

Up Close / 'Second Nature' / By Tatiana Schlossberg

A collective visual response to climate change shows the planet in all its beauty and distress.



"Evolvers" by Cara Romero (2019).



Jeff and Stacey Waters, Staines-upon-Thames, Surrey, U.K. by Gideon Mendel (2015).



"Iceberg in Blood Red Sea," Lemaire Channel, Antarctica, by Camille Seaman (2016).

THERE'S ALWAYS A DISTANCE between the thing itself and its description — and rarely do we see this more than with climate change. The words we've used in the past to convey its urgency don't capture what we're dealing with now: a rapid, human-caused unraveling of the processes that have sustained life for millennia.

So profound is the influence of modern humanity — radioactive waste, mines and drill holes, industrial pollutants, a new atmospheric and oceanic chemistry — that some scientists have proposed marking our age with a new word: Anthropocene. A committee of scholars recently voted down a proposal to define a new epoch by that term, but its use has entered the popular lexicon nonetheless.

In **SECOND NATURE: Photography in the Age of the Anthropocene** (Rizzoli Electa, \$65), a collection of relatively recent photographs and other images edited by Jessica May and Marshall N. Price, 45 artists confront an essential challenge: How can photography capture this moment of environmental crisis? How can it awaken our attention?

Many of the images in the book are immediately striking: chaotic confrontations with ongoing planetary destruction, such as Camille Seaman's "Iceberg in Blood Red Sea, Lemaire Channel, Antarctica," from 2016. Others require more careful consideration (and would benefit from adjacent descriptions, in order to better explain the complicated concepts behind them).

This book, which will accompany a traveling exhibition, offers a sweeping exploration of the vast and mismatched time scales of photography, climate change and the "deep time" of geologic history. Looking is hard; not looking will end up being harder. □



"Mountain Landscape" from the series "Primordial Earth" by Léonard Pongo (2018).



Imabari City, Ehime Prefecture, by Toshio Shibata (2007).

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