

unsettled

ground

Art and the Environment
from the Smart Museum Collection

Large Print Exhibition Texts and Labels



Unsettled Ground: Art and the Environment from the Smart Museum Collection

How has the environment shaped artistic practice, and how can these artistic forms help us to understand our local and planetary environment in new ways? “Unsettled Ground” explores the interaction of art and ecology as a dynamic conversation that gains new meaning against the background of our climate crisis. Featuring artworks in a wide variety of media from the Smart Museum’s collection, this exhibition invites visitors to consider how artists have engaged with the natural world, interrogated its transformation at human hands, and amplified stories of dispossession and resilience embedded in the earth.

Across four thematic sections—“Arts of Observation,” “Earthly Visions,” “Land at Work,” and “No Man’s Land”—the artworks on view prompt us to shift between perspectives, scales, and sensory modalities, revealing hidden wonders and fantastic visions, abuse and exploitation. Unsettling habitual ways of perceiving local, regional, and planetary ecologies, these objects encourage us to reflect on the earth’s beauty and fragility, as well as our responsibilities to the planet and one another.

Organized by the Smart Museum's Feitler Center for Academic Inquiry, this exhibition was collaboratively curated by Katerina Korola and the students of her seminar, "Picturing the Earth: Art and Environment in the Modern Era." Over Fall 2021, the students worked together to research, conceptualize, and develop interpretive materials for the exhibition. Student essays and creative projects on the exhibition's digital platform offer additional insight into selected works on display. To access this additional content scan the QR code with your smartphone or visit smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/unsettled-ground



"Unsettled Ground" is curated by Katerina Korola (PhD'21) with Berit Ness, Associate Curator for Academic Engagement, and student curators Sindy Chen (MAPH'22), Vicky Chen (AB'23), Sabrina Cunningham

(AB'22), Isabella Diefendorf (AB'24), Teagan Harris (MAPH'22), Ellis LeBlanc (MAPH'22), Meichen Liu (MAPH'22), Felix Ramin (AB'23), Teddy Sandler (AB'23), Jack Schneider (MAPH'22), Wenshu Wang (MAPH'22), Xuanlin Ye (MAPH'22), Datura Zhou (MAPH'22), Octavia Zhou (AB'23).

Support for this exhibition has been provided by the Feitler Center for Academic Inquiry Fund and the Museum's SmartPartners.

Arts of Observation

What does it mean to look closely at our environment?

Acts of observation and fascination—whether occurring in the open air, the laboratory, or the space of the museum—shape our encounter with the world and the myriad living beings that compose it. Bridging natural history and artistic practice, the objects featured in this section invite us to engage with the non-human world at the scale of a specimen. This shift in perspective not only opens onto a spectacular realm of minute creatures and fantastic forms but also prompts us to consider how practices of attention, modes of technology, and disciplinary frameworks inform how we perceive the environment and our relationship to it.

Hiroshi Sugimoto

Japanese, active in United States, born 1948

Birds of Japan

1994

Gelatin silver print

Purchase, Bequest of Joseph Halle Schaffner in memory of his beloved mother, Sara H. Schaffner, and Gift of Carl Rungius, by exchange

2000.14

What seems to be a conventional landscape photograph becomes utterly uncanny upon closer examination. The inanimate placement of two birds in the foreground with feathers in sharp focus, the unnatural transition between the background and foreground, and a host of small details reveal this as a photograph of a natural history diorama, a mode of display dedicated to the lifelike reconstruction of animal specimens and their habitats.

This picture is part of a larger series in which the photographer Hiroshi Sugimoto turned his camera on the displays of the American Museum of Natural History to investigate modes of representation, perception, and

preservation. The collision of taxidermy and photography, both regarded as a way to conserve and deepen knowledge of the natural world, acts as a reminder that our understanding of nature is mediated, often through artificial materials. Speaking of the series, Sugimoto remarked, "However fake the subject, once photographed, it's as good as real."

