

Felipe de Ávila Franco

PORTFOLIO 2022

Bio

Felipe de Ávila Franco (1982) is a Brazilian visual artist radicaded in Finland since 2013. His artistic research is conducted through the lens of biopolitics and environmental aesthetics, combining traditional and experimental sculpture techniques for the incorporation of industrial residues into his process in order to translate the socio-environmental crisis that characterizes our times. Grounded on concepts of materiality, his work is dedicated to approaching sculpture as a practice that can materialize temporalities and dimensions and reflect on the encounter between the scales of the human, the nonhuman, and the planet. His artistic process addresses art as a tool to awake new perspectives of knowledge, establishing interdisciplinary links between humanities and natural sciences and throwing a critical look over topics regarding our industrial dystopia while evoking art as a 'mechanism' to activate a deeper discussion on the conflicting relationship between human society and the so-called 'nature'.

His latest contributions in the international artistic circuit were the solo exhibition 'How to Postpone the End' at Helsinki Art Museum (2021); a selected work to 'Fragile Times' at Galeria im Körnerpark Berlin (2020); work selected to the exhibition 'Da Humanidade: 100 artists in the collection' of MAB-Museum of Brazilian Arts (São Paulo, 2020); LABVERDE International Residency in Amazonia (2019); 'Coexistence: Human, Animal, and Nature in Kiasma Collection' at KIASMA (2019).

Currently, the artist is based in Helsinki and works between South America and Europe. His works integrate distinct collections such as the Museum of Brazilian Art, in São Paulo, the Helsinki Art Museum, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, in Helsinki.



