction is more than twice that of all the extinct birds, mammals and amphibians combined. Yet plants, throughout all time, have been the foundation for nearly all life on earth. Working with embroiderers at The Royal School of Needlework, Paterson has created an embroidery reminiscent of the Art and Crafts movement – reflecting nature as inspiration, and guided by principles of simplicity, utility and beauty. But beneath that simplicity is a complex web of collaboration between leading scientists, naturalists, botanists and herbariums, collecting together all existing imagery of extinct plants from around the world and across centuries. In the artist's own words, *Evergreen* represents “a reverence for nature, and mourning for all that is, or soon to be, lost”.



Katie Paterson, *Evergreen*, 2022. Detail view (right) and installation view. Talbot Rice Gallery, the University of Edinburgh. Photo: Sally Jubbs

To Burn, Forest, Fire, 2021

Bespoke Incense

To Burn, Forest, Fire uses scent to explore the first-ever forest on earth, and the last forest in the age of the climate crisis. The artwork employs the senses to cultivate an intimate, intuitive experience that aims to transport participants through time as a reminder of the increasing levels of extinction caused by humanity. These past and future environments have been translated into incense, in collaboration with Japanese perfumers and incense makers Shoyeido. The first incense depicts earth's first forest, which is thought to have grown in modern-day Cairo, New York State, 385 million years ago. Discovered through fossilised root systems containing three types of ancient plant species, including *Archaeopteris*. The second incense stick recreates the scent of a living forest biome that is acutely endangered, and has become an emblem of the ongoing ecological crisis: the Amazon rainforest. Paterson casts our imagination back into the deep history of plant life, loss, devastation and regrowth. In this special staging at Talbot Rice Gallery *To Burn, Forest, Fire* will observe planetary wildfire in real time. Working with university wildfire experts Rory Hadden and Sergio Vargas Córdoba, an electronic alert has been created to record all major wildfires using satellites orbiting earth. *To Burn, Forest, Fire* incense ceremonies will be held on every day throughout the exhibition when a wildfire with a radiative power of 1000mw is taking place somewhere on Earth.





Katie Paterson, *To Burn, Forest, Fire*, 2021. Close-up ceremony view. Photo: Sally Jubb

(b. 1981 Glasgow, Scotland. Lives and works in Scotland, UK)

Solo exhibitions include Katie Paterson and Zeller & Moyer, Commission for Apple, Cupertino (2023); Ingleby Gallery, Edinburgh (2022); Galleri F15, Moss (2022); University of Edinburgh, permanent commission (2021); The Living Art Museum, Reykjavik (2021); IMHE Commission 2021, Helsinki (2021); Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh (2019-21); Turner Contemporary, Margate (2019); Utah Museum of Modern Art (2017); Centre PasquArt, Biel (2016). Selected group exhibitions include *Time*, Kunsthhaus Zürich (2023); *Time's Relentless Melt*, Princeton University Art Museum (2022); *An Alternative Economics*, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane (2022); *All That Was Solid Melts*, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki (2021); BOZAR, Brussels (2020); *Under the Stars*, The Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (2020) and *Back to Earth*, Serpentine Galleries, London (2020).

Micol Roubini

The Magic Mountain, 2023

4-channel video installation on a continuous, changing loop, stereo sound dialogue

Duration: 25 min

Single-channel, silent video compilation of archival footage courtesy Ivan Cavalli.

A1 poster, full colour image on uncoated paper, including translated accounts of dreams.

Micol Roubini's *The Magic Mountain* is produced by Lo schermo dell'arte, Florence in partnership with Talbot Rice Gallery, with the support of the Italian Council (11th edition, 2022), the programme is aimed at supporting Italian contemporary art in the world promoted by the Directorate-General for Contemporary Creativity within the Italian Ministry of Culture.



Micol Roubini, *The Magic Mountain*, 2023. Installation view. Photo: Sally Jubb

The Magic Mountain channels the psychic energy of a vast, disused asbestos mine in Balangero, Italy. Once the largest of its kind in Europe (operating between 1918 and 1990), it now awaits a huge reclamation project as if suspended in time: the bottom of the mine is currently a lake framed by 300-metre-deep steps of quarried land.

