MAMMUT

ISSUE #5 · WINTER/SPRING 2012 SOME KIND OF NATURE

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Design: Roman Jaster

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Cover Image: *Batholith Etchings* by Eben Goff

The *Batholith Etchings* are somewhere between pictorial and physical. Drawn lines are the result of impressions of shard-shaped printing plates with rough edges and happenstance scratches. The tumbled shapes convey tectonic states of erosion and accumulation, where discord results in a harmonious natural process.

Eben Goff is a Los Angeles-based artist who investigates material process and landscape.

Title illustration on page 11 by Erin Hauber

Erin Hauber is principal designer at cottage industries (cottageindustriesdesign.com) where each day she investigates new ways of thinking and making. Her practice extends beyond the studio to include graduate studies at North Carolina State University, cross-disciplinary collaborations, teaching and mentoring emerging designers and curating design-related events.

Dynamic Bodies

BY XANA KUDRJAVCEV-DEMILNER

As portraits of imagined objects, these drawings are both changeable and changing. I am interested in the way line and color can simultaneously unite and fragment a drawing's multiple parts, calling attention to the spatial shifts in each work and enhancing the pleasurable struggle to define what one is seeing. I see a drawing as a piece of information about a hypothetical moment that, like a snapshot, provides just enough information for the viewer to fill in the temporal blanks of before and after. In so doing, the viewer contributes to a personalized and individual experience of the work.

Xana Kudrjavcev-DeMilner is an artist based in Los Angeles.

(previous page) *Rose,* 2010, colored pencil on paper, 24" x 19"

(left) *Mitten*, 2009, colored pencil on paper, 24" x 19"

(above) *Peaks*, 2010, colored pencil on paper, 24" x 19"

Ligonier Paintings

BY JANE PARSHALL

Most of these paintings are from photographs and video-footage I took in November 2009 in Ligonier, Pennsylvania.[1] This seems a little ludicrous to me now, looking at them; they are as much influenced by Ligonier as they are intuitive and opportunistic. My father was going to Ligonier for the weekend to foxhunt[2] with his cousin's family. I'd never been there before; I went under the guise of making a documentary but felt uncomfortable in my overtly observational position. I've always played the part of observer but there's a difference when one adds the camera. I was overly self-conscious about others acknowledging my gaze and felt strongly that I was an outsider.[3] I only began to uncover some of the results of the trip this fall; much of it embarrasses me. When revisiting it all, I was mostly drawn to the slides I took of my father's cousin's husband Will, his horse Jasper, and oddly cropped video-stills. The paintings are not really about these figures but usurp their forms and eventually abandon any deference for the delineations in the photographs altogether.[4]

1 Inspiration comes from those who are living a life.

2 Those that know little of foxhunting are surprised by the decadence/anachronism of the attire and assume the hunters have guns; it's more like a chase: mostly men (some women) on horseback following dogs chasing a fox in the countryside. George Washington foxhunted; in this country it's open to anyone willing to pay the dues although seems to remain within a limited social-sphere.

3 "America has a diversity; we're all sitting here and we're watching and we're absorbing everything out there; we're watching because we were never part of that; we were part of that but we're outsiders." (Ralph Lauren speaking with Charlie Rose, 1993)

4 I kept looking at Matisse's *Open Window* (1905).

Jane Parshall is a Los Angeles-based artist.

(far left) M. J. Knoud Saddlery, Inc. Matchbook Cover [M. J. Knoud was a saddlery store in Manhattan on Madison and 63rd from around 1916 to sometime in the early '90s; the man who opened the store, Michael Knoud, arrived from the UK around the turn of the century.]

(left) Dad with Navigator, Millbrook, NY, fall 2010, 35 mm slide

Untitled, 2010, oil on polyester, 30" x 40"

(left) Untitled, 2011, oil on polyester, 36" x 60"
(above) Untitled, 2011, oil on polyester, 30" x 30"

Introduction

BY MATTHIAS MERKEL HESS

For our fifth issue of Mammut, we borrowed the title of the 2010 Gorillaz song *Some Kind of Nature* as a theme to investigate our ongoing interest in art and nature. Both terms are so broad as be almost indefinable and this opens up a lot of terrain for investigation, imagination and reflection on the meaning of the words and what role art can play in our relationship with processes of the world.

