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## Grounding in Uncertain Geology: How art will help us learn to live within the Anthropocene epoch

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The End of the World... As We Know It?

Popularized by chemist Paul Crutzen in 2002, the term Anthropocene is currently understood as a proposed yet current geologic epoch, in which human impacts serve as major and defining characteristics of change upon the planet. Many scholars and thinkers who engage with the notion of the Anthropocene evidence its existence through global environmental issues such as climate change, ocean acidification or a rapid decline of biodiversity worldwide. However, official designation of an epoch comes from the International Stratigraphy Commission, through a process which ends in a golden stake being driven into a rock. In terms of the Anthropocene, the metaphorical jury is still out, due to questions that must be answered, including when the Anthropocene is proposed to have started. This question alone raises several potential answers, such as WWII with the atomic bomb, or the industrial revolution with coal. Or, one might even return to “pre-historic” days with the discovery of anthropogenic fire. Additionally, the epoch must be visible in rock strata, but it is also hard to link stratigraphic evidence with these dates.

This capstone is, for the most part, not concerned with the geologic legitimacy of the Anthropocene, or the debate that surrounds it. Instead, it picks up from a point of view that has acknowledged and embraced the Anthropocene as a concept, and which considers *how to live* within the reality of the ‘age of the human’. In various disciplines, the term “Anthropocene” has become quite popular (Showstack 2013). To some, recognition or affirmation of anthropogenic impacts to this degree describes a dramatic or apocalyptic time (Emmelhainz 2015) in which humans self-inflict their own death (Lotringer 2015), while others see it in terms of its political aspects as a chance to legitimize and direct efforts towards solutions for environmental issues (Finney and Edwards 2015), or as a way of “increasing understanding of the world we live in and what we are doing to it in this particular instance” (Zalasiewicz, quoted in Showstack 2015).

Additionally, many humanities scholars have taken a keen interest in the notion of the Anthropocene—“Recently there has been some serious hype about entering the “age of the man” (Hettinger 2014)— allowing it to have become a sort of “buzzword” (Castree 2015). Though many would agree that this time includes serious ecologic and geologic change, not all understand it as a cause for panic and apocalypse. “Yes, we live in the Anthropocene — but that does not mean we inhabit an ecological hell.” (Emma Maris et al. 2011)

To understand the context of the Anthropocene in environmental thought, we must understand a bit about the historical trend of the American environmental movement, spanning approximately the past four or five decades. When we think of environmentalism, it would not be out of the ordinary to intuitively think of conservation— saving polar bears, rainforests, lakes, and wilderness areas, to give a few examples. Truthfully, the movement

was and still is predominantly concerned with the idea of “Nature”<sup>1</sup>, and often the *saving* of this so called “Nature”, as pointed out by Jim Proctor, in his paper, *Saving nature in the Anthropocene* (2013). “Nature” is often used interchangeably with other words, such as “wild” or “wilderness”, and demonstrates a way of thinking within environmentalism and beyond, which romanticizes the concept of Nature as a glorified other.

However, in Emma Marris’ book, *Rambunctious Garden: Saving Nature in a Post-Wild World*, (2011), she introduces a perspective that differs greatly from the classic approach above, yet one that is not uncommon in a contemporary environmental approach. “Nature is almost everywhere. But wherever it is, there is one thing that is is not: pristine.”(2011, 2). Proctor notes this perspective as “Anthropocene to the core” (2013, 86). Marris precedes this on the first page of her book by announcing that “We have lost a lot of nature in the past three hundred years... We have lost nature in the sense that much nature has been destroyed: where there was a tree, there is a house... But, we have lost nature in another sense. We have misplaced it. We have hidden it from ourselves” (2011, 1). Marris cites “our mistake” as the conditions that encouraged or inspired people to begin to think of nature as something ““out there, far away... a place, somewhere distant, wild and free...with no people...untouched by humanity[’s..]” (2011, 1).

Additionally, Marris notes that conservationists often dedicate their time and lives “desperately trying to stop wilderness from changing” (2011, 1). Not uncommon from a contemporary environmental perspective, Marris understands this effort, while commendable, as inhibiting us as a society to having “a fuller relationship with

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<sup>1</sup> I will use Nature with a capital “N” to signify this word in its context as a proper noun, an idea that started perhaps with the Transcendentalists, and which is repeated throughout classic environmental thought. Paradoxically, Nature is hard to define, when we look closer, we find that things are truly hybrid, and mixed.

nature” (2011, cover jacket). The reason for this comes from the fact that “We are already running the whole earth”, (2011, 2) and that “to run it consciously and effectively, we must admit our role and even embrace it”, tempering “our romantic notion of untrammelled wilderness and find room next to it for the more nuanced notion of a global, half-wild rambunctious garden, tended by us.” (2011, 2)

Marris’s perspective of moving past a traditional sense of Nature in relationship to the “wild” or “wilderness” is not dissimilar to other voices within a contemporary environmental movement. However, her repetitive use of the word “Nature” is not always shared by more radical thinkers on the subject, including Jim Proctor, who cites the term as an “overarching generalization for the non-human” (Proctor 2013, 86). Proctor also points out that though the concept of the Anthropocene has caused Marris to “*redefine nature*” (emphasis added) (87) — as a “rambunctious garden” — others, such as Paul Wapner in *Living Through the End of Nature* (2010), “*rejects nature given the Anthropocene*” (emphasis added) (2013, 87).

Discussion of what might be called the Nature/Culture binary is central to contemporary environmental thought, as well as within the discussion of the Anthropocene. Even within classical environmentalism, there has been a desire to understand the relationships between the human and their surroundings. While this conversation may have been different than how we think about it today, classics such as *Silent Spring* demonstrate a curiosity among people regarding their own roles in stewardship and the constant back and forth among human actions, ecological consequences, and then, further consequences for the people. This type of understanding may be the backbone for more contemporary discussions of Nature/Culture, especially as

they gain importance during the Anthropocene. Proctor reviews six books related to the Anthropocene, concluding that there seem to be two types of perspectives during this time on how to approach the nature/culture topic: either by “counting to one”, a “cultured nature”, or by “counting to two”—both are still separate. Proctor proposes:

*Embrace of the Anthropocene could, however, lead to counting beyond two by letting go of nature (and culture) as metaphysical categories qua moral shortcuts. The science and politics of living well in this enduring age of the Anthropocene may require attention less to generalities of nature than the interwoven details that constitute our environment. (Proctor 2013, 83)*

Whatever we count to, this demonstrates the prevalence of the discussion within Anthropocene regarding what will here be summed up as the “Nature/Culture binary”. Even during critique of the Anthropocene, Hettinger confirms the focus during the Anthropocene towards moving past “Nature”. “Most importantly, (the Anthropocene) threatens the key environmental values of “naturalness” (by which I mean the degree to which nature is not influenced by humans) and respect for nature” (Hettinger 2014).

