

ALTERNATOR

centre for contemporary art

where phantoms meet Interpretive Essay by Emma Richards

The initial sight is perplexing: *where phantoms meet* consists of two substantial and authentic looking boulders that perform a carefully choreographed sequence of movements around the gallery space, responding to the movements and actions of its counterpart. Programmed to “dance” carefully around each other, the boulders (Ike and Obelix) are masterminded on top of mechanics that allow them the fluidity and elegance similar to that of carefully crafted dancing partners.

The mechanics that the boulders are crafted upon are designed to allow for movements that are both extended and momentary, as well as curved and straight. The authenticity of the exterior in tandem with the gentle hum of their engines provoked me to reimagine the significant relationship between technology and the natural world.

Is there anything that is sacred within nature anymore?

where phantoms meet presents a dilemma to its audience. We inhabit a world that is rich with nature and life, but our inventions and technology have continuously ingrained itself within our society. Whether it be positive or negative, that’s for the audience to decide.

One may perceive the exhibition to display a loss of the natural world with technology overwhelming our world, but alternatively technology has developed to allow for our species to sustain on

our planet for so long. Humans were not imperative to the establishment of the natural world, but we have always been a necessity for the development of technology.

We are surrounded by the natural world, and yet we have become dependent on technology to sustain and survive. This has led to a 21st century development on the definition of what is natural which is greatly different than 100 years ago, when technology wasn’t nearly as integrated into our lives as it now. The idea of what is natural can be symbiotic to our personal understanding of what is art, and the value that each is subjective. We conceive an idea of what is considered natural as an interpretation by each individual.

As an individual born in the nineties, my idea of technology coupled with nature is inherent and immanent. Nature and technology has developed into a mutually beneficial relationship; they are reliant on one another to sustain in our current world.

The idea of what is natural has gradually shifted from a literal explanation to a spectrum of different understandings in relationship to a progressively more technological society. A discussion emerges in the exhibit that focuses not only on the importance of modern technology within nature and the discourse between the two, but also on the value in which they hold together.



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