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Individual Short Essay

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Environmentally Challenged

Unfortunately, environmental issues are a common subject of study among artists; the importance of these studies is increasing. Even now, during the time of the COVID-19 global pandemic, we see the human capacity for environmental destruction. Ironically social media is flooded with pictures of the recovery of the environment: clear skies, less pollution, animals in populated areas. However, even as the earth seems to heal with human absence, we still disrespect our environment by littering PPE items and rushing to reopen too soon. With this in mind, this exhibition features three artists who are creating varying bodies of work commenting on this relationship between humans and our environment.

Artist Adam Eddy expresses that his creative focus is on the “expansion and dissolution of the self and how it relates to socially constructed hierarchies” (Eddy). His work begins with a focus in painting, but when painting renders itself incapable of properly expressing his goals, Eddy expands into sculpture and other new media forms. “When painting falls short, these [new media] offer new paths for exploring themes of temporality, materiality, and immortality” (Eddy). Eddy seeks to challenge the line human beings draw between us and our surroundings, using his paintings as a means of borrowing structure from the everyday and using them as proxies for the human body.

Mixed media artist Kellie Bornhoft focuses on the notion that human beings have a limited perception of seeing non-living matter as inert. Bornhoft plans to create an installation piece and offer commentary on the tangible and active narratives of how human beings relate to the ground. She states that the piece in this exhibition will explore how an extractive viewpoint that assumes endless and non-reactive resources is in fact an active character in this time of climate change (Bornhoft). This will further add to the discussion of the ongoing and ever-changing relationship of people and our environment.

Last, sculptural artist Ron Lambert combines nature with constructed elements in order to foster a dialog about human efforts to make sense of, as well as control, our environment. “Art has been given the job of capturing contemporary life, providing mementos of things the culture does or should feel for” (Lambert). He focuses on the relationship of people and their differing environments in terms of identity, and how environment has the ability to serve as reminders of past moments.

Each of these artists is individually commenting on this ever-changing relationship between human beings and our environment. With the increasing risks of climate change, as well as the shifting environment in the time of COVID-19, I feel that bringing these artists together to form a visual commentary on their studies couldn't be more appropriate. This exhibition will serve as an opportunity to study deeply each of these artists' work in order to understand better our personal roles within this natural relationship of environment and inhabitant.