This discussion helps lay the background for what are two of four points which I believe to be indicative of the Anthropocene. The first two are: attention to the Nature/Culture binary, and a desire to understand how to live within the world that exists today as opposed to a desire to turn back to older ways or previous ecological realities. This second point is mostly in contrast to what we might understand as classical conservation efforts, or general distrust of “technology” in general (Kingsnorth, 2012).

Scale is the third point in this framework. The time of the Anthropocene proposes this concept in many ways, most notably and obviously in its own description— the human being likened to a geologic force. No longer are we beings humbled and overpowered by

Nature, but rather, we shape the conditions of the planet (Latour 2011). In *War and Peace in the Age of Ecological Conflicts* (Latour 2014) the Anthropocene is a “label that designates the confusion of geology and human action” (59). Additionally, the Anthropocene by definition encompasses the entire globe— as we learned above, there is nowhere on the planet that is off limits to human influences. Hybridity itself poses notions of scale—a stream in a park might seem to be symbolic of Nature, yet when this park is bordered by a neighborhood, run by the city government, and often channeled through metal piping, we realize that general categorizations of “Nature” and “culture” do not fit<sup>2</sup>. In addition, this understanding makes clear the various levels of scales within any given situation or object.

Lastly, the Anthropocene is an interdisciplinary time —based on its hybrid nature, as well as the variety of disciplines fascinated by the topic. Additionally, scientists may no longer separate themselves and the social and political implications of an issue from their work (Latour 2015, 44), and as we work through issues as more than just “good vs. bad”, we find intersections and places where we can no longer sum things up into one type of category— because we live in a mixed world, we have mixed problems with mixed answers. Latour speaks to this subject in an interview for Art in the Anthropocene:

*What’s interesting in the Anthropocene is that we pose [...] questions for scientists, as well as for those on the side of politics, the humanities and art. Because of the Anthropocene situation there are lots of connections that were superficial before, where people would say “yes, its nice to have a link between artists and scientists, they are creative”, but now these are more directly connected. Here, we are talking about the common articulation of the Anthropocene[...]So in that sense[...] there’s a narrativity, and an urgency also, shared by people who are completely different in*

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<sup>2</sup> See alternative outcome reflection paper: Art and Research, Bossio 2017

*their approach. I do think the conversation has changed, so that is why this experiment around the Anthropocene is so exciting.* (Latour and Davis 2015, 47)

The four points above represent ideas apparently prevalent throughout Anthropocene literature, and in addition, there are plenty people who equate the Anthropocene with eminent environmental doom (Lotringer 2015, Hettinger 2014, Davis and Turpin 2015, Emmelhainz 2015). However, this pessimistic rhetoric does not seem unique of the Anthropocene, even though some authors who discuss the Anthropocene take this declensionist stance. I choose to understand this perspective as something more deeply embedded in general notions of environmentalism, and exclude it from my Anthropocene theory.

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## Why Art?

In her 2015 paper *Ethics, Ecology and the Future: Art and Design Face the Anthropocene*, Kayla Anderson states: “Art and design have become platforms for discussing the long-term implications of technology, and modernity, most recently in relation to ecological crisis and the Anthropocene” (2015, 338). This led to my framing question: “how can art help people to understand and/or process controversial and complex topics?”

However, Anderson cautions that, “While artists, designers and curators seek to raise awareness of the Anthropocene, it is important to remain critical of the narratives these practitioners develop” (2015, 338). These narratives are crucial in how we begin to develop our own understanding of the subject, and Anderson explains:

*Anthropocene narratives coming from the art world seem to be most potentially destructive when they propose to do something, further reinforcing an attitude of*

*human dominance over the planet. Paradoxically, art initiatives that stimulate critical thinking rather than simulate action have the potential to be most constructive* (2015, 339).<sup>3</sup>

This capstone is situated rather broadly, “in art”. The three artists whom I have chosen to look closely at are all well-known to a certain degree, their art shown in fairly well-known galleries (such as the SFMoMA and Mass MoCA) and featured on such programs/new outlets as Art21, TedX and Art in America to name a few. These three artists came up time and again during my research, and their practices seem to be influential in the realm of art that looks at the Anthropocene. These artists sustain practices which span the course of many works, and the pieces are intended formally, usually with either a gallery or exhibition in mind. This highly developed practice allows considerable focus to the concepts and modes of representation, and the work is held in high esteem by many other artists and art critics.

Based off of who is talking about the Anthropocene (mainly global northerners), this leaves Anthropocene art at this point to be situated within western art traditions, in somewhat elite circumstances. This does not mean that Anthropocene art does not manifest in other ways, nor that other manifestations are less important.

Though the outcomes are often more open-ended than those of a scientific research process, this paper recognizes art as a form of research. Though some art may be understood as “commercial”, a more “influential” art demonstrates a practice of working through an issue or question, sometimes producing a visual, physical outcome, other times not. In this case, this capstone is situated within influential art that deals with intersections

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<sup>3</sup> This idea will be continued in more depth at the end of the essay



of various topics or questions surrounding how humans relate to their non-human surroundings. My focus question for this capstone is then, “what are some of the key characteristics of the Anthropocene, and how are they being represented or seen in art?” During the time of the human, how do artists think about human relationships to and with non-humans, and what form of artistic expression do they choose?

To further explore this question, I used the four points about the Anthropocene (from above) as a framework with which to evaluate various artist’s practices through select pieces for their relationship to the Anthropocene concept. These points are: attention to discussion of the Nature/Culture binary, acceptance of present conditions (as opposed to a desire for the past), scale, and interdisciplinary engagement.

The methods of analysis were primarily thematic and narrative analysis, and are often highly subjective. For this project, I have looked at three artists who have connections to the concept of the Anthropocene, but who do not explicitly state in what ways or why their projects should be included as Anthropocene art. To understand this, I have used the framework above as a way in which to understand the connections between the artworks and the Anthropocene. By thoroughly looking at artists statements, project descriptions and documentary material regarding certain pieces, I have gained an understanding of the piece/artist’s practice from which I base my analysis off of.

Findings from the application of the Anthropocene framework to the artworks demonstrated that many pieces from artists discussing the Anthropocene do not fully demonstrate or align with these key Anthropocene concepts. This indicates a disconnect between humanities scholars and artists regarding the Anthropocene. With artistic practice as a research process and mediator to work through ideas, this disconnect may reflect the

newness of the subject (especially outside the humanities discipline) and indicate a lag; as a more general population we have not yet made this perceptual transition or shift.

