

BUNKER
ED



AARON ANDERSON

LISA ANDREW

SARAH BREEN LOVETT

KUBA DORABIALSKI

KATH FRIES

YVETTE HAMILTON

ANNA HORNE

RACHAEL McCALLUM

SARAH NOLAN

OFFICE FEUERMAN

KATY B PLUMMER

MADELEINE PRESTON

MARLENE SARROFF

LOTTE SCHWERDTFEGER

The House, the World.

by Yvette Hamilton

“The house was fighting gallantly. At first it gave voice to its complaints; the most awful gusts were attacking it from every side at once, with evident hatred and such howls of rage that, at times, I trembled with fear. But it stood firm. From the very beginning of the storm, snarling winds had been taking the roof to task, trying to pull it off, to break its back, tear it to shreds suck it off. But it only hunched over further and clung to the old rafters...The already human being in whom I sought shelter for my body yielded nothing to the storm. The house clung close to me...” Malicroix, by Henri Bosco, quoted by Gaston Bachelard in *The Poetics of Space*.

A storm is coming.

From more powerful tropical cyclones to storm-surges of increased strength, rising sea levels and rising temperatures; we are facing a new way of life in a hostile natural environment. *Bunkered* is an exhibition that aligns itself into, what Andrew Brown calls in his recently published *Art and Ecology Now*, the new “artistic mainstream”¹— that is, art that responds to environmental issues. Gathering together fourteen artists and architects, *Bunkered* takes this global art movement and responds to the dystopic landscape of a climate-changed future within the context of a domestic dwelling.

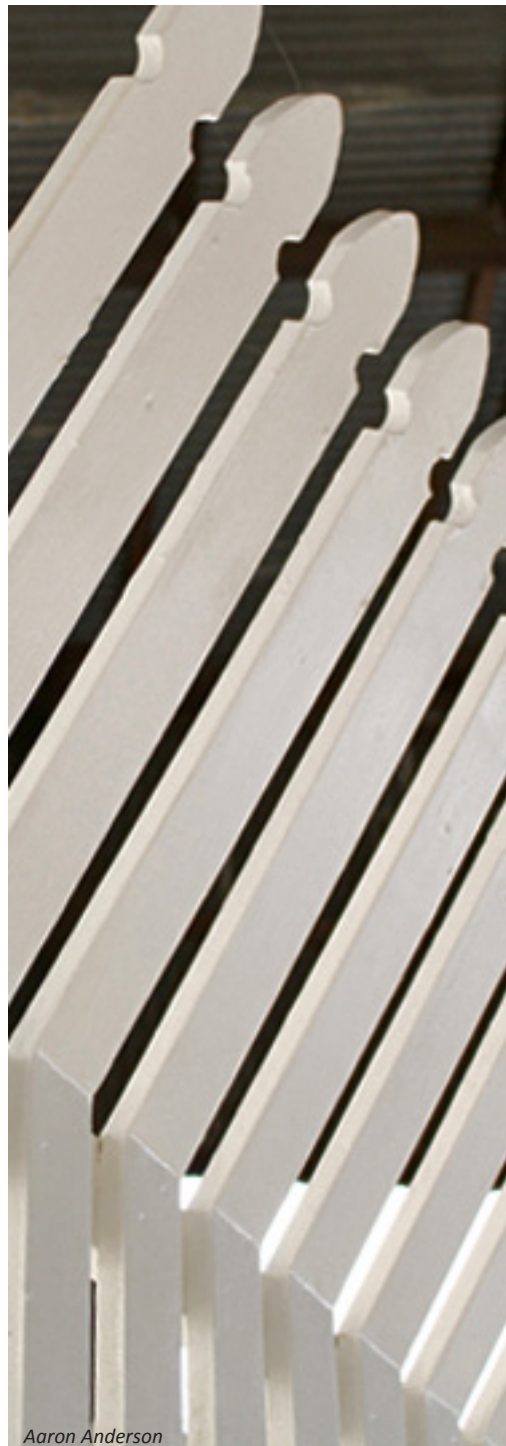
The term bunker can mean a fortification, a shelter, a storage area for provisions, and a difficult situation. While encompassing all of these layered meanings, to be ‘bunkered’ also suggests a reaction to external forces that are threatening and are ultimately unpredictable. In *Bunkered*, a dynamic of dialectic oppositions is set: fortifications can fail, shelters can be permeated, stored items

can be lost and difficult situations can be mitigated. Containing all of these oppositions is the encompassing figure looming large in the exhibition – that of the house. Suggesting comfort, warmth, protection and security, the domestic context is placed at the forefront of the *Bunkered* concept. The artists explore how the notion of a home could change when its surrounding environment is toxic.

