

Why is our planet green?

Brian Buckley, Rachel Frank, Oskar Landi, Alexis Rockman, Sasha Vinci

Curated by Sarah Corona

June 7th – August 27th, 2021

This we know. All things are connected, like the blood which unites one family... Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

– Chief Seattle

Art and ecology have been feeding each other for a very long time. Especially since the 1960s, the artistic practice that centered around ecology and the environment found its way into the modern discourse. This exhibition strives to follow the footsteps of artists and thinkers who long meditated on the connections between humans and their planet, between art and ecology, with five artists whose artworks deal with current ecological issues.

The artists in this exhibition, Sasha Vinci, Oskar Landi, Rachel Frank, Brian Buckley, and Alexis Rockman, offer via their creative processes a coherent, internally connected new ecological relationship between humankind and nature. As Murray Bookchin once noted, exploitation of nature usually arises from unjust social frameworks. Considering this nurturing relationship of social and ecological structures, these artists propose a new cultural way of being human as well, focusing on co-existence, sustainability, and healing. Visions of the future and the ecological and environmental problems of today are two themes that had to meet each other.

The works in this exhibition aim to open a window to the environmental crisis and spark up discourse about our current ecological issues, such as climate change, interspecies codependency, and pollution. As a visual marker, this exhibition visually adopts the “green,” ecologically conscious way of living by including works of art that physically follow this visual harmony.

Italian artist Sasha Vinci uses different creative languages to investigate humanity’s future, and emphasizes the bigger picture of human existence that slowly but steadily demolishes the Earth. Vinci’s drawings create an open space between order and chaos that enables to visualize a new existential condition for all the species that inhabit this

planet. Growing up near the birthplace of American paleontology, where large fossils were found and changed American history forever, artist Rachel Frank draws inspiration for her sculpture practice from natural history, climate change, and non-human species. Oskar Landi's work examines mankind's relationship with the environment through experiential approaches both in the studio and in the field. Landi's 2016 project at the root of his works in this exhibition, *The Voyage of Acceptance*, was a net tow apparatus deployed in the Norwegian archipelago to collect anthropogenic debris particles.

Brian Buckley uses light to create his artwork, taking cyanotypes one step further and challenging the process. Buckley's inspiration, the deep sea and its mysteries, is manifested in his art as octopuses, the extremely intelligent species with a sense of self, long-term memory, about whom we know very little information. Finally, the celebrated New York artist Alexis Rockman, who has been merging science and history with his art for over three decades, reveals the conflicting relationship of nature and civilization with a fascinatingly ominous visual language. In his images, hints of humankind, who interfere and pollute, meet the serenity, or defensiveness, of the mysterious, untouched waters of our oceans.

Works will be for sale. For more info, please email info@sarahcrown.com.

Special thanks to Sperone Westwater Gallery and ClampArt Gallery.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Sasha Vinci

The Italian artist Sasha Vinci uses different creative languages to investigate humanity's future and emphasizes the bigger picture of human existence that slowly but steadily demolishes the Earth. In his most recent series of works, made in the northeastern United States close to New York, Vinci aspires to amplify reflection on humanity's ongoing violence towards its environment. The artist catalogues endangered species of plants and animals, and depicts them under or over geometric shapes of gaudy colors. By doing so, Vinci proposes a visual alphabet in an attempt to (re)build a relationship that goes beyond the boundaries of the human dimension towards another perspective, the cosmos of otherness. Vinci's drawings create an open space between order and chaos that enables a visualization of a new existential condition for all the

species that inhabit this planet. His works on paper suggest a view of humanity's future, showing a bigger picture of human existence that slowly but steadily demolishes the Earth; in favor of an EGOsystem instead of an ECOsystem. Vinci lives and works in Sicily, Italy, and his work has been shown in many national and international exhibitions, and has been published in journals and magazines such as Hi-Fructose, Flash Art, and Artribune. <http://www.sashavinci.it/>

