

Rectangle

NICOLAS SASSOON

THE PROPHETS

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Digital animation, Lava rocks, LCD panels, media players, ABS, rubber
dimensions variables

Text by Nora O Murchú, Artistic director of transmediale

The making of geological strata — the very ground beneath our feet — is an essential component of our contemporary living conditions. From minerals that form microprocessors in our smartphones to machine-spun threads of sand that allow people to follow you on Instagram [1], earth formations and its histories of mineralisation and energy are connected to our everyday. Our digital culture is completely dependant on the geological earth, despite the fallacy that media is immaterial, invisible or in the cloud. Without the materials and resources gathered from geological depths, our technologies would cease to function. Yet despite this transformation of nature into culture, the lasting legacy of Silicon Valley will leave a geological afterglow of concentrated toxins in our soils and water, and e-waste and plastics that will outlive us.

Exploring this resource extraction and environmental impact required for us to use our devices to live networked lives, Sassoon's *The Prophets* asks us to think about rocks and other planetary matter as media and lively forces communicating with us across time. In his newest series of work, Sassoon recounts a partial history of our relation with matter — a speculative geology of our digital condition. Here Sassoon brings together volcanically produced pumice stones into conversation with electronic hardware and LCD screens. Seemingly frozen in time, these pumice stones are unstructured and irregular, full of lobes, cracks, crevasses and voids. Together with vestiges of our digital technology gained from rare earth metals, Sassoon has produced new assemblages that juxtapose human and geological time.

Rooted in volcanological processes, *The Prophets* speak to the possible connections between organic and inorganic materials. The minimal aesthetic elaborates an implicit understanding of sensation and perception that pertains to the connection between technology and its origins. Veering between documentation, visualization and aesthetic treatment, *The Prophets* connects us to the geological forces usually omitted from our view of technology, and invites us to re-examine our relationship to the natural world.

[1] Parikka, Jussi. *Geology of Media*. University of Minnesota Press, 2015