Bertha Evelyn Jaques

American, 1863–1941

Cherry, South Haven

1909

Cyanotype negative on brown paper mount

Gift of the Estate of Lester and Betty Guttman

2014.431

A founder of the Chicago Society of Etchers and active member of the Wild Flower Preservation Society, Bertha Evelyn Jaques also created thousands of cyanotypes of plant specimens. An accessible practice deemed especially appropriate for women around the turn of the century, the cyanotype process involves placing objects directly against sensitized paper and exposing them to light. This print features a cherry branch collected in South Haven, Michigan. In addition to its scientific value, it also evinces Jaques's aesthetic sensibility. The cherry blossoms, rendered in various degrees of transparency, seem to radiate outwards and upwards, while the scattered petals to the right suggest the passing of time. Jaques regarded her work as a way of preserving the ephemeral beauty of the natural world. Describing her practice in a poem, she wrote: "There is a moment's

loveliness too great for words to hold; so paper caught and scattered it for all the world to keep.”

Eli Lotar

French, 1905–1969

Jean Painlevé

French, 1902–1989

Rostre de la crevette (Rostrum of a Shrimp)

1929

Gelatin silver print

Gift of the Estate of Lester and Betty Guttman

2014.529

The title of this intricately detailed, microscopic photograph offers the only clue as to the identity of its subject, which flits between the realms of natural history and abstraction with its elegant lines, sinuous curves, and lightly scaled ground. In this way, Eli Lotar and Jean Painlevé's photograph participates in a wider Surrealist fascination with the strange worlds opened up by scientific media. This image was excerpted from "Crabes et Crevettes" (Crabs and Shrimp, 1929), a whimsical educational film directed by Painlevé and shot by Lotar, which combined underwater and microscopic cinematography to explore the anatomy and life cycle of crabs and shrimp. It presents

a view of the shrimp's carapace—the hard shell covering its head and back. By privileging line and texture, this photograph complicates the conventional association of microscopic imaging with categorization. Instead, it frames and magnifies its subject as an aesthetic marvel.

Mark Dion

American, born 1961

Roundup: An Entomological Endeavor for the Smart Museum of Art

2000/2006

Mixed media installation of black-and-white photographs and mannequin

Purchase, Paul and Miriam Kirkley Fund for Acquisitions
2007.107a-c

This installation by conceptual artist Mark Dion originated as a commission for the Smart Museum's exhibition "Ecologies" (2000). The work on view resulted from an interactive performance in which the artist, sporting a naturalist's costume, led a team of volunteers, including fellow artists, museum staff, faculty, and students, to collect insects from the crevices of the Smart Museum. Dion then set up a temporary laboratory in the galleries and worked with a University of Chicago microscopist to magnify and photograph the grid of specimens on display in the final installation. Dion wrote of this work, "Nature seems not to be found in the everyday, unless magnified. By shifting our focus, we can be reminded that we are

inalienably part of an ecology—we are constructed by and construct the world around us.” By revealing the minute creatures that inhabit the museum, “Roundup” brings to attention the ecological forces that are present all around us but often invisible.

1. Tiffany Glass And Decorating Company

American, 1892–1902

Vase

circa 1896–1902

Blown and crimped Favrile glass

Gift of Miss Margaret Walbank

1975.24

2. Tiffany Studios

American, 1902–1932

Salt Cellar

1904

Blown iridescent Favrile glass

Gift of Miss Margaret Walbank

1975.25

3. Émile Gallé

French, 1846–1904

Vase

circa 1900

Cased cameo-cut and acid-etched colored glass

Gift of Miss Margaret Walbank

1975.22

4. Glasfabrik Johann Loetz Witwe

Austrian, 1836–1947

Vase

circa 1900

Cased blown iridescent colored glass

Gift of Dennis Adrian, A.B., '57 in honor of Professor

Edward A. Maser

1980.41

The curling leaves, twisted buds, and organic folds of these glass vessels exemplify the turn-of-the-century fascination with floral forms, which saw decorative artists—many of whom also practiced as amateur botanists—turn to nature for aesthetic inspiration. From the naturalism of Émile Gallé's moss-green vase, acid-etched with leaves and blossoms that seem to grow from its base; to the abstraction of the Loetz Witwe vase, which reduces floral forms to symbolic silhouettes; to the

animated organicism of Tiffany's crimped Favrile glass; the vases bridge natural and artistic beauty. In addition to functioning as containers for cut flowers and a vessel for salt, these iridescent glasses resemble plants and crustaceans themselves, bringing the natural world into the home through both form and function.

Earthly Visions

How do we envision the natural world around us? The ways in which we see, touch, and otherwise sense the earth affects how we understand and share our planet. In this section, artists approach the environment as a natural utopia. Though the concept of “nature” as something separate from the human has rightly been critiqued, these works insist on the natural world’s enduring significance as a source of inspiration, strength, and rejuvenation.

