Portfolio

Selection of works 2003 – 2023
Maarten Vanden Eynde

www.maartenvandeneynde.com

Restauration du Lac de Montbel, 2003
Photo print, 70 x 50 cm.
Photo by Marjolijn Dijkman
(In the collection of the municipality of Montbel, France and in private collections)

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

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

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

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

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

Preservation of IKEA Tea-cup, 2005
Photo print, 70 x 50 cm.
Photo by Arend Roelink
(In the collection of Nomas Foundation, Italy)

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

Historiography is inherently subjective. History is made, told, and retold by individuals whose memories may be selective and who may have an interest in manipulating or warping our perception of events so that we can never really be sure where truth lies. What we can be sure of, however, is that when reconstructing the past mistakes are constantly made, because the information available (which may be incomplete or biased) demands degrees of interpretation and speculation.
IKEA Vase is an amphora-shaped vessel made of restoration paste and incorporating the fragments of an IKEA mug. Given the unimaginable quantity of IKEA products that are spread all over the globe and the proven ability of ceramics to withstand the passing of time rather well, there are bound to be material leftovers of these mass-produced consumer goods in future geological strata. The work questions the capacity of historical artefacts to give an accurate impression of what life in an inherently unknowable past would have been like. Through this process it points out the hypothetically fallacious impressions a future archaeologist might formulate about our present, based on its surviving remnants.

IKEA Vase, 2011 A.D.
Ceramic and restoration plaster, variable sizes.
(In the collection of Zeeuws Museum, The Netherlands
and various private collections)

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

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

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

Taxonomic Trophies, 2005 - 2018 (ongoing)
Branches, wood and metal name tags, variable sizes.
(In collection of Verbeke Foundation, Belgium and various private collections)

Taxonomic Trophies, 2005 - 2022 (ongoing)
Branches, wood and metal name tags, variable sizes.
(In collection of Verbeke Foundation, Belgium
and various private collections)

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

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

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

Oil Peak, 2006 - 2014 / **Oil Bubble**, 2012
Bronze, tar melted and shaped, metal bucket, variable sizes.
(In various private collections)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mo(NU)mentum, 2008
Various materials, 450 x 60 cm.
Commissioned by Generali Group Innovation Academy, Germany
Permanent installation, Bensberg, Germany

Mo(NU)mentum, 2008
Various materials, 450 x 60 cm.
Commissioned by Generali Group Innovation Academy, Germany
Permanent installation, Bensberg, Germany

Brick Era +/-2000 A.D., 2013
Bricks and concrete, variable sizes
Artist Project at Art Brussels 2013, Belgium
(In the collection of the Municipality of Puurs, Belgium
and various private collections)

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

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

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

Contradictio In Terminarium under construction, 2017

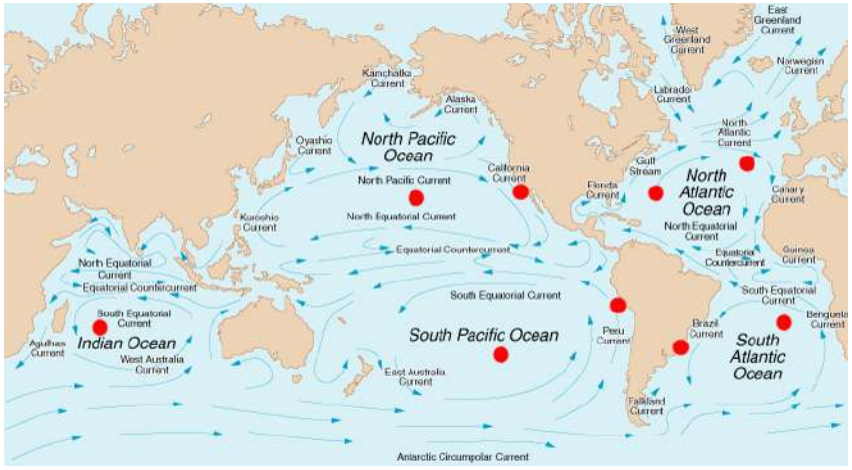
All over the world earth is being transformed into building materials. The desire to build and own a house is one of the major factors fuelling the market economy. Belgians have a particularly strong urge to build their own homes, hence the common saying that 'every Belgian is born with a brick in the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

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

Contradictio In Terminarium, 2017
Bricks and concrete, various dimensions, commissioned by Ministry of Foreign Affairs Belgium
Permanent installation at the Belgian embassy, Kinshasa, D.R. Congo

Contradictio In Terminarium, 2017
Bricks and concrete, various dimensions, commissioned by Ministry of Foreign Affairs Belgium
Permanent installation at the Belgian embassy, Kinshasa, D.R. Congo

Plastic Reef, 2009 - 2012
Melted plastic debris from the worlds oceans, 500 x 450 cm. Installation at Manifesta 9, Genk, Belgium, 2012



Plastic Reef, 2008 - 2012

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

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

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

Plastic Reef, 2009 - 2012
Melted plastic debris from the worlds oceans, 500 x 450 cm. Installation at Manifesta 9, Genk, Belgium, 2012

Plastic Reef, 2008 - 2012
Melted plastic debris from the worlds oceans, 500 x 450 cm. Installation at Art Space Pythagorion, Samos, Greece (2019)

Abraham Ortelius, a famed Flemish cartographer and, in 1570, the creator of the Theatrum Orbis Terrarum – the first modern atlas (though it was not then referred to as such) – was the first to speculate that the continents as we know them today might once have been part of a single vast supercontinent, later named Pangaea, from which they drifted away.
Continental Drift is a globe entirely covered by melted plastic taken from the huge accumulations of debris caught in the five major oceanic gyres. These massive aggregations of plastic waste are growing so greatly in size and mass that plastic is now the most common surface feature in the world's oceans.

Continental Drift, 2014
Vintage globe, melted plastic debris from the worlds oceans, variable sizes.
(In the collection of Maison Particulière, Brussels, Belgium and in various private collections)

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

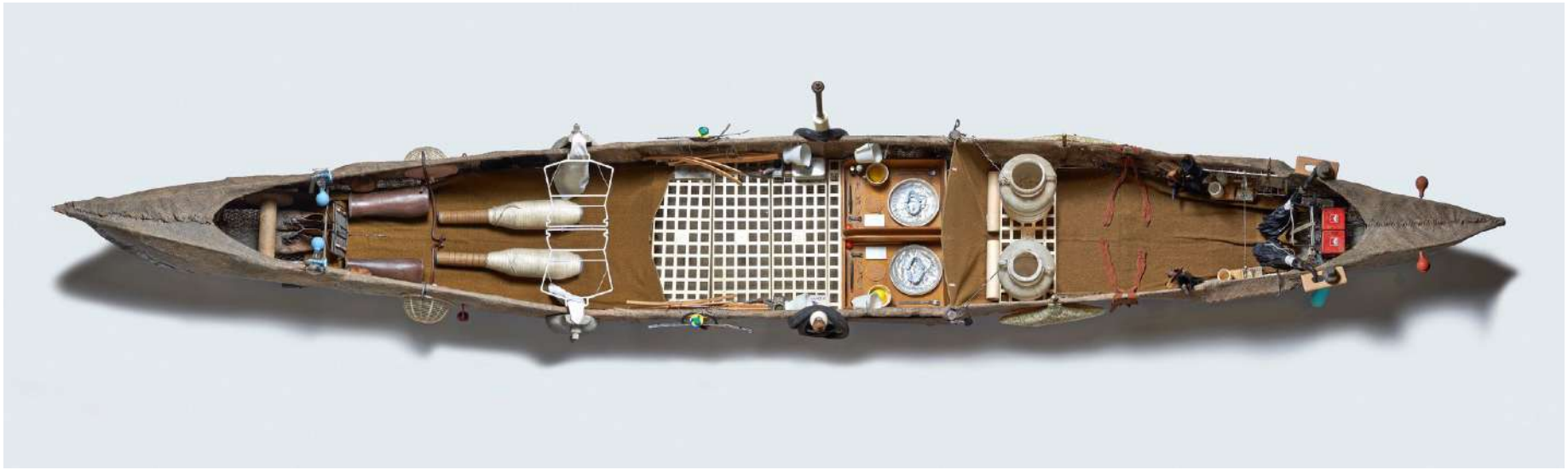
Globe, 2013
Various materials, 850 x 850 x 850 cm.
Permanent installation at Vent des Forets, Lorraine, France

Globe, 2013
Various materials, 850 x 850 x 850 cm.
Permanent installation at Vent des Forets, Lorraine, France

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

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

The Other Side, 2014
Various materials, 750 x 110 x 60 cm.
(In the collection of Zeeuws Museum, Middelburg, The Netherlands)

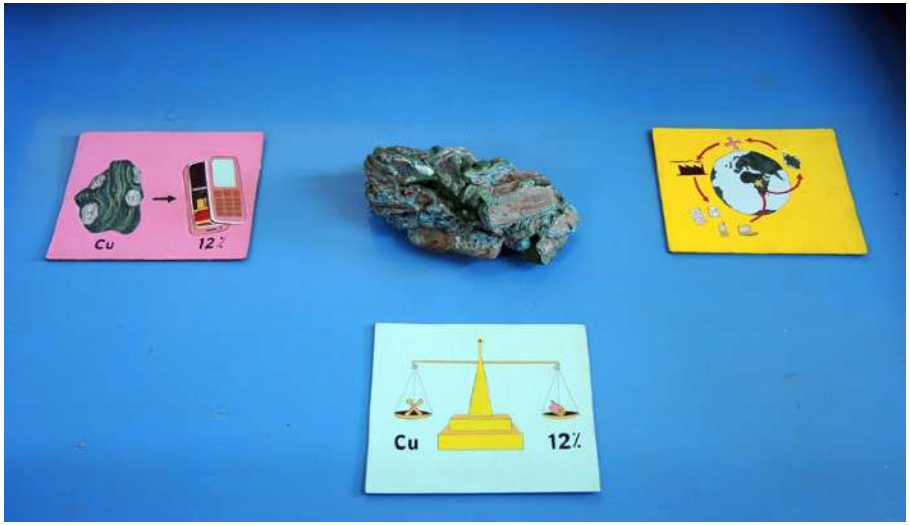


The Other Side, 2014
Various materials, 750 x 110 x 60 cm.
(In the collection of Zeeuws Museum, Middelburg, The Netherlands)

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

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

Technofossil, Billboard, 400 x 300 cm. Commissioned by the 4# Lumbumbashi Biennial, D.R. Congo, 2015



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

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

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

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

Technofossil, 2016
Sculpted malachite rocks, variable sizes.
Installation at the National Museum in Lubumbashi, D.R. Congo, 2015

Technofossil, 2015
Sculpted malachite rocks, variable sizes.
(In the collection of Mu.ZEE, Ostend, Belgium)

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

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

Malachite Laptop (XO-OLPC), 2017
Sculpted malachite from D.R. Congo.
Produced in collaboration with Augy Ngoyi Twite
(In private collection, Belgium)

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

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

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

Copper was the first metal to be smelted from its ore and the first to be cast into a shape using a mould. At present, however, most copper, both mined and recycled, goes into electronic devices owing to its high conductivity. There is more copper than any other metal in phones and computers – in fact it weighs more than all the other metals combined. *Copper Country* is a series of three topographic drawings of the largest copper mines in the world, Bingham Canyon in the United States, and Chuquicamata and El Morro in Chile. The drawings are made by etching printed circuit boards (PCB) with ferric chloride (FeCl3), a technique normally used in making copper circuits for electronic appliances. The chemical process is interrupted and frozen with varnish, creating an unpredictable variation of the 'natural' background in contrast to the graphic human intervention of open-pit mineral mining.

