

## PRESS RELEASE

Julian Charrière

*All We Ever Wanted Was Everything and Everywhere*

curated by Lorenzo Balbi

MAMbo - Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna | Sala delle Ciminiere

9 June - 8 September 2019

Opening: Saturday 8 June 2019 at 8 pm

Live and DJ Set Lotus Eater (Lucy & Rrose) [Stroboscopic Artefacts] and Rhyw [Arcing Seas | Fever AM | Avian] at 10 pm, Biografilm Park

*Bologna, 7 June 2019 - From 9 June to 8 September 2019, MAMbo - Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna is pleased to present *All We Ever Wanted Was Everything and Everywhere*, the first personal exhibition in Italy of Julian Charrière (b. Morges, Switzerland, 1987) whose work bridges the realms of environmental science and cultural history.*

*All We Ever Wanted Was Everything and Everywhere*, curated by Lorenzo Balbi, in the Hall Sala delle Ciminiere includes a wide selection of works such as photographs, installations, sculptures and videos, touching upon the history of science, the development of media culture, the romantic vision of exploration and the modern ecological crisis.

Backing his long-term interest in the unseen processes behind the production of knowledge and the different methods that lead to a discovery, Charrière tries to understand history, looking at the past to imagine what the future holds. Like an archaeologist, the artist gazes into past events to understand those yet to come while reflecting on the present. His projects often stem from fieldwork in remote locations with acute geophysical identities - such as volcanoes, ice-fields and radioactive sites, setting off to distant landscapes and facing extreme conditions. From his expeditions around the globe, Julian Charrière brings out the beauty of nature while depicting its vulnerability and the fractures existing between nature and civilization. By showing the environmental disasters caused by humans in places like the Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands, the former Semipalatinsk Test Site in Kazakhstan, in a monoculture plantation of oil palm in Indonesia, or most recently underseas, Charrière doesn't only raise awareness nor expresses a moral judgement: he reveals as well the invisible forces that mould the landscape, from geological events to a thirst for resources engineered in our digital era, including, on a more immaterial plane, the cultural projections that change the meaning and perception of a place. However much we try to plunder the earth and raid its resources - at such a rate that scientists are talking about the past two and a half centuries as a separate geological era, the Anthropocene - the planet will get its own back and we will be forgotten.

The MAMbo exhibition path draws on ideas about ephemerality, the passage of time, and humankind's attempts to dominate the environment.

Entering the exhibition hall, the public is taken to a remote Atoll in the Pacific Ocean, where 70 years ago, 23 of the most powerful manmade explosions in history occurred. During this period, bombs delivering a combined fission yield of 42.2 megatons were detonated. The force of one of these, 'Castle Bravo', was enough to vaporize two islands, and gouge a massive crater - measuring 2000 metres in diameter - out of the primordial reef.

Four pieces - the videos *Iroojrilik* and *As We Used to Float* and the installations *Pacific Fiction* and *All We Ever Wanted Was Everything and Everywhere* which gives its name to the exhibition - invite us to explore what remains of those tests and the islands, above and below the sea, revealing an unsettling legacy of unintended monuments. This body of work questions the interaction between anthropogenic and natural transformations.

Charrière dabbles in the same subject through photographs and sculptures which depict this tropical Garden of Eden through the scope of Bikini's atomic legacy and post-colonial ecology. For instance *Lost at Sea - Bikini Fragment* are two sculptures made from mutated coconuts found at the atoll.

Continuing through the exhibition visitors are transported to Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan, a former Soviet atomic firing range. There Charrière created the photographic work titled "Polygon" which documents the site and shows its atomic reality by exposing the film negative to contaminated soil, therefore the naked eyes invisible rays burn the photosensitive medium letting some ghostly traces. These melancholic black and white images document a post-apocalyptic place and time. In the same space *Somewhere*, a video that the artist shot during the little time laps allowed by the Geiger counter on site. Between those two bodies of work the viewers are placed in a sort of trance to meditate in the dark atmosphere of atomic tests which also gives a nod to the fantasy world of science fiction.

In parallel with the artwork set in Kazakhstan, this part of the exhibition includes two additional installations. *Savannah Shed* brings together a structure composed of concrete and lead, a spectrometer and a crocodile, while *Somehow They Never Stop Doing What They Always Did* is a set of intriguing constructions evoking connotations of mythological buildings. Made from plaster bricks, fructose and lactose, they are moistened with water from some of the most famous rivers which allowed the rise of different civilisations, such as the Nile, Euphrates and the Mekong among others, before starting to mould away. These constructions evoke emblems like the Tower of Babel and, by decaying so rapidly, seem to stake out their place in history.

Another large installation captures the visitors' attention. *We Are All Astronauts*, a titled inspired by Buckminster Fuller's writings, is a set of suspended globes shorn of all geographic

markings. The artist used globes manufactured between 1890 and 2011, and scratched away the geopolitical boundaries of those times using a self-made sandpaper constituted of mineral samples from every country recognised by the United Nations. The dust from the scrapings then settles gently beneath the globes, creating new maps that point to an ever more global world where fixed boundaries become progressively more useless.