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## Artists

### **NATALIE JEREMIJENKO**

*Jeremijenko's unique brand of participatory environmental action is marked by [this] seductive blend of DIY technology and amateur science...Jeremijenko is harnessing a wild energy that can capture our attention, overwhelm our orthodoxies and offer arresting alternatives to our habitual relationship to the world we inhabit. (Muller 2010)*

With a background in engineering, biochemistry, neuroscience, and history and philosophy of science, Natalie Jeremijenko may not at first sound like someone in the NYU Visual Art Department. However, more recently, Jeremijenko works as an artist, and from my research, I have found her work to be at the forefront of the intersection of art and the Anthropocene. Indeed, Jeremijenko uses the word “Anthropocene” outright on her website’s “about” page to describe the current time in which the Earth and its residents exist.

Jeremijenko’s practice utilizes the art-historical “institutional critique”, and the artist herself understands this practice as one of the most valuable contributions from the discipline of art to the world. Institutional critique arose during the mid 20th century, calling out the institution of art as culturally stifling. Here, taste is recognized as a product of the institution, without regard for potential differences in taste based on a variety of social factors, including class, race and gender (Tate 2017). Often, this has meant that art which attempts institutional critique veers away from the setting of a gallery, however this

is not always the case. Here, Jeremijenko riffs off of institutional critique as above to use art as a means to question larger institutions and their processes.

Jeremijenko hopes to develop an “alternative institution” for reimagining and redesigning a shared urban environment (Larios 2013). This theme can be understood as central to her practice and a base off which her projects build. However, the NYU professor also disagrees with a system where designers, planners or architects dominate the conversation and implementations of how cities, shared urban environments, are designed (Larios 2013). Additionally, Jeremijenko is critical of small, behavioral changes, such as with the promotion of individual actions as solutions, and hopes to recognize them as “necessary but insufficient” (Larios 2013).

In her ongoing project, Environmental Health Clinic, Jeremijenko attempts institutional critique by problematizing of the “medicalization of health” (Larios, 2013). In this case, Jeremijenko strives to encourage a turn back towards understanding internal effects as indicative of external conditions. Basically, how we should look towards our (shared) environments as influential upon our individual health conditions. In Environmental Health Clinic, patients arrive with concerns about their own health, or the health of their immediate environment, and leave the clinic with “prescriptions” for various actions they may take in order to improve their health, via the improved health of their environment. For example, a patient may come to the clinic with concern about their asthma, and leave with solutions for improving the air quality in their neighborhood.

Lizzie Muller reviews a 2010 show by Jeremijenko in Sydney, AU, describing the Australia-native artist’s practice quite well. This show, titled “X”, preceded some of her

larger, participatory projects which I discuss here, however, the underlying themes seem to be very similar.

*...Her work is built on the idea of creating tools that allow others to take action to investigate or improve their own situation. Perhaps even more interestingly from a participatory perspective, these ‘others’ need not necessarily always be human. Her practice is fundamentally a form of ecological and political activism. But she does not seek to defend nature from humanity, she does not fight for the wilderness, or protect pristine landscapes from human destruction. Jeremijenko fights for an urban ecology in which human beings, in their own man-made habitat, are connected tangibly, viscerally and emotionally to the rest of nature. Much of her work is about creating new ways for humans and non-humans to participate together in the amelioration of their shared habitat. (2010, 589-590)*

Additionally, the X in Jeremijenko’s practice has been described as short for “experimental” in her notion of “experimental design”. The X also references crossing boundaries, something which she understands as foundational to her work— “cross-fertilization, cross-species collaboration, and cross disciplinary collaboration” (Muller 2010).

Jeremijenko often engages with subjects that indicate a potential desire to merge and rethink boundaries and binaries of nature and culture. Projects *BUTTERFLY xBRIDGE* and *TREExOFFICE*, offer examples of how this may be working.

*BUTTERFLY xBRIDGE* (Figure 1) provides safe pathways for pollinators to move throughout a city, navigating the infrastructure challenges that a city presents— namely, streets. Indicative of the hybridity of the world, pollinators do not only exist in green spaces, and are living within cities, whether we care for them or not— categories that we may draw such as “natural” vs. “human-made” do not hold up in real life. These bridges work to promote a larger culture of thriving pollinators within cities, helping them maneuver through the city via enticing flowers hanging on bridge-like structures high

above the roads and out of danger from cars. These bridges allow pollinators to cross streets safely, and can also create links between green spaces where they may find elements more stable to their survival, such as parks, hedgerows and personal gardens. Ideally, the city would support a large network of these bridges and green spaces.

TREE x OFFICE (figures 2 and 3) takes a slightly more radical approach to the nature-culture understanding, as a communal office space is built in or around a tree. This space can be rented out by the day or hour, and comes complete with high-speed internet. All the rent money goes to the landlord... the tree! The tree then “uses” the money for its own benefit, investing in projects that will benefit it both in the short and long run. Some of the more short term investments include pollinator projects such as Butterfly Bridges as well as soil enrichment. In a short video about the project, Jeremijenko credits the “Bolivian rights of earth document” which attempts to give legal standing/rights to the non-human world. In the case of the tree, Jeremijenko and the Environmental Health Clinic play with this idea by giving the tree the rights to property as a landlord. In this same video, Jeremijenko notes that urban trees have been valued at \$400 per tree, based off their benefits to communities, with help such as air quality control. Jeremijenko hopes that by elevating the tree from a “low paid service worker” to that of a property owner, we may create an “interdependent urban ecosystem” and “demonstrate a capacity to produce a desirable future.” (Jeremijenko, 2012) “The Tree’s longer term investments involve sending offspring to schools, universities and sites of higher education. This is a specific investment strategy to provide for the next generation in terms improved air quality and more productive energy systems.” (Environmental Health Clinic Website, “TREExOFFICE”)

In terms of scale, Jeremijenko is explicit in the fact that through her work she hopes to help humans to take control of their own environmental health. This sentiment carries through her work as she challenges existing systems and processes, with a desire for people to claim responsibility for the world in which we inhabit. During the Anthropocene we must begin to recognize our lives as situated within a mix of influences and consequences from both human and non-humans, and further, we must move forward with this understanding so that all of our creations remain conscious of their larger implications. Jeremijenko's understanding of this mix situates within highly urbanized areas with a desire to push the bar for environmental health both as an aide for immediate human health as well as for concerns regarding larger scale and longer term ecological degradation such as biodiversity loss. Jeremijenko's vision for cities includes them as places which have high levels of insects, food growing, improved and clean air, all while also continuously growing more and more technologically advanced. In this way, Jeremijenko touches on nature/culture issues, as well as some scales, including humans as a geologic force.