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

Silicon Age consists of a pure silicon ingot or boule, using a special process to obtain 99.99999% pure single crystals. On one side the image of the first monolithic silicon integrated circuit chip, invented by Robert Noyce in 1961, is engraved as a bas-relief. On the other side, the crystal comes to a natural end, in the physical form of the ingot, at the point where it cannot get any smaller

Silicon Age, 2016
Silicon ingot, bas relief image, 145 x 15 x 15 cm.

Cosmic Connection, 2017
Recycled telephone and computer circuit boards, metal
700 x 700 x 350 cm.
Installation at Verbeke Foundation, Belgium

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

Cosmic Connection, 2017
Recycled telephone and computer circuit boards, metal, 700 x 700 x 350 cm.
Installation at Verbeke Foundation, Belgium

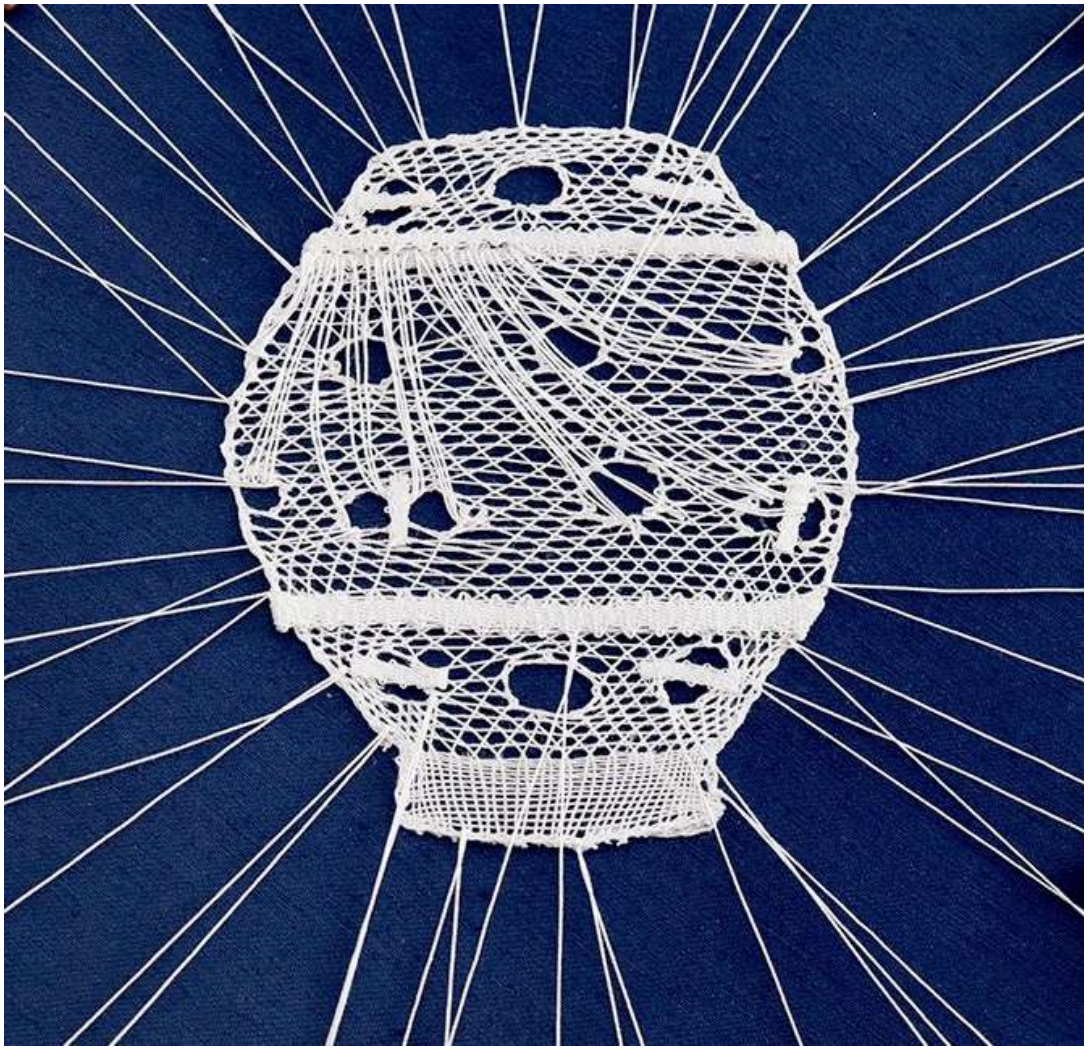
The Last Human, 2017
Human skull, computer elements
(In private collection, Belgium)

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

The Last Human, 2017
Human skeleton, computer elements, variable dimensions

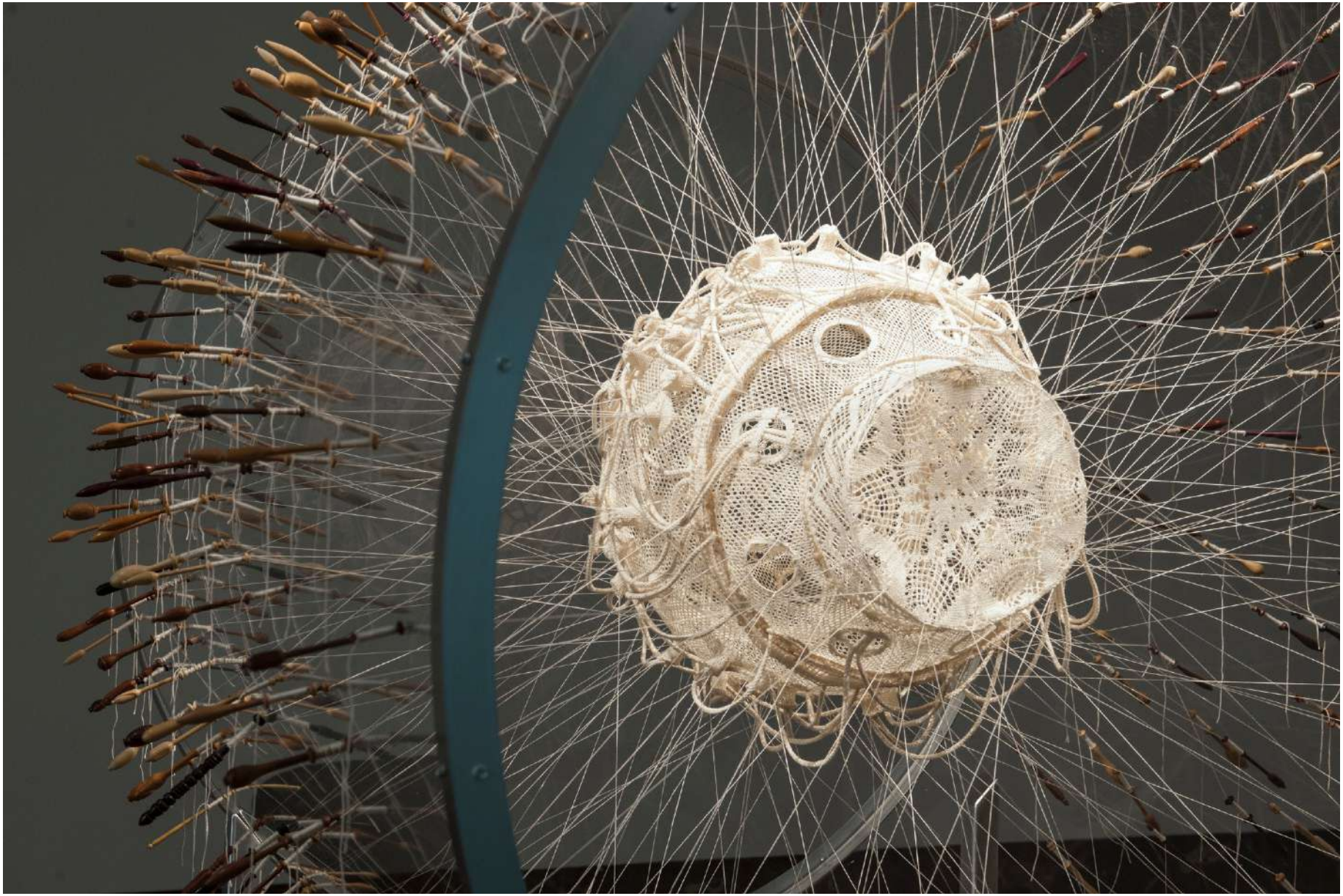
The Last Human, 2017
Human skeleton, computer elements, concrete, 180 x 100 x 20 cm.

Fat Man, 2016
Cotton lace, wooden bobbins, traditional straw cookie pillow, 60 x 60 x 5 cm.

