

Text
 Bergit Arends

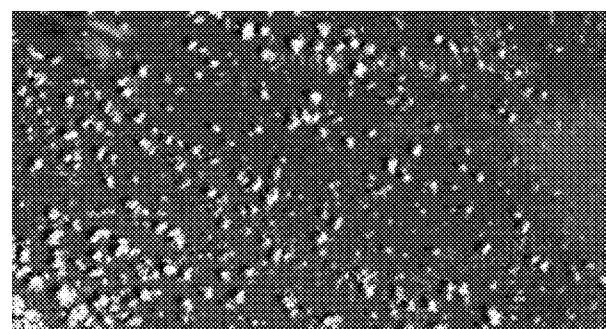
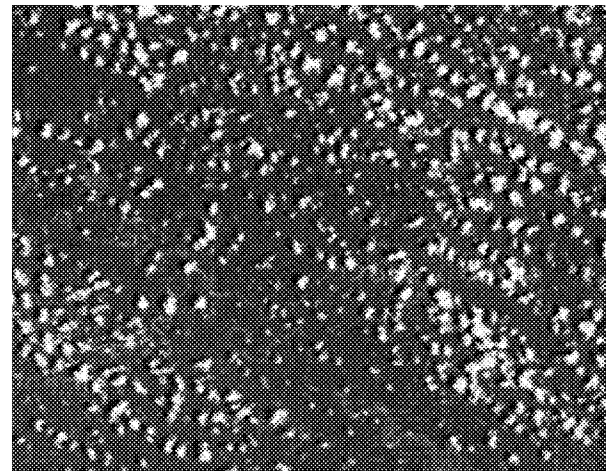
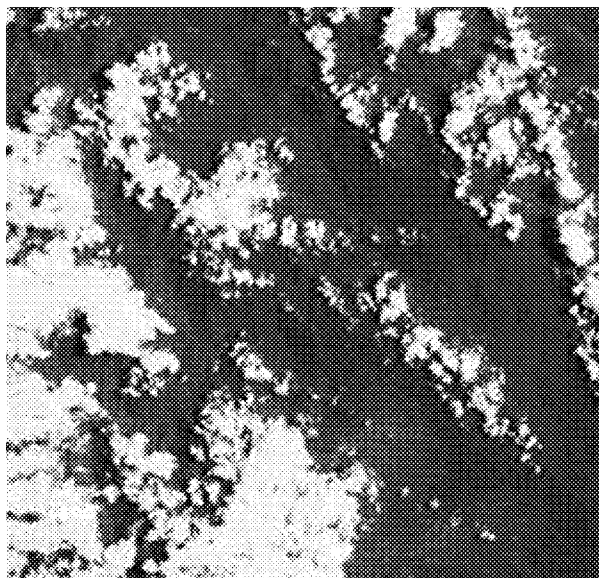
Graphic Design
 Thomas Buxó
 Amsterdam

Print
 Robstolk
 Amsterdam

Life on our planet is in constant flux. There has been life on Earth for 3.5 billion years, since the first living organisms are estimated to have emerged. Since then there have been five mass extinctions, which caused changes on Earth. Extinctions are a natural part of life, but the current rate of loss is about 100 to 1,000 times what it should be. This decline in plants, insects, birds, amphibians, sea-life and other living organisms has become known as the sixth mass extinction, and has one distinguishing characteristic: it is caused by humans.

The larger-than-life aluminium sculptures, entitled *Bone Variation*, are modelled on fossilised dinosaur bones from the Museum's palaeontology collection. Despite the colourful, iridescent finish, they remain relics of death, a reminder of the many forms of life that have been shaped through evolution, giving us a tangible sense of the contemporary and of times past.

The work *Collection: Aepyornis, Gallimimus, Allosaurus, Palaeomastodon* is made of fragile porcelain fragments of life. They are casts from specimens in the Natural History Museum collection: the egg from the elephant bird *Aepyornis*, the limb bones from dinosaurs *Gallimimus* and *Allosaurus* and the elephant ancestor *Palaeomastodon*. Bones are *memento mori*, reminders of death. But the egg is birth, the start



of life. The flowers, butterflies and insects that populate these works point to the cycle of life and the beauty and wealth of our planet. There is an underlying melancholy of the end of time, and the hot breath of extinction. Seeing ourselves as occupying a moment in time, through the reflection of the mirrored surface, makes us question our arrogance over nature and the need to work with it rather than against it.

The drawings entitled *Amazonia Expedition Sketchbook* reflect the artists' first impressions of and responses to their journey. The works conceptualize the experience of the Amazonian expedition and the artists' understanding of the connections between us and the natural environment. We are part of nature and the iconography in the drawings playfully depicts the mutual dependency. But in fact, we are more dependent on nature than nature is on us – our presence brings about nature's decline – and human decline with it, unless we choose to change and find solutions to these local and global problems by placing us within nature, not outside of it.

