

***Water Memory Militia***  
**A speculative archaeology by The Utopian Megapraxis Collective**  
**for Locust Project, Miami, FL**

From the digital record, an image emerged of a culture of limitless growth and untold assets. We have been unable to locate this culture in the incongruous 21st century fossil record.

“Managed to break the encryption on the social accounts of all three million residents of the M-D metro from that satellite server, wasn’t very hard for the vessel-mind to crack.”

“Go ahead and parse it down into a geolocated timeline? No point trying to attribute this grid to folks who fled the first wave.”

- WMM, 2170 CE

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In coastal waters, the visible spectrum of light tapers to a dark, slightly yellowish, green hue, sort of a deep jade, penetrating to a depth of ~50 feet before falling off to total darkness. In the open ocean, you get deeper blues to depths of 200 feet. Estimate models of planetary sea change are all over the board, and largely dependent on the various actions of dissociative nation states and their further dissociated populations. What, and how many, artificial lights needed for the Miami job really depends on the actions taken to prevent sea-level rise.

*Water Memory Militia* is a speculative, fictional archaeology project exploring material necessity in an increasingly digital world. *WMM* is an effort to relink the materiality of contemporary everyday objects with the disembodied image of their digital use, through the collapsing of seemingly disparate spaces: the archeological seabed and the Modern cityscape. By sifting through the midden heap of contemporary material culture, drawing awareness to the ways we regard simple objects, and highlighting their importance and participation in the construction of reality, we aim to draw parallel to the coastal cities (specifically those at-risk in the face of climate catastrophe) which stand in resolute hubris against the passing of time, but are in fact vulnerable ecosystems on the verge of extinction.

The exhibition will feature a lighting program to simulate the possible depths of the city based on differing projection models. The gallery will evoke a submerged archeological survey, a gridded installation featuring a series of time capsule-like objects amongst architectural elements and general detritus. Members of the Collective will activate the site, giving tours, explaining the site from the position of the speculative future archeological team. Amongst digitized geolocated social media data, there will be informational takeaways of essays, narrative works, and artworks created by the collective. The public will have the ability to submit objects for time capsules to be submerged upon completion of the exhibition run.

A time capsule is an archeology that creates itself, an intentional reminder that we send to the future. In utilizing time capsules, the goal of *Water Memory Militia* is increasingly paradoxical. To ensure that we are around when those reminders resurface, the narrative will have to prove itself false. In showing the consequences of our material culture, we wish to delete ourselves from the archaeological record.

1. Project description (max. 500 words)
2. Draft floorplan/rendering of proposed project  
- see attached PDF for floor plan and images
3. General artist statement (max. 250 words)

Born of the question: What is the endgame of Civilization? The Utopian Megapraxis Collective is a non-situated community of artists, curators, writers, educators and thinkers invested in the process of envisioning a global Utopia. A theoretical megaproject with architects spread across time zones and disciplines, their work is imaginative, speculative, and future-oriented, but with the goal of moving towards equitable reality in the present.

The Utopian Megapraxis Collective denies the binary, and exists within the continuity of the “between”. Recent exhibitions and research inquiries have been focused on tapping into the para-real, that space between the physical and digital, as a situational anomaly capable of housing Utopian inspirations and ideations. Examining the translation of people, places, and things as they move through this para-real(ity) has been integral to learning what is gained and what is lost, what opportunities are possible and impossible, what we are willing to sacrifice and live with in this quest for a perfect civilization.

4. Project Impact - Explain how your project embraces experimentation and risk-taking in your artistic practice and is relevant to current artistic practice. (Max 350 words)

*Water Memory Militia* situates the actions of the Utopian Megapraxis collective within the spatial particularities of the Miami community and environment, encouraging a collaborative construction existing in the space of the para-real. The group collectively explores the physical and digital worlds we occupy, the divisions between the individuals and the communities they inhabit, and the psychology of locations, past and present, as they evolve over time – by bringing this exhibition to fruition and navigating between these various boundaries, we seek to nourish and continue to grow a network/ecosystem of future-world-builders. To achieve this goal, this project connects collective members and the local contributors to the time capsules by

centering memory as a constructive tool for societal change.

We view the tenuous concept of collective memory as a dynamic practice. As outsiders, our idea of what a memory of Miami looks like may conflict with that of the community. By projecting into the present speculative memories, we plan to raise awareness to crises of a global nature. What this awareness looks like to those locally situated in day-to-day Miami, will only be visible upon completion.

Employing the term “militia” in promotion of an artistic exhibition is intentional, but indeed risky within the larger global socio-political climate. The conflict-oriented militaristic language will draw awareness to the fact that climate and war are not separate but entangled issues. We can not criticize without making visible; what does it look like to subvert military action – to envision Miami’s architecture as an archeological site, in the way that many nations around the world are currently in the process of becoming?

