

ERIC VAN HOVE
Anthropocene Geodesy
Vernissage le 26 Février 2016
Exposition du 27 Février au 16 Avril 2016

In his latest exhibition Anthropocene Geodesy at Voice Gallery in Marrakech, the Morocco based Belgian artist Eric van Hove is showing for the first time a series of photographs he made near the North Pole and Spitzbergen in 2009.

The title refers to the measurement and representation of the geological time in which humans started to have a significant global impact on Earth's geology and ecosystems. The word Anthropocene was coined by scientist and Nobel laureate Paul Crutzen at the turn of the millennium and is now widely used and adopted by the scientific community dealing with climate change.

It is however the significant essay The Climate of History by Indian historian and post-colonial theorist Dipesh Chakrabarty that inspired van Hove to travel to the most remote island of the Northern hemisphere.

In the artist's own words, this body of works is intended as an response, if not as an illustration of Mr Chakrabarty's essay. It deals with the juxtaposition of human history with that of natural history and puts forward the claim that due to the anthropogenic explanations of climate change the humanist distinction between these two histories is collapsing. Chakrabarty questions how the climate crisis is of influence to our notion of historical understanding; to see human history as a geological time is aligning human time with natural time.

It is with this in mind that Eric van Hove shot these photographs in which we see a 'measuring' tool consisting of the wooden tripod of the Theodolite of his late grand-father, a pendulum from the broken clock of his grand-mother and a human femur bone he collected on the shores of the Yssyk Koul lake in Kirghizistan in 2008. These personal belongings were rearranged by placing the bone on top of the tripod from which the pendulum was hung.

Subsequently, using perspective which is an important element of the Renaissance in art, the bone was aligned to the perspectival lines of the landscape. While the Vanishing point echoes our own disappearance, femur bone were used in the past as a measurement tool.

By aligning the bone many different histories seem to fall in place with each other; van Hove's personal, art historical, human and natural time. It urges us to ask the question, how human intent seems to juxtapose the all encompassing randomness of nature.

text by Hicham Khalidi

“The current planetary crisis of climate change or global warming elicits a variety of responses in individuals, groups, and governments, ranging from denial, disconnect, and indifference to a spirit of engagement and activism of varying kinds and degrees. These responses saturate our sense of the now.

*Alan Weisman’s best-selling book *The World without Us* suggests a thought experiment as a way of experiencing our present: “Suppose that the worst has happened. Human extinction is a fait accompli.... Picture a world from which we all suddenly vanished.... Might we have left some faint, enduring mark on the universe?...Is it possible that, instead of heaving a huge biological sigh of relief, the world without us would miss us?”*

I am drawn to Weisman’s experiment as it tellingly demonstrates how the current crisis can precipitate a sense of the present that disconnects the future from the past by putting such a future beyond the grasp of historical sensibility.

The discipline of history exists on the assumption that our past, present, and future are connected by a certain continuity of human experience. We normally envisage the future with the help of the same faculty that allows us to picture the past. (...)

Excerpt from Dipesh Chakrabarty, *The Climate of History: Four Theses*, *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (Winter 2009), pp. 197-222, The University of Chicago Press.