The issue is anchored by a reprint of a 2008 essay by Max Andrews on art after environmentalism, and an interview with the ecologically-minded curator Patricia Watts. The rest of the theme section contains work that we've seen in exhibitions or studios in Los Angeles. Rather than offer a specific direction, we hope the images and words here speak directly to the ongoing dialogue between human actions and the natural world.

"Some kind of nature
(Some kind of nature, some kind of soul)
Comes from one within us
Oh, Lord, forgive me
(Some kind of mixture, some kind of gold)
It's got to come and find us
All we are is dust"

—*Some Kind of Nature* by Gorillaz, 2010

Illustration by Erin Hauber

The Ebb and Flow of Ecology and Art:
An interview with Patricia Watts

BY MATTHIAS MERKEL HESS

Patricia Watts is founder and West Coast curator of ecoartspace, a nonprofit founded in 1999 to provide a platform for artists addressing environmental issues in the visual arts. She is currently co-curating a project in New Mexico commissioning international artists to create site-specific works around the state exploring perceptions of a larger universe, space travel, the science of space and the cosmos. Mammut co-editor Matthias Merkel Hess interviewed Watts via email about her work.

Matthias Merkel Hess: You have curated art and ecology themed shows for almost 15 years now. What's changed in that time?

Patricia Watts: That's a big question. So much has changed in the last 15 years!

In the late 1990s, I spent most of my time trying to educate state parks, nature centers, natural history museums and art museums about this work. Back then it was mostly an "invisible" type of art that for obvious reasons was being over looked—ecological art, artists restoring degraded environments, working in collaboration with biologists and watershed stakeholders, communities. It was a time when it was important for me to make distinctions with these activities in comparison to the earlier Earth Art and Land Art movements. I was a new mother and was interested in bringing these artists into schools to do educational workshops with students and felt aesthetics was a great way to illustrate the principles of ecology, to bring an awareness of our interdependence with the natural world. However, I also became concerned that artists could potentially contribute more to the consumption of nature without a real understanding of the science.

After the millennia, by 2002, with the war in the Middle East beginning to occupy our minds and diminish our resources, I think artists were desperately looking for new tools to engage the sciences. When we realized that the world was not going to end with Y2K, or 9/11, and that the internet was a great tool for sharing scientific data, artists were digging fast and deep for information to create content for their work. Much of what was being done in galleries remained traditional arts, painting, photography, and sculpture. However, a younger group of artists emerged on the scene by 2004–5, especially after our first big climate change hit with Katrina, and this work was more activist oriented, sited in populated environments outside the gallery walls. Around this same time, I had moved to the Bay Area and found with its rich history in environmental activism, there were artists doing important community-based projects. Much of this work was inspired by the Situationists movement of the 1960s and was more recently labeled relational aesthetics by Nicolas Bourriaud, and dialogic art by Grant Kester. It involved public actions, educational activities, walking and mapping environments, etc., including planting gardens, foraging foods, creating demonstration events of simple technologies, and providing examples of replicable systems for creating like-minded communities.

Something that I have also noted in the last six to seven years is that these artists are more consumer or product driven, focused on what people can do in their own backyards. As a generation that has grown up on television and computers, I think they are accustomed to having information at their fingertips and have had the support to do the right thing within the personal realm with quick response time. They are a more entitled consumer. I think my generation, the artists who came into their work during the late 80s/early 90s, when installation art and conceptual art was evolving, felt that looking at the big picture, a more visionary approach, was the way to go. They wanted to shine a light on the collective culture, to examine the way we were living and how it was affecting the planet as a whole.

All along the way, especially for the Art World, the question remained: Is it Art?

MMH: Does it matter if what you are doing is, as you put it, "Art" with a capital "A?"

PW: Yes and No. Or, No, definitely not CAPITAL A. I am more interested in how this work interacts with an audience, what are the strategies that the artists are using to engage citizens, scientists, policy makers, as well as the art world. How are they successful at what they are trying to achieve? I do think it is important to participate in a formal contemporary art dialogue, whether the work is acknowledged by critics or not. I usually find most critics misunderstand the work. They might be great writers, know art history or contemporary art theory, but do not understand the motivations of the artists or the science behind the work. If you don't understand the science or the principles of ecology, it is basically hard to know whether the work is good or not, in my opinion. The biggest criticism of this work is that it is not aesthetic, it is not a sophisticated object that allows collectors to engage in the work. It is work that is being made for an audience at large, the masses. It is only a recent phenomena that art schools are creating social practice programs that support this kind of work, after basically thirty plus years of community arts in the United States.

