

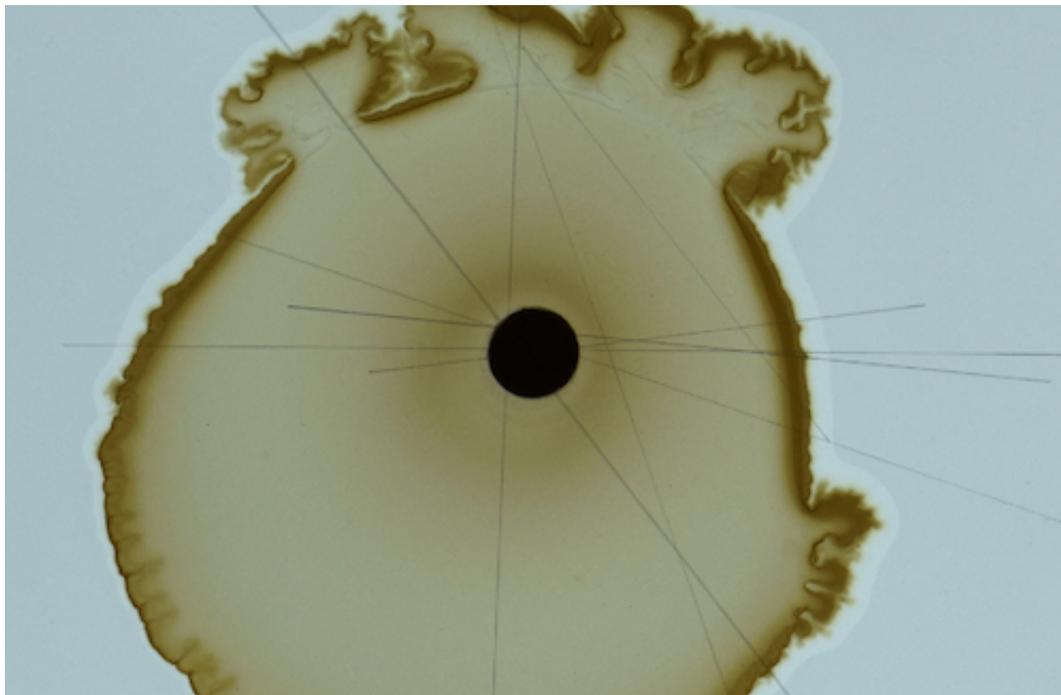
PRESS RELEASE

## **The Habitat of Time** Curated by Julie Louise Bacon

20 February – 14 March 2020

Preview & curator's introduction: Wednesday 19 February, 6:30 – 8:30PM

Announcing a new group exhibition curated by Julie Louise Bacon exploring the role of time as a medium in shaping human and more-than-human worlds, presented in the context of her current residency as associate curator at Arts Catalyst.



James Guerts, *Trajectories II-Prebiotica*, 2019; image courtesy the artist

### CURATOR'S STATEMENT

The project focuses on the way that time as a medium shapes our perception of life, the structure of societies, and the vastness of the physical world. The artworks featured in the exhibition propose a rescaling of human time and expose its deep interrelations with the diversity of the more-than-human realm, moving through the geological, technological, biological and cosmic.

Every era experiences and understands time differently. In the 21st century, the instability of globalisation, the speed of digital technologies, and the transformation of knowledge are generating rapid shifts in time. These shifts unfold at individual, collective and planetary scales. In a climate of acceleration, compressed and volatile time, the artists show up temporal relations in new ways, through their work with the forms and rhythms of: analogue and digital media; seeds, insects and matter; graphite, ochre and charcoal; satellites, strata and atmospheres.

**Thomson & Craighead**'s work *Horizon* (2009-20) acts as a visual and conceptual index of the modern, global regime of clock time. In the premiere of a newly-formatted 4K iteration of the work, the London-based artist duo collate imagery captured from webcams positioned in each of the world's 24 time zones, which are accessed remotely via the Internet. The work explores the potential of the Internet to convey the experience of duration and exposes the slippage between the conditions of network, planetary and local time.

The exhibition features works by five Australian artists all of which are shown in the UK for the first time. **Robert Andrew** is a descendant of the Yawuru people; his mother's country encompasses Rubibi (Broome) and its surrounds in the Kimberley Region of Western Australia. In a video work produced for the exhibition, Andrew reconfigures traces of an intricate drawing machine that he installed at Metro Arts, Brisbane for the exhibition *Disruptive (III) logic* (2017). The machine was driven by a Cartesian coordinate system that accepted texts from the Yawuru language as a stimulus to manoeuvre organic objects – including charred wood, shell, rock and ochre – across the gallery's surfaces. The video iteration of the work re-invokes the erasure of indigenous culture and exposes the power of symbolic materials and technology to shape relationships with time.

*Ark* (2020) is a new single-channel video by **James Geurts**, which focuses on the Flinders Ranges in Australia, formed some 650 million years ago, and the location of the world's oldest fossil evidence of multicellular life. Geurts exposed 35mm film footage, captured at sites around the Ranges, to the climate, light and dust in the area. The film was then threaded through a Steenbeck editing machine manually, and the duration of the feed varied, while the imagery was re-captured in digital format. The experimental process draws out the matter of time held within and between celluloid, biological and geological bodies.

