

+

+

James Hutton (1726–1797)

born and died Edinburgh, Scotland

Theory of the Earth, with Proofs and Illustrations, Vols. I-III,
1795–1899

Courtesy of Linda Hall Library of Science,
Engineering and Technology, Kansas City, MO
EL2019.001.01-.03

+

+

+

+

Andrew S. Yang

born 1973, Atlanta, Georgia

Ghosts of the Everchanging: Cobra Rock,
1993 and 2001 (after John Charlton), 2019

from *Theory of the Earth, Volume IV*

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist, with appreciation to photographer
John Charlton, IA2019.001.05

Ghosts of the Everchanging: Castle Rock,
1997 and 2001 (after John Charlton), 2019

from *Theory of the Earth, Volume IV*

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist, with appreciation to photographer
John Charlton, IA2019.001.04

Reading the Landscape (Ancient Ocean Testament:
Cobra Rock, Kanseas), 2019

from *Theory of the Earth, Volume IV*

salvaged books, steel support

Courtesy of the artist, IA2019.001.03

Reading the Landscape (Ancient Ocean Testament:
Castle Rock, Kanseas), 2019

from *Theory of the Earth, Volume IV*

salvaged books, geological specimens

Courtesy of the artist, IA2019.001.02

These sculptural installations evoke the structures of geological layers and mimic well-known formations that can be found in western Kansas. Yang created composite images of photographs originally taken by John Charlton, who worked for the Kansas Geological Survey. Charlton photographed these notable sites on two separate occasions, documenting slow and drastic changes in the landscape over time. The word *Kanseas* that appears in some of the works' titles is also a reference to changes over time. The Midwest region of the continent was at one time the location of an inland sea.

+

+

+

+

Andrew S. Yang

born 1973, Atlanta, Georgia

Deep Time Library & Archive, 2019

from *Theory of the Earth, Volume IV*

salvaged books, geological specimens, plastic, ceramics,
altered photographs

Courtesy of the artist, IA2019.001.01

Geologists state that the Earth is 4.54 billion years old—plus or minus 50 million years. That number is so large and abstract that within our experiences of time it simply means “a whole lot.” Even so, these details provide important context for understanding the planet’s dynamics and the roles humans play within them.

Deep Time Library & Archive is a scale-model of Earth’s deep geological history in which just one page front and back from one of these books represents 10,000 years. That is about the number of years that is thought to make up the history of human civilization. This installation uses approximately 454,000 book pages to represent the age of the Earth.

This bibliographic rock face creates layers of time and knowledge. What is preserved as part of a definitive record and what is discarded or transformed into something new? How is information best stored and retrieved over the long run, and what is the “long run”? These are questions that geologists and archaeologists ask about rocks and soils just as much as historians and librarians consider them while archiving printed materials.

The books included in this exhibition have been through book sales and offered to secondary retailers. This installation is their last appearance before recycling, which keeps them out of landfills. The artist also understands their longer lives as part of the carbon cycle. A very warm thank you to KU Recycling, the Lawrence Public Library, and the John M. Flaxman Library at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago for their support of this work and for being responsible stewards of these cultural materials.

+

+

+

+

Andrew S. Yang

born 1973, Atlanta, Georgia

Worlds We Might Live On, 2019

from *Theory of the Earth, Volume IV*

antique educational globes, shelves

Courtesy of the artist, IA2019.001.08

+

+

+

+

Andrew S. Yang

born 1973, Atlanta, Georgia

Earth, 1934 (definition, Dust Bowl), 2019

from *Theory of the Earth, Volume IV*

salvaged book, magnifying glass, antique globe,

Dust Bowl dust, glass container

Courtesy of the artist and Kate Meyer, IA2019.001.09

The definition of our planet in this 1934 encyclopedia is provocative as a “theory of the Earth.” 1934 also happens to be the first year of the Dust Bowl in the Great Plains. Over the next four years, Kansas lost 2.5 to 5 inches of topsoil. An inch of topsoil can take 500 to 1,000 years to create under natural conditions. The antique globe also dates to 1934. This can be verified by the geopolitical boundaries that it depicts, which are now outdated. The accompanying container holds dirt from the Dust Bowl.