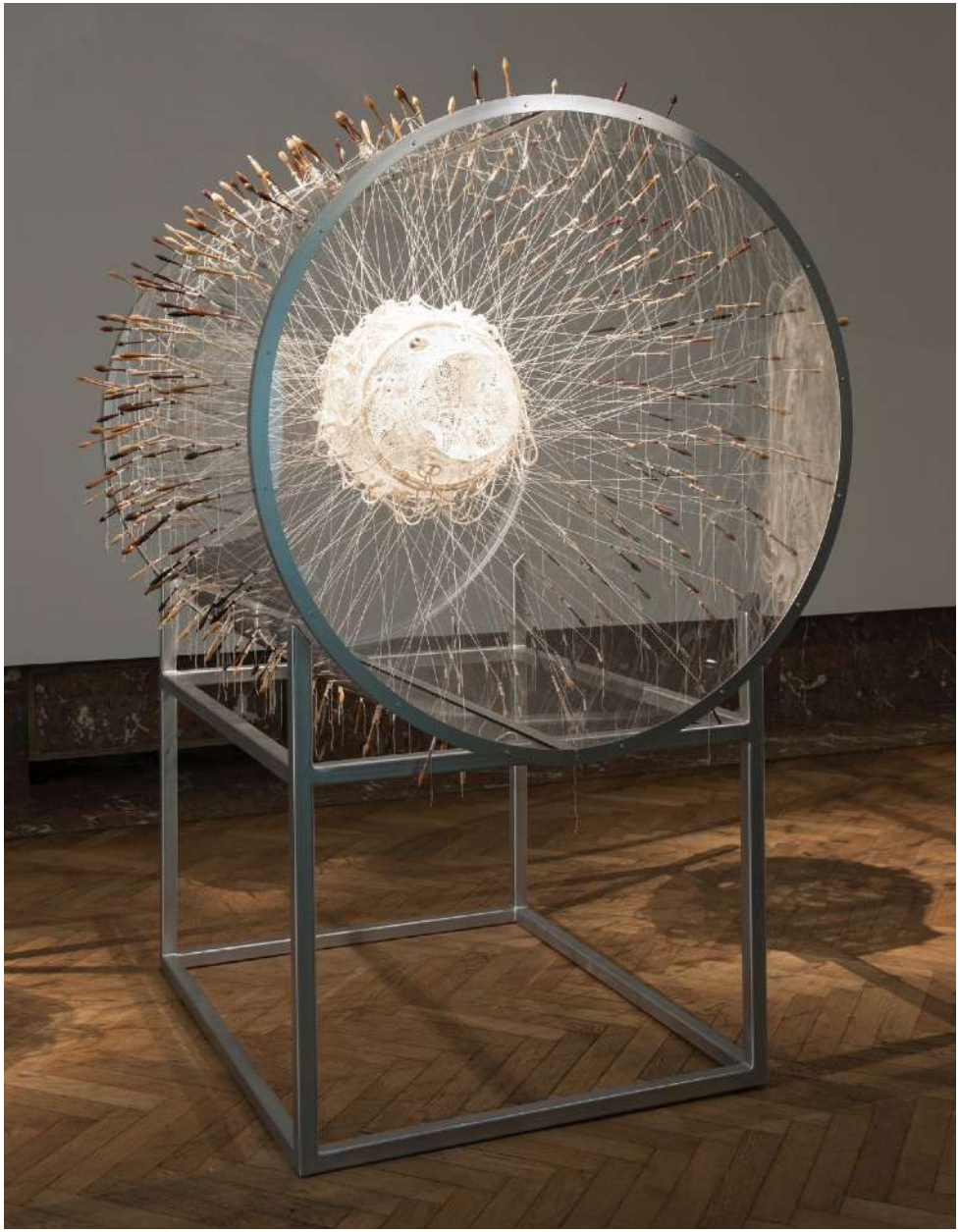


Fat Man, which takes its name from the atom bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan, on 9 August 1945, is part of a series of three works named after the first three atomic bombs, *The Gadget, Fat Man* and *Little Boy*. The wooden bobbins used in the work, which vary in size, shape and colour, are made from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

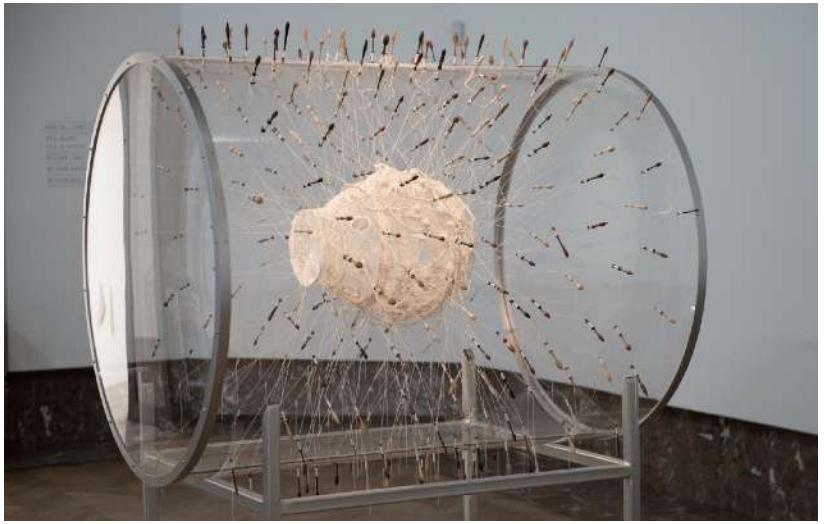
The Gadget / Fat Man / Little Boy, 2016
Cotton lace, wooden bobbins, traditional straw cookie pillow, 60 x 60 x 5 cm.



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



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



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

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

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

Around the World is a huge bobbin in the shape of a rocket. Spun around it is cotton thread measuring in total 40,015 kilometres, a figure that represents the average equatorial circumference of Earth. War and cotton have long been connected, starting with guncotton, used as a propellant in firearms and in the warheads of torpedoes, mines and grenades. Cotton was used as an aircraft covering – for the first flight of the Wright brothers, the aerial dogfights of the First World War, even for the famous German zeppelin Hindenburg – and in the first gas masks as protection against chemical weapons. It has thus been key in both the taking and saving of human lives.

Around the World symbolises the significant role that cotton played and still plays not only on a global but also a personal scale, being the first material a human newborn feels when it is wrapped in cotton cloth and also, in many cultures, the last material bodies come into contact with when they are shrouded in cotton to prevent post-mortem leakage and contamination. British and European cotton spinning and weaving was the first major industry in human history to lack locally produced raw materials, making it the first globally integrated manufacturing industry. Cotton fuelled the Industrial Revolution both in England and the United States and was a major influence on the creation of wealth throughout most of Western Europe. It made cotton plantation owners the richest and most powerful men in the New World, enabling them to invest in the building of astronomical observatories (like the Lowell Observatory, where the expansion of the universe was discovered and whose data helped to find a spot on the Moon where Apollo 11's lunar module could safely land) as well as universities and stock markets (like the cotton exchanges where futures were being introduced for the first time, offering investment in crops that were not yet planted). *Around the World* visualises the potential of a single thread encircling the globe and at the same time it shows that no matter which path you choose the end and the beginning are in the same spot. What goes around, comes around.

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

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

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

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

The Power of None, 2018
Wood, metal, copper wire, printed silicon wafers, silicon sculpted brain
500 x 500 x 120 cm

The Power of None (details), 2018
Wood, metal, copper wire, printed silicon wafers, silicon sculpted brain.
500 x 500 x 120 cm

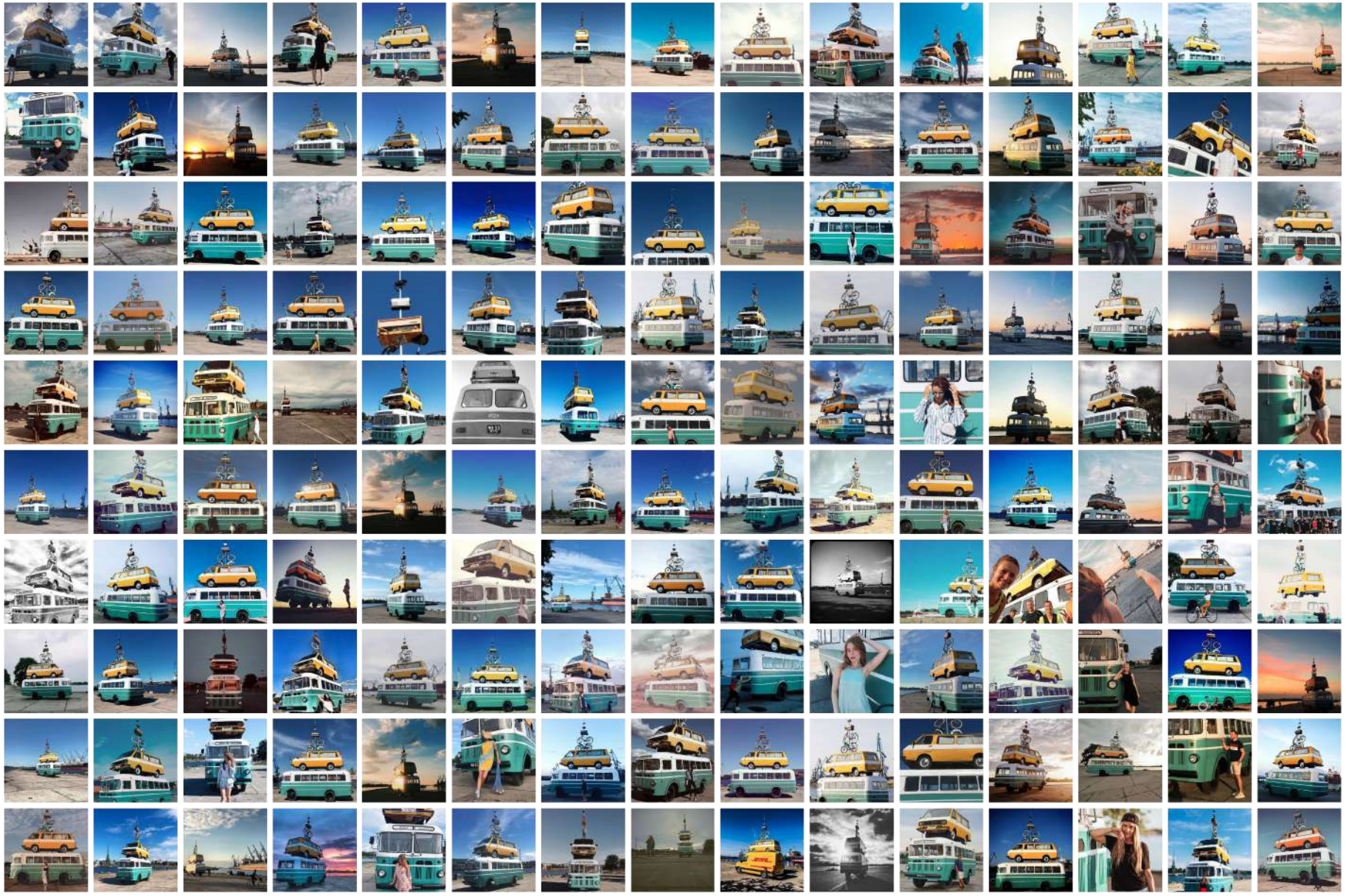
The Power of None is a multifaceted installation that deals with the different agencies of silicon, tracing its past, present and future potential. It is the basic material in the production of integrated circuits used in computers, TVs, mobile phones and all types of electronic equipment and semiconductor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

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

Pinpointing Progress, 2018
Various vehicles and electronic devices spiked on a metal needle
960 x 740 x 240 cm

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

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



Pinpointing Progress (A selection of more than a 1000 images found on Instagram), 2018
Various vehicles and electronic devices spiked on a metal needle
960 x 740 x 240 cm

Half Life, 2019
Ceramic vessels made with Boom Clay (Dessel, BE).
800 x 50 x 240 cm.