In this way *Bunkered* forges a corporeal relationship with the notion of home in a climate-changed world. In mapping this future on a house, we also map these results on ourselves. Gaston Bachelard argues in *The Poetics of Space* that the house is a body of images that gives the illusion of stability. Bachelard aligns the self with site, declaring that “...the house’s situation in the world.. gives us, quite concretely, a variation of the metaphysically summarised situation of man in the world.”²This reflection of the self in the house is a psychological study that Bachelard labels, topoanalysis. He says, “...the house shelters day-dreaming, the house protects the

dreamer, the house allows one to dream in peace.”³ In *Bunkered* this notion of protection is threatened by the pervasive encroachment of climate change onto ‘normal’ life. When the surrounding world is no longer benign, the very air we breathe a source of harm, the notion of a house warps and transforms. The psychoanalysis undertaken in *Bunkered* is one that gives new ontological insight to what ‘home’ is. When there is a constant threat outside our doors, is there still a place for peaceful dreaming within our homes?

While there is a phenomenological reason to examine *Bunkered* through Gaston Bachelard’s eye, there is also a physical one. The Branch3D house is like a mirror of the oniric house that Bachelard outlines in *The Poetics of Space*. With its narrow staircases, half-levels and attic, it is a site of constant surprise, with the distinct sensation that one is travelling upwards through it, like “a vertical being”⁴. Like Bachelard’s mapping of the house to philosophical and psychoanalytical explorations of the self, the artists in *Bunkered* engage with the interior of this house to create an indexical relationship to the outside world. This microcosm/macrocosm dynamic reflects the oppositional nature of the themes linking the works together throughout the exhibition. A dialectic emerges between the inside and the outside, the light and the darkness, the synthesized and the natural, and the psychological and the practical. All of the artists engage with some, or all of these themes, resulting in a grouping together of works that show us the inside reflected in the outside and the outside reflected in the inside. These works are not objective and didactic attempts to ‘educate’, but rather speculative, subjective and exploratory.



Aaron Anderson

Our introduction to *Bunkered* comes in the form of Aaron Anderson’s window installation work, *Suburban Ruin #9*. What at first resembles a glittering green lawn of welcome, at closer inspection warps into a dangerous warning to passers by. The work’s oscillation between enticement and warning, suburban comfort and urban fortification is underlined in the overarching notion of inside and outside which permeates it, and other works in the show. Office Feuerman’s work *Fuzzy Window* also negotiates the territory of what is kept in and what should be locked out. A fluorescent window shutter, the work acts as a boundary space - a high-vis device for mediating visibility and permeability. These works explore, as Bachelard puts it, “the house’s powers of protection against the forces that besiege it...”⁵, the focus here being on the weak points, the thresholds, where things can be let in and out. Continuing this theme is Sarah Breen Lovett’s work *Block Out*. A window-boarding device that maps all of the existing gaps and cracks within the walls, the work simultaneously acts as a decorative lacework-like mask and an anxiety-inducing reminder of the multitude of micro-fissures that will need to be addressed in a toxic climate. The unknown airborne chemical cocktail that could pervade our homes is also reflected in the ceramic work of Rachael McCallum. *Glamour Poison Fun Times/ the Gravity of the Situation* is positioned like a decorative element in the living space, presenting as a static and suspended rendering of chemical chaos. The macrocosm of a changing world is seen in the microcosm of this ceramic landscape.

This microcosmic rendering of the world is also seen in Lotte Schwerdtfeger’s *Water Closet / Wilderness Cabinet / Wellness Centre*. Inhabiting the bathroom space, the work acts as a synthesized ecological system, an



Lisa Andrew



Kath Fries

attempt to connect with nature when this is no longer an option. The ramification of a damaged ecosystem permeating our food chain is seen in Madeleine Preston's *Hunger Scale*. Transforming the kitchen from the warming hearth of the home, to a cold and clinical sustenance station, the installation's bleak rendering of food as solely a nutritional necessity is a literal kick in the guts.

Moving outwards from the kitchen, Sarah Nolan's *Grotty* takes up the synthesized natural form of a grotto and warps it into a cave of consumer waste. Instead of natural rock formations, *Grotty's* walls are shimmering with plastic disposable detritus acting as decorative forms - a cave for the contemplation of excess and what is lost. The cave form is repeated in Katy B Plummer's work *The Allegory Of The Cave, Or, How To Light The Night When The Walls Are Rocks And Everything Is Stopping*. The video work poetically charts the attempt to create illumination amongst the looming unseen and unknown dark future. This need for creating illumination within the dark is seen in Anna Horne's natural/unnatural sculptural installation, *Campfire*. Like a candle left burning in a window, this work can be read as a flickering tribute to a life connected to the elements. Illumination is, according to Bachelard, a humanising element, "Through its light alone, the house becomes human. It sees like a man. It is an eye open to night."⁶ This light takes on a distinctly humanoid form in my own work, *Hello*. Acting as an anthropomorphised lighting element, the robotic lightbox creates a communication code through the medium of light. The collapse of communication is explored in Kuba Dorabalski's *Emergency Broadcast News*. An absurdist exploration of the notion of news when cataclysmic events make everything news, the anchors unravel before our eyes. Responding to cataclysmic