How to Postpone the End
at Helsinki Art Museum, 2021
Extended documentation

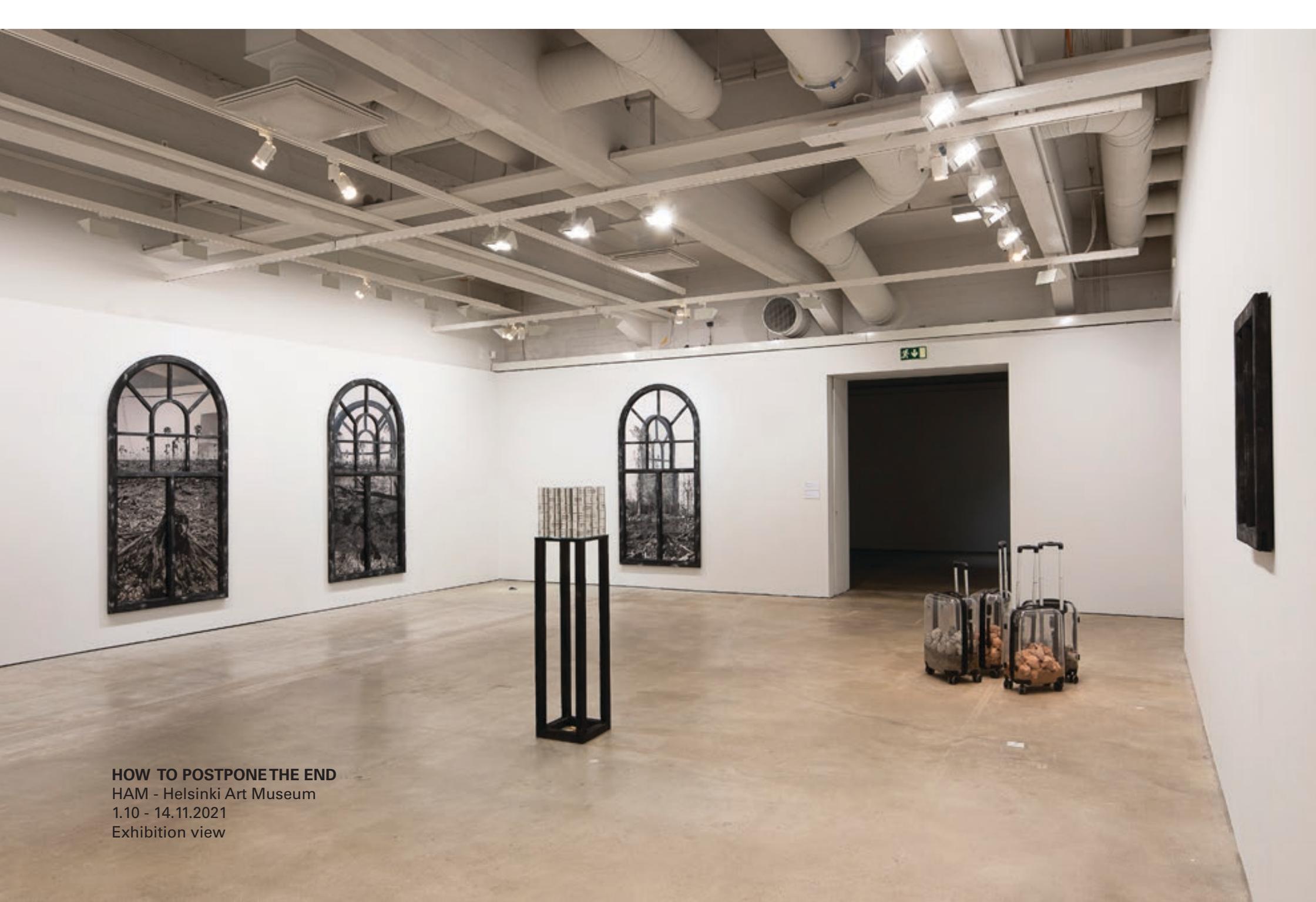


How to Postpone the End

The exhibition 'How to Postpone the End' invites reflections concerning the intrinsic relations between the degradation of ecosystems caused by modern large-scale industrial processes and the long history of exploitation of natural resources, invasion of territories, and the extermination of populations and cultures produced by the still ongoing colonization processes around the world, including in South America where the artist comes from. Through the contrast of concepts such as degradation, development, and ancestrality, the exhibition suggests an encounter among modern and rudimentary technologies and a clash between scientific perspectives and the ancient and grounded 'cosmivision' to mitigate this fearful, disturbed, and impersonal corporeity of the so absent contexts of the present, in the attempt to avoid or at least to postpone the end.

The realization of this exhibition was supported by Arts Promotion Centre Finland, the Finnish Cultural Foundation, and the Brazilian Embassy in Helsinki.

Reflexive Landscapes, 2021
UV print on Neobond, wood
frame and forest ashes
65x48cm



HOW TO POSTPONE THE END
HAM - Helsinki Art Museum
1.10 - 14.11.2021
Exhibition view



Reflexive Landscapes, 2021
UV print on Neobond, wood
frame and forest ashes
230x116cm



Reflexive Landscapes, 2021
UV print on Neobond, wood
frame and forest ashes
230x116cm



HOW TO POSTPONE THE END
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Displacements
Sculpture/installation, 2021
Contaminated soil, terracotta,
porcelain, PVC, and polyurethane.
Dimensions variable



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Soil for Sale
Sculpture/installation, 2021
Contaminated soil, metal cans,
burnt wood plinth and ashed
140x32x32cm