*Water Memory Militia* is a provocation. As recent events in the art world have shown ( i.e. the cancellation of critical exhibitions, the resignations at Documenta and Artforum), provocations require careful consideration and proper conversation. We, the members of the Utopian Megapraxis Collective, are willing to meet these goals head on and give these issues their due diligence.

5. Production Budget - provide an overview of approximate expenses for any that apply (see description of Production Budget\* below)

\$1200 for Lighting Design Program (lighting panels, dmx controllers, programming and technical setup)

\$8000 for printing of speculative ephemera (postcards, pamphlets, zines, books, and takeaways)

\$1000 for creation of Archaeological Grid and Installation elements

\$1000 for research and creation of Submersible Time Capsule

Travel and accommodations for 3 to 4 members of the collective to move work from various parts of the country. If proposal is accepted, installation design requirements and technical requirements will determine these specifics.

6. CV or Resume

7. Up to five images of previous/related work or three links to time based works

8. Image details (title, date, year medium of the submitted work and/or links)

UtopianMegapraxis\_Brickman Example.jpg

Example of Speculative Performance work by member Jacklyn Brickman  
2022

Photo Documentation of Performance - Frozen Fields, Cryo-Speculation Lab by the Department  
of Planetary Futures

UtopianMegapraxis\_Lightfoot Example.jpg

Example of Speculative Archeological drawings by member Caleb Lightfoot  
2023

Drawings and Text from *Museum of Destitute History, or 12 Lines of Flight From a Monument to  
the End of Monumentality*

UtopianMegapraxis\_Pestana Example.jpg

Example of Installation works by member Steven Pestana  
2022

Photo Documentation of Installations Dawning (top) and The Witnesses (bottom), various  
materials and dimensions

UtopianMegapraxis\_Sandler Example.jpg

Example of Speculative Performance by member Leah Sandler  
2016 - 2023

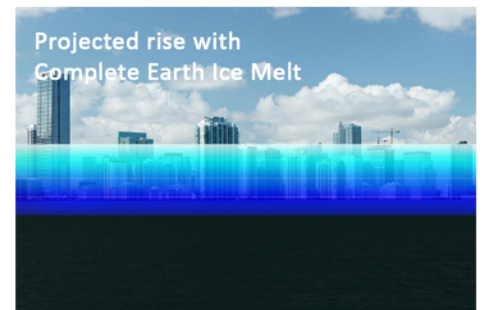
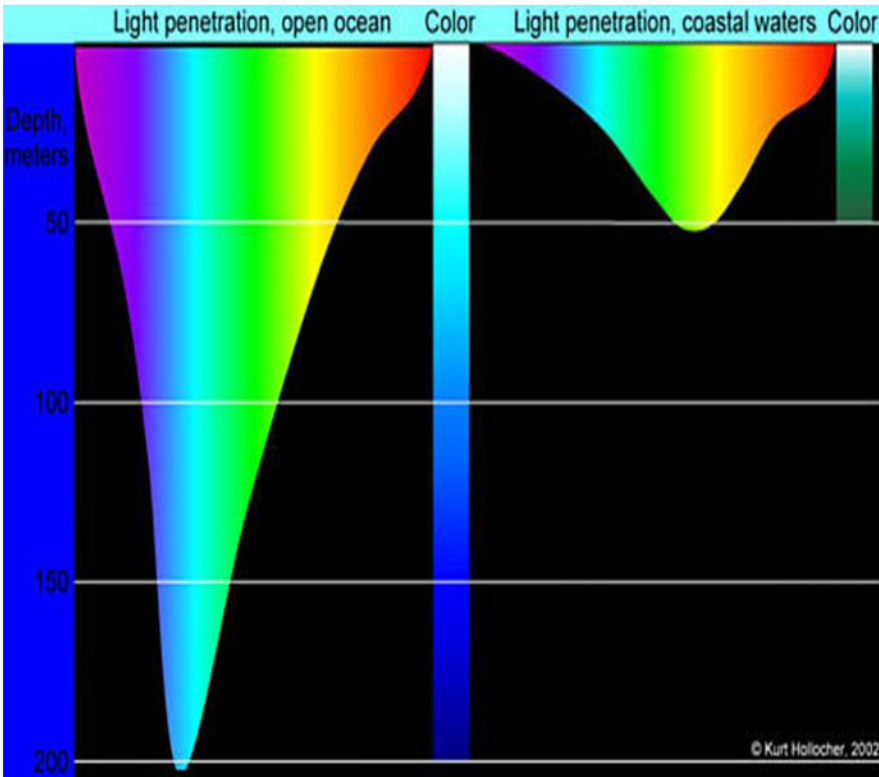
Documentation of various projects and publications as The Center For Post-Capitalist History

UtopianMegapraxis\_Turner-Anderson Example.jpg

Example of Speculative Installation work by member Caroline Turner-Anderson  
2019 - 2021