Windsock Currents by Crissy Field, 2005, San Francisco, California

Alternative energy installation by RT Livingston and interpretive performance by Red Dive. A month-long event through National Park Service in conjunction with UN World Environment Day.

Sweet Survival:Urban Apple Orchard II by Susan Leibovitz Steinman, 2006–2008, Sonoma County Museum, Santa Rosa, California

MMH: I think it's a big challenge to make work that speaks to both scientific and aesthetic concerns. That's why I was particularly impressed by Gustav Metzger's 2007 "Reduce Art Flights" proposal, which specifically targets all the travel that goes on in the name of contemporary art. I think Metzger was also saying that the art world should address its own wastefulness before tackling larger issues. How do you negotiate the challenges of art that while often idealistic and informative, can come across to some as preachy and didactic or ineffectual and wasteful?

PW: I have been very impressed with some of these artists who really take the work seriously. One in particular, Eve Mosher, has refused to travel abroad to give a single lecture, preferring to book multiple engagements during an extended trip. It is great when an artist thinks about their footprint on the planet especially when choosing materials for installations. However, most artists take on too many projects, traveling all over the world, and use materials that they know are wasteful or worse, toxic to manufacture and to be around. There are a lot of potential contradictions for an ecological artist. As a curator, working both independently and having worked for a museum, I have tried to create sustainable standards for organizing a show by choosing green printers for invitations or eliminating snail mail, creating digital catalogues rather than printed ones, using Skype whenever possible for panel discussions, meetings, etc.

I think this practice has developed some useful strategies over time for disseminating information that is less didactic. I see many emerging artists being more playful, taking on alternate personae, creating performative works to address the pedantic aspects of educating people about our interdependence on this planet such as LA's Urban Rangers or Fallen Fruit collectives. I think these artists have been on a tough learning curve the last decade in creating a context, an environment for understanding a huge amount of information interpreted from scientific publications on climate change and information accessed online to early work done in the 60s and 70s in the environmental movement. There is definitely a harsher critique of this work in the museum or gallery context, compared to the community arts or performative work in the public sphere.

MMH: An environmental consciousness seemed to enter the mainstream in the last decade, for example with the Toyota Prius or just about every corporation touting its "green" credentials. To a certain extent, there seemed to be a parallel interest in eco-topics in the art world. Has this interest faded or is it still there?

PW: I think the green movement was rediscovered by artists in the 90s (the 60s turned upside down). As with any fad or movement, its roots are years prior. The commercial world only woke up to the "green" movement when the numbers of people who were shopping for organic foods hit over 30 percent of the food market, somewhere around 2004/5. Artists have been addressing environmental issues through the 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s. Although, there are so many exhibitions addressing the natural world right now I can barely keep track of them. On the ecoartspace fan page on Facebook we make around three posts a day with events, shows, etc. happening internationally. In a two-year period we now have almost 5,000 fans.

I definitely think we are riding a wave and that at some point in the near future, being green will just be normal, an inevitable transition due to a lack of natural resources. Behavior modification is a slow process, so over a 40-year period really, here in America, we might finally adapt to the fact that we cannot consume the world's resources without restraint. Something that people in countries with smaller land mass and higher populations figured out long before us.

Personally, I feel I am stepping back from focusing specifically on what you can do in your own backyard. I do think some of this work, probably a lot of it, is really a form of preaching to the choir. I don't have much hope for convincing countries like China to truly go green. There are simply too many people and the monetary gains are too hard to compete with when it comes to managing natural resources. I guess I feel in some way, we have pulled the plug already. My current focus is much more of a Macro perspective or a more spiritual way of exploring what it means to be human at this point in time on planet Earth. We are part of a much larger system, a universe that interacts with our planet in ways that we simply do not have any control over. When the sun flares and bombards our planet with solar radiation interfering with our communication systems and also magnetic poles can shift, it just seems evident to me now that we are dealing with something that is much bigger than saving the planet.

So, I guess my answer is yes, I do see that this work will fade out, like it did in the 1980s. Culture is a system that ebbs and flows with the economy and with our ability as humans to comprehend what we are doing to ourselves.

Dogs

BY DAVID ZUTTERMEISTER

These dogs, made of wood and mulched yellow pages, were made in emulation of a painter's process, where every move can be eradicated by a new stroke. Art, animals, and obsolescence—three ontological lacunae.

