

With deepest thanks to all participating artists: Jeanne Aubert - Fabio Barile - Sjoerd Buisman - Lisa van Casand - Douglas Mandry - Jacobien de Rooij - Tanja Smeets and Teylers Museum Haarlem



Let Go
and
Cherish
#2

The Secret of
Deep Time

Geology in contemporary art

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Bildhalle (Zürich) The exhibition was made possible in part by:



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3 May - 29 September 2024

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Geology in contemporary art

The ancient tree stump (773-937) from the museum's collection and on display in the historical exhibition *Allemaal Haarlemmers* is the starting point for *The Secret of Deep Time*. This tree stump is a silent witness to the deep time of peat bogs, sand barriers, dune formation and extensive woodlands. A period that lasted far longer than the time that Haarlem has been a city.

Deep time refers to a period when geological events took place, long before humans appeared on Earth. The creation of sediments, rocks, stones, fossils and minerals takes place in another temporal dimension. The ancient light of stars is still shining on us, even though those stars disappeared long before the creation of the Earth. The formation of mountains takes millions of years. The Moon's gravitational pull on Earth's water creates its own constant rhythm of tidal fluctuations. These slow geological processes go on forever, leaving lasting traces in the landscape. Reading these traces gives us insight into the age of the Earth and how life evolved.

The Secret of Deep Time

Clock Time

Today, time is disguised as a clock that everyone takes into account. Our behaviour is based on looking at our watch, the time display on our cell phone or the buzzer that ends a lesson. Our actions are strongly influenced by the clock in the name of effectiveness, production and progress. The translation of abstract time into clock time has made our relationship with nature increasingly complex and less natural.

But seasonal changes and days defy our clock. Time is not a uniform, linear concept with a beginning and end point. We have forgotten that time runs its own course at different speeds, where past, present and future merge. This becomes clear when we look at deep time and its geological processes. The imagination and craft of the participating artists in *The Secret of Deep Time* allow us to see and experience the grandeur of time solidified in matter. This exhibition is about geology and deep time, and what a renewed appreciation of it can mean in times of climate crisis. The work of the participating artists depicts deep time in various ways and invites contemplation of natural phenomena that span millennia.

Jacobien de Rooij created wall drawings for this exhibition, inspired by plants that have flourished in Haarlem and its surroundings for centuries.

Jeanne Aubert's video *The Last Song of the Sun* tells a contemporary myth about the sun burning land and itself until darkness prevails. **Fabio Barile's** *Works for a Cosmic Feeling* depicts all-encompassing evolution with a cosmic collection of photographs. **Douglas Mandry's** work explores the relationship between humans and nature using photography, technology and sculpture. **Lisa van Casand** emphasizes the need for solidarity with the Earth with her tapestries from *Set in Stone* (2021-2024). **Sjoerd Buisman** examines growth processes and structures of plants, while **Tanja Smeets'** installation *Under the Pavement Swirl the Roots* (2022-2024) envelops the visitor with primal plant structures.

Through drawings, wall hangings, photographs, videos and installations, these artists seek to convey the wonder and immensity of deep time, inviting attention to natural phenomena that develop slowly but still influence the fate of life on Earth.

The work of these artists can contribute to seeing the long lines of time and experiencing it not fragmented, but as a whole. Jacobien de Rooij sometimes uses a quote by American writer John Steinbeck from *The Log from the Sea of Cortez* (1951) in relation to her drawings which is appropriate here: 'All things are one thing and that one thing is all things - plankton, a shimmering phosphorescence on the sea

Activities

- Lecture Johan Görtemöller, gardener Thijssse's Hof, and Bram Birza, biology student at Wageningen University May 10
- About time, a conversation between artist Jacobien de Rooij and emeritus professor of history Piet de Rooij May 23
- Ecotrip Festival - Culture and Sustainability Haarlem 28 and 29 September
- Film program in cooperation with Filmkoepel Haarlem
- Summer workshop for children



and the spinning planets and an expanding universe, all bound together by the elastic string of time.'

If we allow ourselves to be less influenced by the clock, we can make room for the renewed awareness that we are part of ancient natural rhythms. Australian philosopher Roman Krznaric writes in his book *The Good Ancestor. How to think Long Term in a Short-Term World* (2020), "First and foremost, we should develop a humble attitude toward deep time: the realization that our ephemeral existence is dwarfed by the immense time span of cosmic history, freeing our minds to look far into the past and beyond our own lives into the distant future. We must realize that human civilization is but a pinprick in cosmological time."

By looking at the work of these artists in *The Secret of Deep Time*, we can reevaluate deep time. This can help us look beyond the boundaries of our own existence in the here and now, hopefully increasing the likelihood that we will be inspired to strive for a better legacy for future generations and that we will actually take concrete action in one of the greatest challenges of our time: the climate crisis.

Let Go and Cherish #2

Following *D(R)AAD. On embroidery as protest and healing*, the second small exhibition in the series *Let Go and Cherish*, which explores how contemporary art can contribute to a new experience of cultural heritage. Using contemporary issues and current themes, the series reflects on objects, stories and themes from the historical exhibition *Allemaal Haarlemmers* - about 1000 years of city history, and casts an alternative and broader view, beyond the borders of Haarlem and its immediate surroundings.

For more information, visit verweymuseumhaarlem.nl