#### How to retell the world.

#### Narratives of human relations with nature in museums

Elżbieta Nieroba, University of Opole, Poland



hem.

ranspational Higher Education

#### Second Annual FORTHEM conference

FORTHEM – Connecting Worlds of Science and Society

# CRISIS OF IMAGINATION

 we need new narratives about the world that will allow us to abandon known patterns of action and open up to new relationships in which humans do not dominate nature



Second Annual FORTHEM conference FORTHEM – Connecting Worlds of

ion Science and Society

#### RESEARCH MATERIAL

 content present at exhibitions and accompanying educational and promotional materials, catalogues



Second Annual FORTHEM conference

FORTHEM – Connecting Worlds of Science and Society

# METHOD OF ANALYSIS

• critical discourse analysis – nature is the exploited party



Second Annual FORTHEM conference FORTHEM – Connecting Worlds of

Science and Society
January 29-31, 2025

# **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- do the narratives reproduce an anthropocentric world order?
- are there practices of erasing nature?
- what is the status of humans in relation to nature?
- who are the main characters in the narrative, what roles do they play in it, and where does the action take place?



Second Annual FORTHEM conference

FORTHEM – Connecting Worlds of Science and Society January 29-31, 2025

# ANALYSED EXHIBITIONS

- We Are Nature: Living in the Anthropocene, Carnegie Museum of Natural History, 2017
- Unsettled Nature: Artists Reflect on the Age of Humans, National Museum of Natural History, 2021-2022



Second Annual FORTHEM conference

FORTHEM – Connecting Worlds of Science and Society

#### We Are Nature: Living in the Anthropocene, Carnegie Museum of Natural History

reuniting humans with nature

- you are an animal; the same goes for everyone you`ve ever known and loved
- rejecting the idea of nature as: pristine and separate from humankind's influence
- the beautiful web of life around us
- an entanglement that is at the root of everything
- curators try to cut through this complicated and at times overwhelming science



Second Annual FORTHEM conference

FORTHEM – Connecting Worlds of Science and Society January 29-31, 2025

#### We Are Nature: Living in the Anthropocene, Carnegie Museum of Natural History

a new interpretation of the collection:

• how humans are shaping life on Earth



Second Annual FORTHEM conference

FORTHEM – Connecting Worlds of Science and Society

# Unsettled Nature: Artists Reflect on the Age of Humans, National Museum of Natural History

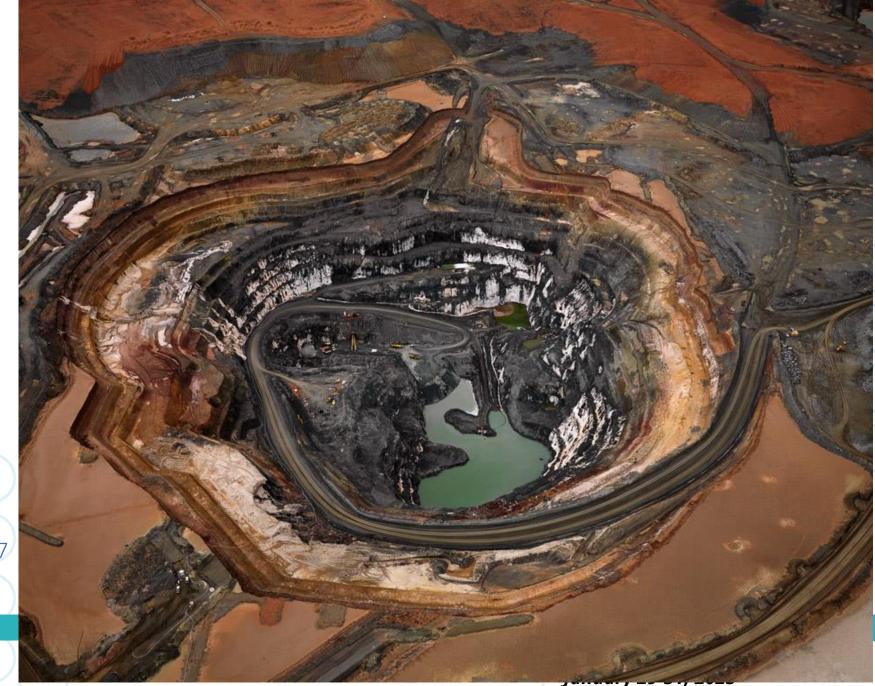
- confronting visitors with something that is ultimately emotional
- art as a tool to help people realize the truth
- Art can make visible something that's so invisible, like climate change



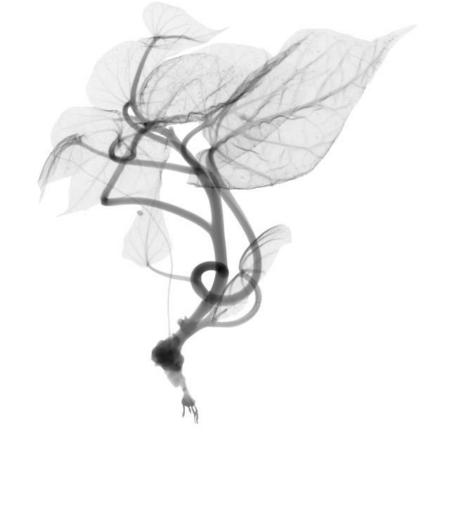
Second Annual FORTHEM conference FORTHEM – Connecting Worlds of Science and Society

- beautiful colours
- strange beauty

Edward Burtynsky, Mines, Australia, 2007



• beautiful leaves



Dornith Doherty, Sweet Potato Clone, 2009

#### HUMAN RELATIONS WITH NATURE. CONCLUSIONS

*We Are Nature: Living in the Anthropocene,* Carnegie Museum of Natural History, 2017

- We humans have been part of the story all along, just on the other side of the camera
- stewardship of the Earth
- to make life abundant and diverse

*Unsettled Nature: Artists Reflect on the Age of Humans,* National Museum of Natural History, 2021-2022

• human era

anthropocentric dictionary



Second Annual FORTHEM conference

FORTHEM – Connecting Worlds of Science and Society