Additionally, with all of this Jeremijenko demonstrates a relinquishment on the idea of a potential "return" to some previous and potentially "pristine" condition— though a city may seem highly unnatural, Jeremijenko works to create spaces that include aspects of both the biophysical world and the built environment in ways which highlight aspects of their potential to work together to achieve the most dynamic and conscious space. Jeremijenko realizes the reality of city spaces and their human inhabitants, but also the realities of their non-human inhabitants, and works, sometimes literally, to merge, bridge and celebrate these hybrid spaces.

Artist // Piece	Scale	Nature/Culture	Acceptance of Current Conditions	Interdisciplinary
Jeremijenko// Tree X Office	<p>Somewhat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Power scales (who speaks for who, humans vs. non-humans needs/priorities in decision making)</li> <li>•Distance scales (trees sending offspring to colleges)</li> <li>•economic scales, “low paid service worker” —&gt; “landlord”/ “Property owner”</li> </ul>	<p>Yes! Definitely engages with this concept, though perhaps doesn't fully transcend it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•references the Bolivian constitutional amendment giving “rights” to “Mother Earth”</li> <li>•however, still symbolic: <i>structure</i> in a <i>tree</i> to reference synthesis between “natural” and built environments. Tree is symbolic of “natural” world or “Nature”.</li> </ul>	<p>Yes!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The work largely takes a reformist perspective</li> <li>•celebrates a more mixed world of humans and non-humans. Tries to imagine what this might look like in its most inclusive and efficient form.</li> </ul>	<p>Yes!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•economic, power, engineering, environmental concerns, art. Also research based and tries to make connections to institutions of higher education</li> <li>•plays with needs of both human and non-human actors interacting</li> </ul>
Jeremijenko// Butterfly X Bridge	<p>Somewhat/ Unclear.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Infrastructure for pollinators, which is somewhat a scale in the size of the pollinators themselves</li> </ul>	<p>Yes!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Another example of how Jeremijenko grapples with human relationship to non-humans, trying to make cities more “fair” for pollinators.</li> <li>• As above, still symbolic — pollinators as a symbol for nature.</li> </ul>	<p>Yes!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Moving forward — celebrates and helps pollinators live in urban setting.</li> </ul>	<p>Somewhat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•plays with needs of humans and non-human actors interacting.</li> </ul>

**MARY MATTINGLY**

“Art can transform people’s perceptions about value, and collective art forms can reframe predominant ideologies.”

—Mary Mattingly (2015)

I first stumbled across Mary Mattingly’s work on the cover of one of my main sources for this project, “Art in the Anthropocene” edited by Heather Davis and Etienne Turpin. However, though “Pull” (Figure 4) is used as the cover art for the book, and Mattingly’s pieces show in exhibits that reference the term, I have been hard pressed to find references to the Anthropocene from the artist herself.

Mattingly is a self-described apocalyptic thinker. She discusses much of her previous work as highly dystopian, such as projects on wearable structures for housing the individual body as well as small amount of power and water (Figure 5). Her photographs of these works often depict a barren landscape as the background, with only one figure (Figures 6 and 7). These images speak volumes towards a narrative of solitude, survival and apocalypse. However, the artist began to transition away from this, remarking retrospectively in a 2013 interview, “this dystopic future, it was very sad to me, and breaking out of it was necessary at some point. I really started to think about my own life, and how outside of this future I was inventing, we all had to live.” (Miller and Ravich 2014)

In her 2013 series *House and Universe*, Mattingly utilizes both photographic, sculptural and performative aspects. *Pull* and *Life of Objects* (figure 8) are both images from this series. First, Mattingly photographed and catalogued all of her possessions, learning about the life history of as many as possible— the places they came from, the materials involved and their origins, etc. She proceeded to pile these objects and wrap them, creating



a new, sculptural object from her many possessions. She then proceeded in the performative aspect by dragging the object across the Bayonne Bridge, which connects New Jersey and Staten Island. This bridge was significant as it at the time was somewhat of an obstruction for the global shipping industry, due to its low height. The piece intended to celebrate this aspect of the bridge as a sort of protest against the shipping industry as it relates more generally to a capitalistic system and the production and consumption of material goods. Her cumbersome experience of moving the object intended to represent (though not understand) the traumatic, exploitative and problematic processes and histories behind many of her personal objects.

During her shift from the dystopian realm, Mattingly began collaborative work on Triple Island (Figures 9, 10, 11), a three-part structure that acts as living space, greenhouse, garden, and communal space for cooking. This space is situated at pier 42, along the East river in New York City, in an area that was flooded during hurricane Sandy. For this reason, Mattingly has built the structures on empty 55 gallon drums, so that in the event of a flood, from any given natural or human induced disaster, these structures could float. (Miller and Ravich 2014)

“Mary’s really apocalyptic, she imagines a world in which we don’t have a supply chain through which you can meet your needs, and so she’s inventing things which you can still live in like, an urban habitat.” (Ivan Gilbert in “New York Close Up”, Art21 2014)

Though Triple Island, may still be apocalyptic or designed with apocalyptic situations in mind, I find a success in Mattingly’s works which deals with the imaginative and free nature of art projects to playfully propose new ideas, and to interact with people. Triple Island as a participatory piece engages participants to rethink, or more closely think

about their relationships and connections to systems such as capitalism, supply chains, power, etc. Though the piece may be oriented to take place after some apocalyptic event or disaster, the nature of this piece to work past the event itself, and to begin to imagine what a new world looks and feels like closely relates to larger Anthropocene questions and themes.

This is interesting, as initially I understood apocalyptic themes as indicative of a less productive narrative. Yet, in this case, Mattingly demonstrates that an apocalyptic approach is not necessarily one which ceases to be meaningful and helpful. This seems to be true for two reasons. First, that she does not understand the apocalypse as the end event, and second, that in the aftermath, we will continue to figure out how to live, calling upon our ingenuity and creativity. In many ways, this is not that different from redesigning our current ways of thinking and living such as Jeremijenko, or the next artist, Saraceno do. The differences seem to lie in the ways in which we begin this shift— in Mattingly's case, we are forced to most likely through a collapse of many of the systems that we rely on. In Saraceno and Jeremijenko's work, the artists begin in the present moment and rely more heavily on belief in the ability to reform current systems. Interestingly, both Jeremijenko and Mattingly have worked significantly in New York City, and both deal with what it will mean to live in new ways in urban settings.

