Seeing the Anthropocene

curated by Julia Clift

On view: October 28-December 2, 2023, simultaneously at Tiger Strikes Asteroid and Cherry Street Pier, Philadelphia

Opening Receptions: November 4th, 5-8 PM at Cherry Street Pier, with a live performance at 6 PM, and November 9th, 6-9 PM at Tiger Strikes Asteroid

Artists and Collaborations: Austen Camille (with music by ENAensemble) | Lydia Cheshewalla | Matthew Colaizzo | Christopher McNulty | Ana Mosquera | Hui-Ying Tsai | Hui-Ying Tsai in collaboration with Jonathan Grover | Byron Wolfe | The Immersion Project: Austen Camille, Erik Cordes, Ph.D., Samantha Joye, Ph.D., Malte Leander, Christine Lee, and Rebecca Rutstein

Seeing the Anthropocene (StA) is a cross-venue exhibition curated by Philadelphia-based artist Julia Clift, featuring diverse artists and collaborative groups contending with the global climate crisis and other urgent environmental issues. Through wide-ranging media, the included artworks foster understanding of the moment we're in, inspire personal connections with the natural world, and imagine different potential futures depending on how we act today. The show features artists from across the country as well as international perspectives.

Several artworks in StA shed light on the policies, conventions, and attitudes that led to the climate crisis and continue to sustain it today. Large-scale pieces by Matthew Colaizzo and Christopher McNulty document commonplace pollution and extractive industry in America, while smaller works by both artists subtly critique human efforts to dominate the natural world. In their own ways, Colaizzo and McNulty interrogate Modern ideals of "progress" that often underpin environmental destruction.

Byron Wolfe's *Vanished Volcano Visualization Kit* offers maps and models to help audience members envision Mount Tehama, an ancient volcano in Northern California that's almost entirely disappeared over the past 400,000 years due to natural erosion. The kit evokes the difficulty of processing environmental losses and imagining what once was, mental tasks required for contending with present-day issues like climate change and mass extinction. While Wolfe endeavors to see the distant past, Ana Mosquera envisions a dystopic climate future. Her Breathing Exchange

Temporium, a woefully dysfunctional life raft and oxygen tank, forebodes mass climate migration and encapsulates life's precarity on a hotter planet, especially for those less privileged.

A highlight of the exhibition is the first prototype of *The Immersion Project,* a collaboration between Austen Camille, Christine Lee, Rebecca Rutstein, Malte Leander, and oceanographers Erik Cordes, Ph.D. and Samantha Joye, Ph.D that incorporates large-scale coral-inspired sculptures, augmented reality animation and sound into a multi-sensory installation to educate the public about deep sea ecosystems. After a national exhibition tour, the sculptures will be installed in the Gulf of Mexico to help restore coral habitats damaged by the Deep Water Horizon oil spill in 2010. The project demonstrates one way that artists can contribute to climate solutions.

All of the artworks mentioned thus far will be on view at Tiger Strikes Asteroid. Two miles south of the gallery, at Cherry Street Pier, works by Lydia Cheshewalla, Hui-Ying Tsai, and Austen Camille encourage personal connection to the natural world and help audience members to see themselves as part of nature rather than above it. Such perspective can be a wellspring for environmentally-conscious action. Notably, Camille's large-scale augmented reality animation over the Delaware River, featuring music by Philadelphia's ENAensemble, will incorporate a live performance during the show's opening reception at Cherry Street Pier, on November 4th at 6 PM. At Tiger Strikes Asteroid, Camille's AR animation within The Immersion Project and a second piece by Tsai—a collaboration with sound artist Jonathan Grover—tie the two venues together and bring notes of hope to the gallery.

For more information, please visit www.StAPhilly.com.