

Dana Fritz: *Terraria Gigantica*
Collection CAE1409

Introduction/Abstract

Terraria Gigantica: The World Under Glass explores the world's largest enclosed landscapes as possible impossibilities: Biosphere 2's ocean in the Arizona desert, the Henry Doorly Zoo's desert in the Great Plains of Nebraska, and Eden Project's verdant rain forest in Cornwall, England. Materials include three photographs (one from each site), project information, exhibition ephemera, a book dummy, and press materials.

Biographical Note: Dana Fritz

Dana Fritz is a Professor in the Department of Art & Art History at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She holds a BFA from Kansas City Art Institute and an MFA from Arizona State University. Her honors include an Arizona Commission on the Arts Fellowship, a Rotary Foundation Group Study Exchange to Japan, the 2013 Society for Photographic Education Iamemaker Award and Juror's Awards in national exhibitions. University of Nebraska-Lincoln has awarded several grants from the Office of Research and the Hixson-Lied Endowment that have supported her photographic projects in Europe and Japan. Fritz's work has been exhibited in over 60 venues in the last decade including the Center for Photography at Woodstock, the Houston Center for Photography, Florida State University Museum of Fine Arts, the Griffin Museum of Photography and the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art as well as Château de Villandry in France, Xi'an Jiaotong University Art Museum in China and Toyota Municipal Museum of Art in Japan. Her portfolios *Garden Views* and *Terraria Gigantica* were selected for the Museum of Contemporary Photography's Midwest Photographers Project from 2004-06 and 2008-12 respectively. She has been awarded artist residencies at three locations known for their significant cultural histories and gardens or landscapes: Villa Montalvo in Saratoga, CA; Château de Rochefort-en-Terre in Brittany, France; and Biosphere 2 where she made photographs for *Terraria Gigantica: the World Under Glass*.

Scope and Content

Terraria Gigantica: The World Under Glass explores the world's largest enclosed landscapes as possible impossibilities: Biosphere 2's ocean in the Arizona desert, the Henry Doorly Zoo's desert in the Great Plains of Nebraska, and Eden Project's verdant rain forest in Cornwall, England. These vivaria are enclosed environments where plants are grown amidst carefully constructed representations of the natural world to entertain visiting tourists. At the same time, however, they support scientific observation and research on the plants and animals housed under these natural conditions. But these 'natural conditions' require human control of temperature, humidity, irrigation, insects, and weeds to cultivate otherwise impossible environments and species. Taken together, these architectural and engineering marvels stand as working symbols of our current and complex relationship with the natural world.

Built in the late 1980s to research possible space colonization, Biosphere 2 was designed as an airtight replica of the Earth's environment. The glass and metal-framed structure contains a tropical rain forest, mangrove wetlands, a fog desert, savannah grassland, and an ocean with a coral reef. No longer airtight, it is repurposed by the University of Arizona for research and education about sustaining our planet Earth, 'Biosphere 1,' through study of water, climate, and energy. The Henry Doorly Zoo supports both education and research on a campus with the largest indoor jungle in the United States and the largest indoor desert in the world. Here, the illusionism of these immersive environments also incorporates the display of the animals that live there. The Eden Project was built with a mission to educate about environmental conservation and sustainability. It currently houses over 1 million plants in the world's largest conservatory and models sustainable practices in construction, waste reduction, and resource management.

While the technical and aesthetic demands of these varying missions informed the physical design of these spaces, the required juxtapositions of natural and artificial elements also generate unintentionally striking visual paradoxes that can go unnoticed. The artist looks in the corners of the carefully constructed exhibits, away from the crowds of visitors, for the places where the illusion gives way. In these margins, these liminal spaces, the natural and the artificial sometimes meet, overlap, and bleed together, or they collide, resist, and contrast with one another. The visual richness of these small details leads to big questions about what it means to create and contain landscapes. They ask us to think about our interactions with and attitudes about the natural world. They ask us to consider whether these spaces supplement or replace the natural world. They ask us to reflect on the distinction between the natural and the artificial. Under the glass, the artist frames these views and invite contemplation of nature's future.

Materials include three photographs (one from each site), project information, exhibition ephemera, a book dummy, and press materials.

Dates

2007 – 2014

Quantity / Extent

.25 cubic feet

Language

English

Arrangement

Dana Fritz: Terraria Gigantica is organized into three folders.

Related Archive Collections

CAE1214: Judy Natal: Future Perfect

Related Publications

Berman, Michael. *Grasslands/Separating Species*. Santa Fe, NM: Radius Books, 2009.

Container Listing:**CAE1409: Folders 1-3, 2007 – 2014****CAE Box 29**

- 1 Artist and Biosphere Residency Information, 2007 – 2014
- 2 Project Information and Outcomes, 2011 – 2014
- 3 Exhibition Ephemera and Press Materials, 2008 – 2013

CAE1409: Additional Materials

CAE S-Box 13

- 2#6 *Painted Leaves and Dripping Moss, Lied Jungle, 2007*
- 2#7 *Green Ductwork, Eden Project, 2007*
- 2#8 *Rain Forest Back Room, Biosphere 2, 2007*