In the last space of the show the visitors are taken to the backside of Narcissus's mirror. *Silent World* and *Where Waters Meet* are presenting a phantasmagorical undersea realm. The works show images of naked free-divers like suspended in the depth of some Cenotes in Yucatan, as they seemingly floating slowly disappear in a underwater cloud (known as chemocline) This descent into the abyss is clearly replete with metaphors.

As an addition to the exhibition, in the entrance hall, visitors will get the first glimpse of what is coming from *In the Real World It Doesn't Happen That Perfectly*, a video installation by Charrière and Julius von Bismarck. The artists fooled much of the media world - CNN, Fox News, the Daily Mail, to name a few - with their videos of false attacks in the famous Arches National Park of Utah. In a world where fake news on social media can sway opinions and election results, the work is a masterful picture on fiction, reality and truth in the media of today.

*All We Ever Wanted Was Everything and Everywhere* will be inaugurated on **Saturday 8 June 2019 at 8 pm**. The opening features, from 10 pm, Live Set by **Lotus Eater (Lucy & Rose)** [Stroboscopic Artefacts] and DJ Set **Rhyw** [Arcing Seas | Fever AM | Avian], on the **Biografilm Park** stage in Parco del Cavaticcio. **Lucy & Rose**, teaming up as Lotus Eater are techno artists who operate in area of experimental music. Their first collaboration took the form of mutual remixes, and that led to a number of shared sessions and a new project, starting with two EPs signed Lucy and Rose called *The Lotus Eaters (SA)* and *The Lotus Eaters II (Eaux)*. With the *Desatura* album, the first release signed under the project name The Lotus Eaters, their common work was refined further. **Rhyw**, also known as one half of Cassegrain, became known for a series of releases that represent the best of contemporary techno music. His work underscores his keen ear and skill in extracting melody from apparently disharmonic elements. Rhyw co-produces the label Arcing Seas with Magna Pia, his partner in Cassegrain, as well as Fever AM with Mor Elian.

On the occasion of the exhibition, **Edizioni MAMbo** is publishing the book by **Julian Charrière** and **Nadim Samman** *As We Used to Float* in Italian under the title *Noi che galleggiavamo*. Halfway between a travel journal and a critical essay, this book explores the Bikini Atoll as a place for daydreaming and imagination and the traumatic setting of nuclear tests. In this book, the personal story of the journey to Bikini, above and below the sea, is completed by a critical examination of post-colonial geography, to reach wider conclusions about place and

subjectivity. These thoughts emerge from a series of dives into the story-telling pool and cover many aspects that range from the psychological and aesthetic parameters of deep-water scuba diving to the shabby poetry of ships and the stakes in play when filming underwater. With vivid descriptions of concrete bunkers on white beaches, the “ghost fleet” of derelict Second World War battleships, radioactive coconuts and much more, *As We Used to Float* is a sea tale for our time.

*All We Ever Wanted Was Everything and Everywhere* was realised with the support of the main sponsor Hera, the sponsor Gruppo Unipol, with the contribution of Regione Emilia-Romagna as well as the support of Pro Helvetia. The exhibition is part of Bologna Estate 2019, a calendar of events organised and coordinated by Comune di Bologna and Città Metropolitana di Bologna - Destinazione Turistica (Bologna City Council and the Greater Metropolitan Area of Bologna).

**Julian Charrière** (born in 1987 at Morges, Switzerland) is a French-Swiss artist based in Berlin. One of the most exciting young artists working today, Charrière is known for a research-based practice rooted in geology, biology, physics, history and archaeology. He frequently travels to some of the most remote regions of the planet to explore how human civilization and the natural landscape are inextricably linked. By Marshalling performing arts, sculpture, photography and videos, his work provides a meeting point between the fields of environmental science and the history of civilisation. To date his practice has explored the post-romantic construction of “nature,” putting on stage the tensions created between deep or geological timescales and those related to mankind. A former student of Olafur Eliasson and participant of the Institute for Spatial Experiments, his work has been presented in exhibitions across the world, including at the Musée Cantonal de Beaux Arts de Lausanne; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna; Museum of Contemporary art, Tokyo; Parasol Unit, London; 12th Biennale de Lyon; and the 57th Venice Biennial. His work has more recently been shown in a solo exhibition at the Berlinische Galerie, Berlin.

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## TECHNICAL SHEET

### Exhibition title

Julian Charrière. *All We Ever Wanted Was Everything and Everywhere*

### Curated by

Lorenzo Balbi

### Promoted by

Istituzione Bologna Musei | Area Arte Moderna e Contemporanea

### Venue

MAMbo - Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna  
via Don Minzoni 14 | 40121 Bologna - Italy

### Dates

9 June - 8 September 2019

### Opening

Saturday 8 June 2019 at 8 pm

### Opening hours

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Festivities h 10 am - 6.30 pm; Thursday h 10 am - 10 pm

### Ticket

Temporary exhibition full € 6 | reduced € 4

Card Musei Metropolitani Bologna and Bologna Welcome Card reduced € 3

Full cumulative ticket exhibition + MAMbo/Museo Morandi Permanent collection € 10

Reduced cumulative ticket exhibition + MAMbo/Museo Morandi Permanent collection € 8

### Publishing

*As We Used to Float, Noi che galleggiavamo* - Edizioni MAMbo

### General Information

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