Dead bird
Sculpture, 2021
3D scan printed on ABS



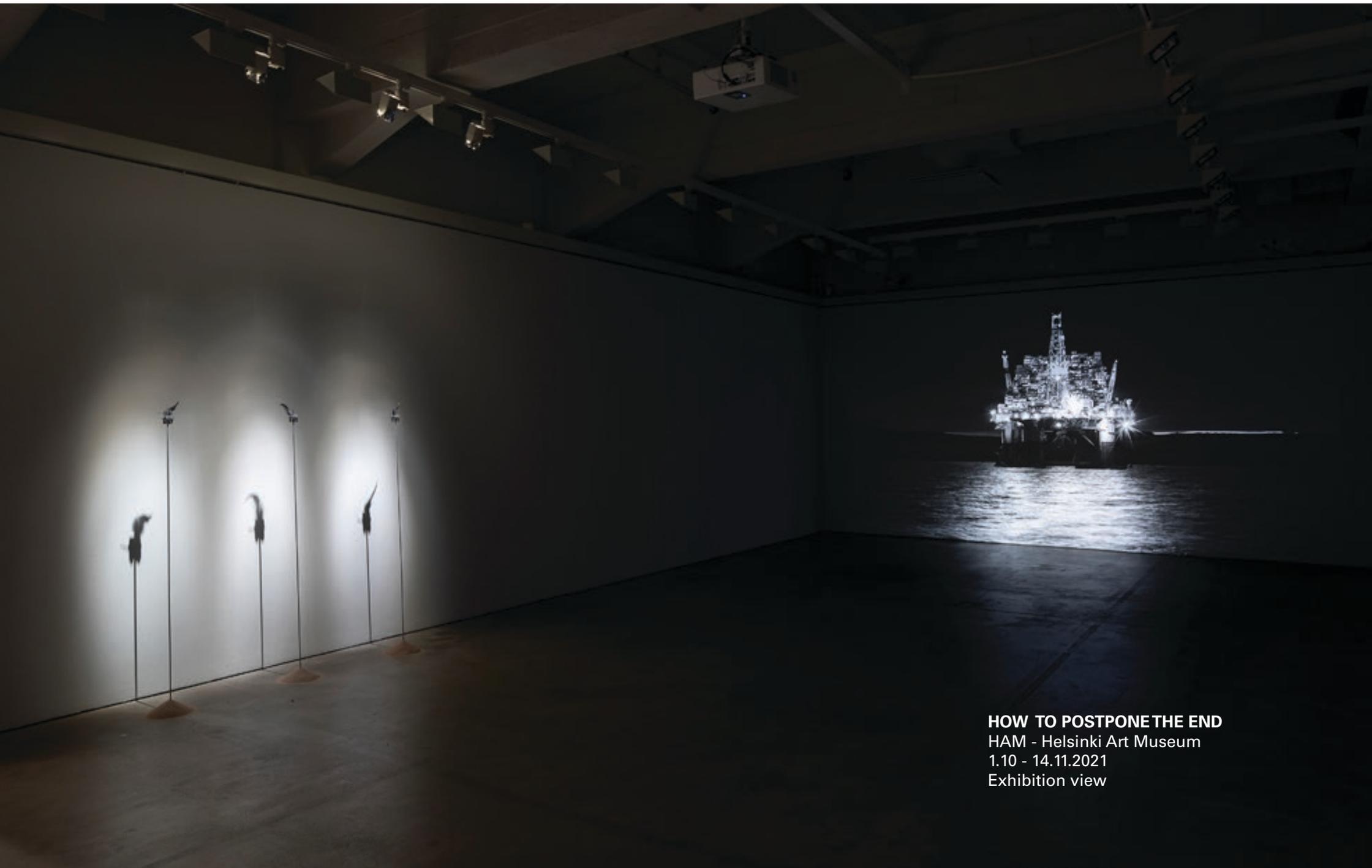
HOW TO POSTPONE THE END
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Future Worships