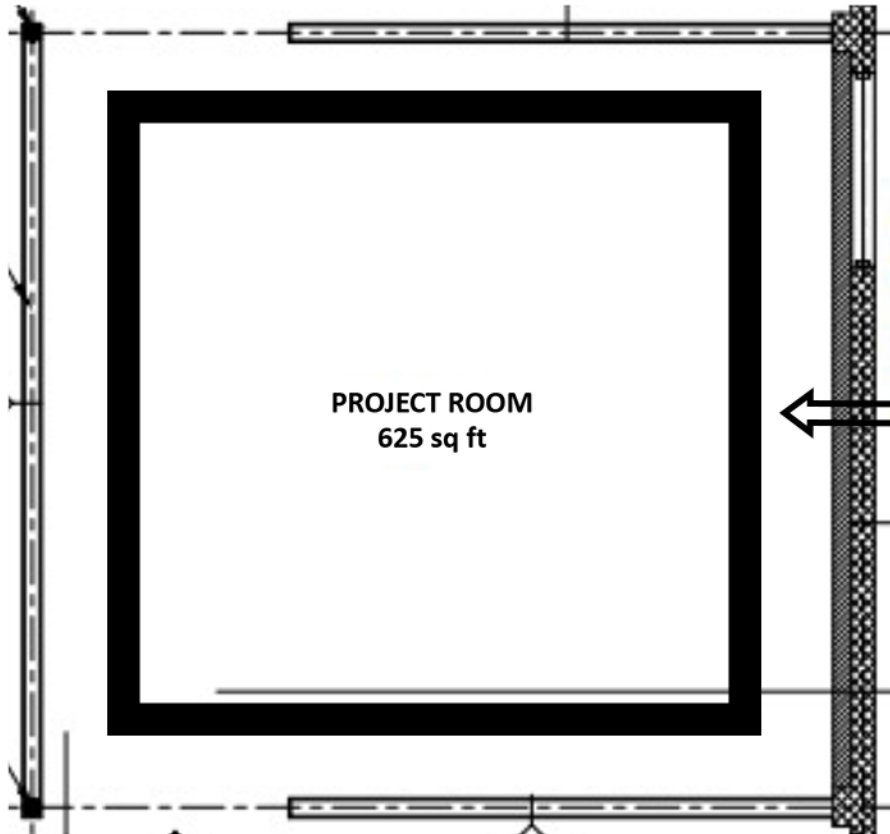
Photo Documentation of Installations Solarsteading at Marielandia (top) and Verum Post Umbra  
(bottom) - various materials and dimensions.

# LED Panel lighting program

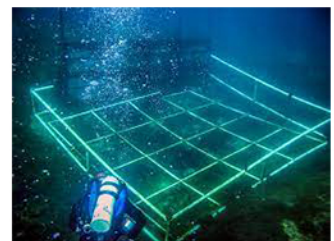
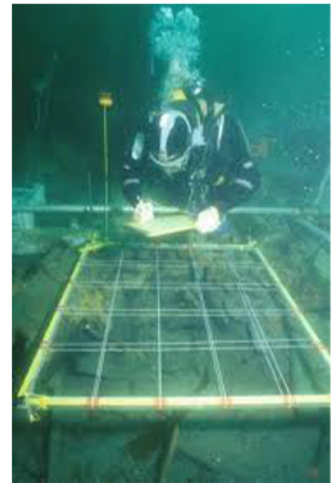
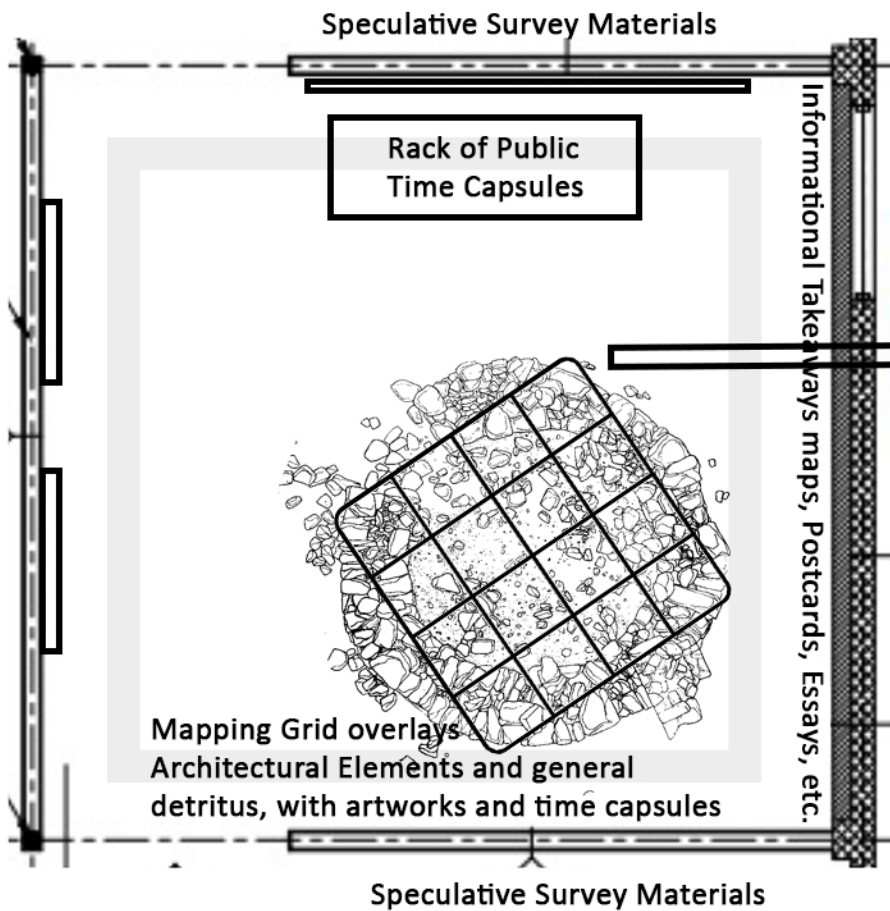