Half Life, 2019
Ceramic vessels made with Boom Clay (Dessel, BE).
800 x 50 x 240 cm.

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

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

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

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

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

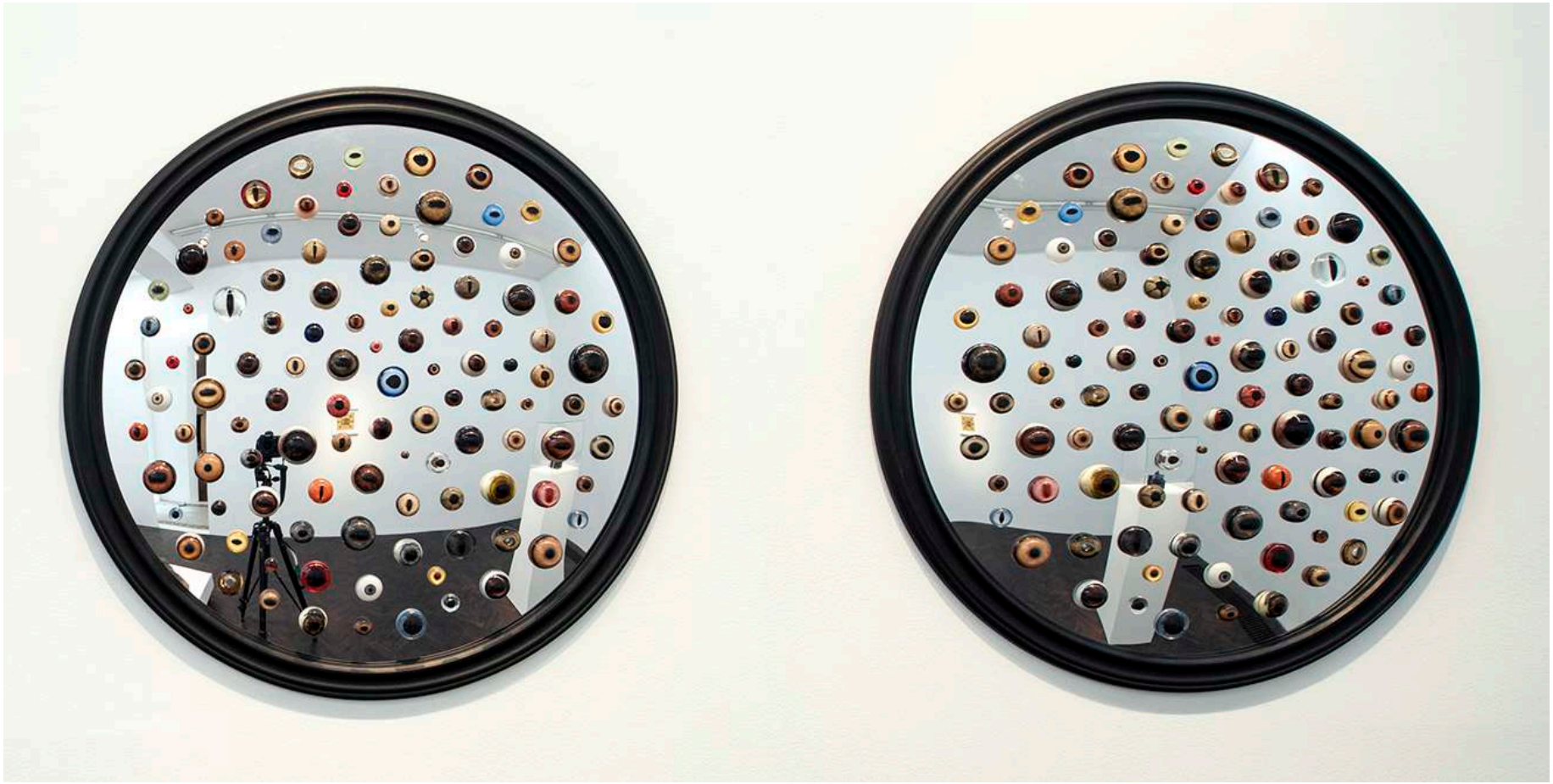
In 1884 an International Prime Meridian Conference was held to standardise time and establish twenty-four-hour time zones, each spaced 15 degrees of longitude apart. That was also the year of the notorious Berlin Conference that regulated European colonisation and trade in Africa. Time and space were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

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

The Overview Effect, 2019
Polyester globe cut in the 38 existing different timezones.
200 x 200 x 25 cm

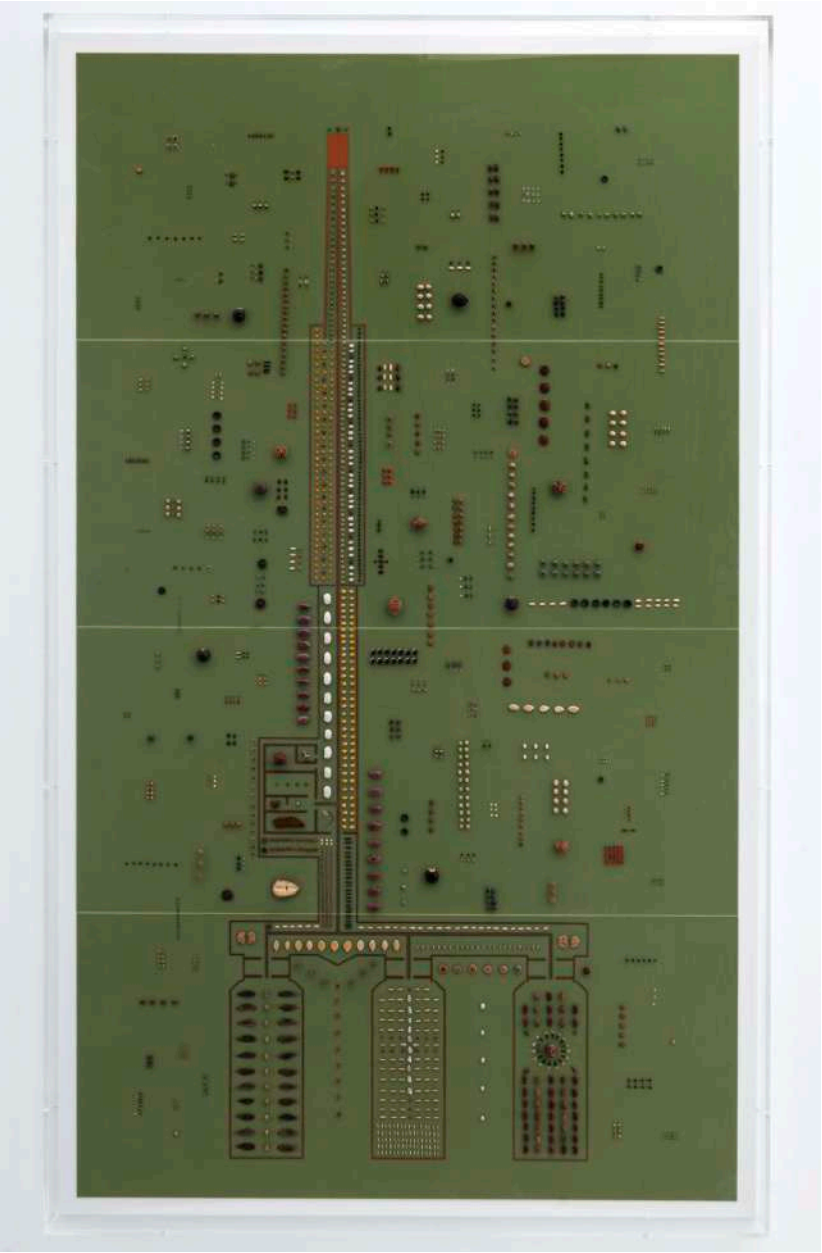
Natural Capital, 2017
Marker on carved wooden branch.
70 x 30 x 5 cm

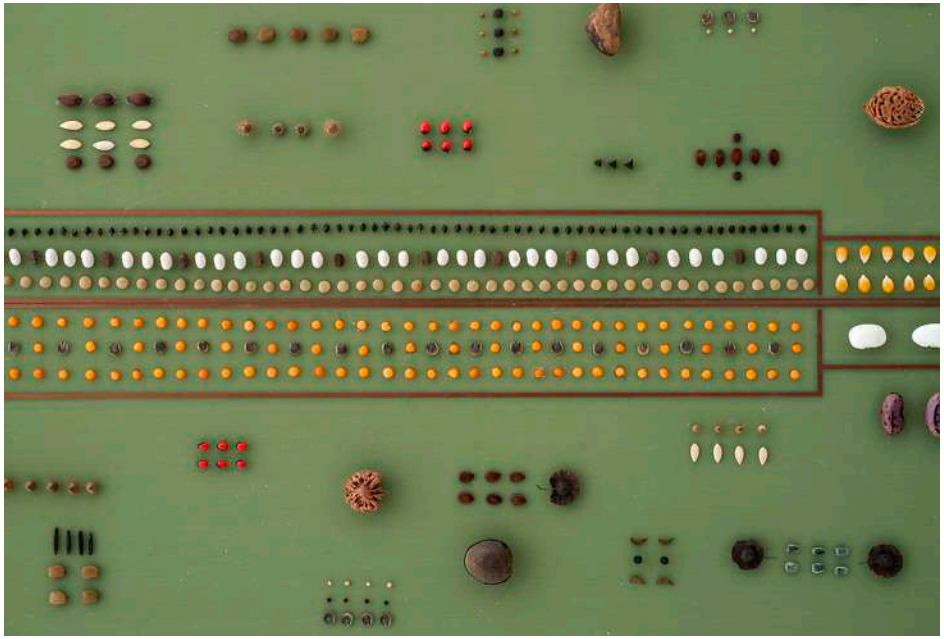
All natural products and even phenomena are given a monetary value. According to the WWF's Living Planet Index of 2018, nature is worth an estimated US$ 125 trillion. This obvious arbitrary and surreal methodology to put a number on the value of nature is however telling and exemplary for humanities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



And Then There Were None…, 2019
Polyester mirror, wooden frame, taxidermy eyes from: African Lion, Antelope, Albino Deer, Albino Raccoon, Barred Owl, Bear, Bobcat, Wild Boar, Brown Trout, Brook Trout, Cat, Caribou, Cheetah, Coyote, Deer, Dark Coyote, Dolphin, Elephant, Elk, Fallow Deer, Fawn, Gray Shark, Gray Fox, Hartebeest, Human, Leopard, Lynx, Lizards, Largemouth Bass, Light Whitetail, Marlin, Mountain Lion, Mouth Bass, Muskie, Owl, Palomino Trout, Panfish, Pheasant, Pike, Raccoon, Red Fox, Sheep, Shark, Smallmouth Bass, Snakes, Steel Head, Tiger, Trout, Walleyes, Warthog, Wildebeest, Wolf, Yellow Perch, and other Amphibians, Birds, Fish, Large and Small Mammals, and Reptiles.
66 x 66 x 10 cm