Sculpture/installation 2021

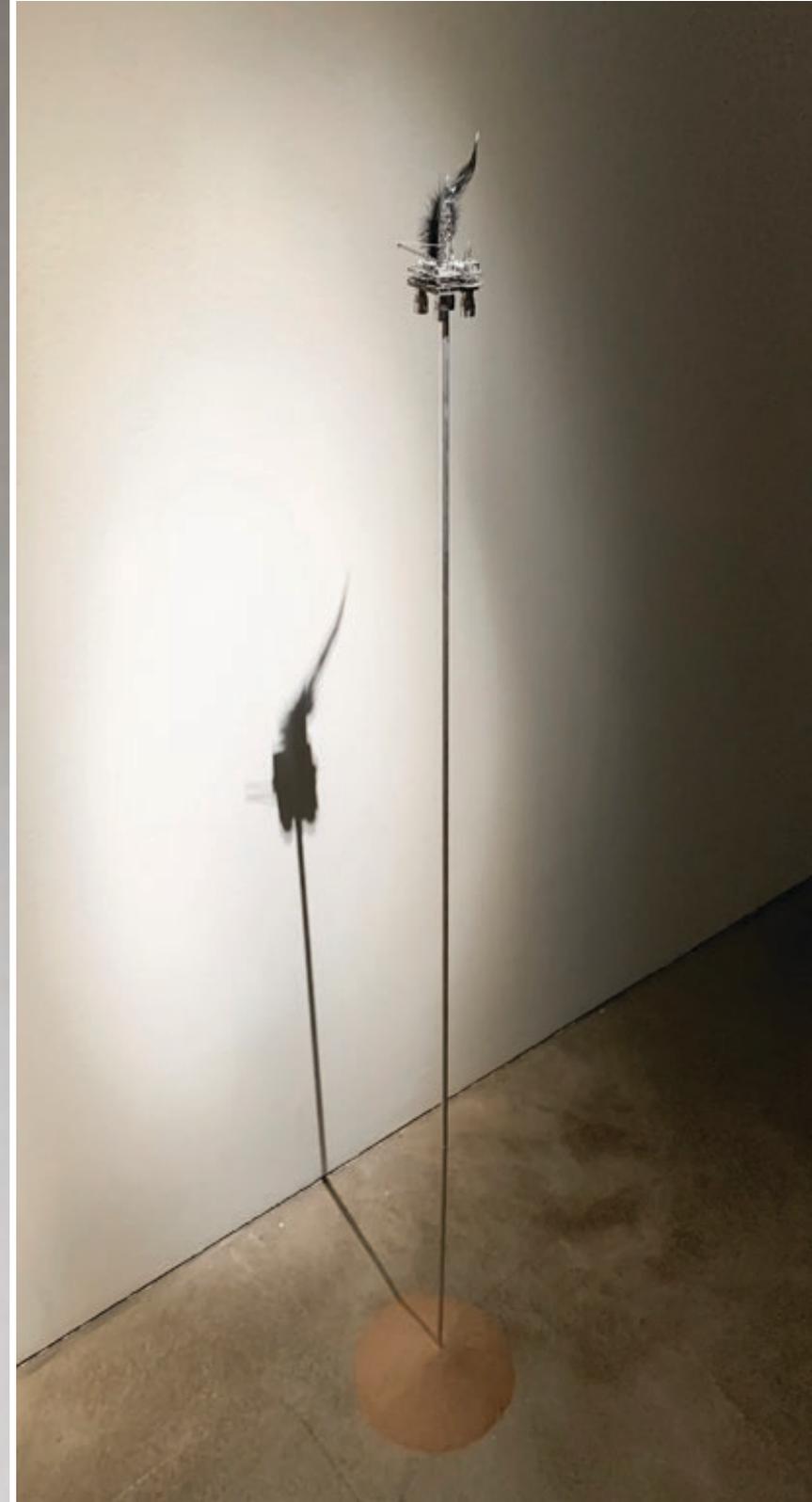
Bamboo, wood, asphalt, glass, steel, concrete, polyurethane, charcoal, porcelain, marble, wax, leather, latex, engine oil, nickel, gold, hemp fiber, PVC, satin, obsidian stone, salt, beans, sand, petroleum, acrylic, and automotive paint. 70x55x40cm



HOW TO POSTPONE THE END
HAM - Helsinki Art Museum
1.10 - 14.11.2021
Exhibition view



Platforms
Installation, 2021
Aluminum and sand
155x5x5cm



Favela Offshore, 2019

The video installation recreates an originally steady landscape picture of an offshore platform with the superposition of a favela image. Through video edition processing, the elements in the landscape gained motion to connect both structures over a surrealistic fictional-reality.

The clash provoked by overlapping the two architectonic structures shed light on the contradictions carried by the industrial society's large scale production systems, which resonate in the physical and conceptual manifestations of the globalized market that create enormous social gaps. The work is presented as an immersive high definition "picture-with motion" video installation.

Video documentation: <https://vimeo.com/318078454>

Favela Offshore

Video-projection, 2019
10 minutes duration (loop)
Stereo





Favela Offshore #2
Video/audio installation, 2021



Broken heart
Sculpture, 2021
Porcelain, glass, oil
and electromechanics
12x12x30cm

Archaeology of the Anthropocene
2014-2017

Eclipse, 2017

An eclipse is an astronomical event that occurs when an astronomical object is temporarily obscured, either by passing into the shadow of another body or by having another body pass between it and the viewer. An eclipse occurs during a syzygy, which is a straight-line configuration of three celestial bodies in a gravitational system.