Water Memory Militia  
for Locust Projects, Miami

Proposed Layout,  
works not produced



LED Panel Lighting fixture, hung from ceiling



## **The Utopian Megapraxis Collective (2022 - present) - CV**

utopianmegapraxis@gmail.com

Born of the question: What is the endgame of Civilization? The Utopian Megapraxis is a non-situated community of artists, curators, writers, educators and thinkers invested in the process of envisioning a global Utopia. A theoretical megaproject with architects spread across time zones and disciplines, their work is imaginative, speculative, and future-oriented, but with the goal of moving towards equitable reality in the present.

### **Artist Residency**

2023

33oc, Toffia, Italy (June)

### **Exhibitions**

2024

(upcoming) **File Share**, ArtSpace Hartford, Hartford, CT (October)

(upcoming) **File Share**, Oklahoma State University, Tulsa, OK (Summer)

(upcoming) **URC::Utopian Recruitment Center**, QiPO Art Fair, Mexico City, MX (Feb)

2023

**UID (Unique Identifier::Utopian Inspirational Daemon)**, Digital Pavilion for the 2023 Wrong Biennale, Digital (November '23 - March '24) – [www.galleryontheinter.net](http://www.galleryontheinter.net)

**UMD::Utopian Manifestation Daemon**, Vinegar Projects, Birmingham, AL (September)

### **Publications**

(UU)ater, digital zine, open edition, #1 in the Utopian Universal Series (coming soon)

### **Bios for Collective Primaries and Curator**

Additional resumes for participating members of the collective are available at request

**Steven Pestana (Collective Primary for *Water Memory Militia*)** is a multidisciplinary artist living and working in Brooklyn, NY. He earned his BA in Art History from New York University and his MFA in Digital Media from Rhode Island School of Design. He has participated in numerous solo and group shows and previously exhibited at the Rubin Museum, Spring/Break Art Show, Satellite Art Show, Peep Space, Space 776, Rhode Island College, Grin Providence and Boston Center for the Arts. He was the recipient of 2023 Individual Artist's Grant from the Rogers Art Foundation, a 2021 City Artists Corp grant, two 2018 Scholarships from Urbanglass,

a 2015 Puffin Foundation Grant for Fine Arts, and has attended residencies at Vermont Studio Center, Mass MoCA, and Santa Fe Art Institute.

**Leah Sandler (Collective Primary - Florida based - for *Water Memory Militia*)** is an interdisciplinary artist, writer and educator based in Orlando, Florida. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from Rollins College in 2014 and a Master of Fine Arts from University of the Arts in 2017. Recent exhibitions include the Corridor Project Billboard Exhibition, the 2020 Florida Biennial, Interstice at MOTOR (curated by the Residency Project) Los Angeles, CA, Utopian/Vermilion, a solo exhibition at ParkHaus15 in Orlando, FL, and CPCH Staging Area, a solo exhibition at Laundromat Art Space in Miami. Sandler's writing and projects have been featured in publications including Textur Magazine, Salat Magazin, SPECS Journal, and Mapping Meaning Journal. She is the author of *The Center For Post-Capitalist History's Field Guide to Embodied Archiving*, published by Burrow Press, and teaches at Stetson University in Deland, Florida.

Observing the decline of the Capitalocene from the sand pine scrub and urban sprawl of Orlando Florida, Sandler constructs parafictional worlds through mediums including video, text, drawing, and collaborative interdisciplinary projects. These parafictions flesh out imagined post-capitalist institutions, rituals, histories, manifestos, and landscapes. Traversing these worlds, the viewer is encouraged, through a visual language of repeated symbols and colors present throughout discrete works, to consider the inconsistencies of the invisible ideologies that uphold and subtend our current system, and to visualize the precarity of our contemporary moment.