David Zuttermeister is an artist working in Los Angeles. He is always looking for an escape.

(left) No Title 4, 2010, wood, yellow pages
(top) No Title 7, 2010, wood, yellow pages
(bottom) No Title 6, 2010, wood, yellow pages

Paintings

BY LILY VOSE-O'NEAL

(left) Untitled (Flow), 2008, acrylic on wood, 36" x 36"
(right) Untitled (Mound), 2008, acrylic on wood, 36" x 36"

Lily was born and raised in the coastal village of Woods Hole, Massachusetts, where she attended the Children's School of Science, beach-combed, collected specimens, and experienced bioluminescence. She learned to sew, sail, and tie knots. Lily studied art at The Cambridge School of Weston and Bennington College. She is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. She considers art-making a form of research and invention, a kind of science fiction. She divides her time between Los Angeles and Woods Hole.

Forest For The Trees: Art after Environmentalism

BY MAX ANDREWS

To paraphrase the Brazilian art critic and radical politician Mario Pedrosa, "In times of crisis, we must stand by the side of the artist."[1] Judging by the titles alone of the deluge of best-selling environmental books from the last few years—including James Kunstler's 2005 *The Long Emergency*, Jared Diamond's 2005 *Collapse*, James Lovelock's 2006 *The Revenge of Gaia*, and of course Al Gore's 2006 *An Inconvenient Truth*, also an Oscar-winning movie—these are times of crisis indeed.

Yet just recently the publishers of two of the gospels of the environmental movement (namely, Henry D. Thoreau's 1854 *Walden* and Rachel Carson's 1962 *Silent Spring*) released Ted Nordhaus and Michael Shellenberger's *Break Through: From the Death of Environmentalism to the Politics of Possibility* (Houghton Mifflin, 2007). Shellenberger and Nordhaus, in a follow up to their provocative 2004 paper "The Death of Environmentalism," insist we must combat climate change through forging a way out of the "literal sclerosis" of old-fashioned notions of nature with faith in the power of politics to instigate change.[2] Excoriating the fatalism and biblical guilt invoked by Gore *et. al.*, they call for massive state investments in clean energies and a progressivist vision that is not based on the tired paradigms of restrictions and limits, but on unleashing new aspirations, growth, creativity and affluence. As the titles of their texts suggest, for them the illogical and antiquated concept of "the environment" must be extinguished along with the narrow definition of what is an "environmental issue."[3]

Public Smog by Amy Balkin, 2004 to present.
For current info on the park, please visit publicsmog.org.

In our historical moment that is seemingly threatened by an ecological (and social and economic) crisis anticipated by the United Nations' International Panel on Climate Change and others, Nordhaus and Shellenberger's conviction in politics is wholehearted—despite the infamous precedents of the Bush administration's duplicitously named "Healthy Forests" and "Clear Skies" policies in the US.[4] In a similar fashion, an unfailing trust in the efficacy of artistic practice retains the power to articulate fresh ideas and actions in new times of emergency. But of course today's ecological narratives are vastly more complicated and abundant than those of yesterday. Twenty years after the notion of "Sustainable Development" entered common usage (with the report of the Bruntdland Commission in 1987), and in the wake of the 1992 Earth Summit, protests in Seattle and Genoa, the Kyoto protocol, and so on, the terms and phenomena of the present—such as carbon offsetting, food miles, cap-and-trade, greenwashing, etc.—describe a profoundly different world to that of the 1960s, when both popular environmentalism as well as Conceptual art and its allies came into being in the West.

Active from the early 1960s until his death in 1986, Joseph Beuys is often celebrated as a founding father of so-called "eco-art," as well as being one of the founders of the Green Party in Germany. Yet maintaining that Beuys' strategic vision could still have traction in today's world would not only be politically disastrous, but artistically irrelevant. The charismatic Beuys adopted a shaman-like persona and a mystical relation to an allegorized non-human world. This was typified by his belief that he spoke for animals "that cannot speak for themselves."[5] Such statements that claim special authority based on the premise that some people (i.e. Beuys himself, wilderness-focussed environmentalists, etc.) somehow know what nature wants seem acutely problematic today. Perhaps the grandest of Beuys' projects, *7000 Oaks* (1982–87) consisted of the planting of seven thousand trees in Kassel, Germany, each companioned with a basalt block to evoke the harmony of nature.[6] Leaving the spurious claim that nature was ever somehow harmonious to one side—a myth that still underlies "back to nature" fundamentalism—these days Beuys' social sculpture would nevertheless be caught up in another kind of system and meaning.