+

+

+

+

Andrew S. Yang

born 1973, Atlanta, Georgia

Text and Texture, Books of Nature, 2019

from *Theory of the Earth, Volume IV*

salvaged books, geological specimens, paleobotanical

coal “peels,” cuneiform tablets, inkjet prints

Courtesy of the artist, IA2019.001.07

One facet of Yang’s artistic practice is juxtaposing cultural and natural objects. The idea of “natureculture” synthesizes these two categories by acknowledging that their relationships are intertwined on every level. Visual play and representation in this installation create many poetic moments. The idea that we might read the Earth like an open book, for example, comes to life in new ways among fossilized bark that resembles Sumerian cuneiform tablets (one of the earliest known writing systems) and a geological sedimentary rock that opens like a book to reveal a fossil.

Thank you to the KU Biodiversity Institute and Natural History Museum and the Kenneth Spencer Research Library for joining the Spencer Museum of Art in supporting this work with collections from across the University.

+

+

+

+

(above)

Andrew S. Yang

born 1973, Atlanta, Georgia

Worlds We Might Live On, 2019

from *Theory of the Earth, Volume IV*

antique educational globes, shelves

Courtesy of the artist, IA2019.001.08

+

+

+

+

Andrew S. Yang

born 1973, Atlanta, Georgia

The Earthly Body, 2019

from *Theory of the Earth, Volume IV*

salvaged books and cards, geological specimens,
paleobotanical coal “peels”

Courtesy of the artist, IA2019.001.06

By creating relationships between human bodies and planet Earth, Yang further emphasizes 18th-century Scottish geologist and naturalist James Hutton’s theory that the Earth is not static. Trained as a physician, Hutton likened the planetary body to the human body, both of which are subject to cycles of growth, decay, and regeneration.

+

+

+

+

Andrew S. Yang

born 1973, Atlanta, Georgia

Stella’s Stoichiometry (all things being equal, 6 lbs. 13 oz.),
2012

water, rock sugar, canola oil, powdered L-Arginine,
three oyster shells, baking powder, glass containers, inkjet print
Courtesy of the artist, EL2019.008

This portrait of the artist’s daughter at birth is based on the six elements that make up 99 percent of her material being. Yang exactly calculated the amounts of carbon, oxygen, nitrogen, phosphorus, hydrogen, and calcium from Stella’s birth weight and proportions and has presented them in the form of items that were available at the grocery store. This representation of Stella’s chemical makeup offers a poignant reminder that most matter is composed of the same elements, it is simply their combination that determines the final form.

+

+

+

+

Andrew S. Yang

born 1973, Atlanta, Georgia

Stella's Stoichiometry (seven years, all things renewed, 40 lbs.), 2019

water, Legos, bituminous coal, ethanol, fertilizers, chalk, glass containers, inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist, EL2019.009

Based on the popular belief that all cells in the human body regenerate every seven years, Yang recreated the original portrait of his daughter *Stella's Stoichiometry (all things being equal, 6 lbs. 13 oz.)*, on the adjacent wall. This time, he has chosen a different set of materials to represent the six elements that make up 99 percent of her body. These substances, including plastics and fertilizers, give a nod to the very different kinds of materials that have been incorporated into her body over her first seven years of life.

+

+

+

+

(above)

Andrew S. Yang

born 1973, Atlanta, Georgia

Our Planet-Sized Fact (average global temperature change, 1895–2018, after Ed Hawkins), 2019

vinyl

Courtesy of the artist, IA2019.001.10

Climate scientist Ed Hawkins created #ShowYourStripes to communicate temperature change over the last more than 100 years. The warming stripes are intended to spark conversations about global warming by representing annual temperatures with minimal scientific information. These graphics are free to use. Yang has altered Hawkins's original design, making it appear three-dimensional so that the current high temperatures (on the far right end) face the viewer directly and with urgency. Yang installed these data in conversation with his interests in the Earth's cycles and climate change. They speak to the stratigraphic layers on view throughout his installation *Theory of the Earth, Volume IV*. They also have meaningful connections to artist Assaf Evron's reflections on how we choose to represent information and how those images might be repurposed.