Working across disparate geographies and eras, the artists in this section employ a diverse array of media—from ceramics and textiles to printmaking and painting—to create their own earthly visions. Drawing variously upon artistic tradition, spirituality, and science, these artists present holistic yet idiosyncratic representations of the natural world, offering new perspectives on the planet and our place within a shared ecology.

Attributed To Giovanni Castrucci

Italian, active 1576–1612

Wooded Landscape with Crenellated Wall

circa 1600–1607

“Commesso di pietre dure” of semi-precious hard stones
and petrified wood mounted on slate

Gift of the Collection of Edward A. and Inge Maser in
honor of Richard Born

2008.43

This intricate landscape was created using the “commesso di pietre dure” method, a costly and labor-intensive process that involved combining precisely cut fragments of precious and semi-precious stones to create a mosaic, which could then be set into tabletops, cabinets, small altars, and other furnishings. Invented in sixteenth-century Florence, the practice arose alongside early modern debates about the nature of representation and the artistic agency of natural processes. To form this view of a wooded landscape, the artisan exploited the color and pattern of each stone fragment to suggest delicate patterns of foliage, distant vegetation, and dramatic clouds. The inclusion of petrified wood alongside various stones brings another dimension to the object’s subtle play

with visual analogy, inviting us to reflect on the interaction of representation and materiality.

Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Tischbein

German, 1751–1829

Der Tierlaokoon (The Animal Laocoön)

1796

Etching on laid paper

Gift of Stephen and Elizabeth Crawford

2016.106

This etching represents a zoomorphic reinterpretation of the famous Laocoön Group sculpture, which, during the eighteenth century, was widely regarded as the paragon of classical artistic tradition. As he created this work, Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Tischbein was actively experimenting with comparative physiognomy, a practice that explored analogies between human and animal forms. The transformation of the sculpture's human figures into lions is not the only alteration; the etching also embeds the scene into a rich natural landscape. Formal echoes, such as similarities between the lion's tufted mane and the vegetation draped over the rocks, suggest a continuation of Tischbein's interest in metamorphosis into the vegetal world. The rocky outcroppings meticulously frame the tumbling arrangement, giving the impression of a drama

that has been momentarily paused. This raises the question: is the natural world around us a stage?



Image Caption: Photograph published by Fratelli Alinari (Italian, Active 1854–1920), 1870.

Mukul Dey

Indian, 1895–1992

Sacred Tree

1927

Etching

University Transfer from Max Epstein Archive, Carrie B.

Neely Bequest, 1940

1967.116.540

The subject of this drypoint etching is the sacred Bodhi tree under which the Buddha achieved spiritual awakening. Growing upwards from an urn, the tree's tangled branches dominate the composition and offer refuge to a host of small creatures. Winged deities frame its crown, while people lay offerings at its base. Mukul Dey was a pioneer of drypoint etching in India, a technique that he learned while travelling to Chicago and London.

Working at a time when India was under British rule, Dey was deeply concerned with developing a national artistic language. In addition to his printmaking practice, he also worked to recover and preserve India's rich cultural heritage. Between 1918 and 1919, he undertook an arduous journey to copy the Buddhist frescoes at the Ajanta and Bagh caves. These encounters informed his

work, which conveys a sense of national pride in its combination of traditional imagery and modern technique.

Sheila Hicks

American, active in France, born 1934

Evolving Tapestry--Soleil

1984

Wound, tied, and knotted dyed linen

Gift of the artist

1995.45a-c

Sheila Hicks's bundled threads tempt our hands to reach out and sense just how light and soft they are. Renowned for her textile sculptures, Hicks used wound, tied, and knotted linen to form bouquets of threads, whose pointillist combination of oranges, yellows, and greens evokes flowers, moss, and lichens, and, as suggested by its title, the sun. As we move around the work, these allusions to natural abundance give way to the ordered presentation of ponytails of bound string that form the three separate coils from which the sculpture is built. The transition draws attention to Hicks's meticulous process, offering new insights into the work's materiality.