Tree planting today comes with all of the baggage of being the most widely known—and least accountable—method of "offsetting" one's personal (or indeed corporate) "carbon footprint." There are now countless websites that will calculate the amount of greenhouse gas emissions one contributes in the course of flying in airplanes, driving cars, heating the house, etc,. and facilitate counteracting this through purchasing carbon credit, whether in the form of supporting the installation of low-energy bulbs or cookers in the developing world, for example, or "locking away" carbon dioxide in the form of a tree. Yet weighing the value of the emissions put out against the carbon taken in over the life-span of a tree is an exceedingly abstract and unknowable calculation. Furthermore, each carbon credit provider generates different sums for what is essentially an utterly arbitrary mechanism. Now many of the more reputable carbon offset companies disown tree planting altogether, and some already-dubious sequestration scientists suggest that only planting near the equator could ever be remotely effective in any case. What people are really buying into, it would appear, is a shaky promise of a clear conscience as ecological debt is momentarily assuaged with a mouse click. The possibility of sustaining Beuys' grand "grassroots" gesture as somehow "pure" seems lost, as we all might well be, in a crossfire of guilt and goodwill, hollow truths, corporate hucksterism and eco-marketing.

Amy Balkin's *Public Smog* (2004–ongoing) is a project that infiltrates this conflicted and intangible territory. By buying up carbon credits otherwise available on the open market to industry and putting them out of use, the artist has created a clean air "park in the atmosphere that fluctuates in location and scale." One park exists over the coast of California through the state's own trading system, another is over the European Union thanks to Kyoto-protocol-standard carbon purchased through a broker in London. "Public Smog makes you feel better," "Public Smog will save the earth," ironically states a computer slideshow that documents the project and promotes the use of the park for events including "breathing or other self-directed activities." Balkin's construction exploits the role of emissions' trading as the single neoliberal "solution" to overcoming the climate crisis although it sustains old technologies—the parks owe their anomalous existence to the grand folly of approaching climate change as if it were simply a very big pollution problem. In subverting the abstract mechanisms of turbo-capitalist transactions *pro bono publico*, the *Public Smog* enterprise moreover maintains a deeply ironic relation with environmentalism's privileging of territories deemed free of human intrusion.

In 2000 British Petroleum, the former Anglo-Persian Oil Company that was recently named one of the "ten worst corporations" based on its human rights and environmental record, changed its name to BP ("Beyond Petroleum").[7] A new corporate identity based around a yellow-and-green, sunflower-like "helios" logo was

Land Mark (Foot Prints) by Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla, 2001–2004

Home & Graves & Gardens
by Cyprien Gaillard, 2007

introduced, and the company defiantly boasted of "the responsibility to produce and consume energy in ways that respect both human rights and the natural environment."[8] The artist group The Bruce High Quality Foundation ("a collaboration of consensual disgust") recently made *Beyond Pastoral* (2007) for an exhibition in New York, which ostensibly comprised a 1/5 scale model of the BP filling station across the street from the gallery.[9] On the floor were some seven thousand lemons and limes (the numerical correlation to Beuys' oaks is perhaps coincidental) arranged in the form of the "greenwashed" BP logo. Each fruit was wired with electrodes and together they generated enough electrical current to illuminate the model. This playful elaboration of corporate hypocrisy operated knowing that it could never present a "correct" ethical or common-sense undertaking either. The artists calculated that transporting the fruit from source already used at least four hundred litres of fuel, and the rotting fruit presented a possible public health hazard. So the project effectively greenwashed itself by declaring that the fruits would be composted at the end of the show. At the intersection of appearances and actions, and "working in the ever-expanding tradition of mockery" as the Foundation describe, the project embraced the absurdities, ironies and manipulations encountered in transforming and justifying power.