Solar eclipses have caused fear, inspired curiosity, and have been associated with myths, legends, and superstitions throughout history. Even today, an eclipse of the Sun is considered a bad omen in many cultures. This piece recreates the astronomic event through the contrast of light and oil. The two elements are very present in contemporary life, opposite forces dividing the horizon for the development of society. A constant confront between belief and knowledge which drives men out from light to darkness and back.

The work was part of the research *Archaeology of the Anthropocene*, exhibited in 2017 in a show with the same title and now integrates Kiasma collection in Helsinki-FI.

Video documentation: <https://vimeo.com/204401809>

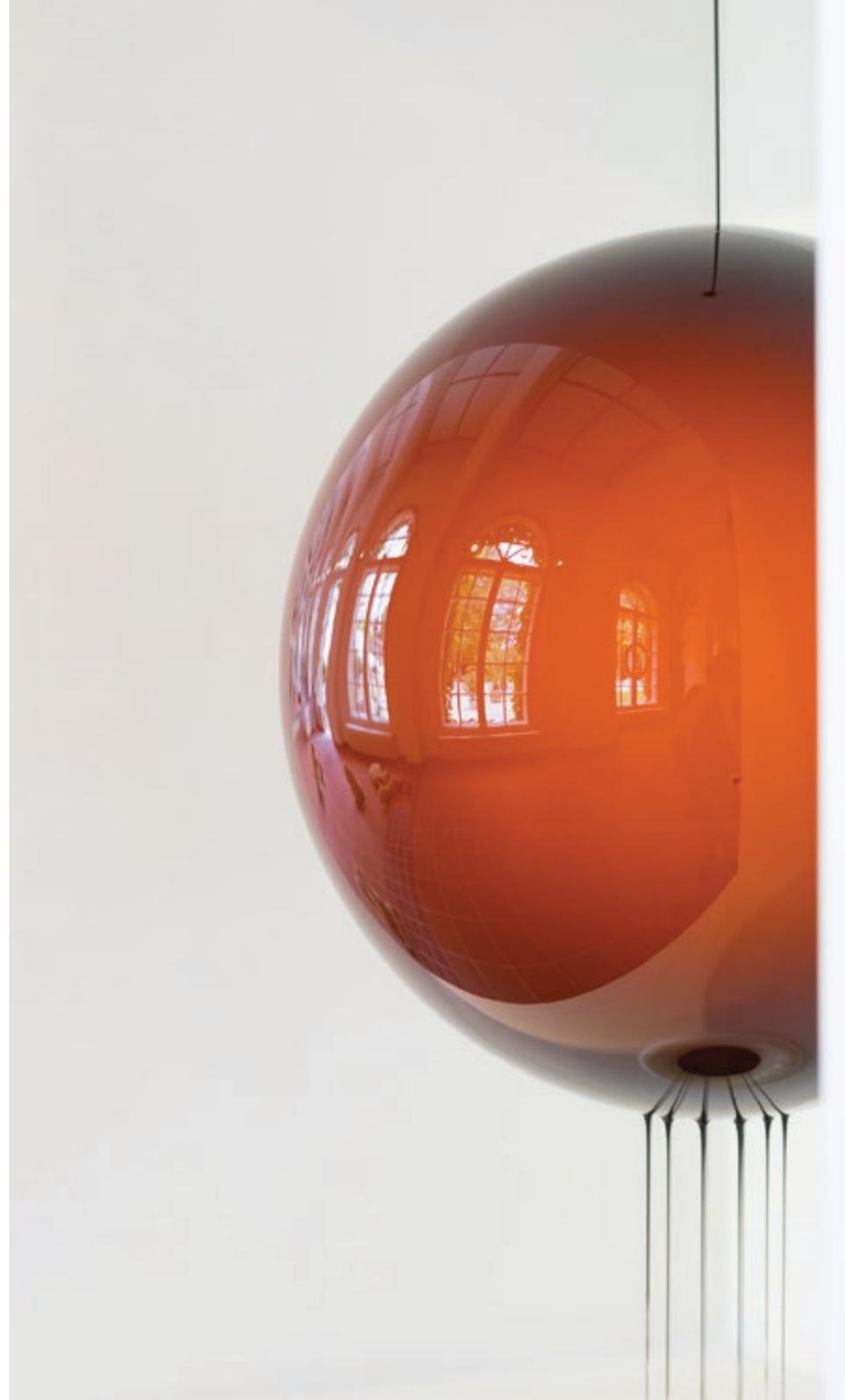
Eclipse (Detail)