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

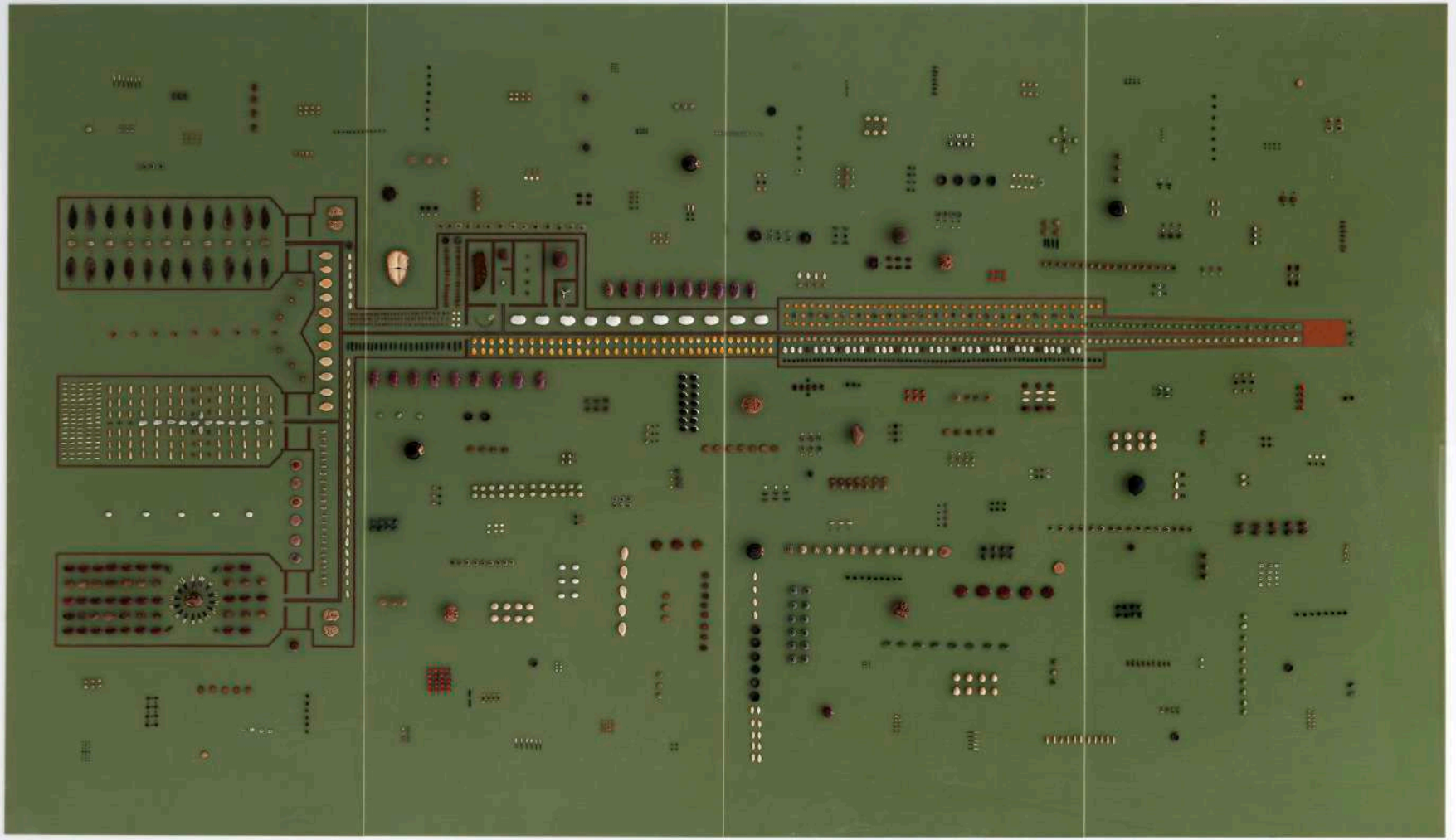




Biodiversity is in dangerous decline in both the animal and plant kingdoms. One of the ways in which the survival of as many different plant species as possible is, hopefully, being secured is the creation of gene banks in seed vaults and time capsules. In 2008, Norway opened the Svalbard Global Seed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

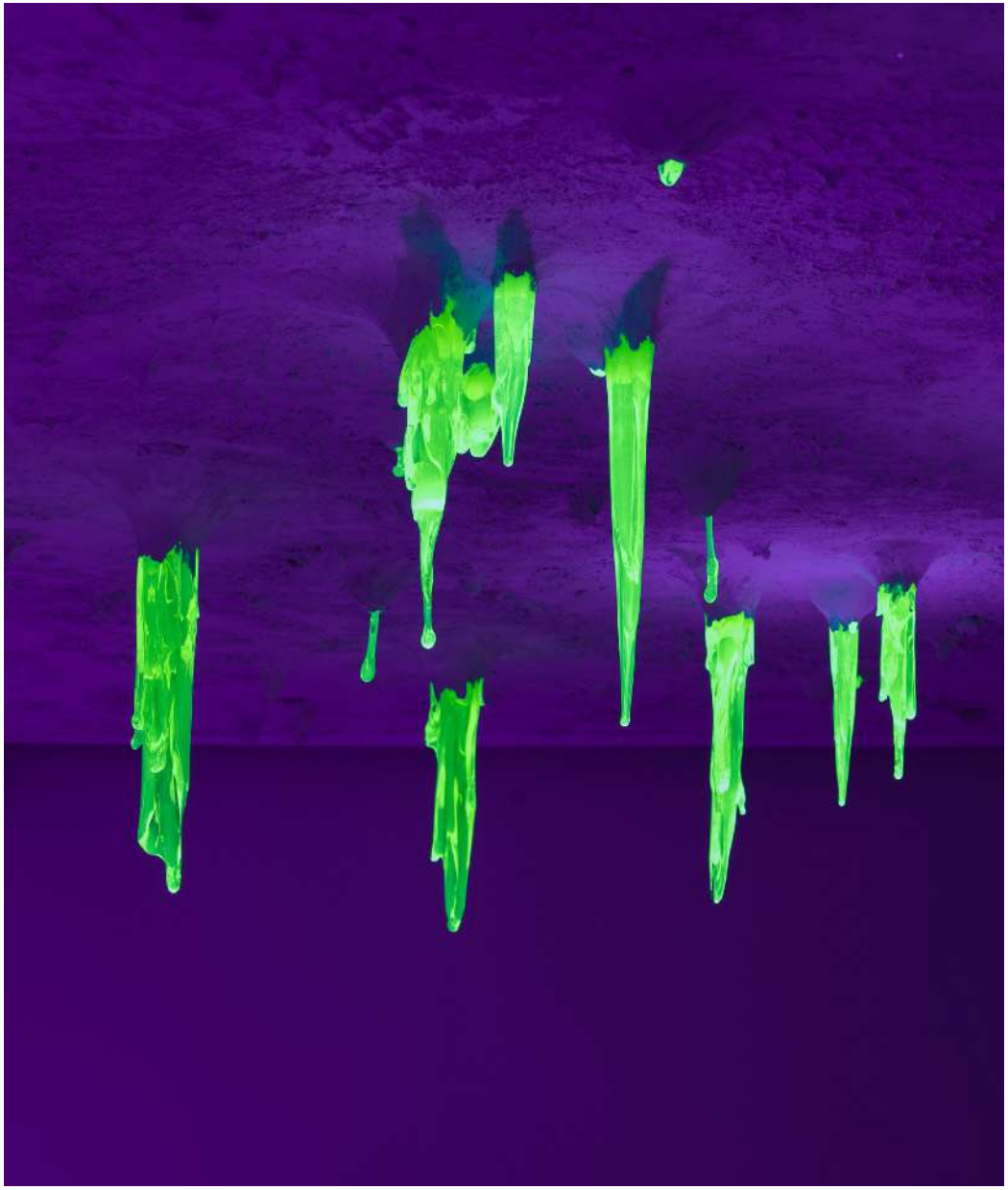
The Great Decline combines the blueprints of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, visualised as a copper circuit on large-scale PCBs (printed circuit boards), with a wide variety of seeds collected from different parts of the world. Together they make up a huge lukasa, or memory board, reminiscent of those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

The Great Decline, 2019
Printed circuit boards (PCB), various seeds.
125 x 214 x 8 cm



The Great Decline, 2019
Printed circuit boards (PCB), various seeds.
125 x 214 x 8 cm

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



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

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

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

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

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

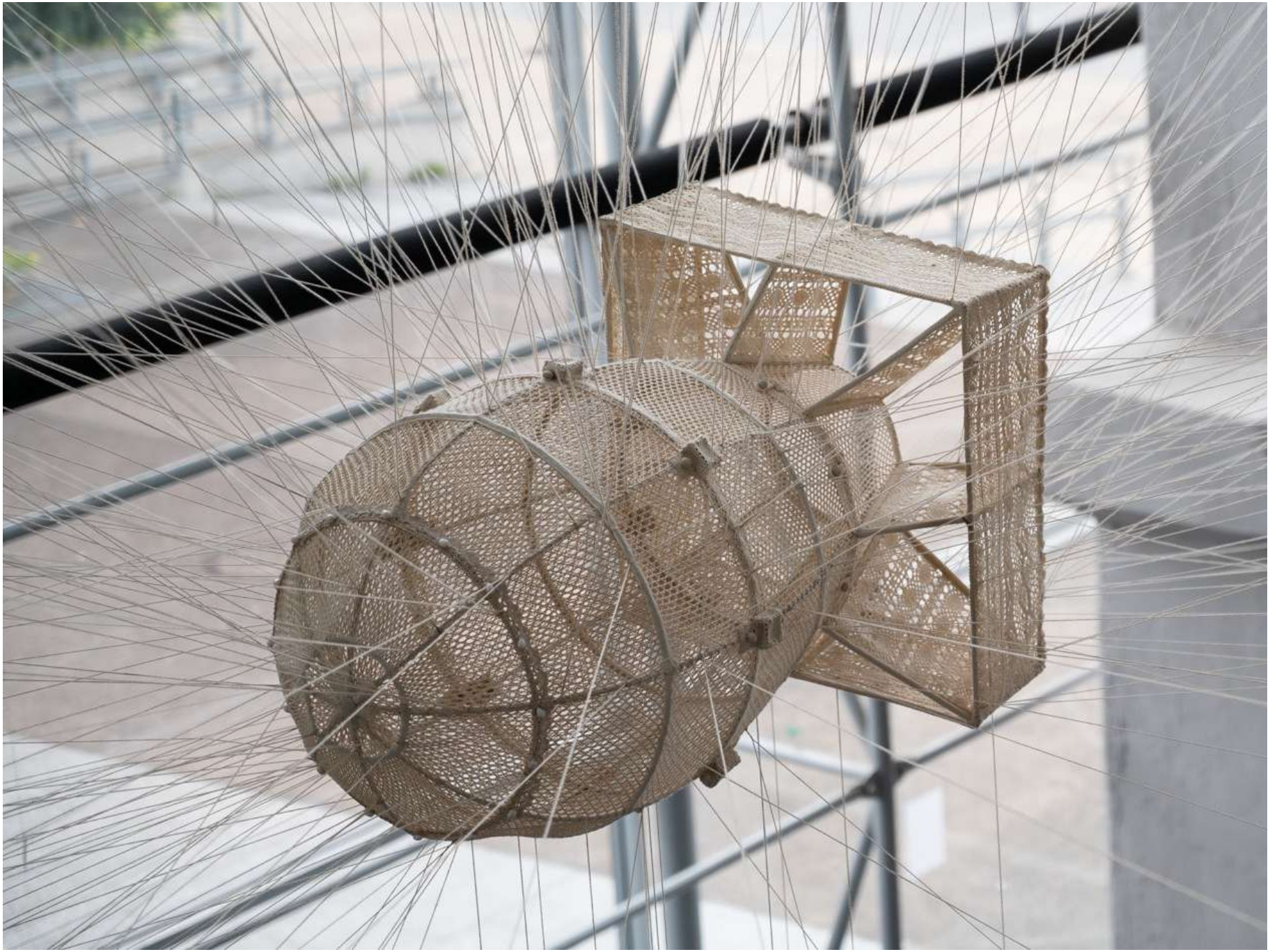
Chain of Events, 2021
Various materials
1500 x 200 x 30 cm