events, Marlene Sarroff's *Temperature Rising* depicts escalating temperatures physically mapped onto the stairs in the house. This intervention acts not only as a gradient to rising heat, but also as a barometer to threat and danger.

The sense of danger reaches a heightened state in Kath Fries's attic installation, *Taper*. The attic, according to Bachelard is a space where "fears are easily 'rationalised'"⁷, however here Fries inverts this place to one where fears are *realised*. Resembling a malevolent parasitic plant, *Taper's* root-like tentacles permeate the roof and remind us that this shelter will soon be reclaimed to the new natural forms that have adapted to the altered climate. An attempt to remove ourselves from the unfolding horror is seen in Lisa Andrew's *Droom*. Taking place in the bedroom, and reflecting Bachelard's notion of this room as one that is associated with "nooks and corners of solitude"⁸, this immersive installation provides a physical retreat, a safe space within, constructed of brick and wood. The paradox being that this retreat is a synthesis itself, the 'bricks' and 'wood' are actually fabric, this site for dreams and illusion is an illusion itself.

Situated in the living spaces of Branch3D director Sarah Nolan's house, *Bunkered* brings home the enormous ramifications of climate change to the familiar environment of day-to-day living. The exhibition charts "the dynamic dialectics of the house and the universe"⁹ in an uncertain future. This exhibition, by examining the relationship between house and universe under the cloud of climate change, is reflecting the globalised trend of environmental art becoming "firmly centre stage"¹⁰.

By producing contemplative responses to an uncertain future, the fourteen artists are



Yvette Hamilton

operating at “the vanguard of arts practice”¹¹, with *Bunkered* bringing the ‘vanguard’ into the home. We are invited to speculate on a future way of life in an entirely familiar way through the living room, kitchen, bathroom and bedroom. By placing the concept within a lived environment, we experience the potentials of climate change not in the arm’s-length relationship of a gallery setting, but rather up close, personal, with all of the sights, sounds and smells of a domestic context.

As viewers, we walk through this house as if walking into a potential future; as occupants, Sarah and her partner Gavin will live within this altered space as if living in a threatened, and threatening, world. *Bunkered* gives us the space to ask how we will relate to our notion of home when we are confronted with the psychological and emotional ramifications of life in a toxic climate, and ultimately questions, how will we live?



Footnotes:

1. Andrew Brown, *Art & Ecology Now* (United Kingdom: Thames & Hudson, 2014).
2. Gaston Bachelard and M. Jolas, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), p. 27-28
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid. p. 17
5. Ibid. p. 37
6. Ibid. p. 35
7. Ibid. p. 19
8. Ibid. p. 14
9. Ibid. p. 37
10. Brown, *Art & Ecology Now*. p. 6
11. Ibid. p. 8



Aaron Anderson
suburban ruin #9

“I’m a very special human being. Noble. And splendid.”

inside
outside
urban
suburban
alluring
repulsive

Neddy: “Nothing’s turned out the way I thought it would. When I was a kid, I used to believe in things. People seemed happier when I was a kid. People used to love each other. What happened? “

Shirley: “You got tossed out of your golden playpen, that’s what happened. “

ascent
descent
expulsion
admittance
construction
destruction

“I’m a very special human being. Noble. And splendid.”



Lisa Andrew
Droom

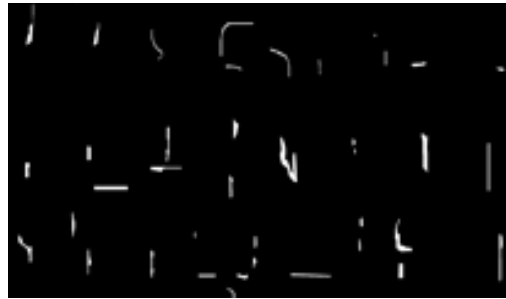
Droom is a room within a room, a vestibule in which dreaming is the vehicle to another place. This vestibule is designed as the space to be while in between two states and acts as the threshold of departure. *Droom* is constructed around a bed with an appendage like funnel leading to an exit, for the easy exit and egress of mind travel.

