

Time, Forward!

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V-A-C Zattere, Venice

A group project curated by Omar Kholeif and Maria Kramar

"How do we see the Earth, how do we discern its vast landscape? Daria Irincheeva uses one of the most prominent sources of cartographic technology, satellite imagery, to reveal scalable and regularly updated images of planet Earth. This technique is presented alongside one of today's most quotidian uses of ceramic technology: the multi-purpose tile. The resulting installation is a manipulation of the planet's natural resources in two distinct forms of media: the abstract technological image and ceramic object—which are each separated by about 30,000 years of human development." - Omar Kholeif

Time, Forward! project questions the notion and function of time and how it relates to new forms of consciousness, action and sight in the twenty first century. The title is also an ironic take on the revolutionary 20th century Soviet slogan. *Time, Forward!* became a celebrated novel, film and a tune that was very popular across decades and which is still highly recognisable in Russia today. While its original use proposed an optimistic and progressive view of acceleration, the exhibition takes a more critical position towards the celebration of velocity and compression of time in the digital age.







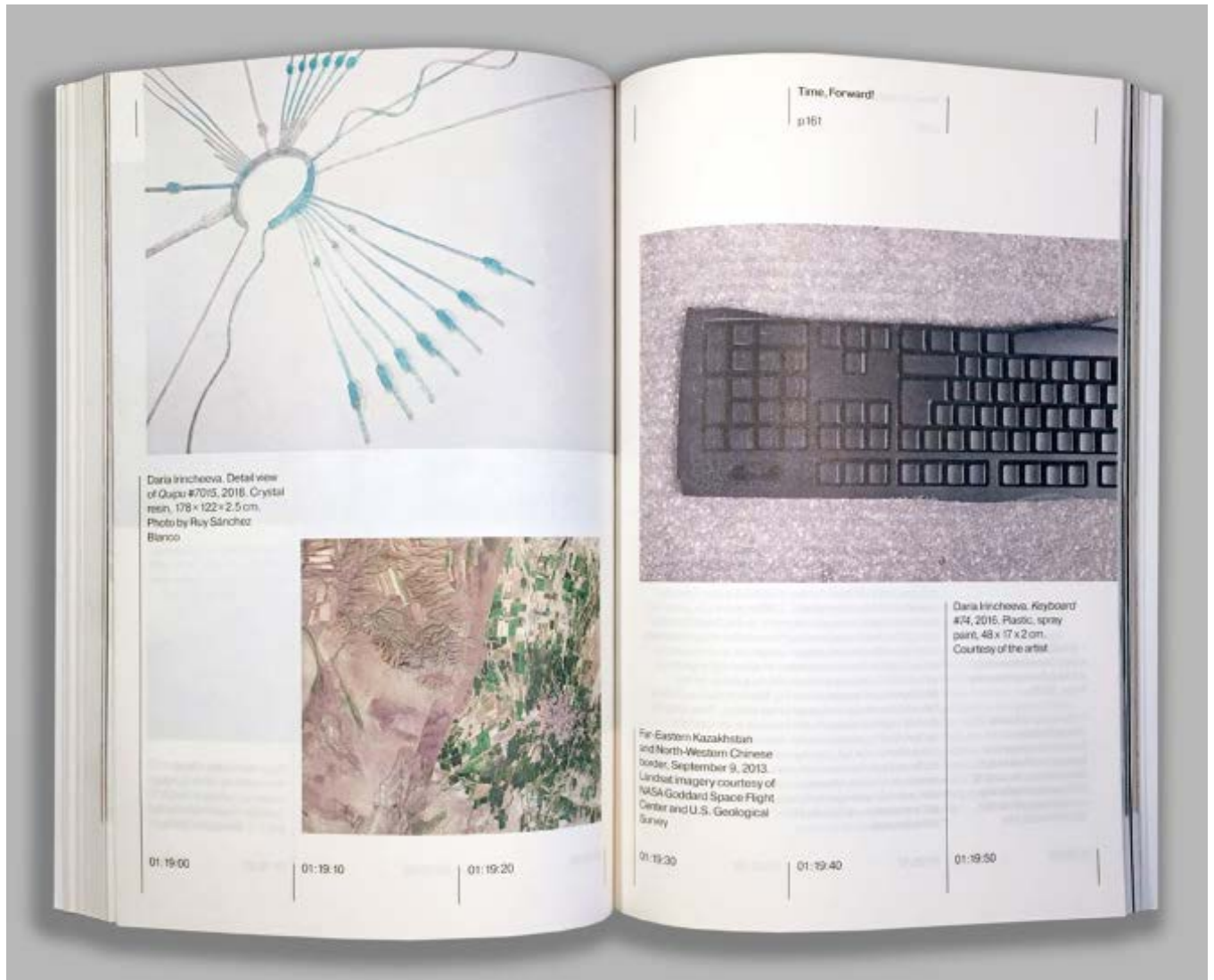
Ceramic tiles, wooden video frames, 6 videos 20mins each.











