

U t o p a p h o b i a

In August of 2021 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released their sixth assessment report, laying out in stark terms what the future holds for planet Earth. Increased global temperatures, rising sea levels, higher frequency of wildfires, drastic weather, and health crises due to pollution and food shortages are some of the issues that loom large.

For many, there is little hope. The most urgent climate issues we face can only be addressed by the power structures that have profited from them. Individual actions, while important in furthering awareness, have not risen to the level of effective protest. Large and small scale incremental changes are underway but progress is being outpaced by devastation.

Confronted with this lack of action we risk resigning ourselves to extinction and erasing a vision of humanity as resourceful and resilient. This exhibition presents the work of artists who are building on and thinking beyond the steps we take as individuals and challenging conventional wisdom on how we address climate change. Re-examining the value and utility of materials, exploring knowledge and traditions that have been marginalized, and visualizing perceptions of space through form are just a few of the ways in which these artists are envisioning a more sustainable future.

What is 'Utopaphobia'?

Utopia is often defined as an imagined place where social conditions are perfect and all things are equal. By virtue of that impossibility the word is also synonymous with impracticality, naive optimism, and insidious authoritarianism. It exists in our lexicon as an inherent contradiction. Something to which many feel an aversion to and in many ways embodies the predicaments we face in continuing to shape society.

As creatures living on this planet we are, to the best of our knowledge, the most capable of manipulating the world around us. The structures we build, the materials we process and synthesize, the social systems we navigate in our daily lives, and the art we make are all characteristics that distinguish us from other life on earth. Our own history frames us as exceptional. Superior. The creation of a higher power. The image of god.

As exceptional creatures we now find ourselves in a conundrum. Our curiosity, knowledge, and self-awareness has enabled us to envision a perfect world while cynically embracing the fact that it is unattainable. For many of us in modern industrial civilization we have resigned ourselves to a neoliberal position from which the virtuous gesture is rewarded with more social and monetary capital than the revolutionary action. This exhibition may very well be an example of that very problem.

However, in spite of the urgency of the moment and the times in which we live, thought

and actions are not mutually exclusive. The social fabric that connects us still depends on knowledge, education, infrastructure, community, and culture. Though more of us should, we cannot all spend the majority of our time fighting for the preservation of the environment that sustains human life. What we can do is not only think more consciously about our actions but also about our perception of the very systems we need to change. This exhibition presents the work of artists who work across media to explore notions of materiality, the natural world, sustainability, and how we respond to these ideas in our everyday lives.

Artists

Gabriella Boros

As an avid hiker and gardener, Gabriella is keenly aware of the climate crisis we have today. Raised in Israel, her parents both European Holocaust survivors, taught her to appreciate nature as they hiked in forests, beaches and desert canyons. These works aim to inspire the preservation of our natural environment. By creating narratives of humans interacting with plants, Gabriella hopes to bring the natural world closer to people that may feel more detached from it. The works illustrate the inextricable tie between plants and humans and the need to preserve that relationship.

In this work Gabriella taps into narratives of plants acting as healing agents. The series *Ojibwa Plant Medicine* illustrates discoveries in herbal medicines made by people of the Ojibwe First Nation. Her work also explores symbiosis in nature and the cultural legacies of matriarchs from history and mythology.

"I anxiously watch as our environment is further degraded by industry and careless conservatorship of our world. The more plants that I research the more I discover how remarkable botany can be in helping our planet thrive and in helping humans live healthier lives. Ultimately, these works aim to inspire the preservation of our natural environment."

www.gabriellaboros.com

Jan Brugger

Jan Brugger believes making is a form of thinking that often reveals itself in fragments. She engages a variety of media and research strategies that animate or draw out meaningful links between things that might at first seem disconnected.

"Using art as a process to feel, think, and connect, I make propositions with my work (rather than prescriptions or propaganda) that embody, mimic and critique cultural problems by holding up a distorted mirror. I turn to humor and theatricality to reveal new

dimensions of the truth, and/or the honest aspects of the mythic - like a Cubist painting of a situation. The shapes and structures of my work are based on the 'real world' but are used to destabilize convention and offer alternate possibilities and outcomes. (I believe this is what can make art and comedy revolutionary.)"