Minnie Evans

American, 1892–1987

Untitled [Visionary Garden Design]

1960–1968

Oil and paper collage on canvas board

Gift of Brenda F. and Joseph V. Smith

2003.11

In this colorful mixed-media collage, Minnie Evans conjures a garden paradise replete with lush vegetation, floral motifs, and fantastic figures. Born and raised in a deeply religious community, Evans began making art after feeling called upon by God to draw the elaborate visions that she had experienced since childhood. She produced her visionary garden designs while working as a gatekeeper at Airlie Gardens in Wilmington, North Carolina, a sixty-seven acre garden renowned for its azaleas, magnolias, and wisteria. Evans regularly drew and painted in the open air, drawing inspiration from her rich floral surroundings. The family that owned the gardens also allowed Evans to study their collection of artworks, including Chinese and Persian carpets, the

influence of which can be detected in the interlacing forms and symmetrical composition of works like this one.

Joseph E. Yoakum

American, 1890–1972

Caucasus Mts On Black Sea near Armavir in
USSR

1964

Ballpoint pen and colored pencil on paper

Gift of Dennis Adrian in memory of George Veronda

2001.571

Based on Chicago's South Side, Joseph E. Yoakum began drawing intensely in his seventies after feeling divinely called to create. During his brief but prolific career, Yoakum produced more than 2,000 drawings, often made using commonplace materials like his trademark ballpoint pen. Landscape was a favorite subject for Yoakum, who travelled extensively as a young boy in Buffalo Bill's Wild West and the Ringling Brothers Circus, and later as a soldier in World War I. Characterized by striated lines and undulating shapes, his landscapes regularly drew on a combination of personal experience and imagination. This highly stylized representation of the Caucasus Mountains exemplifies Yoakum's use of line, color, and sinuous patterns to create an animated vision of natural formations

like mountains, forests, and waves. Yoakum developed this playful and idiosyncratic style to convey the emotions and memories evoked by the landscape. As the artist famously explained, “The drawings are unfolded to me, a spiritual unfoldment.”

Ruth Duckworth

American, born in Germany, active in England and United States,

1919–2009

Maquette for “Earth, Water, Sky”

1968–1969

Glazed stoneware and wood

Gift of Mrs. Leonard Horwich

1987.6

Clay forms recalling mountains, valleys, lakes, clouds, and other natural phenomena collide and coalesce in Ruth Duckworth’s maquette. Duckworth created this architectural model as a study for “Earth, Water, Sky”—an immersive ceramic mural commissioned for the foyer of the University of Chicago’s Henry Hinds Laboratory, where it remains today.

Inspired by topographical maps and the emergence of satellite imagery, Duckworth’s maquette and mural depict aerial views of the earth that collapse geomorphic, hydrologic, and atmospheric processes onto a single plane. By shaping these diverse environmental forces from a common earthen material, clay, Duckworth’s

artwork echoes her belief in a “common energy” from which all things grow. Viewed from above, Duckworth’s maquette offers a humble portrayal of the environment; by contrast her monumental mural surrounds and incorporates viewers into its representation of a planetary ecology, perhaps moving them to share in her “intense concern for nature—our environment and what we do to it.”



Land at Work

To designate an area as “land” is to situate it in relation to human activities past, present, and future. In the context of a still ongoing colonialism, land is often regarded as a property to be owned and a resource to be exploited. This extractive attitude has left its mark on the earth—transforming the landscape, exhausting ecologies, and unleashing toxins into the ground, water, and air. Yet this viewpoint remains partial, neglecting both the natural forces that have shaped topography over millennia and alternative models for less harmful relations with the environment.

Experimenting with perspective, framing, and scale, the works in this section invite us to consider the conflict between shaping space for human purposes and respecting natural processes. Navigating land use and its evolving forms, these objects raise questions about how we value the earth and the way it has been irrevocably altered as a result.

Timothy H. O'Sullivan

American, possibly born in Ireland, 1840–1882

Shoshone Falls, Snake River, Idaho,
View across Top of the Falls
1874

Shoshone Falls, Snake River, Idaho,
Midday View
1874

Albumen prints

Purchase, Gift of the Smart Family Foundation in honor of
the 30th Anniversary of the Smart Museum
2003.147.30, 2003.147.31

Timothy H. O'Sullivan created these majestic views of Shoshone Falls in the context of the Wheeler Survey, a multi-year geographic expedition whose efforts to map the territory west of the 100th meridian represented an important step in opening the area to colonial and commercial exploitation. Shoshone Falls had long served as an important fishing and trading site for the Lemhi Shoshone and Bannock peoples. Taller than Niagara, its rushing cascades captured the imagination of American

surveyors and offered an attractive subject for field photographers like O'Sullivan, who accompanied the expedition with carts of chemicals, glass plates, and other related equipment. To create the picture above, O'Sullivan used a long lens to enhance the fall's sublime aspect, leaving the viewer suspended over a foaming abyss. The sensuous greys and whites of the cascading water contrast with the rich detail in the rocky background, showcasing both the spectacle of nature and the precision of the camera.

