



NAUGHTEN PROFILE



Ereozoic

“Biologist E. O. Wilson has suggested that we are now entering the Earth’s Ereozoic period, which he characterises as an age of loneliness following mass extinctions caused by human activity. In contrast with the more commonly used term Anthropocene (or ‘age of man’), Wilson’s classification addresses the history we are living through from a broader ecological perspective, to recognise humanity’s essential and inextricable connectedness with other forms of life on the planet.

In these pictures, Naughten explores the history of this complex relationship, examining how we have attempted to contain nature in both physical structures and cognitive frameworks. Our image of nature is so often partial, refusing to engage with the environment’s overwhelming power and intricacy whilst erasing traces of human culpability from the narrative of our dwindling natural habitat.”

– Lucy Fleming-Brown

The series is profoundly important for me as it’s my first body of work as an activist, trying to raise awareness of the biodiversity crisis and mass extinctions caused by human activity. It’s extraordinarily difficult to get the message across but couldn’t be more urgent or pressing. It’s been very well received which is encouraging but I feel there’s a lot more work to be done. It’s going to be a monumental battle trying to save the remaining wildlife from extinction.

The idea came to me during a visit to the Field Museum in Chicago which was full to capacity but happened to be showing an exhibition on extinction without a single person inside. I realised the work would have to be bold and colourful in order to attract people’s attention in the first instance, and then I could use the work as a platform to discuss the unpalatable facts, and hopefully raise awareness of the mass extinctions unfolding. It has worked to an extent, certainly in as much as the work is popular. I don’t know how much I learned during the process of making the work but my ideas have been confirmed, and I am also heartened to know that there’s a massive increase of conservation awareness and work being done, both in the field and by other artists and journalists. Fight the power!

The images are designed to be surreal and utopian but absolutely not representative of reality. The future does have the potential to be extremely dystopian but it seems that awareness of the gravity of the situation is growing dramatically so I am not giving up hope just yet.

Profile

Jim Naughten

Bio

Jim Naughten is a photographic artist currently exploring themes including biodiversity loss, historical subject matter and natural history. He was awarded a painting scholarship to Lancing College and later studied photography at the Arts Institute of Bournemouth (both in the UK). Naughten’s work has been widely featured in exhibitions across Europe and the US and includes a solo show at the Wellcome Collection and Imperial War Museum and group shows at the Royal Academy of Art and National Portrait Galleries in London. His first series, ‘Re-enactors’, was published as a monograph in 2009 (Hotshoe Books), his second, ‘Hereros’, was published by Merrell in March 2013. Stereoscopic books *Animal Kingdom* and *Human Anatomy* were published by Prestel in 2016 and 2017. *Mountains of Kong* was published in 2018 and *Ereozoic* in 2022.

Images courtesy of the artist and Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery © Jim Naughten

Jim Naughten is represented by Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery

First: *Gorilla*, 2021
Right: *Bear*, 2021
Next: *Orangutans*, 2021



