



MICHAEL BELMORE

SOMEWHERE BETWEEN TWO STATES OF MATTER

DECEMBER 13, 2018 – FEBRUARY 9, 2019

SOMEWHERE BETWEEN TWO STATES OF MATTER

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Curated by Natalia Lebedinskaia

EXHIBITION: DECEMBER 13, 2018 – FEBRUARY 9, 2019

OPENING RECEPTION: DECEMBER 13, 7:30PM



“Stone once liquid, once fire, ebbed and flowed
like raging water beneath the islands from
which we build our lives.” - Michael Belmore

COVER: ABOVE: Michael Belmore, *Somewhere Between Two States of Matter* (detail), Glass, steel, stone, 2017

OPPOSITE PAGE: Michael Belmore, *Standing Stone 1* (detail), Gouache on paper, copper leaf, 2017



Michael Belmore's work questions what it means when human time encounters the time and motion of stone. *Somewhere Between the Two States of Matter* focuses on the moment when human activity transforms a supposedly inanimate object; in the act of choosing to pick up and throw a stone, it becomes a weapon. The choice becomes a standoff between two states of matter.

ABOVE: Michael Belmore, *Somewhere Between Two States of Matter* (detail), Glass, steel, stone, 2017

The name of the exhibition refers to the definition of glass, which is neither liquid nor solid. Glass flows. The rate of its movement is so gradual that it can continue to function as if it is solid. Over time, however, very old windows pool and bulge, subject to a process that remains imperceptible to the human eye. Stone was once liquid too, shifting beneath our feet, spilling from mountains and cracks in the ocean floor. It continues to flow underneath the earth's crust, carrying continents on its currents. We are in awe when we see it, as if watching the earth form. Its motion freezes human time, like in Pompeii, and makes solid ground. The act of transformation of liquid into solid is the base for creation.

According to Belmore, the two substances—glass and stone—exist in a state of envy and tension. Glass desires to be hard like stone, while stone yearns for its state of flow. Stone shatters glass, and shattered glass commands attention. Precious stone crystals are marvelled to be clear like glass. The two materials are never far off from one another: glass is made from sand, a material that was once stone. Heat melts and transforms sand to come together once again into a state that is at once neither liquid nor solid. Formation of glass feels like alchemy. It requires such extreme heat that instances of its natural occurrence are extremely rare, such as



following the heat of nuclear testing. During the Cold War, researchers found areas of the Arizona desert that were turned to glass from melted sand—new bodies of water that move so slowly that their currents are invisible.

Belmore's work speaks to how materials are never inanimate; how they move through space; how they perform work, shapeshift, and morph. Through his work, we come closer to understanding the time of stone. Unlike the Western understanding of linear time, the concept of deep time is marked by its cyclicity. In deep time, mountains rise and erode, continents move through the oceans to bump up against each other and separate again, boulders tumble downstream becoming pebbles and sand, and then stone once again. Ancient life becomes oil and turns to precious stones. Within these mechanisms, human time and labour feels momentary and insignificant. It moves so quickly that the time of stone stands still. The incommensurability between geological time and human time has allowed for centuries of exploitation of seemingly infinite natural resources. Only recently has Western thought allowed for a meeting point between human and geological time: in the wake of ecological devastation and the irreversible imprint of human activity on the time of stone, we have dubbed the current epoch the Anthropocene.

ABOVE: Michael Belmore, *Standing Stone 1*, Gouache on paper, copper leaf, 2017



In *Between the Two States of Matter*, Belmore confronts us with a simple choice to throw a stone at a glass shield. The stones are lined up and ready. The piece contains a promise of rebellion, the threat of violence, and a choice. This choice is the moment of transformation of an inanimate object (the stone) into a weapon (a projectile).

Stones of a certain size are not used in public landscaping for the fear that they might incite violence during public protest—a temptation for which they are dubbed riot rocks. One can easily imagine the size of such a stone, fitting into one’s hand and holding a certain weight. It is likely a somewhat smooth stone, easily gripped. It has

been worn down by water and glaciers. It was once liquid. Perhaps it has come into the landscape from another continent, a shard of a foreign mountain. Seven such stones are part of Belmore’s installation. Their trajectories have taken them from their ancient origins into the gallery space. The encounter is not only between the shield and the stone, or the viewer and the work, but rather it is a series of relationships that blur the boundaries between animate and inanimate entities.