Droom’s support and surface are made from a fabric-like membrane making it flexible while appearing solid. To avoid unwanted intruders the walls are corrugated with pockets to confuse the onlooker’s gaze, while its walls are made from replicated false wood and brick veneer and made to act as camouflage blending into the surrounds of your house.

Droom is a space where one may look out or but not into lest the sleepers be ambushed during their travels. *Droom* is the perfect “a home getaway” capsule which will allow you to travel in un-interrupted patterns while leaving intruders confounded. This *Droom* model is designed to transport two adult humans.



Sarah Breen Lovett



Sarah Breen Lovett
Block Out

When the world outside becomes toxic we will need to board up all existing openings in our buildings. The larger more obvious openings like windows and doors will be easily identified, but the smaller cracks and crevices, nooks and crannies will become a significant threat. Through these tiny gaps any number of pollutants and noxious airborne particles will enter the sanctity of the home. An obsessive-compulsive fixation on finding and treating these unassuming fault lines will need to be developed if we are to survive.

In *Block Out* existing fractures of the *Bunkered* house are documented, traced and perforated onto the surface of window boards. As such the window board, normally used for blocking out the world, becomes a device for amplifying the omnipresent and inevitable threat than the other less obvious openings in the building. The minuscule and unassuming nature of the small openings are translated into a delicate lace work, the function of the block out board becomes ornament, which visually filters the world outside.



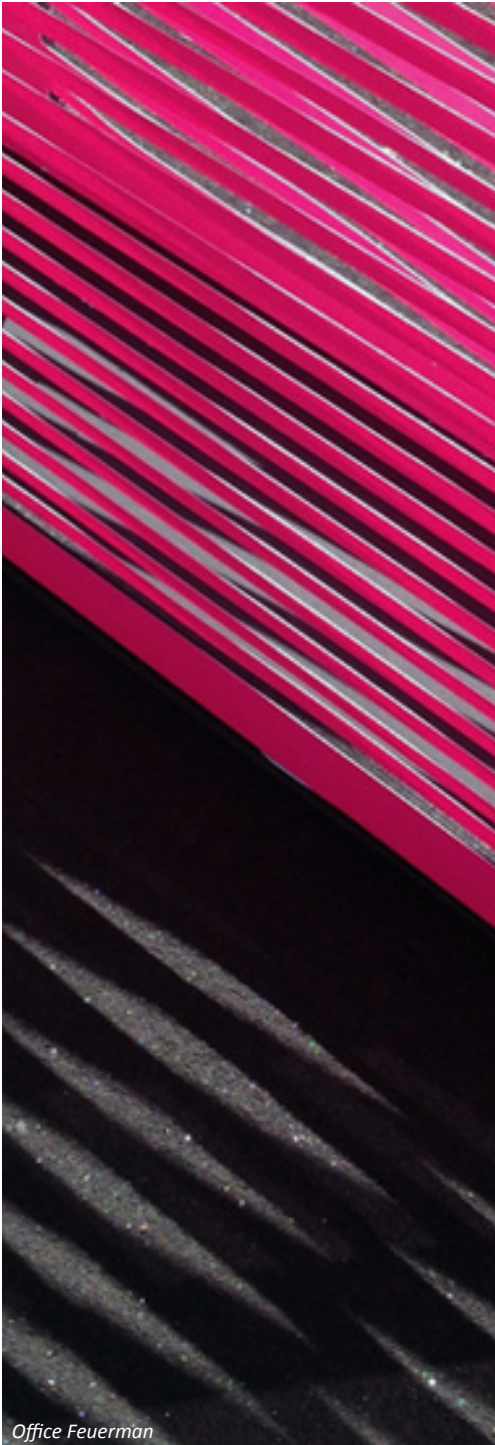
Kuba Dorabialski
Emergency Broadcast News

Everything has collapsed. A glitzy, network news programme no longer has an ideological floor to stand upon, but the news anchors, sports commentators, weathermen and traffic update reporters are still turning up to work and mechanically “doing the news”.

But what do they report when everything is news and nothing is anything any more? Long pregnant pauses, vaguing out, endless shuffling of papers, incoherent rambling and metaphysical interpretive dance routines are among the spontaneous human-scale responses of the news commentating its own majestic implosion.

