

How to retell the world.

Narratives of human relations with nature in museums

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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



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RESEARCH MATERIAL

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



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METHOD OF ANALYSIS

- critical discourse analysis – nature is the exploited party



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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?



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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



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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*



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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*



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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*



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- *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



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