Exaggeration, parody, and slapstick reveal but also alleviate and undermine the overwhelming anxieties and dead-end ways of thinking about the world. Is technology the problem, or is it actually rooted in humanity? Could true peace be achieved through more chaos rather than order? *Transcendental Metaworry* is an absurdist lecture that presents humankind as the "worrying animal". In a quest to find transcendence from the modern world, the lecturer's mind spirals into worry until he reaches the state of TMW.

www.janbrugger.com

Evan Carter

Evan Carter's artistic practice is rooted in the belief that painting and drawing are the most accurate material manifestations of human thought. Utilizing modes of abstraction and figuration he explores tensions between the material and immaterial worlds. In exploring this liminal space he produces images that are palimpsestic documents of responsive gestures; mappings of aesthetic thought processes.

He often relies on found materials to produce images that take shape over the course of a few years. Time is an essential element in his work is an attempt to communicate with viewers about their relationship to time, space, and materiality.

<https://www.evancarterartist.com>

Kim Curtis

Kim Curtis' work deals with the environmental aspects of human activity. As a painter and sculptor, Curtis investigates the marks which accumulate in our spaces through both addition and subtraction, destruction and preservation. These paintings utilize materials that are not typically used to make paintings. Styrofoam and insulation material that would otherwise be harmful waste is incorporated into fragmented images of the natural landscape. The paintings themselves embody the relationships between humans and the environment that is often taken for granted and overlooked. They are metaphors for this relationship and deny the viewer the idealized landscape that has held such a prominent place in the history of painting.

Ms. Curtis holds degrees in History of Art from the University of California, Berkeley and in Drawing and Painting from California College of the Arts in San Francisco. A California native, she began her artistic career as a costume designer and theatrical craftsperson, working with world-renowned designers and performers as master craftsperson for the San Francisco Opera. Her work has been shown and collected throughout the US and abroad, primarily through her 15-year relationship with Kasia Kay Art Projects in Chicago. Curtis currently teaches in the Department of Theatre at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and continues to work in theater, fine art and illustration from her studio in Urbana, IL.

Ten percent of the purchase price of her paintings goes directly to Illinois-based Prairie Rivers Network or to an environmental organization of the purchaser's choice.

www.kimcurtis.net

Megan Diddie

Megan Diddie is a Chicago-based artist working with video, animation, drawing, and ceramics. Her work explores the possibilities found where our bodies, nature, and the systems that organize our lives meet.

Hot House is an ongoing project that started in 2016. It visualizes a fantastical and speculative public institution, the botanical bathhouse, by examining and reforming video footage of coldly real and extant structures: the four remaining public bathhouses in Chicago, the Garfield Park Conservatory, and the variegated infrastructure of the Enduring City. In addition, the project's drawings and sculptures reflect upon these public works utopias. In Chicago, the forever striving 'Global City', luxury saunas and wellness spaces are becoming increasingly popular, with access hinging on a rarefied socio-economic status. Hot House plans an opposing vision, based on historical public works that provided free or inexpensive services through humble design and general provision. Hot House contemplates places of 'encounter', places where we see each other in intimate settings such as the restroom or the public pool. The conservatory element of this project considers how nature might take more precedence in daily life. The pieces are modular and visitors are encouraged to move and re-design the layout. In order to find plants that grow best in and around the sculptures, Diddie has been working with Sussanah Donne, an ecopsychologist and botanical artist.

*Hot House was partially funded by DCASE and a printed book of drawings accompanies these pieces and is free to the public. If you would like a copy of this book please email the artist at megan.diddie@gmail.com

www.megandiddie.com

Susanne Layla Petersen

Susanne Layla Petersen does not write artist statements or believe that artwork requires accompanying text. It is up to the curator to make a statement as to why they selected Susanne's work.

The End of the World as we know it is being included in this exhibition for its depiction of the natural world through the distorted lens of technological intervention. This visual intervention can be read a number of ways. The curator feels that it is particularly poignant in illustrating the limited access the vast majority of the global population has to this landscape in spite of the impact they have on it. If so many of us only have access through digital means it seems appropriate that the digital medium is not only constrained in it's representation but also reflective of our relationship with and the impact we have on it.

Glasslabs.works

Travis Neel & Erin Charpentier

Erin Charpentier and Travis Neel are a collaborative artist partnership. Their creative practice is interdisciplinary; melding conceptual, curatorial, activist, and socially engaged art practices. For them, art is a useful territory for collective imagining and a vehicle for exploring new ways of being together in the world.