Open
12 March through
29 April 2011

Opening
Saturday 12 March
5 pm

With the support of
Natural History Museum
London

Lucy + Jorge Orta *Amazonia*

'We journeyed to the Amazon to experience the immensity and grandeur of such a vulnerable living organism. By gaining an insight, we hope our artworks can evoke such feelings so nature can once again invade our minds.' Lucy + Jorge Orta

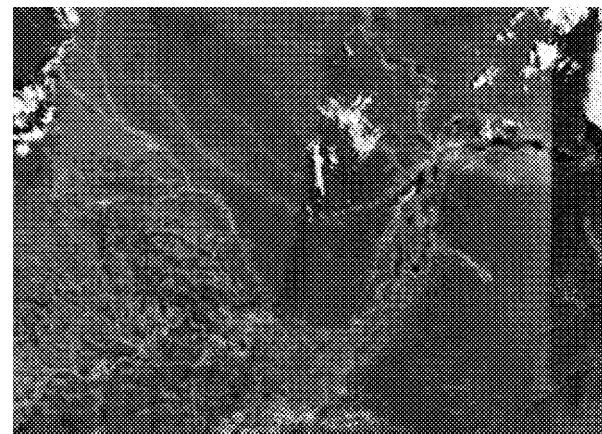
My centre is everywhere
Everything – huge and hung together

(from Mario Petrucci, *Amazonia video script*, 2010)



For their new body of work *Amazonia*, Lucy + Jorge Orta were deeply inspired by their expedition to the Peruvian Amazon during the summer of 2009, which proved an arduous, yet mesmerizing experience. The sculpture and photography on display at Motive Gallery are an edited version of the exhibition *Amazonia*, which was commissioned by the Natural History Museum London as part of the International Year of Biodiversity 2010.

Recording through photography, video and sound Lucy + Jorge Orta found the Amazon to be a beautiful oasis of diversity, in a state of crisis. The region proved to become an emotional and conceptual starting point to restore our focus to the world around us, both its beauty and its imperilled state. *Amazonia* did become a state of mind through which the artists strive to revive our deep enjoyment of nature as such and to convey its value to our daily lives and to our survival.



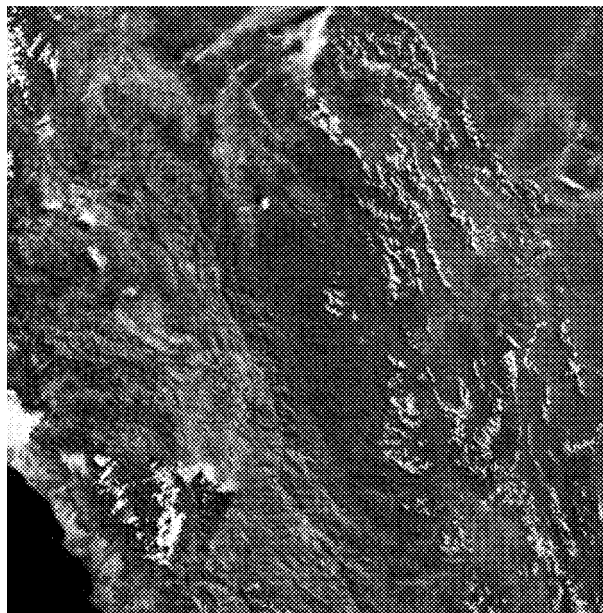
Overleaf
(from left to right)

'Aepyornis (Elephant bird
egg, Madagascar)'
2010
Royal Limoges porcelain,
enamel drawings
35x25x25 cm

'Bone variation'
2010
Cast aluminium, metal-
lised paint
Approx. 250x70x70cm
(process)

'Collection: Aepyornis,
Gallimimus, Allosaurus,
Pelaomastodo'
2010
Royal Limoges porcelain,
enamel drawings, steel,
lacquered glass
Table plinth:
150x100x110 cm
(casts)

'Collection: Aepyornis,
Gallimimus, Allosaurus,
Pelaomastodo'
2010
Royal Limoges porcelain,
enamel drawings, steel,
lacquered glass
Table plinth:
150x100x110 cm
(detail)



During the expedition to the Peruvian Amazon, the artists travelled with scientists from the Environmental Change Institute (ECI) at Oxford University and scientists from Peru. Their journey took them to the Manú Biosphere Reserve, where Lucy and Jorge started to develop the series of photographs *Perpetual Amazonia* (one-metre-square S12 48 21.6 W71 24 17.6). Together with the scientists they mapped out a one-hectare plot of rainforest to which the coordinates in the title and on each photograph refer to. Starting with a specific piece of land and the experience in the Manú Biosphere Reserve, the series captures images of plants from around the world and from diverse ecosystems.