+

+

+

+

Assaf Evron

born 1977, Ramat-Hasharon, Israel

Untitled (Color space), 2013

series of 27 C-prints

Courtesy of the artist, this work was produced with support of the Photography Department at Columbia College, Chicago, EL2019.010-.046

+

+

+

+

Assaf Evron

born 1977, Ramat-Hasharon, Israel

Untitled (Color space), 2013

series of 27 C-prints

Courtesy of the artist, this work was produced with support of the Photography Department at Columbia College, Chicago, EL2019.010-.046

+

+

+

+

Assaf Evron

born 1977, Ramat-Hasharon, Israel

Untitled (Color space), 2013

series of 27 C-prints

Courtesy of the artist, this work was produced with support of the Photography Department at Columbia College, Chicago, EL2019.010-.046

+

+

+

+

Assaf Evron

born 1977, Ramat-Hasharon, Israel

Untitled, 2019

series of 11

MDF board, glue, epoxy

Courtesy of the artist, EL2019.047-.059

+

+

+

+

Fatimah Tuggar

born 1967, Kaduna, Nigeria

Lives, Lies, and Learning, 2019

eight school desks, eight flat screens, eight clear plastic prisms, eight media players, eight animations

Courtesy of BintaZarah Studios, with appreciation to Constantine Gapp for animation support; Connie Mousser, Cynthia Wilson, and Naiby Pereira for fabrication; and actors Bryce Ostrom, Chris McCoy, Daniel Sparacino, Daniel Streeter, Greg Smith, Imani Aisha Wadud, Jake Tyler Reitz, Jessica Whitfield, and Kathryn Breeden. EL2019.068.01-.40

+

+

+

+

Danielle Roney

born 1968, Syracuse, New York

PUBLICS, 2019

12-camera Nest security camera system, cloud-based software,
private access peer-to-peer viewing network, 12 c-stands

Courtesy of the artist, with appreciation to the Center for
Latin American & Caribbean Studies, KU Technology Centers,
and the Office of Multicultural Affairs, EL2019.061

PUBLICS consists of a series of Nest security cameras arranged in groupings that will be reconfigured around the galleries throughout the exhibition. Roney has circulated private access links to immigrant communities that activate these cameras. This allows immigrants access to the exhibition without having to physically enter the Museum. By turning control of these cameras over to a heavily surveilled community, Roney flips the use of the technology to enable access into the space of the Museum without revealing the users' identities.

+

+

+

+

(clockwise around the gallery)

Danielle Roney

born 1968, Syracuse, New York

Whispers: Mantras 1, 2019

3D printed nylon

Courtesy of the artist, EL2019.064

Whispers: Mantras 2, 2019

3D printed nylon

Courtesy of the artist, EL2019.065

Whispers: Mantras 3, 2019

3D printed nylon

Courtesy of the artist, EL2019.066

Strata: Bending Fields of Relation, 2019

voice-driven animations, LED mesh, controller,
aluminum tubing, vinyl flooring

Courtesy of the artist, with appreciation to the Center for
Latin American & Caribbean Studies, KU Technology Centers,
and the Office of Multicultural Affairs, EL2019.062

Our Subjective Realities, 2019

two optical glass spheres (yellow, clear),

two steel retort rings, two c-stands, two Nest cameras

Courtesy of the artist, EL2019.067

Penumbra, 2019

PVC sheet, LED mesh, controller, voice-driven animations, steel

Courtesy of the artist, with appreciation to the Center for
Latin American & Caribbean Studies, KU Technology Centers,
and the Office of Multicultural Affairs, EL2019.063

Please do not touch the installations.

+

+

+

+

Andrew S. Yang

born 1973, Atlanta, Georgia

Ghosts of the Everchanging: Cobra Rock, 1993 and 2001 (after John Charlton), 2019

from *Theory of the Earth, Volume IV*

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist, with appreciation to photographer

John Charlton, IA2019.001.05

Ghosts of the Everchanging: Castle Rock, 1997 and 2001 (after John Charlton), 2019

from *Theory of the Earth, Volume IV*

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist, with appreciation to photographer

John Charlton, IA2019.001.04

Reading the Landscape (Ancient Ocean Testament: Cobra Rock, Kanseas), 2019

from *Theory of the Earth, Volume IV*

salvaged books, steel support

Courtesy of the artist, IA2019.001.03

Reading the Landscape (Ancient Ocean Testament: Castle Rock, Kanseas), 2019

from *Theory of the Earth, Volume IV*

salvaged books, geological specimens

Courtesy of the artist, IA2019.001.02

These sculptural installations evoke the structures of geological layers and mimic well-known formations that can be found in western Kansas. Yang created composite images of photographs originally taken by John Charlton, who worked for the Kansas Geological Survey. Charlton photographed these notable sites on two separate occasions, documenting slow and drastic changes in the landscape over time. The word *Kanseas* that appears in some of the works' titles is also a reference to changes over time. The Midwest region of the continent was at one time the location of an inland sea.

+

+