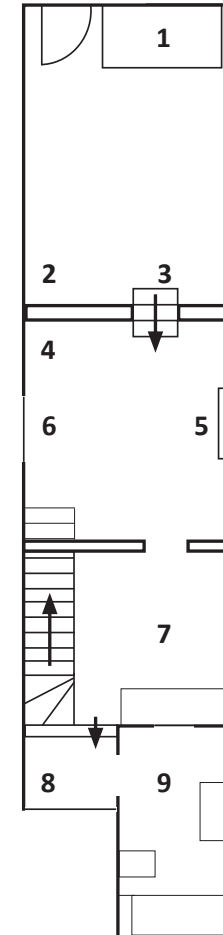


Kuba Dorabialski

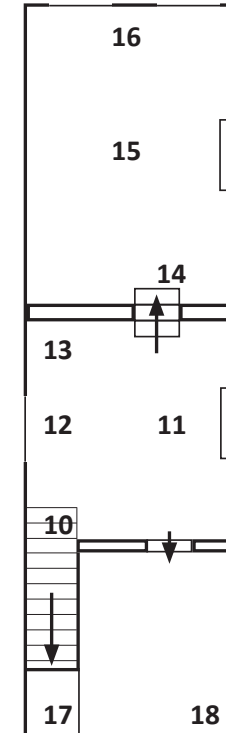


- 1 Aaron Anderson
- 2 Yvette Hamilton
- 3 Marlene Sarroff
- 4 Katy B Plummer
- 5 Rachael McCallum
- 6 Office Feuerman
- 7 Madeleine Preston
- 8 Sarah Nolan
- 9 Lotte Schwerdtfeger
- 10 Marlene Sarroff
- 11 Lisa Andrew
- 12 Office Feuerman
- 13 Kuba Dorabialski
- 14 Marlene Sarroff
- 15 Kath Fries
- 16 Sarah Breen Lovett
- 17 Anna Horne
- 18 Office Feuerman
- 19 Sarah Breen Lovett

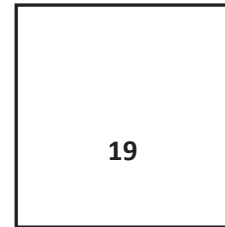
GROUND



FIRST



SECOND





Kath Fries
Taper

Entwined roots dangle dripping with congealed beeswax. They stretch down from the pitched darkness, through the ceiling beams, towards a solitary dim light bulb. The roots are dead, dried and fragile, trickled with beeswax and wrapped in twine, some are almost fossilized into stalactites.

An attic purports to be safe haven, the room furthest from the street and closest to the sky, an enticing quiet place for humans, flora and fauna seeking refuge from the outside world. But a garret is also traditionally a place of poverty and madness, where creatures and people eventually meet their demise.

To taper is to gradually grow narrow towards one end, to taper off; and a taper is a thin candle. Located in an internal space that narrows into a pitched roof, where wax stalactites and plant roots hang like upturned candles thinning to a dripped point, *Taper* implies that escape is impossible. Uncontainable toxins and pollutants leach through the earth and air, seeping into our interior spaces to potentially poison all aspects of our lives.



Yvette Hamilton
Hello

Hello is a robotic animated lightbox that explores the relationship between people, place and light in an uncertain future.

Resembling a cross between HAL 9000 and a S.A.D lamp (Seasonal Affective Disorder light therapy device), *Hello* is an anthropomorphised light portrait that seeks to explore the potentially complex relationships between people and their spaces in a future where we could be bunkered inside.

Acting like a stand-in for human presence, the round aperture within the lightbox is at once a light source, communication portal, face and eye. The work sets up a field of oppositional relationships: human/humanoid; light/dark; presence/absence; seeing/surveillance.

Hello questions the evolution of identity in relation to the notion of being bunkered inside. When our place in the world is reduced to an enclosed space, how will we relate to the objects and apparatus of living that surround us? And how will our being-in-the-world be shaped by the reduced space that we occupy?

Hello acts as an introduction to a conversation about these potential living futures.



Anna Horne
Campfire

Situated in the 'computer room' of the *Bunkered* house, Anna Horne's work engages with imitative manufactured materials. Hidden in the far right corner alcove, the small space is dimly lit and comprises of exposed brown brick and wooden surfaces. Placed in the space is a series of made objects symbolising a campfire. A 'real' campfire produces light and energy, and is created outdoors from natural materials; the components of the symbolic campfire are made from manufactured materials such as vinyl, enamel paint and plastic. *Campfire* will have no practical function, and will sit stagnant and unchanged in its environment. The process of making an installation akin to a campfire out of manufactured materials was optimistic if not misguided, a naive and nostalgic paean to the outside environment.

As a species we have a growing population living mostly in urban environments. There will be, and are, generations that may never experience nature away from cities and built up urban areas. *Horne* is interested in the relationships we have with manufactured and common materials, the products she uses are often faux materials impersonating something natural; emphasising the contradiction between the natural and artificial.



Anna Horne



Rachael McCallum

Glamour Poison Fun Times/the Gravity of the Situation

Acting as an artist in the face of global climate change, concerns about humanity's contribution to the ecosystem have oozed into the practice of *Rachael McCallum*. *Glamour Poison Fun Times/the Gravity of the Situation* is a piece of frozen reactions, capturing a moment of exciting energy and presenting it as dislocated and abstracted.