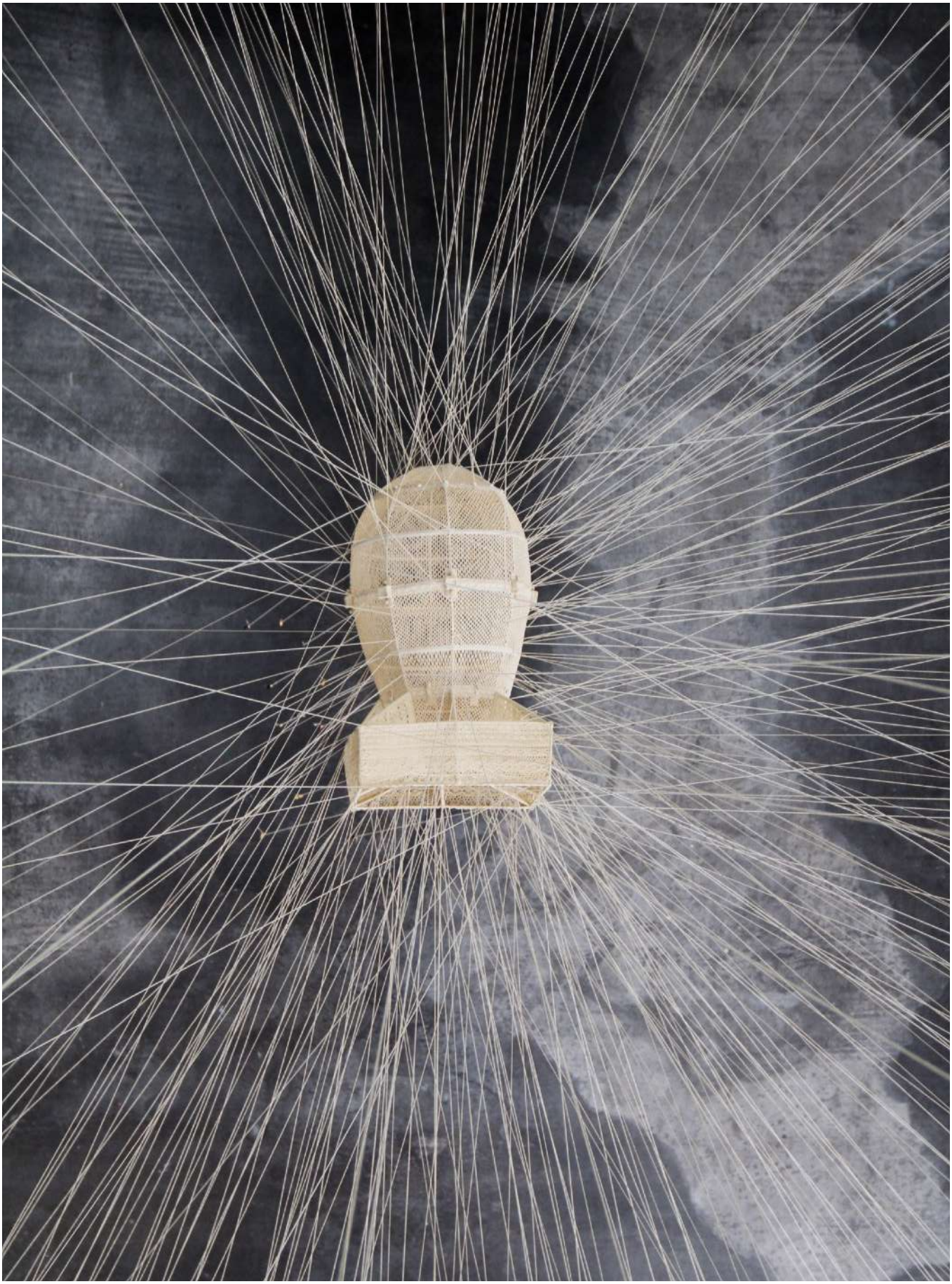
Chain of Events, 2021
Various materials
1500 x 200 x 30 cm

Fat Man was the nickname given to the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan, on 9 August 1945. Most of the uranium used in the first atom bombs came from the Shinkolobwe mine in Katanga, in what was then the Belgian Congo (now the DR Congo). It was processed in America's southern states and shipped to Antwerp in Belgium, by the Belgian businessman Edgar Sengier, the director of the Union Minière du Haute-Katanga, an Anglo-Belgian mining company operating in the Congo's copper belt between 1906 and 1966. A similar route was followed in the past by cotton. Enslaved people transported from the Kingdom of Kongo in central Africa and elsewhere planted and picked cotton in America's southern states, whence it was shipped to the cotton mills of the United Kingdom and also to Belgium and the rest of western Europe to be used in the bobbin lace industry.

An odd encounter between the particularly female work of bobbin-lace-making and the predominantly male occupation of bomb-making, woven into the tangle of threads in *Fat Man 3D*. That is not the only ironic link between the histories of cotton and uranium. When the Second World War broke out, Japan was one of the world's major cotton producers and traders, almost surpassing Britain. Dropping Little Boy and Fat Man – the code names of the second and third atomic bombs made by the US as part of the same Manhattan Project – on Hiroshima and Nagasaki heralded a definite end to the cotton empire of Japan. *Fat Man 3D* was made in collaboration with Rita Van Cotthem, a highly skilled bobbin lace expert, who spent more than 1000 hours on its creation. The 350-plus wooden bobbins are all unique pairs, referencing the many hands that facilitated the creation of the first atomic bomb. Shaped like bullets or bombs and radiating outwards they seem suspended in mid- trajectory, adding to the installation's explosive force.

Fat Man 3D, 2022
Produced in collaboration with Rita Van Cotthem
Cotton thread, wooden bobbins.





In 2018, a wolf was spotted in Belgium again for the first time in more than a century when She-wolf Naya crossed the Dutch border into the Belgian province of Limburg. Since then, the wolf has not disappeared from the news and its presence continues to stir the imagination. We now know that the wolf was the first wild mammal to approach humans, and was slowly domesticated into the dog that is now, for many, man's most loyal friend.

The variety of species is almost inexhaustible through cross-breeding and breeding programmes, of which the Chihuahua is the most extraordinary result and the furthest removed from its original ancestor, the wolf. It has become a familiar status symbol to a host of Hollywood stars, from Britney Spears, Madonna, Mickey Rourke, Marilyn Monroe, Reese Witherspoon, The Rock Dwayne Johnson, Scarlett Johansson, Demi Moore to Paris Hilton, whose Chihuahua named "Tinkerbell" was by far the most famous, wearing clothes from Dior and Louis Vuitton and owning a $325,000 doghouse.

Chihuahua Footprints Discovered! was an intervention in the collection of Gallo-Roman museum in Tongeren, Belgium and includes both a stuffed Chihuahua attached to one of the custom made dolls that represent prehistoric people, and a slab of concrete in which the same dog left some distinct footprints.

Chihuahua Footprints Discovered!, 2021
Concrete, Taxidermic Chihuahua, furcoat
Variable dimensions

The Gordian Knot, 2023
Copper bars, electricity cables, water tubes, gas pipes, natural lianas, rope, ceramic insulators and glass resistors.
100 x 100 x 100 cm

CV Maarten Vanden Eynde (°Leuven, Belgium 12/02/1977)
Artist and co-founder of Enough Room for Space

Maarten Vanden Eynde graduated in 2000 from the free media department at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam (NL), participated in 2006 in the experimental MSA^ Mountain School of Arts in Los Angeles (US) and finished a post graduate course in 2009 at HISK Higher Institute for Fine Arts in Ghent (BE) where he is a regular guest tutor. Since 2020 he is a PhD candidate at the UiB / University of Bergen in Norway.

In 2017 he was nominated for the first Belgian Art Prize and won the Public Prize.

His practice is embedded in long term research projects that focus on numerous subjects of social and political relevance such as post-industrialism, capitalism and ecology. His work is situated exactly on the borderline between the past and the future; sometimes looking forward to the future of yesterday, sometimes looking back to the history of tomorrow. Currently he is investigating the influence of transatlantic trade of pivotal materials like rubber, oil, ivory, copper, cotton and uranium, on evolution and progress, the creation of nations and other global power structures. The initiated project Triangular Trade traces back the origin of the different materials and follows their (r)evolutionary path as they are processed and transformed into 'world changing wonders'.