Sculpture, 2017-2020
Wood, lamp bulb, oil
and electro-mechanics
63 x 22 x 63cm
(Kiasma collection)



Eclipse

Sculpture, 2017-2020
Wood, lamp bulb, oil
and electro-mechanics
100 x 100 x 40cm





Eclipse

Sculpture, 2017-2020
Wood, lamp bulb, oil
and electro-mechanics
100 x 100 x 40cm



Plagues, 2017

The teeth are the primal basic tool for surviving, responsible for the first stage of 'breaking' natural substrate into the energy that sustains the body. More than a forensic tool to archaeology, there are spiritual levels in the signification of the teeth, related to the connection between interior and exterior, as the mechanism to crush the elements that nourish the body, and therefore, also nourishes the soul.

The work is made from original molds taken from real indigenous individuals back in 1971 when a group of anthropologists made an expedition to Brazilian Amazonia to investigate the physiological particularities of this genetically isolated society.

The work calls our attention for the process of squeezing, compression, constriction, and marginalization of indigenous societies, our only link with the ancient past when human society actually intertwined with the 'natural' environment. Currently, the usual relations between 'modern' and indigenous societies are mostly based on oppression and destruction of their land and culture for the exploitation of territory and resources, usually treating them as plagues that should be exterminated.

Plagues

Sculpture, 2017

Mixed media

8x10x15cm



Plagues
Sculpture, 2017
Mixed media
8x10x15cm (each)

Ode to Anthropocene, 2016

This work produces a system with a continuous feedback loop of dense and reflexive dark fluid over a structure that resembles a large-size hourglass. The external, fine, static-looking layer, which is actually in constant motion around the structure, creates a solid-fluid object.

The oil layer streaming over the structure alludes to the depository stratigraphical layers that science had as the grounds to cast the concept of Anthropocene, which beyond the new geological paradigm invites us to reflect on what it means to 'be born in an already contaminated world'. The concept was cast in the same year in which Zygmunt Bauman cast the concept of liquid-modernity, metaphorically referring to the transition from a solid to a fluid-structure of the structures that are pillars of modern society.

According to the author, solids have clear spatial dimensions while fluids do not possess any specific form and cannot hold their shape. Solids cancel time while for liquids, by contrast, it is the flow of time that matters, not the space they happen to occupy, once they take this space 'only for a moment'.

Video documentation:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zPF9wDFsM4&feature=emb_logo

Ode to Anthropocene

Sculpture, 2016

Oil, steel and electro-mechanics

200x100cm diam





Ode to Anthropocene

Sculpture, 2016

Oil, steel and electro-mechanics

200cm x 100cm diameter



All Well, 2017

The well one of the earliest man-made structures dating from the Neolithic. This kind of construction seems to date from the times of adoption of a series of behaviors common to the people of a given region, including the widespread of farming, animal keeping and the use of metal tools. Thus, the well can be considered one of the technological innovations responsible for the development of human society as we know it today.

Beyond its historic, social, and constructive aspects, a well brings within itself both strong sculptural and conceptual meaning. Its building techniques used at the same time two very traditional sculpture related techniques: extraction (of the ground) and adding (of bricks and cement).

