

ARTSY

## Artist Eben Goff Exposes Humankind's Rampant Degradation of the Environment

ARTSY EDITORIAL

JULY 28, 2015



For his second solo exhibition at L.A.'s Diane Rosenstein, the multidisciplinary artist Eben Goff expands upon the themes that drive his work: humankind's degradation of the environment, the visual power of elemental materials and abstraction, and the resonances between natural and manmade forms. He conveys such weighty considerations with a distinct visual economy and sense of elegance. But while his new photographs, wall reliefs, and sculptures are striking in their understated, formal beauty, they also expose some troubling truths.

Titled "Eben Goff: Inclusions," the exhibition showcases three distinct series. Among them are a set of sculptures aided by nature—and our pollution of it. They start simply, one as an open-sided aluminum triangle, and two as aluminum poles. Goff takes these shapes to the L.A. River, partially submerges them beneath its rushing waters, and anchors them in place. Here his work ends and nature's begins. Left in the river for a set amount of time, these metallic obstructions catch the copious debris and aquatic plants choking its waters. They emerge wrapped in thick accumulations of trash and plant matter. When encountered in the setting of an art gallery, it is disturbing to discover the source of these sculptural augmentations, and that we are at fault for making these works possible.



Nearby, Goff presents the most recent chapter in the ongoing project that has occupied him for the past decade. Titled *The Butte Speculator* (2015), it consists of photo documentation of a performance he undertook in Butte, Montana, as well as its central prop, a hollowed-out wooden arc on a wheeled platform. In the photographs, we see the arc's graceful shape set against the austere beauty of Butte. His presentation reads as an aesthetic exercise, evoking the formal language of Modernism and Minimalism. And yet there is more than meets the eye here, too. This work is set not in unspoiled wilderness, but near the copper mining operations that have made this landscape toxic—another heavily polluted environment, revealed in Goff's dangerously beautiful art.

— Karen Kedmey