

Letter from the Editors

Jamie Allen, Paul Boshears, Marin Abell

In the American vernacular of the 1990's, people actually used to say that things "rocked." "That rocks!" we'd say. The 'we' of our mostly 1990's teenagehoods could never have imagined that 20-something years later, a rather strange un-ironic interest in the literal referent of a pretty stupid exuberant rejoinder would arise. And yet, here we are, and here we go.

This, the "Pitch Drop" issue of the *continent* journal has been, more or less, two years in the making, as we understand time as human beings. On the timescale of your average rock, we're talking about moments, instants, maybe even nanoseconds. The titular genealogy of the issue stems first from an experiment of rather romantic geology originating on the largest of the Oceanian isles ([Pitch drop experiment](#)), and then from a collaborative exhibition and discussion in a subterranean project and gallery space in Copenhagen ([Science Friction Pitch Drop exhibition](#)). This encounter of ideas and people flourished into something of a seismic wave of awarenesses and activities, rippling in through the surface of our proverbial "editors desk." (There is no such desk.) Our activities here are attempts to improve and expand awareness. To address the ways in which our mercurial attentions seems to drift ever-away from the substantive and subtending earthly elements and forces beneath our feet. It turns out that the elephant-earth in this livingroom-universe is getting a fair amount of attention these days by writers and thinkers, creators, artists and researchers alike. Ignoring the geological earth (and, of course, its climate) is symptomatic of a denial of our common interests (to remain) and interactions (to intervene).

We present here a re-inscription of the geological, through the lenses of literature, the arts and philosophy, a humble offering to our globe and fellow terreans. Our unending appreciation and adulation to the people we are featuring in the Pitch Drop issue: Anders Kolle, Jonathan Kemp, Marin Abell, Martin Howse, Jeffrey Cohen, Rosemary Emma Lee, Will Schrimshaw, and Jussi Parikka.

Each article in this issue is accompanied by an 'icon', in this case the image of a mineral species derived by Marin Abell (marinabell.org) from The Mineralogy Database (webmineral.com), a bottom-up cultivation across a range of geomorphological processes — temperature and pressure range diffractions. Some of these crystalline structures grow through rhythmic deposition, some through

turbulent heat, and some through the scratching and scraping of the earth's crust against itself. They embody structures in cooperation that: have common uses, pose human health risks, vary in degrees of radioactivity, and have as yet undiscovered relations to human and nonhuman entities:

1. Barahonaite (Fe) (for the letter from the Editors)
2. Bussyite (Ce) (for the Copenhagen Invitation by Jamie Allen)
3. Chloritic Clays (for Geophilia, or The Love of Stone by Jeffrey J. Cohen)
4. Clinoptilolite (for Pitch Drop by Jonathan Kemp)
5. Eyselite (for Mutating Media Ecologies by Jussi Parikka)
6. Haleniusite (La) (for Ground Control: A Humbling Shift by Marin Abell)
7. Panichiite (for Returned to the Earth by Martin Howse)
8. Pakhomovskiyite (for Darwin's cicadas and lines of life by Anders Kolle)
9. Hillite (for Stack, Frame, Heap by Martin Howse, Jonathan Kemp)
10. Henrymeyerite (for thetenthwatch.com by University of Queensland)
11. Kaolinite (for The Sand Timer by Rosemary Lee)
12. Perroudite (for Notes on Gephonography by Will Scrimshaw)

18th Century debates between Plutonists and Neptunists were more than mere esoteric argumentation between geology nerds, but importantly made for a particular kind of social and intellectual personhood. Where you stood on the matter signified a progressive or regressive worldview. Geological thinking was once a primary mark of what it was to be a thoughtful being, expressed either as the violent scream of rocky topologies birthed from a volcano, or in the quiet shuffling of crystal formations in the ocean. The Pitch Drop issue of continent. essays the drop of a needle into the groove of a revolving and evolving globe. Let's listen.

— Jamie Allen and Paul Boshears with Marin Abell