**Ian Breidenbach (Curator and founder of Utopian Megapraxis Collective)** is a conceptual artist, curator, and educator based in Findlay, Ohio. In 2012, he founded [The Neon Heater Art Gallery](#), an artist-run space servicing the community of Findlay, Ohio and surroundings, providing access to contemporary art in a rural setting. His artistic practice explores the connective quality of narrative in the creation of worlds and possible futures. He holds a BFA from Wright State University in Selected Studies: Video Art (2009) and an MFA in Studio Art from Texas Tech University (2022). He is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor at The Ohio State University at Lima, OH teaching Studio Art and curating The Farmer Family Gallery.

In 2018, he received the Palmer Scholarship from the Toledo Art Museum to conduct national research into Artist-Run Galleries and community engagement. In 2022, alongside members of The Blue House Gallery, he organized [Futures: A National Artist-Run Symposium](#) in Dayton, Ohio to bring together gallerists from around the country to explore the issues, difficulties, and imagine possible futures of the Artist-Run gallery community. This symposium follows years of research into the way that art can be a catalyst for community engagement, and how the Artist-Run model of curation is specifically suited to thinking about collaboration between artists and non-artists alike. He is currently focused on gathering together artists, writers, and thinkers who share this hope for better futures, in an attempt to collectively envision an equitable Global Utopia and ultimately take steps towards its creation.





**Frozen Fields: Unexpected Growth**

Cryo Speculation Lab  
The Department of Planetary Futures

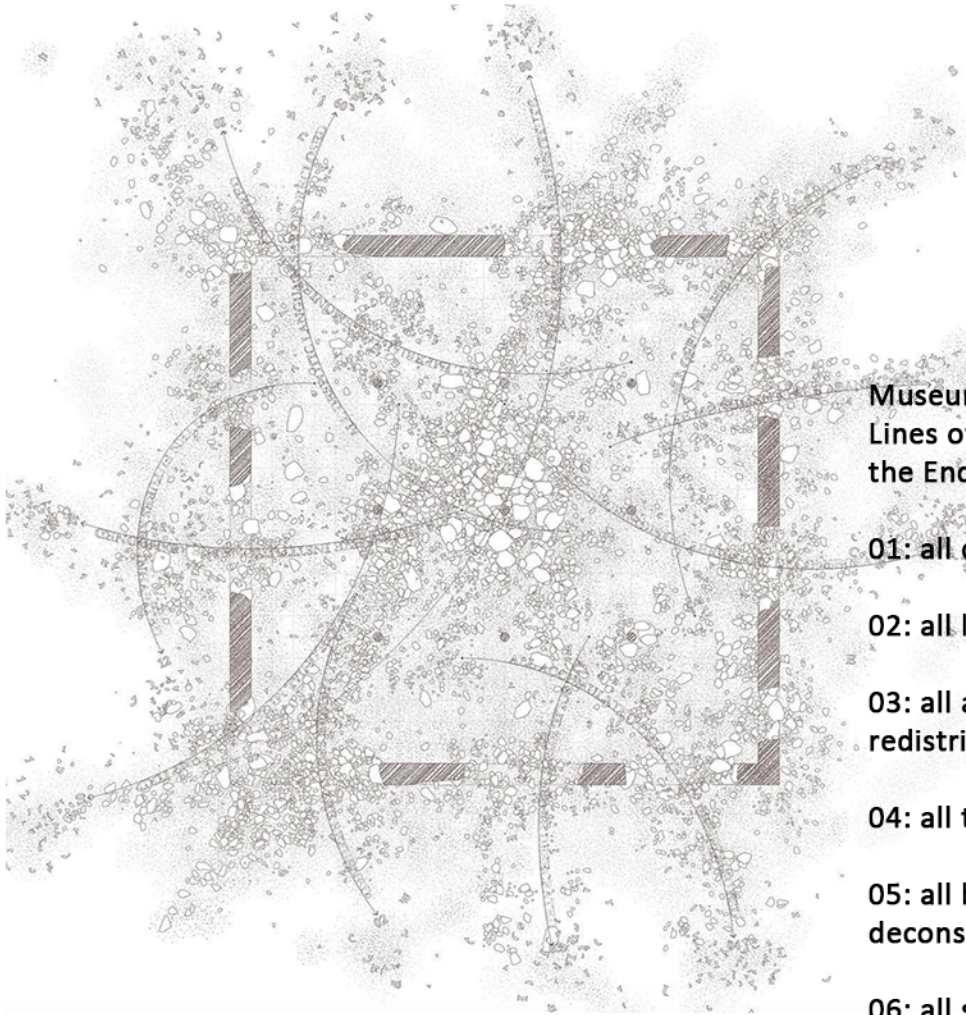
Frozen Fields: Unexpected Growth is a multimedia live performance and report from the Cryo Speculation Laboratory at The Department of Planetary Futures. FF:UG meditates on time, space, and the preservation of life through live physical and digital visuals that approach the overarching topic of absurdity in eco-art through sound, experimental animation, bodily movement, and realtime performance. Agents traverse the laboratory amongst layers of time, former, and future selves to process and preserve grass via methods of dissection, archivation, and cryopreservation. Projected ghostly figures echo the motions of live dancers to present alternate existences through layered dimensions. A rumination on fragility, metamorphosis, and humankind in the face of a shifting world, the layered choreography, visuals, and sound design explore liquified, frozen, and compressed possibilities for the future - livable or not. FF:UG ponders humanity's place in time and space, bodies in motion, and the evolving dimensions of future selves, in a cryptic celebration of the unexpected resilience of living things.