All Well

Installation, 2017

Bricks, steel and petroleum

125x125x100cm



All Well

Sculpture, 2017

Bricks, steel and petroleum

125x125x100cm

*Exhibition view of Archaeologies of the
Anthropocene - Helsinki, 2017*



All Well
Sculpture, 2017
Bricks, steel and
petroleum
80 x 106 x 106 cm

Provoked Archaeologies
2019-2020

Re-Actions, 2019

'Re-actions' is a photography series reaching spaces, objects, and materials, found in areas affected by industrial activities, urban growth, and other events that put a mark in history and shaped those landscapes. These events somehow produced ruins, debris, and unique objects through the combination of the action of the elements over human manufactures, including the building and demolishing of structures. Once incorporated and transformed by the action of the climate and time, these once-structures are now transfigured from simple object-residues into artifacts that, beyond mere debris and remains, "portray and manifest the consummated revolt of nature".



Re-Actions

Digital photography, 2019

Metallic paper photo print

100x70cm



ReActions

Felipe de Ávila Franco

Reactions is a series of digital photographs that explore the relationship between nature and human-made objects. The images are presented as metallic paper photo prints, which give them a unique, almost tactile quality. The series is a reflection on the way we interact with the world around us, and how our actions can have a lasting impact on the environment.

Re-Actions
Digital photography, 2019
Metallic paper photo print
100x70cm



Provoked Archaeologies #2

Installation, 2019

Excavated soil in the Amazonia rainforest,

wood sticks and sisal rope

Photo documentation 180x90cm

Object 50x50x50cm



Provoked Archaeologies #2

Excavating the soil in the search for the constitution of the past and its extra-material connection with the present suggests a series of confrontations between human and geologic temporality scales. The action of excavating to investigate in order to reveal, protect and preserve what unites present and past, supplying history with evidence, exposes the dichotomy of an invasive action which at the same time disrupts with the integrity of time and space, aggressively affecting that hidden reality and manifesting an antithesis of the principles of preservation and protection.

This approach was carried out in a reservation area of the Amazonian rainforest's and investigated through principles similar to those existing in an archaeological excavation, the soil as an essential artistic materiality. The contrast between the geometrically shaped proportions of the precisely made excavation confronts the misshapen pile of soil exposed in a careless and urgent way. In addition, the presence of an improvised ladder made with branches and sisal rope emerging from the hole, suggests an absent presence, subverting the narrative of an excavation made from outside in or inside out. The subject of that excavation remains uncertain, as well as if it was actually dug out or will still be buried, and beyond, whether who made it, emerged or escaped through it.

Provoked Archaeologies #2

Sculpture/Object, 2019

Excavated soil in the Amazonia rainforest

Object 50x50x50cm

Video documentation





Provoked Archaeologies #2
Installation, 2019
Excavated soil in the Amazonia rainforest,
Object 50x50x50cm

Features in display

Prosaic' objects become signs of history, which have to be deciphered. So the poet becomes not only a naturalist or an archaeologist, excavating the fossils and unpacking their poetic potential, he also becomes a kind of symptomatologist, delving into the dark underside or the unconscious of a society to decipher the messages engraved in the very flesh of ordinary things. (The Aesthetic Revolution and its Outcomes - Jacques Ranciere)

The works are composed of residual materials gathered and produced between 2016 and 2021 in different regions of South America and Northern Europe at areas reported as contaminated by large-scale industrial activity areas or affected by misguided disposal of constructive debris.



Features in display

Series of objects, 2019-2020

Residues collected from contaminated areas, driftwood, ceramics, bones, asbestos, iron, concrete cast, plaster, and glass.

16x11x5cm



Features in display

Series of objects, 2019-2020

Residues collected from contaminated areas, driftwood, ceramics, bones, asbestos, iron, concrete cast, plaster, and glass.

16x11x5cm

The last man on Earth

The work is inspired by the book *Last and First Men*, a scientific novel written in 1930 by the British writer Olaf Stapledon. The book describes the Earth two billion years ahead of us when a future race of humans is on the verge of extinction. The book describes that almost all that remains in the world are solitary and surreal concrete monuments, transmitting their message to the desert, witnessing the collision between notions of time, history, and oblivion.

The last man on Earth

Sculpture/object, 2019

Concrete and dust collected from urban sites.

32x38x45cm





The last man on Earth

Sculpture/object, 2019

Concrete and dust collected from urban sites.

32x38x45cm

**www.felipedeavila.com
studio.felipedavila@gmail.com**

Felipe de Ávila Franco - 1982
Brazil/Finland