Their projects have been featured in the Agitprop! exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum; The Time Based Arts Festival at the Portland Institute of Contemporary Art, The Northwest Now Biennial at the Tacoma Art Museum; the Out Of Sight Survey of Northwest Art in Seattle, Washington; the Converge 45 art fair; the Writ Large festival at The Great Wall of Oakland; the POW Film Fest; the Portland Art Museum; the Hollywood theater in Portland, Oregon; and numerous DIY and public spaces across the United States.

<https://questwork.org>

Roberto Santaguida

Since completing his studies in film production at Concordia University, Roberto Santaguida's films and videos have been shown at more than 400 international festivals, including CPH: DOX, Copenhagen International Documentary Film Festival (Denmark), Contemporary Art Festival Sesc_Videobrasil (Brazil), transmediale (Germany), and Message to Man (Russia). He has also taken part in artist residencies in numerous countries, including Iran, Romania, Germany, Norway, and Australia. Roberto is the recipient of the K.M. Hunter Artist Award, the Chalmers Arts Fellowship and a fellowship from Akademie Schloss Solitude in Germany.

In the beginning, there was nothing. You can get nothing easily.

Dan Buckley parts the veil on the origins and future of the universe. He investigates the disorder and delight that proliferates in between; the worlds and ideas that rub up against each other and, at times, collide.

A reflection on assigning meaning and shedding preconceptions while in free fall.

Adam Sébire

Adam Sébire studied documentary filmmaking at the national film school of Australia (AFTRS), going on to make dozens of programs for Australian TV, before crossing to video art. His experiences filming on the Pacific island nation of Tuvalu in 2003, only 2 meters above the rising waters of the Pacific, turned his focus towards climate change.

Adam has been marooned in Arctic Norway for almost 18 months by Australia's Covid-19 border closures. The misadventure has however allowed him to experience and document the disturbing changes to this fragile environment, firsthand.

AnthropoScene II: Tideline explores sea level rise, anthropogenic influence on the environment, and nonhuman timescales.

www.adamsebire.info/anthropoScenes

Kelsey Merreck Wagner

How can we use ugly materials to make aesthetically pleasing art? How can art contribute to environmental stewardship? What are my responsibilities as an artist and human being?

As a practicing artist and anthropologist, Kelsey Merreck Wagner's theoretical research on culture and art are utilized to advocate for environmental issues and the animals and human communities experiencing them. She largely focuses on community-based natural resource management, cultural dimensions of conservation, arts-based education, creative activism, political ecology, and elephants; her research has focused on regions of Appalachia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Cambodia.

www.kelseymerreckwagner.com

Deep Time Chicago:

DEEP TIME CHICAGO is an art/research/activism initiative formed in the wake of the [Anthropocene Curriculum](#) program at HKW in Berlin, Germany. The initiative's goal is to explore one core idea: humanity as a geological agency, capable of disrupting the earth system and inscribing present modes of existence into deep time. By knitting together group readings, guided walks, lectures, panels, screenings, performances, publications and exhibitions, we hope to develop a public research trajectory, offering a variety of formats where Chicago area inhabitants can grapple with the crucial questions of global ecological change.

Inheritance 2.0 is a collaboration between Kayla Anderson, Sara Black, Amber Ginsburg, Sarah Lewison, and Claire Pentecost.

<https://deeptimechicago.org/>

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Please contact Evan Carter at evancarterartist@gmail.com or 774-364-0156 with any inquiries regarding purchasing artwork or contacting artists involved with this exhibition.

Gabriella Boros



Rage of the Matriarchs
2021
20" x 14"

Sarah: Anemone

\$800



Rage of the Matriarchs
2021
20" x 14"

Rebecca: Cyclamen

\$800



Rage of the Matriarchs
2021
20" x 14"

Leah: Globe thistles

\$800



Rage of the Matriarchs
2021
20" x 14"

Rachel: Mandrakes

\$800



Rage of the Matriarchs
2021
20" x 14"

Dinah: Sea Squill

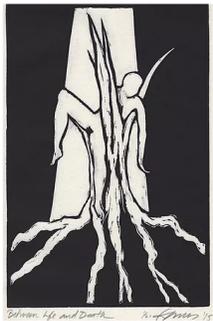
\$800



Rage of the Matriarchs
2021
20" x 14"