Rachel Frank

Growing up near Big Bone Lick, Kentucky, the birthplace of American paleontology, where large mammoth and other megafauna fossils were found, altering Western views on extinction and evolution forever, artist Rachel Frank draws inspiration for her sculpture practice from natural history, climate change, and non-human species. Frank uses the wildlife corridor as a synecdoche for issues impacting the ecosystems of the southern Arizonian Sonoran Desert's borderlands: wildlife fragmentation, migration, borders, climate change, droughts, and the changing uses of the desert. In a separate but related ecosystem, ceramic sculptures based on ancient Eurasian offering vessels imagine how old forms may play roles in new ceremonies. A series of rhyton vessels—animal shaped pitchers—form a hydroponic grow system for edible plants, designed as a response to the increasing droughts within desert regions. The kernos, a circular-shaped vessel with an individual offering cup, and the lekythos, a narrow vessel associated with funeral rites and loss, have been recast as offering vessels for indicator species—plants and animals that can provide early signals of environmental or climatic changes within an ecosystem. She currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. <https://rachel frank.com/>

Oskar Landi

Landi moved to New York in 1998 where he attended the International Center of Photography and studied cinematography at New York University while working as a photo assistant for legendary photographer Mary Ellen Mark. His works examine mankind's relationship with the environment through experiential approaches both in the studio and in the field, including, but not limited to the staggering amount of anthropogenic debris that has accumulated in the oceans over the last few decades, which has spread to the most remote regions on earth, evidence of a human-made emergency closely related to climate change, yet much more tangible. This side effect of modern industrialization and hyper-generation of standardized products is growing to alarming proportions: In 2017, the UN estimated that 51 trillion plastic particles are

floating in our oceans, a number that is growing every day, and their weight is estimated to outnumber fish by 2050.

Oskar Landi's work examines mankind's relationship with the environment through experiential approaches both in the studio and in the field. Landi's 2016 project, *The Voyage of Acceptance*, is at the root of his works in this exhibition, and has evolved into a collaboration with NASA on a remote sensing study of microplastic pollution. In that work, Landi chronicled the journey of a net tow apparatus deployed in the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard to collect anthropogenic debris particles. The samples collected contained different types of plastic that were pinned on hot needles and then photographed, a technique used to discern organic material from synthetic. <https://oskarlandi.com/>

Brian Buckley

Brian Buckley uses light to create his artwork, taking cyanotypes one step further and challenging the process. Buckley's inspiration, the deep sea and its mysteries, is manifested in his art as octopuses, the extremely intelligent species with a sense of self and a long-term memory, about which we have very little information. Buckley began his newest body of work in early 2020, purposely exploring the concept of uncertainty—especially in relation to his own life and the abrupt changes brought on by the pandemic. Reflecting specifically on personal relationships, issues of intimacy, and more widely on his own notions of the nature of beauty, Buckley examined both the joy and pain of love, hoping to confront losses experienced over the course of his life. Buckley's practice is reminiscent of Gyotaku—a traditional Japanese practice of “printing fish” that goes back to the mid-1800s. From the word gyo meaning “fish” and taku meaning “stone impression,” Gyotaku is a form of nature painting used by fishermen to record their catches, now an art form of its own, which Buckley has chosen to reinterpret. <https://www.brianbuckleyphoto.com/>

Alexis Rockman

For over thirty-five years, Alexis Rockman has blended science with informed speculation to deliver a prescient and, at times, apocalyptic vision of the ecological state of the planet. Relying on scientific as well as historic content, Rockman continues his vision of the collision between civilization and nature for these new works on paper. Focusing on the world's waterways as subject matter, Rockman explores all the ways in which bodies of water have not only transported people and materials, but also

helped to proliferate the spread of language, culture, art, flora and fauna, religion and disease. Serving as “highways” for expansionist and colonial exploitation, the history of seafaring tells of a deliberate and unwittingly disastrous ecological and anthropological exchange that led to a decline of indigenous populations and ecological collapse due to pandemics and invasive species. The works on view, selected from a much larger series, feature the artist’s darkly surreal vision of the clash between humans and their planet—often dramatic scenarios on a monumental scale. <http://alexisrockman.net/>

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Sarah Corona is an independent art professional based in New York. One of her main interests is to bring art into the public realm and to discover how technology affects art and culture. She is the founder of SARAHCROWN Art Consulting, founder of the Art In Lobbies program, and specializes in private sales and business strategies in the arts. <https://www.sarahcrown.com>