However, though she seems to be forward thinking in terms of the rethinking and restructuring, her proposals rely less heavily on technology than other artists, and are almost suspicious of technological innovation. Though Triple Island relies on a degree of human innovation, these innovations are all about living more simply and often using older

technologies and DIY contraptions, such as a refrigerator that is just one terra cotta pot inside of another, and simple water filtration systems.

Both Triple Island and Pull pose questions of simplicity— how much do I really need, and what would it be like to live without things that I think I want, how may I use what I have? Similarly, this piece may be looked at as an urban permaculture experiment<sup>4</sup>, which, like the above contribute to a classical environmentalist perspective.

In respect to the Nature/Culture binary, Mattingly describes Triple Island’s location on pier 42 as a “place between nature and the city” (Miller and Ravich 2014). Additionally, Mattingly’s proposes that human interactions with the ecological world should be in the form of “stewardship”, and “caretakers” (Mattingly, 2015). While not necessarily bad or untrue some of these ideas may reminiscent of a classical interpretation of the Nature/Culture relationship especially in the context of conservation.

Mattingly’s pieces address scale in the context of trying to understand the larger systems in place which shape our lives as middle-class, global northerners. What systems do we play into without even noticing? “Who has power, who doesn’t? Who doesn't have access and who does?” (Mattingly, in “New York Close Up”, Art 21 2014)

Yet, in parting, Mattingly returns to the themes which indicate a true desire to learn how to really live within a future that is uncertain or, in her case, very “grim”. However, she notes that in some senses she is optimistic that people will be able to come together to work in a communal way to “make something that’s a new world” (Mattingly in “New York Close Up” Art21 2014). Though the piece is intended partially as a sculpture, she describes

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<sup>4</sup> Permaculture is a principal generally related to the designing of “sustainable” ecosystems for agricultural production. Often permaculture is practiced in urban contexts, where people transform their yards into centers of food production to be consumed by the residents of that property.

it also as “symbolic” of the optimistic ideas above. Additionally, this piece offers a creative space for experimentation and experience thinking in new ways about our relationships to non-human actors as well as other humans.

<i>Artist // Piece</i>	<i>Scale</i>	<i>Nature/Culture</i>	<i>Acceptance of Current Conditions</i>	<i>Interdisciplinary</i>
<p><i>Mattingly // Triple Island</i></p>	<p>Yes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Notably these pieces work to imagine what life would be like in the event of a major catastrophe, disaster or collapse, which, though apocalyptic, asks us to think about what would be left — aka what systems we rely on without even thinking about them.</li> </ul>	<p>Somewhat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Triple Island as located between “nature and the city”</li> </ul> <p>Slightly apocalyptic</p>	<p>Somewhat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Still relates to classic environmental thought, such as promotion of more “simple” ways of living such as rainwater harvesting, gardening, etc.</li> <li>• However, structures not meant to be completely self sustaining, still require interaction with urban and the conveniences that come with it.</li> </ul>	<p>Yes!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• working with technical processes for self-sustaining energy, water collection, gardening, and urban renewal.</li> <li>• Research-based project.</li> <li>•walks the line between permaculture experiment and art project</li> </ul>
<p><i>Mattingly // House and Universe</i></p>	<p>Yes!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•focus on scales regarding production and consumption, cradle to grave type of idea.</li> <li>•How do the objects in our lives have a global impact</li> <li>•How do individuals play into larger systems</li> </ul>	<p>Somewhat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•only in the attention that she gives to the ecological exploitation of materials.</li> </ul>	<p>Unsure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•form of protest. only goes as far as to question the systems, doesn't give much focus to the alternatives or how to move forward.</li> </ul>	<p>Somewhat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•combines research on materials with place (the significance of the bridge)</li> <li>•combines art and activism/protest, though this doesn't seem new</li> </ul>

**TOMÁS SARACENO**

Tomás Saraceno is an Argentinian-born artist who works internationally. His work is “informed by the worlds of art, architecture, natural sciences, astrophysics and engineering.” (Saraceno “About” 2017) In an article for *Art in the Anthropocene*, coauthored by Sasha Engelmann and Bronislaw Szerszynski, Saraceno talks about his project for Monument to the Anthropocene, Museo Aerosolar, (Figures 12, 13 14) a community art project in which people melt the edges of old plastic bags together to create an airtight bubble. This bubble then is left out in the sun, to fill with hot air, and begin to rise. Plans for such structures are freely available on the project’s website, [aerocene.org](http://aerocene.org). “Becoming aerosolar would recognize a third, alternative future in which civilization is truly solar-powered, but also liberated from Earth’s surface to become airborne. This is the promise of a future solar-cene.” (Engelmann, Saraceno and Szerszynski 2015, 59) Museo Aerosolar challenges the current “rules of the air” (such as who has permission to be up in it and where) and hopes to encourage legislative change on the subject. Museo Aerosolar structures “promot[e] free and democratic access to aero-stratigraphic data”, encouraging their potential use for individuals and communities to use for emissions-free mapping projects, air quality testing, etc.

However, though he is credited for his work on the Monument to the Anthropocene, Saraceno talks about his work as moving beyond the Anthropocene (Martin, MIT News). He proposes a new time, the Aerocene, in which humans take to the sky in ways never imagined before. The way in which we do so, Saraceno proposes, will be in solar balloons, modeled after Montgolfiere Infrarouge (MIR) trials —large solar balloons for exploring and

collecting weather and cartographic data—from France’s National Center for Space Studies starting in the 1970s. (Martin, MIT News) These balloons however are different from those in Museo Aerosolar—now Saraceno envisions a world where transportation does not rely on fossil fuels, where instead we treat the earth itself as a giant battery (Saraceno, Feb. 14, 2017). These balloons will utilize solar radiation during the day to stay afloat, and infrared radiation from the earth during the night, propelled and carried by jet streams— the specific colors and reflectiveness on various sides of the balloons will be critical for their functionality.