Tamar: Date

\$800



Regeneration
2021
All prints 8.5" x 12"

Between Life and Death

\$300



Regeneration
2021
All prints 8.5" x 12"

Sundered in her Prime

\$300



Regeneration
2021
All prints 8.5" x 12"

Death Becomes Her

\$300



Regeneration
2021
All prints 8.5" x 12"

Regeneration

\$300



Nature's Sorrows
2020
10" x 14"

Columbine

\$300



Nature's Sorrows
2020
10" x 14"

Helleborine

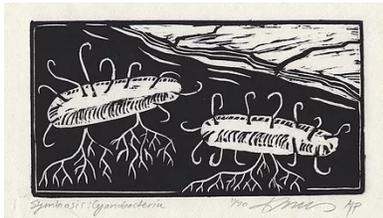
\$300



Nature's Sorrows
2020
10" x 14"

Poppy

\$300



Symbiosis Series
2020
Prints 10" x 11.5"
Cyanobacteria

\$300



Symbiosis Series
2020
Prints 10" x 11.5"
Aphids and Ants

\$300



Symbiosis Series
2020
Prints 10" x 11.5"
Mycorrhizals

\$300



Symbiosis Series
2020
Prints 10" x 11.5"
Lichens

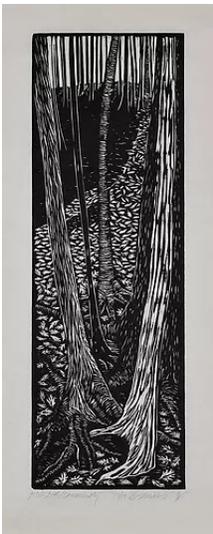
\$300



The Old Oak 2018
57" x 38"

Swamp White Oak
Quercus bicolor

\$1000



Tree Communities
2019/2020
13.5" x 23.5"

Shevet Achim/ Community

\$600



Tree Communities
2019/2020
13.5" x 23.5"

Imahot/Mother Trees

\$600



Tree Communities
2019/2020
13.5" x 23.5"

Modeh Ani/Dormancy

\$600



Tree Communities
2019/2020
13.5" x 23.5"

Shorashim Amukim/Deep Roots

\$600

Ojibwa Woman Healing
2018
Each print 14" x 9"



The Girl That Vanquished An Ogre

Jack in the Pulpit
Arisaema triphyllum

\$700



Lonely Woman Gives Pain Relief and Finds
Friendship

Trillium
Trillium grandiflorum

\$700



Why the Speedy Girl Slowed Down

Meadowsweet
Spiraea tomentosa

\$700



The Murmuring Plants Help A
Long Delivery

Blue Cohosh
Caulophyllum thalictroides

\$700



Hungry Baby Gets the Milk

Spreading Dogbane
Apocynum androsaemifolium

\$700



Easing a First Birth

Pussytoes
Antennaria plantaginifolia

\$700



Vanishing Woman's Permanent Reappearance

Red Baneberry

Actea rubra

\$700



The Fisherwoman Catches A Magic Herb

Artemisia

Artemisia frigida

\$700

Kelsey Merrick Wagner



From *Loom and Doom*
Materials: Plastic Weaving

Inquire for availability



From *Loom and Doom*
Materials: Plastic Weaving

Inquire for availability



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Materials: Plastic Weaving

Inquire for availability



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Materials: Plastic Weaving

Inquire for availability



From *Loom and Doom*
Materials: Plastic Weaving

Inquire for availability

Kim Curtis



Reconfigured: Sixteen
Oil and tape on one wood panel and one
metallic styrofoam panel
23.5 "w x 14.5"h
Price available upon request



Reconfigured: Fourteen
Oil and tape on three wood and three foam
panels 70.5 x 36"
Price available upon request



Reconfigured: Nine
Oil and tape on wood panel
36"w x 36"h
Not available for purchase



Thirtyseven : fifteen
Oil on panel
36"w x 36"h
Price available upon request



Reconfigured: Two
Oil, flashe, masonite, cardboard and nails,
tape on two wood panels
15 x 12"
Price available upon request



Reconfigured: Seventeen
Oil on wood panel
24"w x 24"h
Price available upon request



Thirtyseven: twentysix
Oil on seven panels
137 x 15"
Price available upon request



