

# THE ANTHROPOCENE

**CURATED BY ELISABETH JOHS/**

**NOV 11TH – 12TH 2018 /**

**STUDIO 525 WEST 24TH STREET /**

**PAUL JACOB BASHOUR**

**DOMINIK LEJMAN**

**CLAUDIA VIEIRA**

an•thro•po•cene

*(n) The proposed current geological epoch, in which humans are the primary cause of permanent planetary change.*

The anthropocene is distinguished as the period in which the collective activity of human beings began to substantially alter earth's surface, oceans, systems of nutrient cycling, and atmosphere. The term suggests that the earth is moving out of its current geological epoch, called the Holocene, and that humans and our activity on earth is largely to blame. Humankind has become a global geological force in its own right.

Human evolution both industrially and technologically has provided us with advanced means of production systems that make up our society. These global man-made systems have become uncontrolled planet-changing forces with agency. The future of our planet and future generations undeniably depends on finding a way to manage these systems, and if not 'we' then who shall take responsibility of our activity and dominant influence on climate change?

Humankind has begun to alter the environment and the paradox is: **despite the powerful impact humans have on earth, we as individuals often feel impotent.**

'The Anthropocene' brings together a group of artists, from different generations and from different places across the world, working in various mediums. These artists begin narratives that might account for the kinds of relation and responsibility in which we find ourselves entangled. The disturbing premise is that we are so radically impacting our environment to the point of irreversibility that we may cause a catastrophe. Such a profound statement can almost feel unfathomable to the point of denial. We are left in a state of complex cross-weaves of vulnerability and culpability. The works of these artists respond to the idea of the powerless sensation of where we stand geologically in this moment and challenge the individual accountability in a collective society where we are all part of a drastic change. The presumption is that collectively we are all world changers on a path where we have left a record that is now indelible.

Fact and responsibility have deliberately been blurred; we are unsure who to make culpable and who is capable of working to rectify the situation. Industrialization, globalization, artificial intelligence, climate change, and the limits of the human are the foundational concepts for these works and the exhibition. The exhibition invites its viewers to enter into this dialogue.

**Paul Bashour** (1975, Ohio, USA) paints horizontally on saw horses without a brush or easel. Using a trowel and his hands, he throws, pours and spreads in layer after layer, creating a sculpture on canvas. He uses mixed media including recycled strips of left-over canvas and acrylic paint, mixing the elements on the canvas. The process results in abstract creations that seem to move off the wall with of their own agency. He uses his materials to create systems of layers on the canvas.

**Dominik Lejman** (b. 1969, Gdańsk, Poland.) The experience of art works by Dominik Lejman intimates a creative sense of aesthetic displacement, and not least his immediate use and challenging dismissal of outdated ideas of what constituted arguments and/or distinctions between the temporal and the spatial. Lejman operates within a unique time-space interstice that embraces film and painting and the photographic image, while at the same time retaining a highly personal and pictorially synthetic disposition that grounds his wider use of film and painting in his artistic practice. His use of film and painting take on a dialectical presence through his use of paradoxical, substantial and insubstantial images. They are substantial in terms of a material surface as presence and insubstantial as regards the use of immaterial projection. Lejman generates a performance-related

and intentionally processed conceptual visual presentation; the artist calls it “staging rituals”, yet there is a displaced mental state of experiential *aporia*, a residual position of philosophical and self-reflexive rhetorical puzzlement.

**Claudia Vieira** (b. 1964, Porto Alegre, Brazil) addresses the aspects of the ‘individual’s feelings of impotence about our collective impact on our environment. Her architectural *Topographies*, a series of drawing environments, is an act of connection between body and space. The artist’s gesture rises to the surface, thereby blending her body into the architecture. This action exemplifies Vieira’s responding to drawing as the most direct expression to thought. Whether Vieira makes use of pen, tape, ink or charcoal, her distinctive qualities are highlighted by the empirical relationships of her body with the surroundings and the recording of time lived.