In collaboration with MIT meteorologists, led by Lodovica Illari, Saraceno has designed balloons, and even tried them! At a test in White Sands National Monument in New Mexico, Saraceno and crew set a record for the longest solar-powered, lighter than air, tethered vehicle flight (Martin, MIT News) (Figure 15). In an interview with Cassie Martin for MIT News, Tomás remarked “We like to think of ourselves as living on Earth’s surface, but we are living at the bottom of an ocean of air.” (Martin, 2015) Eventually, Tomás somewhat playfully envisions clusters of bubbles suspended in the air, large enough to support full communities. These little worlds would float largely based on the differences of temperatures between the inside and outside (Figure 16) Earthbound versions of these structures have been displayed in various galleries, including a current show at the SFMoMA titled *Stillness in Motion—Cloud Cities* (Figure 17). Cloud cities is a part of the overall Aerocene project, and, “refers to how it feels to float in the air, condensing the gap between our perception and experience of the ocean of air at the bottom of which we dwell.” (Saraceno)

Though many of these proposals are somewhat outrageous to imagine in contemporary society, we return to Latour's reasoning for the necessity of art in the time of the Anthropocene (whether or not Saraceno sees his work as a part of the Anthropocene or Aerocene), where people from different backgrounds and disciplines work together, forming a "common articulation of the Anthropocene." (Latour and Davis 2015) From the same MIT interview, Saraceno's meteorologist partner commented:

*Tomás' vision of flying solar balloons between cities might be rather futuristic, but it opened our eyes. It made us think outside the box and imagine having a large array of solar balloons, moving with the flow and measuring constituents all over the stratosphere at almost zero energy cost. (Martin 2015)*



<i>Artist // Piece</i>	<i>Scale</i>	<i>Nature/Culture</i>	<i>Return to Previous State</i>	<i>Interdisciplinary</i>
Tomás Saraceno // Cloud Cities/ Project Aerosolar	<p>Yes! in a big way!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Not only limited to earthbound environment, wants to create and inhabit entirely new environments. Wants to inhabit the air!</li> </ul>	<p>Yes!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Some tropes, e.g. takes inspiration from biologic world (such as spider webs and cloud/water formations).</li> <li>•However, transcends the symbolic qualities better than others. uses biologic inspiration to inform/create highly technical structures, does not use physical elements of "Nature" in the product.</li> <li>•This piece goes further than others in really working to create a world in which we are not thinking about either a "cultured nature" or Nature/ Culture binary.</li> </ul>	<p>Yes!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•All about moving forward in big ways!</li> <li>•Often bypassing smaller ideas of reform with a desire to recreate the entire system.</li> <li>•Saraceno backs up his shocking claims by actually creating some of the structures and technologies that he proposes.</li> </ul>	<p>Yes!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Saraceno works not only as an architect and researcher himself, but partners with other research and engineering groups, such as a meteorology unit at M.I.T.</li> </ul>

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## Discussion

Though there could be many different ways of interpreting these pieces in relationship to the framework, these findings evidence that there is a disconnect between artists and humanities scholars in their presentations of the Anthropocene. In both fields, the concept is relatively new, within the past 15 years for humanities scholars at most, and most likely the past 5 or maybe 10 for artists. Not only have the scholars had more time to work through the various intricacies of the subject, but additionally, have seemingly speculated on the themes to levels of abstraction and theory that surpass the actuality of how a more general population regards their experience in today's political, environmental and social climates. When one begins to work with the topic of the Anthropocene, they most likely will quickly surpass the level of understanding held general public as it is a relatively unheard of topic. With that in mind, the artistic practice as one of research seems to lend itself as an example of how one may begin to process and conceptualize this type of new information. Additionally, as something which surpasses the general public's knowledge, yet does not fully abstract itself to the level of the humanities, art provides an in-between for bridging theories and our actual processes of shifting perceptions.

With this in mind, the tropes which I found in the artworks are understandable. After spending so much time researching this topic, the slightly more radical proposals and theories from Anthropocene scholars come to seem obvious. However, the places where the artistic practices fell short of fully articulating or meeting the concepts of the framework served as a reminder that these topics and opinions are shared and actually understood by a very select portion of the population. Further, I was reminded that I too am not able to fully grasp these ideas— most predominantly, though I understand the sentiment behind something beyond nature

and culture “counting beyond two” (Proctor 2013, 83), I still categorize, symbolize and fall into the same tropes as the artists above.

Projects such as ButterflyXBridge and TreeXOffice use symbols such as trees and pollinators to symbolize “nature” as they attempt to demonstrate a collaboration or hybridity between nature and culture. Triple Island evokes both an apocalyptic and perhaps classical environmental stance as it speculates on the aftermath of some unknown disaster, and uses common systems for rain water collection, gardening, and electricity as a proposal for “sustainability”. “Pull” is a practice of living with less, and tells a not-so-new ‘story of stuff’, yet seemingly ignores the privilege that one must have in order to take these actions. Mattingly’s practice indicates a feeling which I suppose to not be uncommon—fear and desire for action without fully understanding what the problems to act upon are, or how.

Jeremijenko’s work indicates the further struggle of how to live, make and act within a world that is all connected, but which we are trained to understand as two things. Further, how to talk about and convey biophysical concerns regarding air quality, biodiversity, or climate change when the culturally embedded go-to is “Nature”. Additionally, TreeXOffice is problematic in the sense that though the tree is being given rights, humans still must speak and make decisions for it.

However, these artist’s tropes are in good company! From above, Anthropocene scholar Emma Marris not only uses the word nature frequently, and its symbolic “rambunctious garden”, but also could be understood as proposing a conservation ethic more inline with thoughts from classic environmentalism. “No matter how radical the book's self-pronouncement, it may hearken too close to the pulse of conservation to explore any territory in which nature—any overarching generalization for the non- human, whether wilderness or garden—is left

behind.” (Proctor 2013, 86) And, just as the finding in this paper indicate, Proctor concludes that “whether as the old pure nature or the new hybrid nature, some notion of nature remains at the heart of environmentalism.” (Proctor 2013, 84)

After analysis, Saraceno’s work appears to align most closely with the Anthropocene framework. Though he often takes inspiration from clouds and spider webs he uses his research on various aspects of their structures to inform technologies that he creates. In this case, his complete abstraction of what may act as symbols for “Nature” seemingly gets him closer to transcending the Nature/Culture binary, or “counting beyond two” in ways which other projects do not.

*(Saraceno’s) work is [also] in critical dialogue with a cadre of contemporary practitioners who similarly explore the relationship between art, architecture, and global ecologies, approaching the “environment” not as an object or packaged resource, but as a variable assemblage of biological, technological, economic, and sociopolitical concerns whose borders must be continually negotiated. (Malone 2011, par 5)*

On the subject of scale, Saraceno not only addresses scales of the earth, but those beyond. His projects address huge concepts, such as our reliance on oil and fossil fuels but in situated, and actually, feasible proposals. Though Saraceno does not make claims such that his pieces are the ultimate solutions to the entire complexity of our contemporary oil dependance, these proposals are highly informed, and highly creative, pushing interdisciplinary boundaries. Additionally, Saraceno’s proposals could be interpreted as uncomfortable, as they thoroughly challenge things which we understand as a large part of our human existence, such as living on the earth, and conversely, those which humans do not usually do: fly.