This painting is a display of mineral compositions interacting and then halted in the moment of cooling, suspended in our space. The piece, having developed into its own shape and surface, becomes an entity in itself, naked and strung up for our observation. The bright ropes draw attention to the fragile yet secure position of the piece. Gravity, as we know it, is presented perpendicular to the audience's view to present a topographical overview of the ceramic surface. By choosing to make and estimate glaze recipes by hand, there is a distinct element of chaos, greatly influencing the final pictorial composition.

Allusions are drawn between the microcosm of the ceramic landscape and the macrocosm of our climate today. The contributions of humanity are interacting with our earthly chemistry, do we all loom before disaster...



Rachael McCallum



Sarah Nolan

Grotty

We are a society of consumers of disposable, single use products, where once used can end up in the environment and habitats of land and marine animals. Microplastics are an enormous problem for the planet already, and one that will no doubt worsen due to humans' engrained consumption habits. Directly connected to the manufacturing of all manner of household items and consumables these habits maintain the constant cycle of resource and energy use, advertising, and goods transportation, all leading to consequences that effect climate change, consistently high temperatures being one key outcome that we are already experiencing. Sarah Nolan anticipates adapting to climate change may provoke a state of mind that will require escaping to a life spent mainly indoors.

Reminiscent of a grotto or shrine, *Grotty* offers a space to reflect on a life of consumption, and a substitute for contact with 'nature'. She has used a collection of familiar plastic forms that embellish the grotto like structure. Reminiscent of the shimmering surfaces of mineral deposits in caves, the jewel like plastic objects and the silver surfaces, sourced from the insides of tetra packs, entice the viewer, just like the single use product may have originally done at the point of purchase.



Office Feuerman

Fuzzy Window

Fuzzy Window blurs the interaction between inside and outside, people and nature presenting both new interior and exterior opportunities. A thickened skin inhabits the window void, creating interference between internal views out and external views in generating privacy, whilst also operating as a sun screen, filtering exterior light.

Independently each panel's graphic consists of a simple set of repetitive line work, but when overlaid, the combination becomes a generator of new patterns creating moiré distortions, reflections and shadows.

The constructed moiré pattern composes a high level of distortion, blurring the boundary between the street and house. *Fuzzy Window* further expands the limits of its use as it becomes an interactive surface. Visual interference, produced by the overlapping of different geometries, allows light to penetrate through, further transforming the perceptual effects of this boundary. The panel moves and morphs as one passes by, creating visual flux and imbalances.



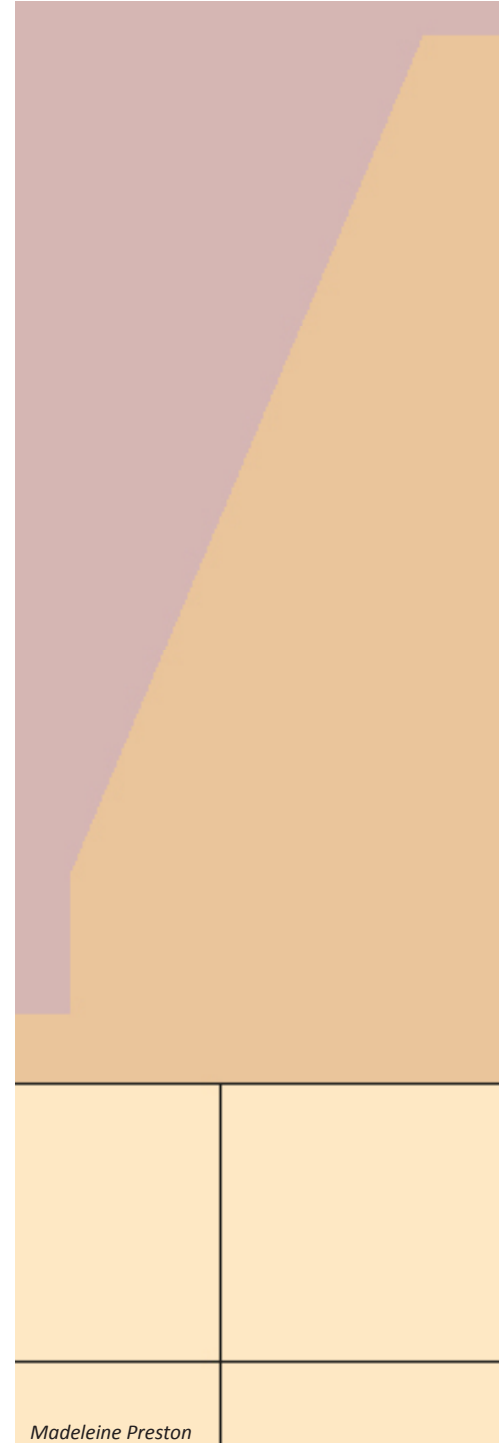
Katy B Plummer

The Allegory Of The Cave, Or, How To Light The Night When The Walls Are Rocks And Everything Is Stopping