In this encounter, agency—defined as capacity to act—is no longer solely in human hands. It is decentered, distributed and porous, existing somewhere between the stone and its rioter. The stone speaks a proposition, the person responds. There is a moment of suspension between action and its consequence. The responsibility is for the potential of violence, linked to the moment in time in which one makes a choice to transform an object. The glass police shields on the wall also make a proposition: they dare the stones. The glass shields are poetic objects, powerful statements about power and powerlessness, about resistance and protection. All the while, we know that the shields are pooling, that their material is in a constant current. The stones stand waiting.

ABOVE: Michael Belmore, *Somewhere Between Two States of Matter*, Glass, steel, stone, 2017



LIST OF WORKS:

Somewhere Between Two States of Matter

Glass, steel, stone, 2017

Standing Stone 1

Gouache on paper, copper leaf, 2017

Standing Stone 2

Gouache on paper, copper leaf, 2017

Standing Stone 3

Gouache on paper, copper leaf, 2017

UP NEXT:

AMY MALBEUF

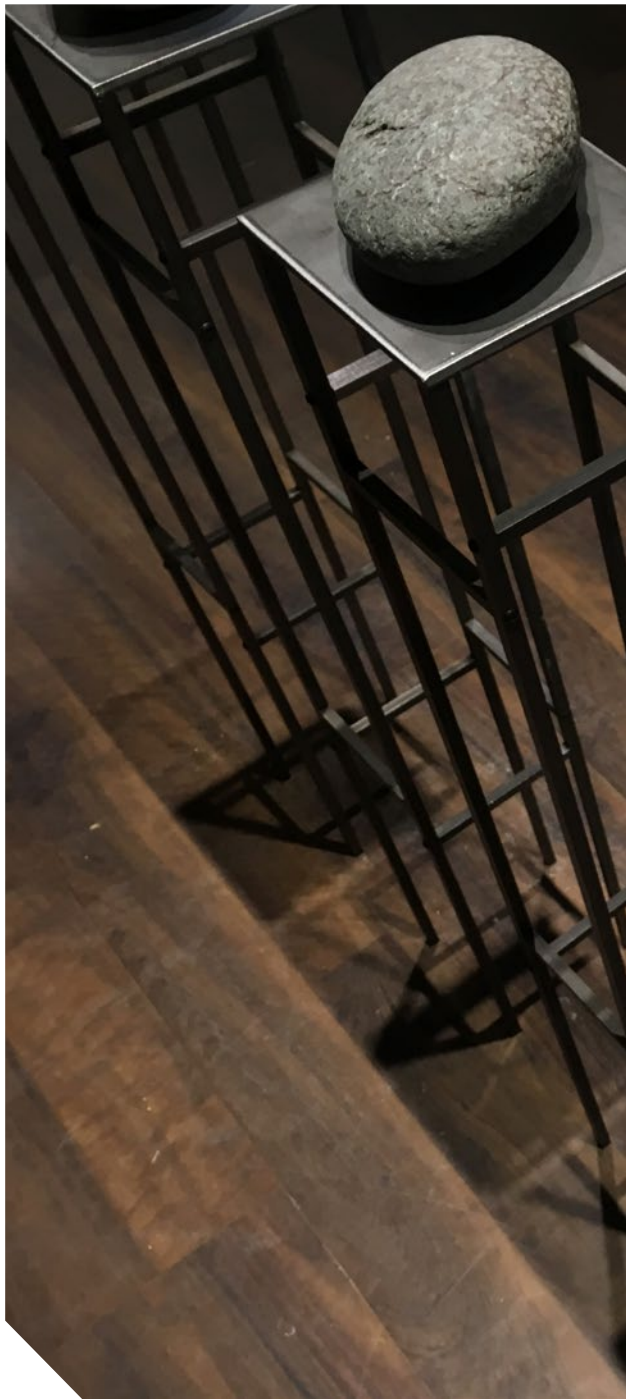
TENSIONS

FEBRUARY 28 – APRIL 20, 2019

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ABOVE: Michael Belmore, *Standing Stone 3*, Gouache on paper, copper leaf, 2017



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MON 4 - 9PM
TUE, WED, FRI 10AM - 5PM
THU 10AM - 9PM
SAT 12 - 5PM SUN CLOSED