From all of this, I speculate that we are in a time of lag. Though perhaps, as Marris proclaims on the cover jacket of her book, “A paradigm shift is roiling in the environmental world”, this shift and its real implications has only really begun to be recognized and understood by a small group of scholars. However, as we observe artists beginning to grapple with the ideas, I am inclined to believe that we may be in the process of working towards these understandings. Rather than be discouraged by the dissonance between the theories and artistic representations, I understand it as the start of a larger movement, and perhaps, paradigm shift.

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### The Bigger Picture: Learning to Live in the Anthropocene

Is the Anthropocene even real? Perhaps so, perhaps not! However, either way we still inhabit the same conditions, the same realities that have us asking the questions we are asking, and debating what we are debating. Primarily, these are questions about humans, by humans, most notably in how we relate to our surroundings and other non-humans. These questions may evoke anything from excitement to terror, and are the same whether or not the Anthropocene is “real”. However, accepting it, we return to the underlying question within all of the artistic practices and humanities papers above— how do we learn to live within the Anthropocene?

Learning to live within the Anthropocene is essentially about creating a new epistemology with which we can guide and ground ourselves as we navigate the Anthropocene. Without a new epistemology, humans may begin to feel lost during a time which poses certain uncertainty, mess, and inevitable changes to our previous modes of existence (Small 2015). In the context of the Nature/Culture binary, Latour notes that

previously, science has focused on a separation, a liberation of Culture from Nature as a way to progress, develop and advance (Latour 2011). Instead, Latour proposes that for the Anthropocene, we will need to figure out how learning and knowledge will be a process in continuously growing closer to world of “non-human natures” (Latour 2011). Part of our new epistemology will require restructuring of our imaginations so that learning is not separating and untangling, but instead, accepting the mess and following the threads as valuable actors to learn about their interactions and consequences.

The Anthropocene does not need more ways of extracting information and facts, but at this point desires new ways in which to interpret and understand (Small 2015). In this way, images and their narratives which only state facts fall short in contributing to the shaping of a new epistemology on what it means to live in the Anthropocene. The good news, as evidenced by the great debate and controversies on the subject, is that as artists and humanities scholars alike struggle to figure out how to understand our current time, they demonstrate overall an active desire towards and engagement with describing our new ways to understand living within the world (Small 2015).

So, how does art contribute to the shaping of this new epistemology? Davis and Turpin explain their understanding of the roles for art during this time: “art, as the vehicle of *aesthesis*<sup>5</sup>, is central to thinking with and feeling through the Anthropocene.” The authors agree with Irmgard Emmelhainz from her essay in the same book, *Images Do Not Show: The Desire to See Within the Anthropocene*, that truly, images will not show us the way, this is not what we can expect of art. Davis and Turpin continue:

*First, we argue that the Anthropocene is primarily a sensorial phenomenon... Second, the way we have come to understand the Anthropocene has frequently been framed through*

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<sup>5</sup> Oxford English Dictionary defines *aesthesis* as “the perception of the external world by the senses.”

*modes of the visual... Third, art provides a polyarchic site of experimentation...and a non-moral form of address that offers a range of discursive, visual, and sensual strategies that are not confined by the regimes of scientific objectivity, political moralism, or psychological depression. (2015, 3-4)*

Additionally, we learn above from Kayla Anderson the importance in how we choose to represent the Anthropocene in images and narratives (Anderson 2015). While apocalyptic narratives may be enticing, these are easy and do not actually help us learn to live within this time. Like with Mattingly's work, we must move on from such narratives towards thinking about what it means to live. This is a much harder narrative.

As a part of the senior art show on campus at Lewis and Clark, critics are invited to visit with students to talk about the work in the gallery. During an informal conversation with Yaelle Amir, curator at Newspace Center for Photography, I was surprised to learn that she was totally familiar with the concept of the Anthropocene. Not only this, but she mentioned off handedly that the Anthropocene is a very popular idea in the art world right now. Due to the seemingly new nature of this concept, as well as the trouble I had finding sources about this, I was somewhat surprised to hear her say this. However, after thinking about it, I realized that indeed, I have found the word used quite often during my research, just not always in ways which aligned with my understandings or rubric for the Anthropocene. So, if the Anthropocene is being talked about and popularized within the art world and the narratives aren't so much in line with what I had identified, what are the dominant narratives in the art world regarding the Anthropocene?

Yaelle named several artists in Chicago who work with the Anthropocene. In addition to looking at their work, I found an article from one of the artists, Brian Holmes. This article, titled, "What Can Art Do About Pipeline Politics?" gives an example of how art

may be used in an instrumental way, in this case, taking a stand against big oil in the Chicago metropolitan region. Various activities, including underground pipelines and oil trains through the city pose risks to residents, and often it would seem as nothing is being done, and as though most people do not want to know about it. In this way, some feel as though big oil is taking advantage of Chicago residents, and a group of artists, as well as others, worked to combat the situation. Here, artistic practice was seemingly used instrumentally in a way which focused on *telling* the status of a situation.

This exhibition featured several pieces or contributions that took on apocalyptic qualities— glass droplets full of detritus that referenced “a toxic industry” (Holmes 2017, 428), science-fiction “scenarios” (ibid.), and images of methadone (a drug responsible for treating narcotics addiction), to represent carbon trading plans and their flaws (Holmes 2017, 429) The artist’s own contribution— a map of the Southside of Chicago and online resources for cartographically “exploring the petroleum industry and its discontents at local, metropolitan, continental, and global scales” (Holmes 2017, 429), seems somewhat less apocalyptic, but without offering any type of forward looking attitude, this just further perpetuates the status quo of dominant big oil, and is pessimistic in its own way by not offering anything further. Only the piece from community activist and performance artist, Rozalinda Borcilă seems to get at the nature of a work for the Anthropocene. This piece is described as “a series of carefully prepared public walks and a participatory mind-mapping workshop, exploring the direct perception of daily life in the Oil City.” (Holmes 2017, 429) This to me sounds like the only piece which attempted to move past just telling about a specific situation or state of being, and tried to look deeper through mind-mapping “perceptions” and experiencing via the walks.



The Anthropocene is a time during which those who engage with it cannot take an objective stance. Latour demonstrates this with scientists who engage with climate change—though the field of science is built on facts and objectivity, this is now impossible when the issues we seek to understand are directly connected to our personal and political lives (Latour 2014). The Anthropocene demands our engagement with that which we study, demands us to experience. For decades, if not longer, artists have been playing the role of an emotionally connected researcher, an experiencer responding to and working through the issues that most influentially impact and affect them. In this regard, art has a leg up in the first steps towards learning to live within the Anthropocene. Indeed, art which aims for stimulation of critical thinking is often the most successful (Anderson 2015).