V-A-C Press

**Anthropocene Markers**

Through the civilian and commercial proliferation of satellite technology originally intended for military use, every individual with internet access can now see the surface of our planet as a massive photograph in remarkable detail, thus creating a new visual perspective of the Earth. Seen from above, human activity in shaping and cultivating land, whether architecturally, agriculturally or infrastructurally, reveals the socio-political and socio-economic approach to land use and land management of any given region. From such a height, and viewing the planet through the Gaia theory of Earth as a living organism, one could be tempted to identify humans as the planet's most successful parasites, based on how extensively we manipulate and reshape it in order to maintain the growth of our globalized civilization, despite damaging it to our own eventual detriment. The extent of this manipulation of the planet through the exploitation and use of its resources has resulted in the suggested identification and classification of a new geological age, named the Anthropocene.¹

Humans, however, are not the first organism on the planet; effect change to such a degree that the course of planetary history has been altered. Life as we know it would not be possible had it not been for the evolutionary step taken by cyanobacteria approximately 2.3 billion years ago, which led to what is most commonly referred to as the Great Oxidation Event.² This event, triggered by the evolution of cyanobacteria to photosynthesize and release oxygen as an unwanted by-product, led to the near extinction of anaerobic organisms, and unintentionally created conditions suitable for the development of oxygen-breathing lifeforms such as insects, fish, and mammals, including human beings. Thus, despite all of its negative aspects—the increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide, mining and the disposal of plastics, among many others—the full, transformative result of human activity for life on Earth thousands of years from now, and beyond, remains to be seen. Ultimately, nature is the most creative and unpredictable agent of change, of which humans are just one creation, or “product line,” within the infinite expanse of the Universe.

¹ Eric C. Ellis, *Anthropocene: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

² University of Zurich, “Great Oxidation Event: More oxygen through multicellularity,” *ScienceDaily*, January 17, 2013. www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/01/130117084856.htm

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¹ James L. Gould, Carl Grant Gould, *Animal Architects: Building and the Evolution of Intelligence* (New York: Hachette Book Group, 2007), 75–99.

² Pamela B. Vandiver, Olga Soffer, Bohuslav Klíma, Jiř Šabodová, “The Origins of Ceramics: Technology at Dolní Věstonice, Czechoslovakia,” *Science, New Series*, vol. 246, no. 4933 (November 24, 1999): 1002–1005. www.sciencemag.org/content/246/4933/1002

³ Yves Lacoste, “An Illustration of Geographical Warfare: Bombing of the Dikes on the Red River, North Vietnam,” *Antipode* 5 (Paris: University of Paris, 1972): 1–13.

Throughout our planetary history, various species have reshaped their physical and social structures via the discovery and invention of new materials. For example, the wasp's learnt ability to make paper and fashion it into nests, thus climate-control their habitable environment, led to the evolution of many new sub-species of wasp, and allowed socially to develop to such extremes that it became no longer optional.³ In the life of the human species, one of the most ancient and useful developments has been the manipulation of basic organic materials such as soil, sand, clay and water into ceramics. Dating from about 29,000–25,000 BC or the Upper Paleolithic Period, early ceramics are believed to be one of the very first human-made “artificial” minerals,⁴ which allowed humans to make the transition from a lifestyle of hunting and gathering to one of agriculture and settlement during the Neolithic period. This use of Earth's resources led to further breakthroughs, such as the discovery that metals could be extracted from stone, then melted and forged into tools. These tools, in turn, would further humans' ability to shape the world, in a self-perpetuating cycle that laid the groundwork for the creation of metal alloys and increasingly sophisticated tools and structures; and eventually, the establishment of mining, the growth of cities, and the development of warfare, conquest and colonization.

Early resource extraction and remodeling, the key facets of human technological and social evolution, gave rise to the art and science of cartography or mapmaking. It has been argued that the development of the map was an essential step towards the process of territoriality, the exertion of political power, and ultimately the creation and expansion of ideologies, and the practice of surveillance. Over four decades ago, French Marxist geographer and geopolitician, Yves Lacoste, pointed to the larger political motivation of much mapping: “The map, perhaps the central referent of geography, is, and has been, fundamentally an instrument of power. A map is an abstraction from concrete reality which was designed and motivated by practical (political and military) concerns; it is a way of representing space which facilitates its domination and control. To map [...] serves the practical interests of the State machine.”⁵

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