Filmmaker Micol Roubini aims to transmit the quality of this corrupted ecosystem through her multi-screen installation: its connections to colonisation, implanted and spontaneous vegetation, lichens and the strangeness of asbestos (thought in ancient times to be magical due to its fire-resistant properties). But it also aims to test a startling psychological theory: that the unconscious experience of a community of people can constitute a form of testimony.

(b. 1982 Milan, Italy. Lives and works in Milan, Italy)

Roubini has exhibited at Pinchuck Art Centre, Kyiv (2022); Museo Casa Testori, Milan (2021), Premio Matteo Olivero, Saluzzo (2017), Hotel Charleroi, Marchienne (2013). She realised the project *Atti clandestini per terre mobile* (Fondazione Palazzo Magnani, 2021). She participated in video exhibitions at Villa Medici (2021), Pavilion (Poznan, 2021), LightCone (Parigi, 2017), Scotland's Centre for Photography (2012). She has conducted masterclasses (Locarno Film Festival, 2022) and participated in residencies including Fondazione Pistoletto (2017), Scottish Sculpture Workshop (2013). Her *The Way to the Mountains* (2019) was presented at the Centre Pompidou, Paris, in competition at Cinéma du Réel and other European festivals. Roubini won the Corso Salani Prize at the Trieste Film Festival 2020.

Simon Starling

Autoxylopyrocycloboros (Billboard), 2006/2023

Inkjet print

The billboard presents documentation of Simon Starling's single-cylinder steamboat devouring itself. Setting off across Loch Long, on the west coast of Scotland, the artist broke apart his wooden boat, piece by piece, and fed it to the fire to sustain its forward progress. Spluttering and choking, it eventually sank to the bottom of the loch, some 85 metres below. When Starling began the artwork that became *Autoxylopyrocycloboros*, it was the early 2000s and he was trying to make sense of the reality that still exists today – lurking beneath this picturesque loch is a fleet of Trident nuclear submarines. On shore, the surrounding mountains have been hollowed out to conceal the nuclear arsenal. As he investigated the site, Starling was shown slapstick videos by the Royal Navy's public relations department in an attempt to humanise their activities, which inspired his inevitably fateful voyage.

With its title that ironically alludes to the ouroboros, a tale eating serpent and alchemical symbol of renewal, *Autoxylopyrocycloboros* has become even more poignant as we exponentially quicken the pace at which our life-support system on this planet is destroyed. Presented here as a billboard version of the original medium format slide projection, it fuses languages of advertising, signposting and civic communication – both warning us of the perils of self-destructive attitudes and drowning us in their irony.



Simon Starling, *Autoxylopyrocycloboros (Billboard)*, 2006/2023. Installation view. Photo: Sally Jubb

(b. 1967 in Epsom, UK. Lives and works in Copenhagen, Denmark)

Solo exhibitions include Galleria Franco Noero, Turin (2023); Casey Kaplan, New York (2023); Pinacoteca Agnelli, Turin (2022); Galerie neugerriemschneider, Berlin (2021); The Modern Institute, Glasgow (2019); Japan Society, New York (2016); Nottingham Contemporary (2016); Common Guild, Glasgow (2016); Musée d'art contemporain, Montréal (2015); Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2014); Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane (2013); Duveen Galleries, Tate Britain, London (Tate Britain Commission, 2013). Starling won the Turner Prize in 2005.

Charles Lyell Collection

Charles Lyell (1797-1875) was a Scottish-born geologist, whose scientific contributions continue to resonate today. His notebook from the 1830s inspired the name of this exhibition. Building on the work of James Hutton (remembered for his ground-breaking work on tectonic plates and the formation of the earth's crust, as observed through Edinburgh's unique coastal strata and persistent Salisbury Crags), Charles Lyell's contributions are remembered for their evocation of deep time.

Charles Lyell was the pioneer of the idea that we can see the epoch of humankind in geological sedimentation. He was referring to the post-glacial geological epoch of the past 10 to 12 thousand years, which he named the Recent in 1838-39. It was this naming that paved the way to the "Holocene" (Recent-Whole) being adopted by the International Geological Congress in Bologna in 1885.

When Paul Crutzen named the Anthropocene over a century later, while others debated radioactive isotopes and chicken bones as the geological evidence of this proposed new epoch, Crutzen pointed to 1784 – the year that Scottish inventor James Watt invented his steam engine. One of the investors in Watt's steam engine was the Scottish chemist Joseph Black who isolated (discovered) carbon dioxide, who was also very close to James Hutton.