Education

2020-2024: PhD in the framework of Matter, Gesture, Soul, University of Bergen, NO
2008-2010: HISK/Higher Institute of Fine Arts, Ghent, BE
2008/2009: Junior PhD on Monographic Museums at University Ghent, BE
2006: MSA^ Mountain School of Arts, Los Angeles, USA
1997-2000: Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Free Media Department, Amsterdam, NL
1995-1997: Sint-Lucas Institute, Graphic Design; successful with Distinction, Ghent, BE

Residencies

2023: *SapienCE*, Blombos cave, Southern Cape coastline, ZA
2021: *Art Explora*, Cité Internationale des arts, Paris, FR
2019: *Picha,* Lubumbashi and Manono, CD
2019: *Art Space Pythagorion*, Samos, GR
2018: *Picha,* Lubumbashi, CD
2016: *Deltaworkers*, New Orleans, US
2015: Katanga and Kasai, CD
2015: *Deltaworkers*, New Orleans, US
2012: Indian Ocean Gyre, Mauritius, MU
2011: South Pacific Gyre, Eater Island, Santiago and Concón, CL
2011: South Atlantic Gyre, Montevideo, UY and Ascension Island, BOT
2011: *GeoAIR*, Tbilisi, GE
2010: North Atlantic Gyre, Bermuda, BM and Azores, PT
2009: North Pacific Gyre, Hawaii and Los Angeles, US
2008: *CEAC / Chinese European Art Center*, Xiamen, CN
2008: *LACE / Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions*, Los Angeles, US
2007: Please Excuse our Appearance, *IKON Gallery*, Birmingham, UK
2006: Georgia Here We Come!, Tbilisi, GE
2005: FILIALE, Basel, CH
2005: The Residents, *Residence Barberini*, Rome, IT
2004: Artist in Residence at TSOOC, Tajimi, JP
2004: Artist in Residence at T293, Naples, IT
2001/2002: *European Ceramic Workcenter (EKWC)*, Den Bosch, NL

Solo and duo exhibitions (selection from 2012)

2023: *Gravend naar de toekomst*, Museum EICAS, Deventer, NL
2022: *Tracing Memories*, NOME gallery, Berlin, DE
2022: *Art Brussels solo*, Meessen De Clercq gallery, Brussels, BE
2022: *Exhumer le future*, retrospective exhibition, La Kunsthalle Mulhouse, FR
2021: *Digging up the Future*, retrospective exhibition, Mu.ZEE, Ostend, BE
2019: *Half Earth*, Meessen De Clercq Gallery, Brussels, BE
2017: *Radiant Matter*, Zone2Source, Amsterdam, NL
2017: *Future Observatory*, Utrecht University, Utrecht, NL

2016: *Catastrophic Casualties & Casual Catastrophes*, Meessen De Clercq Gallery, Brussels, BE
2016: *Europe: Mutatis Mutandis*, 019, Dok Noord, Ghent, BE
2015: Art Brussels, with Meessen De Clercq Gallery, Brussels, BE
2014: Art Rotterdam, with Meessen De Clercq Gallery, Rotterdam, NL
2014: Art Basel Miami Beach, outdoor project with Meessen De Clercq Gallery, Miami, US
2013: *Brick Era*, artist project, Art Brussels, BE
2013: *Plastic Reef*, Hordaland Art Center, Bergen, NO
2012: *Europe 2006-2014*, FelixArt Museum, Drogenbos, BE
2012: *IN_DEPENDANCE*, Meessen De Clercq Gallery, Brussels BE
2012: *The Museum of Forgotten History*, M HKA, Antwerp, BE

Group exhibitions (selection from 2012)

2023: *Compulsive Desires*, Galeria Municipal do Porto, PT
2023: *Seeds of Memory*, Fries Museum, NL
2023: *Through Bone and Marrow*, BRUTUS, Rotterdam, NL
2023: *Sub Terra*, La Maison des Arts, Brussels, BE
2023: *On-Trade-Off: Charging Myths*, Framer Framed, Amsterdam, NL
2022: *FINIS TERRAE / The End. A Beginning*, Antwerp, BE
2022: Point de Bascule, Cloître des Récollets, Metz, FR
2022: *Design Fest Ghent*, Ghent, BE
2022: *One World – Power of the Four Elements*, Schloss Ambras Innsbruck, DE
2022: *PARS PRO TOTO*, SB34 — Clovis, Brussels, BE
2022: *The Hidden Side of Lace*, CC De Ververij, Ronse, BE
2022: *You Know Who*, Abdülmecid Efendi Mansion, Istanbul, TR
2022: *Ars Memoriae*, 601Artspace, New York, US
2022: *On-Trade-Off: Charging Myths*, Z33, Hasselt, BE
2022: *Welcome to Amchitka: area to be avoided*, 38cc, Delft, NL
2022: *Lille 3000: Utopia*, Lille, FR
2022: *Chapter 5IVE*, Het Hem, Amsterdam, NL
2021: *MoMeNT*, Gallo-Roman Museum, Tongeren, BE
2021: *DIG IT UP AND PUT IT IN A BAG*, University Museum of Bergen, NO
2021: *Beaufort 21 Triennial*, All along the Belgian coast, BE
2021: *Zoology*, Zebrastraat-New Zebra, Ghent, BE
2020: *Vision and Horror of Modernity - Industry and Artistic Departure*, The Von der Heydt-Museum, Wuppertal, DE
2020: *Dreaming in Everywhen*, IMPAKT FESTIVAL 2020, Impakt Center for Media Culture, Utrecht, NL
2020: *Zin Ex. From Abstraction to Algorithm*, TABAKALERA, Donostia / San Sebastián, ES
2020: *Chasing Flowers*, Coup de Ville 2020, Sint-Niklaas, BE
2020: *INSPIRE*, Iselp, Brussels, BE
2020: *paysage>paysages*, Château de Vizille, Vizille, FR
2020: *The Work of Time*, Z33 House for Contemporary Art, Design & Architecture, Hasselt, BE
2020: *Liebes Ding - Object Love*, Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen, DE
2020: *ON-TRADE-OFF: La Contrepartie*, Centre Culturel Jean Cocteau, Paris, FR
2019: *An unfinished symphony. Polyphony in the collection*, Mu.ZEE, Ostend, BE
2019: *Nature Morte/Nature Vivante*, Cid Grand-Hornu, Hornu, BE
2019: *On-Trade-Off: The Weight of Wonders*, Cargo in Context, Amsterdam, NL
2019: *Tallinn Photomonth Biennial*, Tallinn, EE
2019: *Némo, International Biennial of Digital Arts*, Paris, FR
2019: *S.O.S. / Save Our Seas*, Muzee Scheveningen, NL
2019: *13,700,000 km3*, Schwarz Foundation, Art Space Pythagorion, GR
2019: *Nature Morte - Nature Vivante*, CID Grand Hornu, BE
2019: *Stormy Weather*, Museum Arnhem, NL
2019: *Chair as an Artwork*, Latvian National Museum of Art, Rīga, LV
2019: *Diatoms, art in a box of nature*, Meise Botanic Garden, BE
2019: *Animal Revolution*, Kunsthalle Bremen, Bremen, DE
2019: *On-Trade-Off: Green Gold*, Galerie Imane Farès, Paris, FR
2019: *Contour Biennial #9: Coltan as Cotton,* Mechelen, BE
2018: *The Unending Gift,* Meessen De Clercq Gallery, Brussels, BE
2018: *AfricaMuseum@EgmontPalace*, Brussels, BE
2018: *For A Brave New Brussels,* MAAT/Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology, PT
2018: *A World Without Us*, Impakt Center for Media Culture, Utrecht, NL
2018: *Mon Nord est ton Sud*, Kunsthalle Mulhouse, FR
2018: *Over het verlangen en de troost*, Kunstenfestival Watou, BE
2018: *Cosmogonies, au gré des elements*, MAMAC, Nice, FR
2018: *RIBOCA*, Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art, Riga, LV
2018: *glorious (?) FAILURE*, Triennial of Contemporary Art at Duffel Psychiatric Hospital, BE
2018: *Workflow*, Cultuurcentrum Sint-Niklaas, BE
2018: *Mystic Properties*, Hotel de la Poste, Tour & Taxis, Art Brussels, BE
2018: *School of Time* - Milan Design Week (with Z33), Milan, IT

2018: *2050. A Brief History of the Future*, National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung, TW
2018: *This Rare Earth - Stories from Below*, Artefact2018, STUK, Leuven, BE
2018: *Objectif Terre*, Musée Barrois, Bar-le-Duc, FR
2017: *Connected Disconnected*, CC De Ververij, Ronse, BE
2017: *The Materiality of the Invisible*, Van Eyck, Bureau Europa and Marres, Maastricht, NL
2017: *12.345.678.910*, Verbeke Foundation, Kemzeke, BE
2017: *Belgian Art Prize*, Bozar, Center for Fine Arts, Brussels, BE
2017: *Disruption – Remapping Nature*, Park De Oude Warande, Tilburg, NL
2017: *La vie aquatique*, MRAC Musée régional d'art contemporain, Serignan, FR
2017: *In_Dependence*, Performatik Biennale, Brussels, BE
2017: *Nucleair Culture*, Atelier Bouwmeester, Galerij Ravenstein, Brussel, BE
2017: *Notes On Our Equilibrium*, CAB - Contemporary Art Brussels, BE
2016: *Le Laboratoire espace cerveau*, Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes, FR
2016: *La Timidité des Cimes*, LE PARVIS Centre d'art contemporain, FR
2016: *Man Made*, Raversyde ANNO1465, Ostend, BE
2016: *2050. A Brief History of the Future*, Palazzo Reale, Milan, IT
2016: *Tous Belges*, Centre d'art contemporain Meymac, FR
2016: *What is Waste?*, Art Affairs, Amsterdam, NL
2016: *Next Flood*, 38cc, Delft, NL
2015: *A.N.T.R.O.P.O.C.E.N.E.*, Meessen De Clercq Gallery, Brussels, BE
2015: *Body of Matter*, MU, Eindhoven, NL
2015: *2050. A Brief History of the Future*, Royal Museums of Fine Art, Brussels, BE
2015: *Realitiés Filantes*, #4 Biennale de Lubumbashi', Lubumbashi, CD
2015: *Mons2015* Cultural Capital, Mons, BE
2015: *Wabi Sabi Shima*, H18, Brussels, BE
2014: *Slow Future*, CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw, PL
2014: *Rumours of the Meteor*, FRAC Lorraine, Metz, FR
2014: *Coming Soon, Real Imaginary Futures*, /Bureau Europa, Maastricht, NL
2014: *Tasten In Het Duister / In The Dark*, Zeeuws Museum, Middelburg, NL
2014: *Encounters at the Boundary*, CC De Kollebloem, Puurs, BE
2014: *Beyond Earth Art*, Johnson Museum of Art, Ithaca, NY, US
2014: *Homo Ludens*, Meessen De Clercq Gallery, Brussels, BE
2013: *World Bookdesign 2012-13*, P&P Gallery, Printing Museum Tokyo, JP
2013: *Vent des Forets*, Fresnes au Mont, FR
2013: *I Could Have Lived Here*, Museum M, Leuven, BE
2013: *Traction Avant*, CIAP, Hasselt, BE
2013: *Ingredients*, Riga Art Space, Riga, LT
2013: *Ja Natuurlijk*, Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, NL
2012: *Cuesta12*, Tielt, BE
2012: *Manifesta9; The Deep of the Modern*, Genk, BE
2012: *Lost & Found*, Error One, Antwerp, BE
2012: *KAAP2012*, Utrecht, NL
2012: *Back to the Future*, CBKU, Utrecht, NL

