

SEANKELLY

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Wall Street International

The wonderful world of Julian Charrière



Julian Charrière, *Tropisme*, 2014

Retracing the endless cycle of past, present and future, combining the natural with the man-made: Julian Charrière sets us in an uncontrollable temporal whirlwind with his new exhibition *Future Fossil Spaces* at the Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts in Lausanne, Switzerland.

This exhibition blending photography, video art and three-dimensional structures explores the Latin etymology of the word fossil and its literal translation into English being 'obtained from digging'.

Charrière produces time-based interventions in different parts of the world where the crudeness and power of the existing nature is left untouched. *Future Fossil Spaces* comprises works that were created in Iceland, Kazakhstan, Chile, Bolivia and Argentina where the artist fully immerses himself in the surrounding landscapes. Julian Charrière creates situations that denote the past, present and architectural character of an area. He does this in various ways, one of which sets him into the role of a 'nature sculptor'. This can be seen in his photographic series *The Blue Fossil Entropic Stories* (2013), where he melts the ice of a glacial mass using a blowtorch as he climbs to its peak for eight hours in the Arctic. The three images presented retrace the

evolution, the past and future of this towering icy mass that has been reshaped by the insatiable efforts of a human being.

Another way in which Charrière questions the shift between past and future is with his piece *The Key to the Present Lies in the Future* (2014). This work is made up of twenty-four hourglasses filled with sand from different geologic periods that have all been thrown against the wall of the museum by the artist. The points of impact where each hourglass has shattered can be subtly delineated onto the wall, shards of glass and fine powder are scattered around the floor. Charrière holds the 'before', the heritage of time and in one gesture, pulverises it in the 'now' to create the 'after': a new rapport to time and shift of matter.

As we enter the next room, we are transported into a new environment. The installation, taking up the entirety of the space is created with stacks of salt blocks piled up to form an earthy and geographic landscape. In the midst of these imposing structures, we discover square steel basins filled to the rim with saline solution from Argentinean lithium deposits. Once again the confrontation between the man-made or, in this case, 'man-harvested' metal and the natural formation of salt goes hand-in-hand with the emphasis on time.

The exhibition continues as we are presented with a video created in a nuclear test zone

called *Semipalatinsk*(Kazakhstan). The film, entitled *Somewhere* (2014) documents large planes of wilderness where the Soviet Union undertook their first nuclear tests (1949-1989). This area also known as 'The Polygon' is still extremely radioactively charged and has created continuous health issues in the neighbouring populations. Charrière films this space that has been polluted by mankind, a record into our past.

Along with this film is an installation called *Tropisme* (2014). We are confronted with a large rectangle, recalling a preservation chamber inhabited by various uprooted plants that have been literally frozen in time with a sheath of ice. Looking through the cactuses and other ancient plants, we realise that Charrière isn't just dealing with the global idea of conservation but is implanting the seed of an era into our subconscious minds. The era of our past, our historical heritage and baggage that contributed to the evolution of our human race.

This show marks the confrontation between the evolution of the earth we inhabit and our relationship to this historical lineage. A mind-opening and visually magnetic exhibition was open from October 31st till January 11th 2015.