Credits:  
Kevin Abbott -  
Motion Capture with Optitrack  
Digital Design and 3D Animation  
with Unity  
Interactive Playback via  
StreamDeck

Kelsey Paschich -  
Choreography  
Performance  
Sound Design

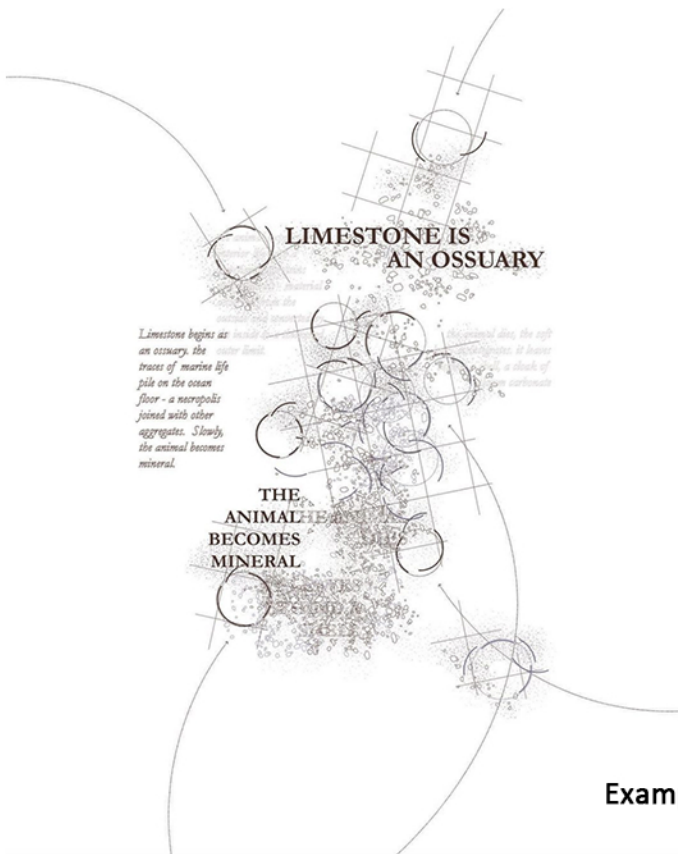
Jacklyn Brickman -  
Animation with EBSynth and  
Adobe After Effects  
Installation and Props  
Costume Design and Fabrication  
Sound Design  
Documentation and Editing

Example of work by collective member Jacklyn Brickman as The Department of Planetary Futures (with collaborators)



**Museum of Destitute History; or, 12  
Lines of Flight From a Monument to  
the End of Monumentality**

- 01: all colonial museums are emptied
- 02: all looted spoils are returned
- 03: all accumulated objects are redistributed
- 04: all towering edifices are desecrated
- 05: all bourgeois galleries are deconsecrated
- 06: all state monuments are effaced
- 07: all official histories are destitute
- 08: all classical taxonomies are disordered
- 09: all despotic languages are foreclosed
- 10: all imperial hegemonies are destroyed
- 11: all oppressive institutions are abandoned
- 12: all forsaken futures are inhabited



Example of work by collective member Caleb Lightfoot

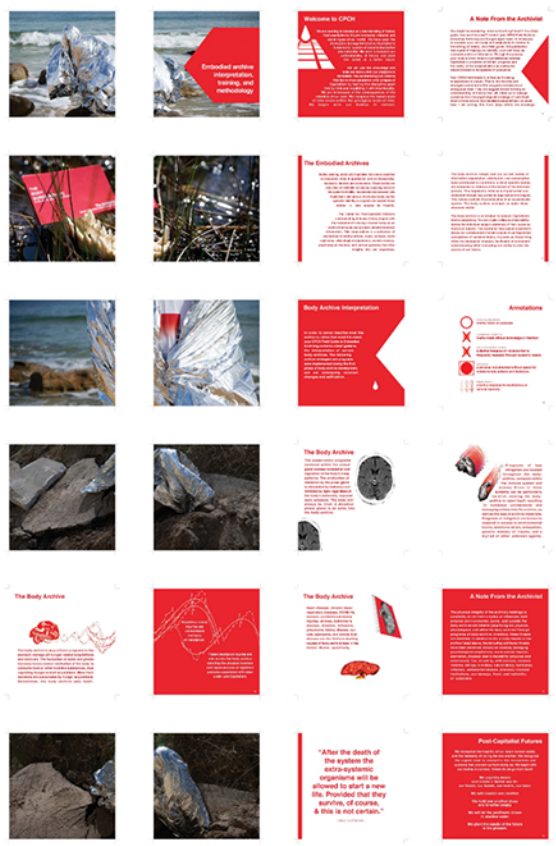


Steven Pestana's multidisciplinary artwork explores the relationship between speculative thought and the visual codes of authority. Using immersive installation, sculpture, mixed media and painting, Pestana draws big-picture connections among unspoken historical, social and cultural tensions at play in everyday life.