The artist crawls into the mouth of a cave. The cave's interior is bigger than we expect, and inside we find tins and tins of food, stacked high. It's like an altar, or a church's pipe organ, or a geological formation. We see her blocking off the opening with stones, until she is alone in the dark. She lights a tiny candle, and another, and another. Soon, the mountain of tins is covered in hundreds of candles, and everything is reflecting and glowing and spitting and sparkling. She tells a short, opaque story about a time when the whole world stopped. Holed up in the belly of the Earth, it appears that she is feverishly petitioning either for the precipitation, or for the averting, of the End Of The World. The candles burn out.



Katy B Plummer



Madeleine Preston



Madeleine Preston

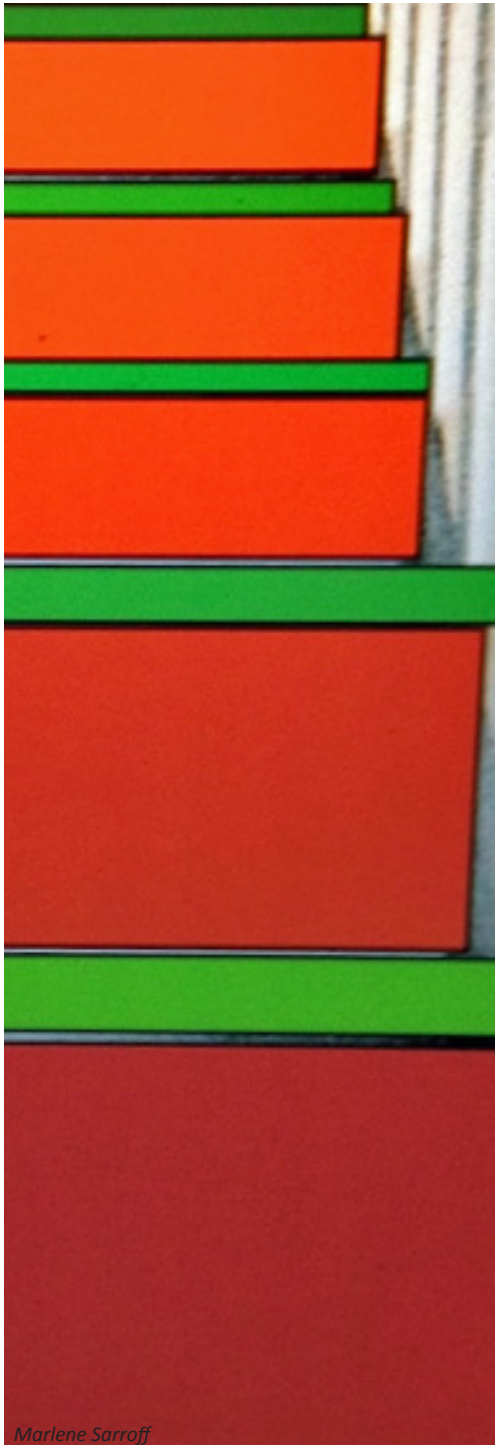
Hunger Scale

"... this idea of thinking about ourselves as the pinnacle really does cause a lot of cultural damage. I'm always interested in figuring out how it is that we crafted a society that has such a suicidal relationship to the natural world. That the decisions we make are actually so irrational that they endanger us all."

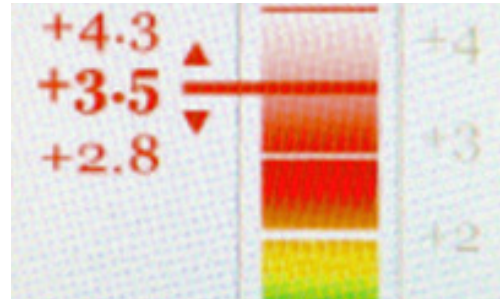
Mark Dion, Hyperallergic, 2014

Hunger Scale is an installation that suggests a kitchen in its most basic sense. Stripped of the suggestion of food as an enjoyable part of domestic routine the kitchen has been replaced with a utilitarian room. The reduced, clinical space serves to funnel the visitor through the kitchen to the bathroom and bedrooms. Pipes are suspended from the exposed beams of the floor above to suggest the room is below ground. This underground space literalises the consequences of overconsumption and environmental devastation.