Emergency: Tree no. 1
Flashe paint on salvaged 1/2" corrugated
cardboard mounted on pink insulation-foam
frame
47" w x 35" h



Emergency: Tree no. 2
Flashe paint on salvaged corrugated
cardboard
24" w x 37" h

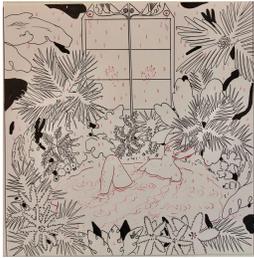
Megan Diddie



Pen on paper

8.5 " x 11"

Inquire for availability



Pen on paper

8.5 " x 11"

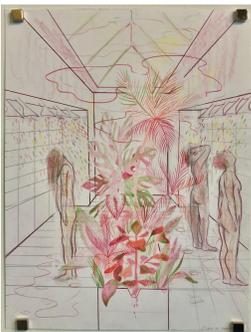
Inquire for availability



Pen on paper

8.5 " x 11"

Inquire for availability



Colored pencil on paper

8.5 " x 11"

Inquire for availability



:
Colored pencil on paper

8.5 " x 11"
Inquire for availability



Pen on paper

8.5 " x 11"
Inquire for availability



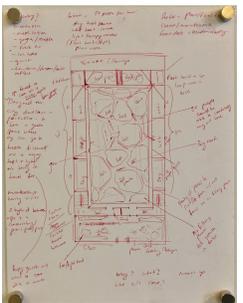
Pen on paper

8.5 " x 11"
Inquire for availability



Pen on paper

8.5 " x 11"
Inquire for availability



Pen on paper

8.5 " x 11"
Inquire for availability



Colored pencil on paper

8.5 " x 11"

Inquire for availability



Pen on paper

8.5 " x 11"

Inquire for availability



Watercolor(?) on paper

8.5 " x 11"

Inquire for availability



Colored pencil on paper

8.5 " x 11"

Inquire for availability



Pen on paper

8.5 " x 11"

Inquire for availability



Colored pencil on paper

8.5 " x 11"

Inquire for availability



Colored pencil on paper

8.5 " x 11"

Inquire for availability



Pen on paper

8.5 " x 11"

Inquire for availability



Pen on paper

8.5 " x 11"

Inquire for availability



Hot House

Ceramic, plants, soil

Inquire for availability

Evan Carter



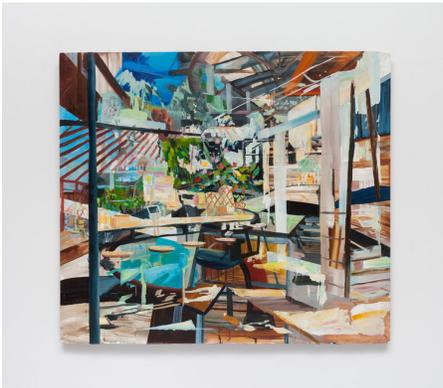
Untitled
2018 - 2021
Found paper, glue

Price available upon request



Land Language
2017
Oil on canvas

\$2000



The Feigntist
2014 - 2017
Oil on drywall

\$4000



Garden
2014 - 2017
Oil on wood, drywall

\$6000

Jan Brugger



Transcendental Metaworry
2019
4K digital video with stereo sound

Travis Neel & Erin
Charpentier



The Shapes of Cooperation
2021
Video, Color, Sound

Susanne Layla Petersen



The End of the World as we know it
2019
Digital Video

Roberto Santaguida



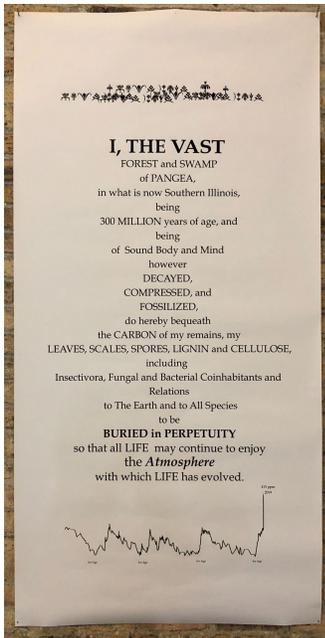
The Universe According to Dan Buckley
2019
HD digital video

Adam Sébire



anthropoScene II: Tideline
2018
HD single-channel, stereo audio

Deep Time Chicago



Inheritance 2.0
2021
Audio & Print