Perhaps, as with everything in the Anthropocene, art cannot choose between dualistic categories, such as representation of experience vs. actual experience. Though often art is created through the act of representing experience, the need for the art itself to create or inspire experience may be more important during times when radical shifts in perception are required. This would account for the ways in which pieces that mainly “tell” do not align with the Anthropocene concepts. Additionally, this may explain (at least in part) why many of the pieces from the artists that I looked at are three-dimensional and often participatory. For example, Mattingly’s pieces though potentially apocalyptic, are highly experiential and meaningful to the participant and experiencer. Even for herself, as she works through the process of *Pull*, she works through her own understandings, connecting with the ideas and questions in new, lived ways. However, the *photographs* of her process do not fully convey the experience. When I showed an image of *Pull* in class, someone remarked that that image in particular appeared apocalyptic.

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## Conclusion

Moving forward, it is imperative that art continue to ask critical questions, and that artists continue to use their practice of art as research to take information further. Art as research cannot stop by simply “telling” or presenting a fact, but must internalize the information, digest it, and respond with new ideas. Will we change the dominant narratives of the Anthropocene? With the relative newness of the subject and the amount of talk and interest that it has already gained, I am inclined to believe that this topic is just in its beginning phases. As both humanities scholars and artists alike continue to push the boundaries of how we understand the Anthropocene, we will only deepen our ability to expand our notions of human to non-human relationships.

As the Anthropocene proposes inevitable uncertainty and continuous unforeseen situations, the goal in understanding the Anthropocene will not be answered via a simple action. Likewise, there is no one answer waiting to be found as the solution to our Anthropocene dilemmas. Understanding how to live within the Anthropocene is a dance of constant engagement and critical thinking that we must practice for increased resiliance, rather than a static answer we may suddenly take on. The artists and scholars in this paper represent a snapshot of this dance at a particular point in time, demonstrate only their engagement and thought process up until this point. In a lively and variable time, we understand again the importance of art not as it dictates solutions or tells a fact, but in its ability to express experience and to promote and provoke the creative process.

During the Anthropocene, humans live in a world of our own creation, yet “not of our own design” (Small 2015, 17)— we have no road map or design specs to turn to. The

lack of direction demands that we actively work on learning our path. We cannot abandon the thing which we have created, this Anthropocene Epoch, even if it seems to be out of control. Latour puts it best in his article titled: *Love Your Monsters: Why we must care for our technologies as we do our children*. “Dr Frankenstein’s crime was not in that he invented a creature through some combination of hubris and high technology, but rather that he abandoned the creature to itself” (Latour 2011, 246).

Narratives will live and die, our understandings of our relationships, our surroundings and our world will expand, change and adapt. Most likely, the Anthropocene criteria in this paper as well as many others will eventually become obsolete. The goals then for art are not to simply arrive at a place where it meets these criteria, but rather, as art does, to continuously push and develop key questions and concepts of the human experience. As a form of institutional critique, we must use critical thought, creativity and humility to wake up in the Anthropocene, as the first step in learning to live within it. This includes constantly understanding where we are at both personal and non-personal levels, and how we arrived at these conditions. Thus, learning to live within the “epoch of us” is not about finding an answer to stick by, but, learning to continuously and actively tend to the process of creating the path ahead of us and through the Anthropocene.

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## Table of Figures



Figure 1  
Natalie Jeremijenko  
*BUTTERFLYxBRIDGE*

image courtesy of artist



Natalie Jeremijenko

Figure 3 (left above) Exterior of  
*TREE x OFFICE*, London.

Figure 3 (right above) Interior  
of *TREE x OFFICE*, London

Images courtesy of Urdesign (<http://www.urdesignmag.com/architecture/2015/06/12/treexoffice-pop-up-tree-office-opens-in-londons-hoxton-square/>)  
(2015)  
and © Jack Hobhouse

Natalie Jeremijenko, 2015.  
(In collaboration with artists Shuster + Moseley, architects Tate Harmer and Gensler. by Groundwork London, Artsadmin and Hackney Council)



Figure 4  
*Pull*  
(House and Universe  
Series) 2013  
Mary Mattingly

Image courtesy of artist



Figure 5 (top left)  
*Wearable Homes* (2004)  
Mary Mattingly

Figure 6 (bottom left)  
*In the Naval of the Moon* (2008)  
from *Nomadographies* (series)  
Mary Mattingly

Figure 7 (bottom right)  
From *A New Breed* (2004)  
Mary Mattingly

Images courtesy of artist







Figure 8  
*Life of Objects*  
(House and Universe  
Series) 2013  
Mary Mattingly



Figures 9, 10, and 11  
*Triple Island* (2013)  
New York, NY, Pier 42  
Mary Mattingly

Images courtesy of the artist



Figure 12  
Museo Aero Solar in  
Roskilde, Denmark, 2011.  
© Museo Aero Solar, 2011.

Images from <http://tomassaraceno.com/projects/museoaerosolar/#&gid=1&pid=1>

Tomás Saraceno in  
collaboration with Alberto  
Pesavento



Figure 13

Museo Aero Solar in Prato, Italy,  
2009. Photographed by Janis  
Elko © Museo Aero Solar, 2009.

Images from <http://tomassaraceno.com/projects/museoaerosolar/#&gid=1&pid=1>

Tomás Saraceno in  
collaboration with Alberto  
Pesavento



Figure 14

Museo Aero Solar in Sharjah,  
2007. © Museo Aero Solar,  
2007.

Images from <http://tomassaraceno.com/projects/museoaerosolar/#&gid=1&pid=1>

Tomás Saraceno in  
collaboration with Alberto  
Pesavento



Figure 15 (above)

Screenshot @ 7:34 (7 minutes, 34 seconds)

Saraceno, Tomás. "Beyond the Anthropocene." YouTube video, 8:57. Posted by "World Economic Forum", February 14, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=47-cjPufEFQ>

Figure 16 (below)

Screenshot @ 6:25 (6 minutes, 25 seconds)

Saraceno, Tomás. "Beyond the Anthropocene." YouTube video, 8:57. Posted by "World Economic Forum", February 14, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=47-cjPufEFQ>





Figure 17  
Tomás Saraceno  
*Stillness in Motion—Cloud Cities*  
2016  
Installation  
SFMoMA

Courtesy the artist; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York; Pinksummer contemporary art, Genoa; Andersen's Contemporary, Copenhagen; Esther Schipper, Berlin. © Photography by Studio Tomás Saraceno, 2016