It is power of another kind that undepins several artworks by Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla. These have emerged alongside the popular resistance movement on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques, a US protectorate. Seventy percent of this tiny Caribbean island was commandeered by the US Navy in the 1940s and until 2003 it was bombarded and marketed by American and Allied militaries as a battlezone for land, sea and air wargames. The island endured high levels of toxicity and habitat damage, and the islanders suffer high rates of cancer and unemployment. As documented in the photographs of *Land Mark (Footprints)* (2001–4), the artists collaborated with islanders to made shoe soles etched with messages and images chosen by the wearers. These left impressions on the sand as they walked in disobedient trespass in the off-limits militarized zone. The video *Under Discussion* (2005) shows a Viequense activist in an makeshift motor boat—made from an upturned conference table—touring the waters of the still-debated restricted area, which, though contaminated, has been reclassified and expropriated from the island's communities as a wildlife refuge under the protection of the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Allora and Calzadilla's Vieques artworks witness the "death of environmentalism" while acting politically, breaking with the iconic standardisation of the earth as a realm of natural laws and organic harmony, and instead foregrounding antagonism. As Yates McKee has described, "while purporting to restore the site's natural balance and protect it for future generations, the Department of the Interior makes a very special form of destruction and obliteration. In designating the site as exclusively "natural," it wipes out the memory of those who lived and worked there ... the issue is now how to engage in combat with a new regime of 'environmentality'."[10]

In 1949 eight villages and a flour mill disappeared under water when a hydro-electric dam was built and the land around the hill of Vassivière in central France was flooded. Vassivière island now hosts the Centre international d'art et du paysage de l'île de Vassivière, designed in the late 1980s by Aldo Rossi and Xavier Fabre. This apparently picturesque setting recently hosted Cyprien Gaillard's *Homes & Graves & Gardens* (2007). The façade of the art centre was hidden by a row of trees which were chopped down for the exhibition and lent against the building, also blocking the entrance. The opening of the show coincided with the French national festivities of Bastille Day, and the artist hosted a free party in the forest with techno music and a firework display that culminated with explosions bursting from Rossi's emblematic conical tower. The artist's actions of violence and mutilation keeps and destroys the evidence of this "natural" site's artificial construction and makes legible the turbulence and dramatic change of its drowned past. Like the marked land that Allora and Calzadilla work with in their *Land Mark*, it is the idea of nature as an external, unchanging entity apart from human activity that Gaillard confronts.

To finish with a return to the sentiment expressed by Pedrosa where we began, in these times of crisis, we might stand by the side of art and artists that allow emancipation from both from the narratives of nature-ventriloquism and healing peddled by "eco-art" on the one hand, and also the recourse to naked activism on the other. Like the discourse around global warming itself, art might be best comprehended and practiced as being profoundly intangible, global and future-oriented—and because of not in spite of its ability to contest and be contested.

Previously published as "El arte después de la ecología," Art&Co, Nº1, winter 2008

Max Andrews is a Barcelona-based curator who in 2005, co-founded the curatorial office Lattitudes with Mariana Cánepa Luna. Latitudes collaborates with artists and institutions in the conception, organization and production of exhibitions, public commissions,conferences, editorial and research initiatives across local, pan-European and international situations. For more information, visit lttds.org.

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1 Cited by Paulo Herkenhoff during the discussion 'A Cultural Cartography – Does Art Travel?', Frieze Talks, 14 October 2007.
2 Ted Nordhaus and Michael Shellenberger, 'The Death of Environmentalism: Global Warming in a Post-Environmental World', www.thebreakthrough.org. See also 'FAQ: Post-Environmentalsim' in Max Andrews (ed.) *Land, Art: A Cultural Ecology Handbook*, RSA/Arts Council England, 2006.
3 For a further analysis of art and 'environmental issues' see my article 'The Whole Truth', *Frieze*, Issue 108, June – August 2007.
4 For sobering accounts of the Bush White House's anti-ecological agenda see Robert S. Devine's *Bush Versus the Environment* (Anchor, 2004) and Jeffrey St. Clair's *Been Brown So Long It Looked Like Green to Me: The Politics of Nature* (Common Courage Press, 2003).
5 "I speak for the hares that cannot speak for themselves", Beuys in 'Interview with Willoughby Sharp' (1969) in Carin Kuoni, *Joseph Beuys in America: Energy Plan for the Western Man, Four Walls Eight Windows*, 1990, p.82.
6 See Joan Rothfuss, 'Joseph Beuys', in *Bits & Pieces Put Together to Present a Semblance of a Whole: Walker Art Center Collections*, Walker Art Center, 2005.
7 See http://www.multinationalmonitor.org/mm2006/112006/mokhiber.html
8 See 'The BP Group Story', http://www.bp.com
9 See http://www.exitart.org/site/pub/exhibition_programs/electric_lab/index.html
10 Translation from Yates McKee, 'L'art et les fins de l'écologie', *Vacarme*, 34, winter 2006. http://www.vacarme.eu.org/article547.html

