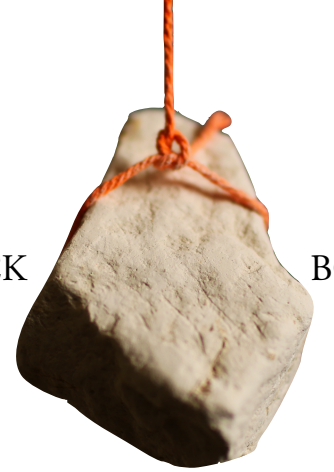
ROCK BODY



8–9 September 2016
University of Exeter

GALLERY

ROSE FERRABY (UK)
STONE EXPOSURES: CULTURAL GEOLOGIES OF THE JURASSIC COAST, 2012–2015
Photographs and Drawings

TS1/TS2 LOBBY

DAVID A. PATON (UK)
CHISEL NOCTURNE, 2012
HD digital video, 16:9, colour, stereo
2'50"

STITCH SPLIT, 2014
HD video, 16:9, colour, stereo
2'01"

TS1

VESTANDPAGE (Germany/Italy)
SIN∞FIN: PERFORMANCES AT THE CORE OF THE LOOKING-GLASS, 2012
Co-Production: DNA Dirección Nacional del Antártico, Buenos Aires; Thetis Spa, Venice
HD video, 16:9, colour, stereo
45'42"

TS2

ANNETTE ARLANDER (Finland)
DAY AND NIGHT WITH MALLA 1–2, 2014
HD video installation, 16:9, colour, stereo
30'20"

MIRKO NIKOLIĆ (UK/Serbia)
we ♥ copper ♥ us vol. 1: copper love maintenance, 2015–ongoing
Website, research materials, (web server, installation, performance)
Produced with support from Helsinki International Artist Programme (HIAP), as part of 'Frontiers in Retreat' project.

At first glance, rock and flesh—or the geological world and our human bodies—seem like disparate realms with little in common. Rocks appear hard, static, inactive, obdurate, while bodies look to be lively, mobile, perishable, capable of affective relations and political acts.

However, as this exhibition highlights, geologic and human bodies are porous to each other and mutually implicated in many ways. Think about calcium, for instance. Produced by the stars, it entered the composition of rocky planets like the Earth, where it became a constituent part of sedimentary rocks. Then, due to its high solubility in water, calcium was able to make the jump into living tissue, where it eventually became a crucial element for the mineralisation of teeth and bones, as well as some essential cellular processes. Without calcium—arriving from the stars to the rocks to the water to the food you eat—you wouldn't have a chance of standing, let alone walking.

Besides life's dependence on minerals, geological and human bodies have also been brought closer together through two other events of a very different kind (and much more recent ones, if we consider them in relation to the long history of the planet). Those events—industrialisation and capitalism—unfolded through the exploitation, on the one hand, of geological resources such as coal and oil and, on the other, human resources in the form of labour time. It was coal that powered James Watt's steam engine; it is oil that fuels the circulation of commodities around the world; and the extraction of both those resources has always been dependent on the labour of human workers. But the accumulation of capital has often pushed both mineral resources and human bodies to the point of exhaustion. Even at a time when one could be forgiven for thinking the world is freeing itself from matter and becoming primarily quantified and understood in terms of data and Mbps (Megabytes per second), burned-out rocks and exhausted bodies are a dominant feature of many contemporary landscapes.

Think of copper. One of the three most used metals in the world and crucial for our smart, connected devices, it is no longer being discovered fast enough to meet predicted future demand. As such, not only has its cost reached new heights, but there is now a booming black market for the precious red metal, fed through theft of copper roofing, gutters, and wiring. Further, the carcasses of our

CAMPUS GROUNDS
(Meet outside Thornlea,
9 September, 5pm)

Site-specific performances by:

CAROLYN DEBY/sirenscrossing (UK/Canada) with **ANNETTE ARLANDER** (Finland)

PAULA KRAMER (Germany) with **DAVID A. PATON** (UK)

old gadgets are frequently dumped as e-waste in developing countries. Here, in order to extract copper and rare metals for reuse, they are dismantled by underpaid and insecure workers—involving significant health risks to themselves and their communities. In this way, for all that our smartphones, tablets, and "cloud-computing" devices seem so cleanly designed, we may not be as far from the health and environmental hazards that characterised the labouring landscapes of the Industrial Revolution as we would like to imagine.

Highlighting some of the connections and interfaces between human bodies and the geological world, the works displayed in *Rock/Body* speak of movements, rhythms, and dynamics that cut across rock strata and the materiality of our own lives. Embodying a variety of media and produced in diverse locations, each of the artists reflect upon the co-habitation and shared histories of minerals and flesh. In doing so—in exploring the multiplicity of ways in which human bodies and geological processes are mutually implicated—their works also raise possibilities for imagining, practising, and organising the rock/body interface in alternative ways.

FUNDED BY:

Arts & Humanities Research Council

PROJECT PARTNERS:

University of Exeter

Lancaster University

BGS 1835 British Geological Survey
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL

The *Rock/Body* exhibition is part of a 12-month AHRC-funded research networking project led by Dr João Florêncio (University of Exeter) in collaboration with Professor Nigel Clark (Lancaster University). The project brings together humanities scholars, social scientists, earth scientists, and artists to identify new pathways for research on the interfaces between the geological world and the human body.
For more info visit http://rockbody.exeter.ac.uk.