With carbon dioxide now suffocating our world, the effect of pulling these interweaving threads of Hutton, Watt, Black and Lyell together is to realise just how long we have known that the geological processes of our planet are changing due to human activity. Often quoted in discussions around Hutton is

his friend John Playfair, who wrote of their visit to Siccar Point, just down the coast from Edinburgh, "The mind seemed to grow giddy by looking so far into the abyss of time." When imagining these eighteenth and nineteenth century geologists beginning to see the age of humanity inscribed in the planet, the mind also seems to grow giddy – or appalled – at how long it has taken us to wake from our comfortable slumber.

Charles Lyell, Scientific Notebook 73

22 November 1838 - 13 March 1839

Coll-203/A1/73, Heritage Collections

Here Lyell discusses his use of the term "Recent". This is his wife Mary's writing, with Lyell's corrections over.

Charles Lyell, Scientific Notebook 208

15 - 29 August 1855

Coll-203/A1/208, Heritage Collections

Based in London, but returning often to his home at Kinnordy, Forfarshire, in the summer of 1855, Charles Lyell made the acquaintance of self-taught Scottish geologist Hugh Miller. Together they visited Arthur's Seat, Blackford Hill and the coast of Fife from Kinghorn to Kirkcaldy, studying sections of ancient volcanic rocks.

Charles Lyell, Scientific Notebook 209

29 August - 11 September 1855

Coll-203/A1/209, Heritage Collections

Lyell's drawing of "Hutton's Rock" on the Salisbury Crags, where James Hutton found evidence to support his theories about the workings of the earth. Hutton observed igneous and sedimentary rocks and understood that they



had been formed at various times by different processes. He suggested that the earth was incredibly old, and continually changing – a startling idea in the eighteenth century that forever changed the way people thought about our planet.

Charles Lyell, *On Fossil Rain-marks of the Recent, Triassic, and Carboniferous Periods*

London: Geological Society of London
Reference Journal Sequence The Geological Society, 1851,
Vol.7 (1-2), p.238-247, Heritage Collections

Here Lyell discusses finding the rain marks, made from rain or hail droplets which harden in the sun and become baked in as fossils, and shows how they are evidence of past climates.

Lyell used the present to understand the past, evidencing how paleoclimate could be understood through the application of this theory. The Triassic could now be understood as being at times intensely cold due to the presence of harsh hail prints observed on fossils. Lyell went further back in time to the Carboniferous with Cape Breton, Nova Scotia samples. On these he noticed similar observable rain prints, which allowed him to prove the humid atmosphere on earth 350 million years ago.

Charles Lyell, *Principles of geology: being an inquiry how far the former changes of the earth's surface are referable to causes now in operation, 12th edition (published posthumously)*

(London: John Murray, 1875)
S.B. 55 Lye, Heritage Collections

On the front cover of Lyell's most celebrated text, *Principles of Geology*, is a rendering of the Roman Temple of Serapis,



Charles Lyell, *the Charles Lyell Collection*, 1855. Installation and close-up view. Photo: Sally Jubb

constructed some 2,000 years ago on the coastline north of Naples. Lyell visited the temple's ruins in 1828. Observing dark bands on the marble columns about nine feet from the base, where the stone had been bored into by a species of marine clam, Lyell concluded that the columns must have been built above sea level, but had at one time been underwater, the lower section of the columns had been protected from the sea and clams by volcanic debris. The columns were then once again raised to their present level by a later volcanic eruption. Since these changes had occurred during recorded history, Lyell concluded that the same geological processes – over the expanse of time – could build mountains and other geological features we see today. Of note is that when publishing his great work, Lyell chose to illustrate the principles of geology with an artefact of humankind.

“Recent” Rain-prints, likely formed 21 July 1849, at Kentville, Bay of Fundy, Nova Scotia (9 items)
EUCM.0132.2013, Cockburn Geological Museum

Rain-prints, Pompton, New Jersey, Triassic
EUCM.0145.2013, Cockburn Geological Museum

Hail-prints, Pompton, New Jersey, Triassic
EUCM.0156.2013, Cockburn Geological Museum

Rain-prints, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Carboniferous
EUCM.0012.2022, Cockburn Geological Museum

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