All in This Together

BY MAX RAIN

All in this together, 2010, Ceramic fired to cone 01, stains, underglaze, and shoe polish, 24.5" x 25.5" x 2.5"

The piece represents our collective willingness to digest and accept tragedies or alarming situations. Across the world, people will choose the path of least resistance despite the repercussions on the environment or on our own health and well-being. The figures in the piece are calmly digging holes and burying themselves, with a general lack of emotion or worry. There is very little sensationalism in their postures and minimal violence or resistance is shown.

Max Rain is a California-based artist currently living in Ireland.

Flood Cubes

BY EBEN GOFF

Flood Cubes is an ongoing project using the channels of Ballona Creek in Los Angeles County. During heavy rains, geometric steel forms are fixed to the concrete riverbed in order to gather debris that are washed out to sea. Wrapped with accumulated detritus and exposed by the receding floodwaters, the forms are unfastened, moved to the studio to dry, and then later exhibited.

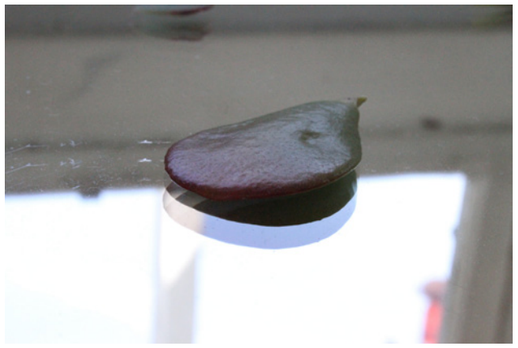
Typically, the artistic gesture belongs to the 'artist's hand' but, with the *Flood Cubes* I've simply set up a situation for the world to react upon. Here I'm looking to embed form and process with each other in such a way that the works describe the conditions of their own coming-to-be. The sculptures are figures of time. They are durational and ephemeral. Furthermore, they are contingent on chance but underscore the fact that chance itself is only visible through the frame of a fixed system.

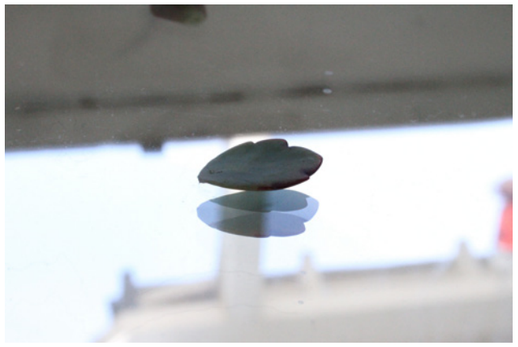
I'm thinking about the distinction between human actions and the actions of nature. If I have an agenda in this respect, it is to take nature as guide and to perceive our labors as part of its being, though sometimes moving against its character.

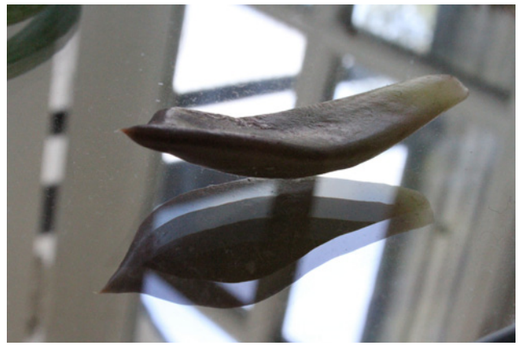
Eben Goff is a Los Angeles-based artist who investigates material process and landscape. His drawings are also on the cover of this issue.