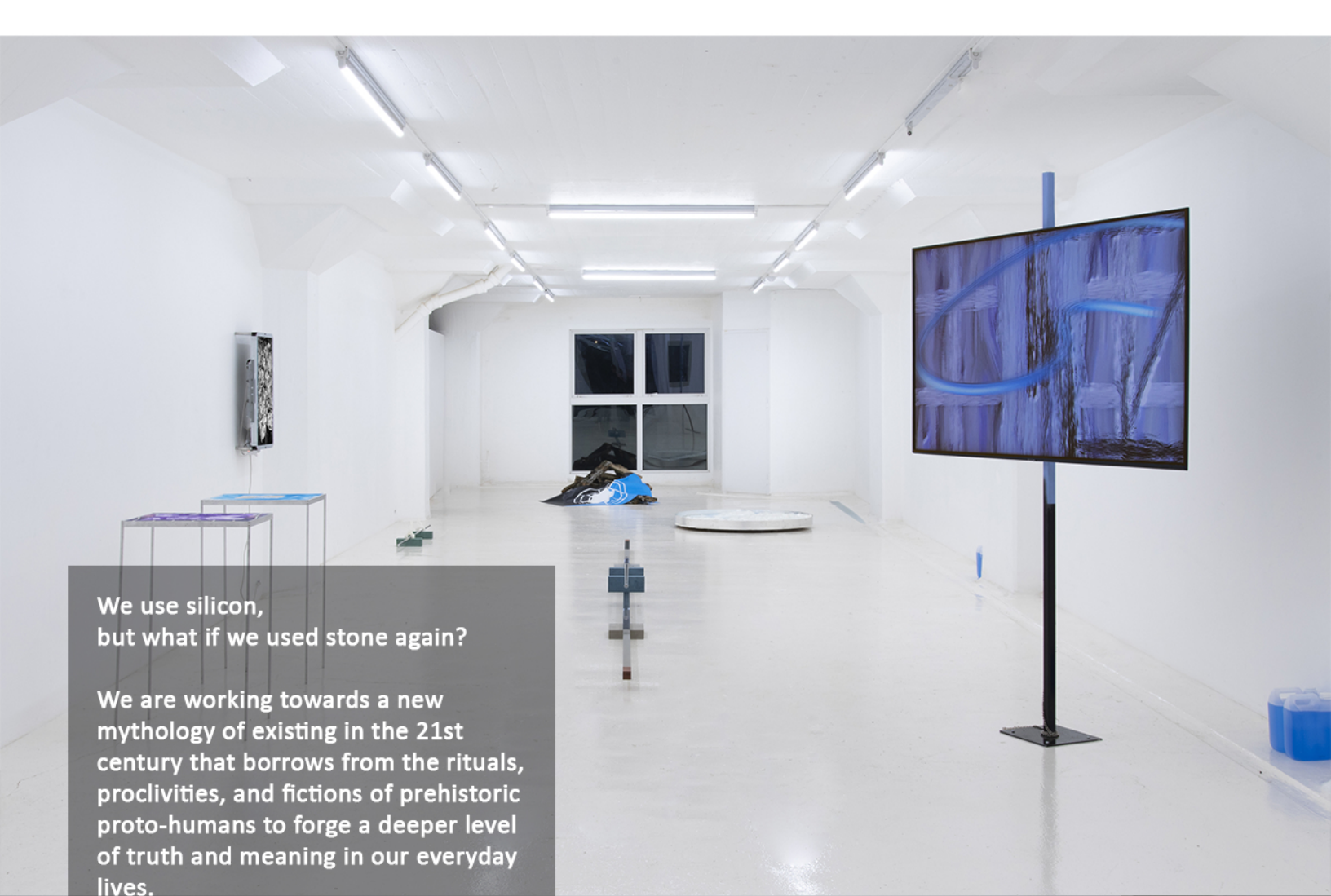


Example of work by collective member Steven Pestana  
Dawning (top) and the Witnesses (bottom)

The Center For Post-Capitalist History, a fictitious museum existing through para-fictional intervention, proposes the creation of new methods of understanding history after the fall of Capitalism. In the institution's vision, the body should be understood as a valuable archive of information that can reorient our understanding of knowledge production and the writing of history, and allow us to prioritize care and mutual aid in a proposed future after the Capitalocene. In this storefront window installation, the viewer is offered a glimpse into a Center For Post-Capitalist History Staging Area, suggesting that the intentional construction of our future is something occurring in the present.