Publications and Catalogues (selection from 2012)

2022: *Art and Climate Change*, Thames & Hudson, UK
2021: *Dépaysements*, publication, Local Contemporain nr. 12, FR
2021: *Digging up the Future,* bookreview, HART, magazine nr. 213, BE
2020: *Digging up the Future*, monography, Mercatorfonds, International distribution (FR/NL/ENG)
2020: *De onderzoekende kunst van Maarten Vanden Eynde*, article, The Art Couch, magazine, BE
2020: *Artist profile Maarten Vanden Eynde*, Kunstmagazine, magazine, BE
2020: *Vision and Horror of Modernity*, catalogue, The Von der Heydt-Museum, Wuppertal, DE
2020: *The Work of Time*, catalogue, Z33 House for Contemporary Art, Design & Architecture, Hasselt, BE
2020: *Liebes Ding - Object Love*, catalogue, Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen, DE
2020: *Maarten Vanden Eynde: Digging Into the Future*, Sculpture Magazine, US
2019: Ensuite magazine nr. 195, cover, CH
2019: *Nature Morte/Nature Vivante*, Cid Grand-Hornu, Hornu, BE
2019: *13,700,000 km3*, Schwarz Foundation, catalogue, Art Space Pythagorion, GR
2019: *Animal Revolution*, catalogue, Kunsthalle Bremen, Bremen, DE
2019: *Chair as Artwork*, catalogue, Arterritory.com, LV
2018: *AfricaMuseum@EgmontPalace,* TLmag 29, magazine, BE
2018: *Lace in Flanders* (cover), publication, Lannoo, BE
2018: *Cosmogenies, au gré des éléments*, catalogue, MAMAC/Snoeck, FR
2018: *Conversations with Jean Prouvé*, catalogue, Fondation CAB, BE
2018: *Over het verlangen en de troost*, catalogue, Kunstenfestival Watou, BE
2018: *RIBOCA*, Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art, Riga, LV
2018: *Welcome to the Anthropocene*: The UNESCO courier, FR

2018: *2050. A Brief History of the Future*, National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung, TW
2018: *This Rare Earth - Stories from Below*, Artefact2018, STUK, Leuven, BE
2017: *Zero Footprint Campus*, Department of Search, Utrecht, NL
2017: *Radiant Matter*, publication, Onomatopee, NL
2016: *Wonders are Collectible*, Lannoo, BE
2016: *Man Made*, Hannibal, BE
2016: *Artists at Home/Work*, LUSTER, BE
2015: *Bio Art; Altered Realities*, William Myers, Thames & Hudson, UK
2015: *2050. A Brief History of the Future*, Royal Museums of Fine Art, BE
2014: *An Ecosystem of Excess*, Ernst Schering Foundation, Berlin, DE
2014: *Naar een groene economie*, De Helling, NL
2013: *Paraphernalia,* publication by Wim Wauman, ROMA, NL
2013: *I Could Have Lived Here*, Museum M, Leuven, BE
2013: *Ja Natuurlijk / Yes Naturally*, GEM / Gemeentemuseum, NL
2013: *The Flemish Climate Policy Plan 2013-2020*, BE
2012: *JAMAN-Diartgonale Special Edition #1*, Enough Room for Space, CM
2012: *Building A Building*, artist book, BE
2012: *Plastic Reef*, CROSSTALKS Bridges over Troubled Water, VUB, BE

Documentaries and various media (selection from 2012)

2021: *Beaufort 21:* De Standaard, De Tijd, Het Laatste Nieuws, newspapers, BE
2021: *Beaufort 21*: VRT news and VTM news, television, BE
2021: *Quel Temps!:* 98, RTBF television, BE
2021: *Atlas van kleine praktische Utopieën*, radio podcast, Radio KLARA, BE
2021: *Digging up the Future,* bookreview, *Pompidou*, Radio KLARA, BE
2020: *INSPIRE*, Iselp review, La Libre Belgique, 14 October 2020, newspaper, BE
2019: *Pompidou*, Radio KLARA, BE
2019: *Animal Revolution*, BILD Zeitung and Weser-Kurier newspapers, Bremen, DE
2019: *Animal Revolution*, RTL-Nord and buten un binnen television, Bremen, DE
2019: *Half Earth*, Meessen De Clercq Gallery, review, H art magazine, BE
2019: *Neue alte Vergngenheit,* Ensuite, magazine (cover), CH
2017: *Pompidou*, Radio KLARA, BE
2017: *Belgian Art Prize*, KNACK magazine, BE
2017: *Belgian Art Prize*, De Tijd, newspaper, BE
2017: *Belgian Art Prize*, Metropolis M, magazine, NL
2016: *Man Made*, De Standaard, newspaper, BE
2016: *Lubumbashi Biennale*, L'art Meme magazine, BE
2016: *No Time To Waste*, Agenda Magazine, BE
2015: *L'invitation avec Maarten Vanden Eynde*, RTBF La Trois, BE
2015: *L'art de prévoir l'avenir*, documentary, RTBF, BE and ARTE International
2015: *Wie Koopt Dat?*, Sabato, magazine, BE
2015: *Plastic Rotzooi Wordt Kunst*, De Standaard, newspaper, BE
2015: *Plastic Reef*, De Groene Amsterdammer, NL
2014: *Art Brussels*, Le Soir newspaper, BE
2014: *Pourquoi cherché plus loin ?*, 19/03/2014, France3, FR
2013: *Vanthilt on Tour*, TV1 19/08/2013 television, BE
2013: *Post Apocalyps Now*, Knack Focus magazine, BE
2012: *Beginning with the Future*, DAMN magazine, International
2012: *Sarah's Barbaren*, VPRO 16/12/2012, Nederland 2, NL
2012: *Museum of Forgotten History*, interview, H art magazine, BE
2012: *Plastic Reef*, workshop Beaufort04, VTM news 19:00 television, BE
2012: *Plastic Reef*, Volume nr. 31, magazine, NL
2012: *Plastic Reef*, Revolve Magazine, Brussels, BE

Curated Shows / Initiated Projects (selection from 2010)

Since 2005: *Co-founder of Enough Room for Space*,
a mobile platform for site-specific projects, Brussels, BE
2022: *Ars Memoriae*, co-curated, 601Artspace, New York, US
2022: *On-Trade-Off: Charging Myths*, co-curated, Z33, Hasselt, BE
2018 - ongoing: *ICC/Institute for Colonial Culture*, National Museum, Lubumbashi, DC
2017: *Triangular Trade*, Enough Room for Space, Brussels, BE
2012: *The Museum of Forgotten History*, co-curated, MUHKA, Antwerp, BE
2012: *Back to the Future*, co-curated, CBKU, Utrecht, NL
2010: *Smooth Structures*, co-curated, SMART Project Space, Amsterdam, NL

Awards and Grants (selection from 2010)

2022: *Lauréat du Prix 2022*, *Marie-Louise Jacques* Foundation, BE
2022: *Meltzer Grant,* University of Bergen, NO
2019-2021: *Multiyear Development Grant*, Flemish Community, BE
2018: *Breakthrough Trajectory Grant*, Flemish Community, BE
2018: *Project Grant for Pinpointing Progress, Riga Biennial*, Flemish Community, BE
2017: *Development Grant*, Flemish Community, BE
2017: *Public Prize*, Belgian Art Prize (BAP 2017), Brussels, BE
2015: *International Work Grant*, Deltaworkers New Orleans, Flemish Community, BE
2015: *International Project Grant*, Lubumbashi Biennale, Flemish Community, BE
2015: *Development Grant*, Flemish Community, BE
2014: *Development Grant*, Flemish Community, BE
2012: *Fernand Baudin Award for Building A Building*, Best Artist Book 2012, BE
2012: *Project Grant for Plastic Reef*, Flemish Community, BE
2012: *Development Grant*, Flemish Community, BE
2011: *Fernand Baudin Award for Industrial Evolution*, Best Artist Book 2010, BE
2010: *Winner of Art in the City 2010*, sculpture competition, Brussels, BE

Committees:

2019-2023: *Member of evaluation committee*, Kunsten & Erfgoed, Flemish Community, BE
2018-2019: *Mentor of Digital Earth Fellowship*, Hivos, NL
2017: *Chair of advisory committee of Mondriaan Fonds*, NL
2015-2017: *Committee member of Mondriaan Fonds*, NL

Works in Collections:

KANAL/Centre Pompidou, Brussels, Belgium / Museum of Ixelles, Belgium / Municipality of Montbel, France / NOMAS Foundation, Italy / Bibliotheca Dominicana in Ghent University Library, Belgium / Mineralogical Museum of Campania, Naples, Italy / Province of Flemish Brabant, Leuven, Belgium
/ Zeeuws Museum, Middelburg, The Netherlands / Verbeke Foundation, Kemzeke, Belgium / VBO / FBE, The Federation of Enterprises, Brussels, Belgium / Municipality of Puurs, Belgium / Belgian Embassy in Kinshasa, D.R. Congo / The Futurium, Berlin, Germany / Mu.ZEE, Ostend, Belgium / DSM, Heerlen, The Netherlands / FRAC Lorraine, France / Belgian Embassy in Den Hague, The Netherlands / Various private collections

Commissions:

2017 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium
2017 Zero Footprint Campus, Utrecht, NL
2013 Vent des Forets, Lorraine, France
2012 Building a Building, SD Worx, Hasselt, Belgium
2008 Generali Group, Bensberg, Germany

Other activities

2017: Special guest at German Marshall Fund's Brussels Forum, Belgium
2013-2015: Member of IUCN Expert Group (International Union for Conservation of Nature).
Co-creator of 'Blue Society', a new vision for the use and protection of the marine environment, BE
2014: Series of workshops around the role of culture in the transition towards a sustainable society, PULSE Transitie netwerk Cultuur, Brussels, BE
2013: Official 'representative of the artists' during the visit of King Philippe in the province of 'Vlaams Brabant' after his inauguration as King of Belgium, BE
2011: 'Studio kinderarmoede/childlachildbour' in the framework of the Millennium goals 2020, organised by 'Kabinet van Ingrid Lieten', Flanders DC, Leuven, BE
2008-2011: Facilitator, Think Tank participant and consultant for Generali Group and Whole Systems, developing future scenario's, worldwide
2009: 'World Ocean Day', Erasmus University, Rotterdam. With Fabien Cousteau, Captain Paul Watson, David Doubilet, Professor Dr. Michael Braungart, NL