In *Trajectories II: Prebiotica* (2019) Geurts presents the traces of a durational experiment with the oldest material known to exist on Earth, taken from a meteorite that landed in Australia in 1969. The work, made at the CSIRO Lab in Victoria, reflects on the threshold at which the chemical becomes biological, and life emerges.

**Lucy Bleach**'s *The Slow Seismogenic Zone: core sample (i)* (2020) features sound recordings of a phenomenon known as 'slow earthquakes', accessed during her residency at a research facility in Japan. The development of technologies that monitor extremely low frequencies enabled scientists to detect the presence of a form of seismic activity that has the potential to either diffuse or trigger more rapid and destructive earthquake events. The installation of the work in the gallery window draws the site and the public into the vibrational field of techno-geological time.

*seed in Space/sound in time* (2017) by **Josh Wodak** sonifies the temperature range experienced by three seeds of the critically-endangered, prehistoric Australian Wollemi Pine during the year-long NASA Seeds in Space experiment, in 2008. The left channel maps the temperature experienced by a Wollemi control sample seed in Mount Annan seed bank. The right channel maps the temperature of an experimental seed on the International Space Station. In the centre channel is the climate experienced by an uncollected seed still lying in Wollemi National Park. The sound samples are all of

the Snowy Tree Cricket, which modifies its pitch and pulse rate according to changes in its ambient temperature.

In *The Pinned Moth Cannot Fly* (2018), **Eva Nolan** uproots the hierarchy of the system of taxonomy developed in the 18th century by the botanist Carl Linnaeus. Nolan creates a speculative and biodiverse ecosystem by digitally fracturing, blending and stitching together high-resolution scans of her graphite drawings. The resulting animated forms depart from the standard, modern view of evolutionary time, and challenge the implication of colonial-originating taxonomies in our perception of the interrelationships between living things.

Details of an accompanying public event taking place on Saturday 29 February will be announced soon via the Arts Catalyst website.

#### SUPPORT

*The Habitat of Time* was supported by a Research and Development grant from UNSW Art & Design, UNSW Australia.

**For further information, images and interview requests please contact Poppy Cockburn, Communications Officer via [poppy.cockburn@artscatalyst.org](mailto:poppy.cockburn@artscatalyst.org) / Tel: +44 (0) 20 7278 8373**

#### EXHIBITION DETAILS

Exhibition dates: 20 February – 14 March 2020

Open Thu – Sat, 12 – 6pm

Free entry

#### Notes to Editors

**Dr. Julie Louise Bacon** is an artist, curator and writer. Her research explores the relationships between social, physical and mental life, as they are shaped through time and the interaction of technology and culture. She leads the international research project *The Habitat of Time* (2018-2021), in its fifth iteration at Arts Catalyst. In addition to presenting performances and installations in festivals and galleries worldwide, she has curated large-scale events investigating the layered time of archives, media, histories and sites: *Tone- A Meeting of Sound and Light* 2014, *Signal-Art and Network Technologies* 2012, and *Per-forming the Archive* 2007-8. Bacon has held executive, directorship and curatorial posts in art centres in England, Northern Ireland and Québec and acted as an advisor and consultant for organisations including European Capital of Culture Leeuwarden 2018, and the Arts Councils of Northern Ireland and Québec. She has published widely on contemporary art and cultural theory and is based in Sydney, where she is a Lecturer at UNSW Art & Design and a researcher at the National Institute for Experimental Arts.

**The Habitat of Time** is an international research project initiated by Dr Julie Louise Bacon. Emerging through a process of workshops, seminars, exhibitions and publications staged from 2018 to 2021, the project was developed through Bacon's role at UNSW Art & Design and NIEA in Sydney, Australia. The three-month residency at Arts Catalyst will be formed of research and public activities that synthesise the project's outcomes to date and expand the international research group. The residency builds on collaborations with OzGrav at the University of Western Australia in Perth (2019), the [Foundation for Art and Creative Technology](#) (FACT) in Liverpool UK (2018), and [Casula Powerhouse](#) (2018) and [Artspace in Sydney](#) (2018).

**Arts Catalyst** is a non-profit contemporary arts organisation that commissions and produces transdisciplinary art and research. Through working with artists, scientists, communities and interest groups the organisation produces projects, artworks and exhibitions that connect with other fields of knowledge, expanding artistic practice into domains commonly associated with science and specialist research. Over 25 years, Arts Catalyst has commissioned more than 170 artists' projects, including major new works by Tomás Saraceno, Aleksandra Mir, Critical Art Ensemble, Jan Fabre and the Otolith Group, and produced numerous exhibitions, events, performances and publications, collaborating with major arts, science and academic organisations. Arts

Catalyst's Centre in King's Cross, London, is a hub where, working nationally and internationally, the organisation can develop new projects and co-inquiries connecting local interests with wider planetary issues.

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