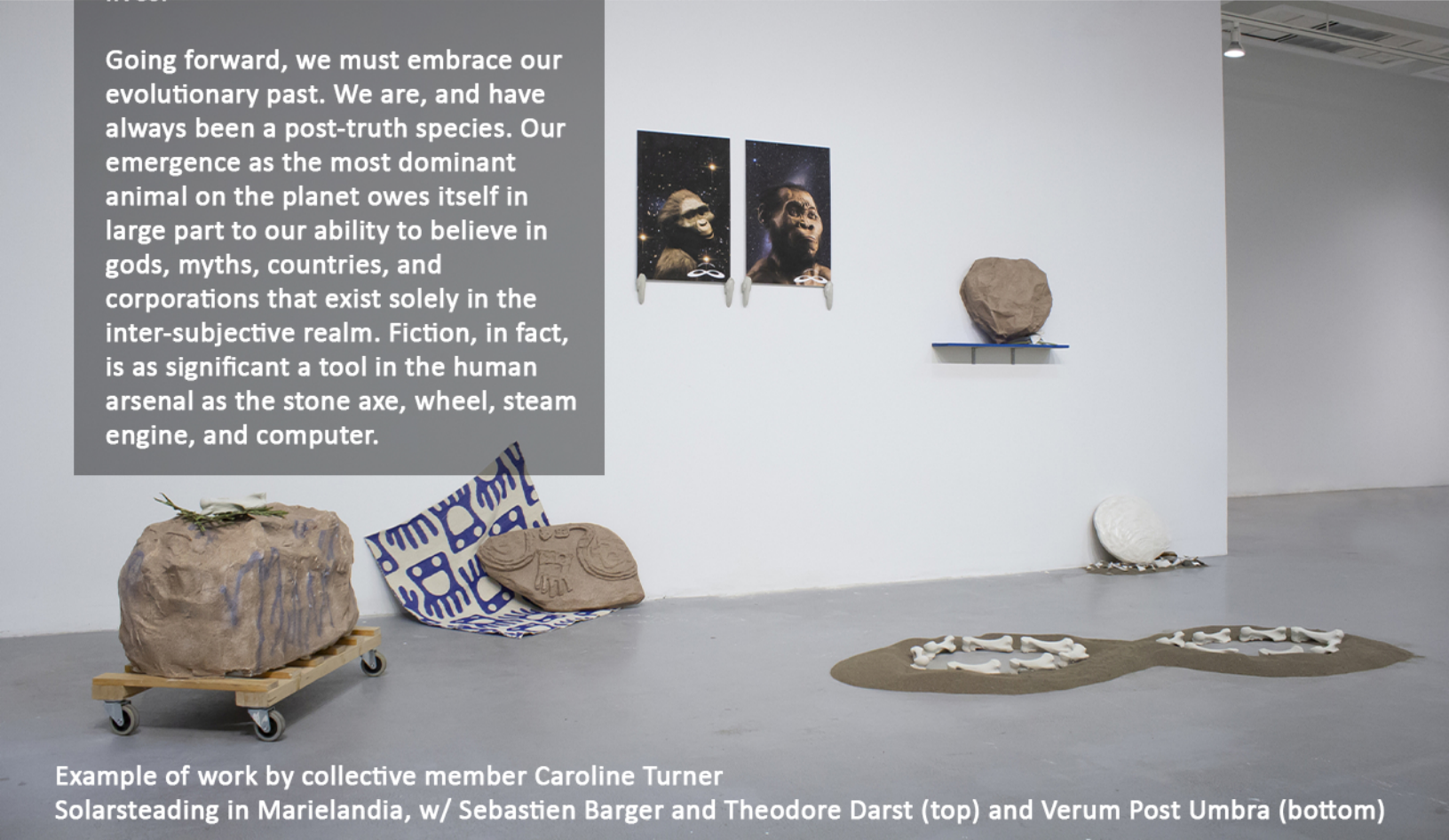
Example of work by collective member Leah Sandler as The Center for Post-Capitalist History



We use silicon,  
but what if we used stone again?

We are working towards a new  
mythology of existing in the 21st  
century that borrows from the rituals,  
proclivities, and fictions of prehistoric  
proto-humans to forge a deeper level  
of truth and meaning in our everyday  
lives.

Going forward, we must embrace our  
evolutionary past. We are, and have  
always been a post-truth species. Our  
emergence as the most dominant  
animal on the planet owes itself in  
large part to our ability to believe in  
gods, myths, countries, and  
corporations that exist solely in the  
inter-subjective realm. Fiction, in fact,  
is as significant a tool in the human  
arsenal as the stone axe, wheel, steam  
engine, and computer.



Example of work by collective member Caroline Turner  
Solarsteading in Marielandia, w/ Sebastien Barger and Theodore Darst (top) and Verum Post Umbra (bottom)