TERRY EVANS

American, born 1944

Rotational Grazing, Chase County, Kansas 1996

Chromogenic print

Gift from the Ann Meyer Rothschild Collection

2016.27

Terry Evan's aerial photograph of a Kansas farm and the surrounding prairie shows evidence of the evolving relationship between humans and the landscape. The stark straight lines emanating from the central octagonal structure are the result of rotational grazing, a ranching practice in which livestock are moved periodically to graze on different strips of land. Recalling a clock, these radiating geometric markings contrast with the bold shadow of the riverbed and natural topography. Time holds a wider significance in this photograph. Captured days before more than 10,000 acres in Chase County, Kansas, were designated as the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, the photograph not only records past layers of both natural and human development, but also looks

ahead to a future where the needs of the land itself are put first.

Toshio Shibata

Japanese, born 1949

Grand Coulee Dam, Douglas County, WA

1996

Gelatin silver print

Purchase, Gift of Lorna C. Ferguson

1998.15

Since the mid-1970s, Toshio Shibata has used his camera to explore the interaction of natural and human forces within man-altered landscapes, with a particular emphasis on those produced by large-scale civil engineering projects. This dramatically cropped view of the Grand Coulee Dam—at the time the world's largest concrete structure—displays the photographer's characteristically sensuous treatment of surface, texture, and line. By eliminating the horizon and any glimpse of scenic wonder, Shibata directs our attention to the dam's concrete infrastructure. Although no water can be seen, the inky flow of black asphalt, guided by the undulating line of the guardrail, recalls the powerful hydraulic current harnessed by the dam, prompting us to reflect on the interplay between the organic and architectural.

Leonard Havens

American, 1914–1973

South Chicago

1941

Color linocut

Gift of Raye Havens Isenberg

2020.25

Walker Evans

American, 1903–1975

Untitled (Clothesline and Smokestacks)

circa 1930, printed 1980

Gelatin silver print

Gift of Arnold H. Crane

1980.93

Placed side by side, these two objects—one a color linocut, the other a diminutive photograph—speak to the impact of industrial extraction and manufacturing on the urban landscape. Leonard Havens's print offers a dramatic representation of a South Chicago steel mill, which

dominates the horizon and seems to radiate a strange light. Born in Pittsburgh, Havens studied at the Art Institute of Chicago and participated in the New Deal's Federal Art Project before being called to serve in WWII. The print's energetic lines, canted angles, and combination of glowing earth tones, and inky blacks convey a certain ambivalence towards the steel industry, which was undergoing expansion to meet the needs of the war effort at the time Havens created this work.

By contrast, Walker Evans's small picture, contact-printed from a camera negative, offers a more sober representation of the industrial environment. Taken from street-level at an upward angle, the photograph contrasts the strong verticals of urban smokestacks with the bowed curve of two clotheslines laden with linens. The juxtaposition calls to mind the proximity of industrial and domestic space, a problem that continues to impact the health of marginalized communities across the United States.

No Man's Land

The earth can act as a catalyst for, archive of, and memorial to human events. Environmental disasters, extractive economics, and forced migrations continually reshape the topographies of land and memory, underscoring the tension between mastery and precarity that unevenly structures human relations with the environment. In this section, four artists mobilize and subvert the genre of landscape to bear witness to moments—real and imagined, personal and collective—in which human relationships to the land have been unsettled and upended. At the same time, these works also testify to the enduring nature of memory embedded in the earth and its potential as a source of resilience. Above all, they beg the question: what happened here?