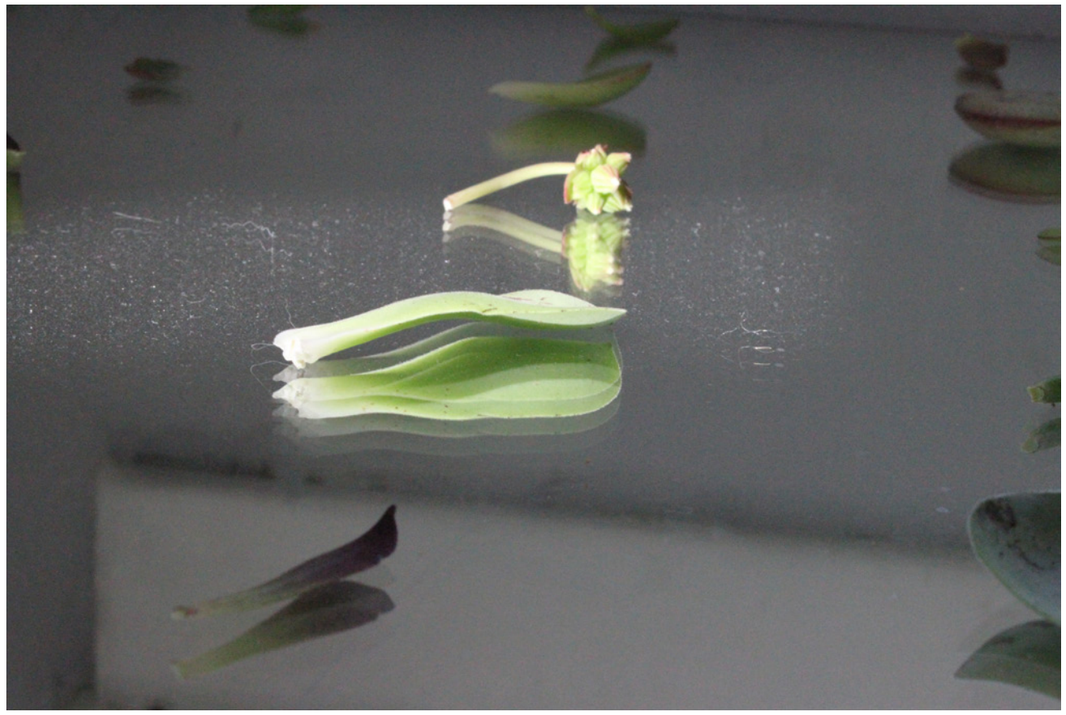
Succulent Garden Proposal

BY JOSEPH IMHAUSER









Succulent Garden Proposal (2011) exists in dialogue with the home owner's (j.frede) present succulent garden. During a walk through his neighborhood I took small cuttings of succulents that I encountered along my way, making a conscientious effort to choose varieties which I believed he did not have. After taking these cuttings I placed single leaves from each of the succulents, randomly and evenly in a grid on the mirror, laid atop the flat file. The mirror produces a refraction of light, it's density and spectrums being dispersed in a fundamentally different way to the succulent leaves, providing each leaf with an unknown environment. Eventually, as leaves evolve and the resident (j.frede) needs to utilize the top of the flat file for some other purpose, the leaves will then be planted and become a garden constructed of succulents with an expanded formula for progression and an altered understanding of efficiency.

Succulent Garden Proposal was part of *Living Room with Twelve Corners*, and installation by Joseph Imhauser in a private residence in Echo Park. It was the inaugural exhibition by Popup Projects, an artist-run organization interested in presenting artists projects and exhibitions in locations ranging from empty commercial storefronts, private salons, outdoor spaces, online projects, and guest curating at established galleries without defining an environmental hierarchy.

Joseph Imhauser is an artist living in New York and co-organizes lyeberry, an ongoing series of mobile information sharing events.

Photo credit: j.frede

Moldy Drywall

BY MATTHIAS MERKEL HESS

A few years ago, I attempted to make large ceramic tiles with drywall as a support structure, but I found that the resulting moldy drywall was much more interesting than the tiles. To make the "best" moldy drywall, I developed a simple method of coating drywall with a mixture of yogurt and water, encasing it in plastic and letting it "cure" for about a month. The result is a black, green, purple and yellow mold that covers the drywall. In 2010, I made two temporary installations where this molded drywall completely covered the walls. The second installation, pictured here, was for the one-night show *Haunted JMOCA* at Justin's Museum of Contemporary Art, a house gallery in the Silverlake neighborhood of Los Angeles. For the show, I worked with Justin Hansch of JMOCA to install the drywall throughout most of the main floor of his house. Justin then hung the rest of the group show on top of the drywall. I'm sure I could find a way to talk about this work in relationship to the crumbling housing market, the way we build our homes or the pervasiveness of 4 by 8 foot sections of building materials, but the truth (if I can talk about my work like a proud parent) is that I find this musty, moldy, crumbly drywall to be quite beautiful.

For photos of the complete *Haunted JMOCA* show and installation, please visit jmoca.info.