

Ryan Dewey

Cleveland, OH

www.ryandewey.org



My work focuses on discovering new ways to think about nature across deep time (past, present, and future). I am particularly interested in building collaborations between contemporary humans and geologic forces for both near-future and deep-future scenarios. I utilize empathy, ritual, and speculative design to communicate about our relationship to nature and to highlight the entanglements between people, places, land use, and climate change through installation, performance, research, workshops, and land art. By drawing formal comparisons between geologic forces and human activity, I aim to knit a tighter connection between contemporary humans and the rapidly changing climate conditions of our current situation. What I'm after is a set of tools to prime natural landscapes for collaborations across time scales in a way that references the human systems that accelerated global warming and delayed the next ice age. To get there I build hand tools and landscape models that help me better understand geologic forces and I speculate about new ways to engage the functions displayed by geologic forces like

Disease of the Heart, Disease of the Flesh, the Boastful Pride of Life, 2018, red oak, white oak, lumber beam reclaimed during demolition of the original wood-framed Sears Tower, dimensions variable



cuprum / cyprium / cipres, 2019, cypress, copper, malachite, 48 in x 48 in x 4 in

glaciers, volcanoes, and the rock cycle. These hand tools and physical sites of priming are simultaneously memorials, warnings, and sites of hopefulness about our place in nature. My work also explores human conceptualizations of time, finding expression in the use of lineage, the life cycle, and heirlooms to help think about geologic deep time. As a kind of ecological dreaming, I bring my audience into new awareness of what it means to be a part of nature. I do this by producing contemplative moments that translate environmental issues into physical and experiential forms.

I've lived and worked in a wide range of geographic environments including mountain forests, continental savannas, remote island jungles and major cities, but until this residency I had never been to a desert. As an artist working on climate change, I felt I needed to experience the desert to expand my vocabulary of geologic and geographic metaphors that I draw on in my practice. Thanks to the Montello Foundation I've been able to begin my encounter with the desert, to begin ground-truthing some of the ecological issues we are facing today and to see first hand the impact that social decisions writ large have on ecological systems at local levels. The scale of resource extraction taking place in the middle of fragile desert ecosystems surrounding Montello was especially surprising. I'm grateful that I was able to spend time carefully observing in the desert, and I have come away with a handful of experiences that will inform my practice for years to come.