Richard Misrach

American, born 1949

Flooded Gazebo, Salton Sea

From the portfolio: Desert Cantos III: The Flood

1984, printed 1991

Ektacolor print

Gift of the Estate of Lester and Betty Guttman

2014.602

Since the 1970s, Richard Misrach has photographed the landscapes of the American desert, documenting the human impact on the natural environment. His large-scale color prints offer strangely beautiful pictures of ecological disasters—human-generated floods and fires, bomb craters left by nuclear tests, polluted air and waterways, and, most recently, the transformation of the US-Mexico borderlands.

Forming part of Canto III—“The Flood”—of Misrach’s extensive “Desert Cantos” series, this photograph focuses on the Salton Sea, an inland lake that was accidentally created in 1905 as a result of efforts to irrigate California’s Imperial Valley. Rather than evaporate, the lake was maintained by agricultural runoff and eventually

transformed into a tourist destination. In the mid-1970s, tropical storms flooded the area, ending its short-lived boom as a “Desert Riviera.” The soothing blues of Misrach’s picture seem to belie this unstable history, but on closer inspection one can detect the remnants of resort infrastructure partially submerged in the calm waters.

[Left to Right]

H. C. Westermann

American, 1922–1981

Arctic Death Ship

From the portfolio: The Connecticut Ballroom
1975

Three-color woodcut on Natsume wove paper

The H. C. Westermann Study Collection, Gift of the Estate
of Joanna Beall Westermann

2002.238

Deserted Airport N.M.

From the portfolio: The Connecticut Ballroom
1975

Four-color woodcut on Natsume wove paper

The H. C. Westermann Study Collection, Gift of the Estate
of Joanna Beall Westermann

2002.241

H. C. Westermann's haunting woodblock prints confront
us with two landscapes in the aftermath of an unspecified

disaster. The artist's fastidious craftsmanship can be observed in his attention to materials, most notable in the strategic use of wood grain to suggest stratification in the rock formations of Deserted Airport N.M.. These extreme landscapes—characterized by breaking ice and desert ruins—suggest an environmental precarity. A veteran of both World War II and the Korean War, Westermann was intimately familiar with the brutality of war and frequently incorporated the Death Ship motif—seen here caught against a large glacier—into his work. The artist's distinctly sardonic, graphic style lends a wry humor to otherwise desolate scenes. Devoid of human figures, the works convey a sense of post-apocalyptic catastrophe that acquires new resonance under the looming shadow of today's climate emergency.

Arthur Amiotte

Native American, Oglala Lakota, born 1942

Wounded Knee III

2001

Acrylic and collage on canvas

Gift of Miranda and Robert Donnelley

2013.30

The Ghost Dance is a Lakota ritual that involves a ring of dancers hypnotically turning and singing, hands joined. As they gained speed, participants would succumb to joyful visions of ancestral reunion and land restored to its verdant precolonial state. The dance symbolized Indigenous hope and resistance to forced assimilation and precipitated the Wounded Knee Massacre at Pine Ridge Reservation on December 29, 1890. The Ghost Dancers at the top of the composition set the stage for a journey through the land's history. Framed by newspaper clippings that relate the settler's narrative of manifest destiny, the landscape is divided by scenes of colonial violence and Native resistance. At its center, portraits memorialize Native American leaders connected to the massacre, including Arthur Amiotte's great-grandfather, Standing Bear. Using images gathered from a range of historical

and contemporary sources, Amiotte tells a story of familial ties, resilience, and resurrection in the face of dispossession and loss.

Yun-Fei Ji

Chinese, active in United States, born 1963

The Three Gorges Dam Migration

2010

Hand-printed watercolor woodblock

mounted on paper and silk

Purchase, The Paul and Miriam Kirkley Fund for

Acquisitions

2010.5.1

Yun-Fei Ji's handscroll depicts a crowd of villagers making their way along the Yangtze River. This migration was provoked by the construction of the Three Gorges Dam, the world's largest hydroelectric plant, which displaced approximately 1.5 million people. Human figures, bundles of clothing, and other belongings intermingle with twisted trees and craggy rocks in this densely packed composition. Extending 10 feet in length, Ji's scroll—printed from hand-carved woodblocks rather than painted with ink—engenders a sense of visual exhaustion that echoes the migrants' wearing journey. Interspersed amid banal details of waiting, smoking, and sleeping are ghostly and fantastic figures that extend the upheaval of forced

resettlement beyond the human world. With former townships and villages now submerged by the flooded waters of the reservoir, Ji's work reminds us of the costs of reconfiguring the land for exploitation.