Our inability to accept the consequences of our collective 'suicidal relationship with the natural world' will lead to irreversible loss and profoundly alter the way we live. Hopefully by drawing attention to these radically altered relationships people will be prompted to action.



Marlene Sarroff



Marlene Sarroff
Temperature Rising

Climate change is the single biggest environmental and humanitarian crisis of our time. The Earth's atmosphere is overloaded with heat-trapping carbon dioxide, which threatens large-scale disruptions in climate with disastrous consequences. We must act now to spur the adoption of cleaner energy sources at home and abroad.

In *Bunkered*, the house stairs and steps are used as a climate thermometer. As the visitors climb the stairs they can sense the temperature becoming warmer by the variations of the colour red on each step riser. As one transcends further into the attic, the red intensifies indicating heat rising as a metaphor for the planet warming. As the temperatures rise our buildings require careful planning to ensure less energy is used to heat and cool them.

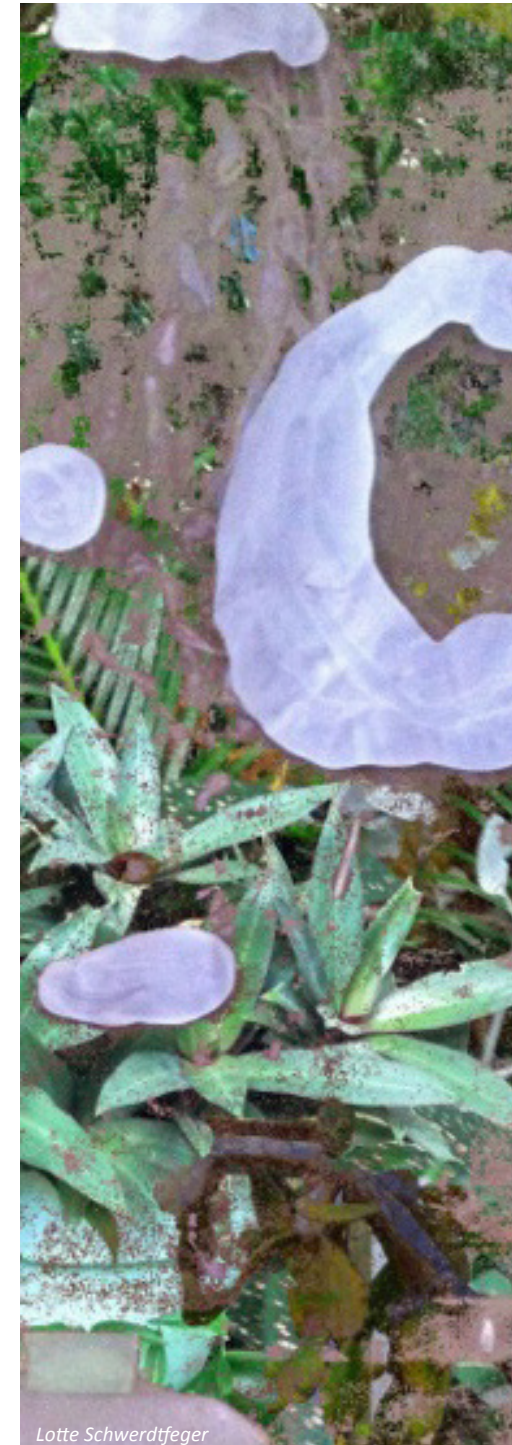
On descending the stairs the visitor will step on green treads, a gradual gradient becomes dense in colour as you descend the stairs to the ground floor, indicating the environment is in good shape and provides a healthy environment. Once back on the ground floor the visitors are provided with an opportunity to participate in a questionnaire testing their knowledge on environmental issues.



Lotte Schwerdtfeger
Water Closet / Wilderness Cabinet / Wellness Centre

Lotte Schwerdtfeger creates a narrative of a dystopian future within the confines of the *Bunkered* bathroom. *Water Closet / Wilderness Cabinet / Wellness Centre* is a ramshackle garden of non-producing salvaged plants and materials. The room remains a functioning bathroom forced to act as a substitute outdoor space.

The collection of urban weeds and ornamental flora makes a garden refuge that is unable to sustain itself. Here there is no ecological system; it is reliant on human input. Plants in ceramic and sculptural pots and planters are used as decorative elements in a human environment, reduced from their potential glory of a natural force to a failed simulation. The confusion of functionality, decoration, and dilapidation, real and fake, explores the way in which humans interact with the natural world and our built environments.



Lotte Schwerdtfeger



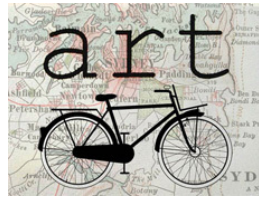
CREDITS

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