

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Media Contact**

Voleine Amilcar: 415.321.8687 | [vamilcar@ybca.org](mailto:vamilcar@ybca.org)



**YBCA announces the West Coast debut of *WE ARE THE ASTEROID III (2019)*  
a solar-powered LED public artwork bringing attention to today's ecological crisis  
on view starting December 9, 2019**

**SAN FRANCISCO (December 9, 2019)**—**Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA)** is pleased to present the West Coast debut of [\*\*\*WE ARE THE ASTEROID III \(2019\)\*\*\*](#) by New York-based artist **Justin Brice Guariglia**. The third iteration of a conceptual, text-based public artwork, Guariglia's solar-powered LED highway message board—like one you might find at roadside—alerts viewers to slow down and beware of the dangers ahead. The repurposed machine features what the artist calls “eco-haikus” that arose from a collaboration with the philosopher Timothy Morton, including “WE ARE THE ASTEROID,” “TRIASSIC WEATHER

AHEAD,” and “WARNING: HURRICANE HUMAN.” Through poetry, metaphor, and humor, the work endeavors to draw audiences into lively discussions about the climate crisis.

***WE ARE THE ASTEROID III***'s unveiling coincides with the centennial of the American Geophysical Union (AGU) and its Fall Meeting, the world's largest international Earth and space science conference, to be held at the Moscone Center this year. The work will be on view December 9–13, 2019, outside of the Blue Shield of California Theater at YBCA on 700 Howard Street for the duration of the conference, and then moved to YBCA's 701 Mission Plaza on Monday, December 16, where it will remain on view through spring 2020. ***WE ARE THE ASTEROID III*** is presented as part of YBCA's public art programming and is made possible in part by the Sidney E. Frank Foundation and the Union of Concerned Scientists.

“Responding to the ecological crisis is the moral imperative of our time. At this critical juncture, it's crucial to deploy art as a positive force for social and political change, and to open our minds to new possibilities,” **notes Guariglia**. “My hope is that this public art installation can help broadly raise the public consciousness to think ecologically. Climate change, global warming, and the ecological crisis are the greatest threats human civilization has ever faced, and we cannot delay addressing them any longer.”

***WE ARE THE ASTEROID III*** cycles through a series of nine “eco-haikus.” Morton's metaphysical language around ecological concerns delivered in the form of the everyday traffic sign challenges our notions of what is out of place in our day-to-day environment, juxtaposing the banal with a state of emergency of global proportions.

“At YBCA we are committed to providing a platform for artists grappling with social issues at the local, national, or international levels through our public art program. We see the work of artists like Guariglia playing a critical role in keeping the climate crisis front and center in our daily lives,” **remarks YBCA CEO Deborah Cullinan**. “***WE ARE THE ASTEROID III*** is an example of what can happen when we center artists as provocateurs to spur societal movement. We hope this piece will not only sound the alarm but also start conversations that raise public consciousness around this critical issue.”

**Adds Adrienne Alvord, Western States director of the Union of Concerned Scientists,**  
“Guariglia’s art elegantly captures the point scientists have been making for years—that we are making hugely impactful changes to our climate and have so much to lose if we don’t reduce our emissions drastically and quickly. The Union of Concerned Scientists is excited to support this piece and bring it to San Francisco. We hope it sparks public dialogue on the urgency of acting on climate change, engages residents and visitors, and influences policymakers and local leaders.”

**Eco-haikus featured on the message board:**

WE ARE THE ASTEROID  
WARNING: HURRICANE HUMAN  
TRIASSIC WEATHER AHEAD  
GLOBAL WARMING AT WORK  
GOODBYE ARCTIC ICE  
THERE IS NO A WAY  
NEANDERTHALS ‘R’ US  
DANGER: ANTHROPOCENTRISM  
FOR SYMBIOSIS: REDUCE SPEED NOW

**ABOUT THE ARTIST**

**Justin Brice Guariglia** is a visual and conceptual artist known for his photographic, sculptural, and installation works that explore the relationship between humans and the natural world. Beginning in 2015, Guariglia began flying on earth science missions with NASA to collect raw materials for his artworks. He collaborates with philosophers, poets, scientists, and writers to forge a deeper understanding of our ecological crisis, with the intention of using art as a catalyst for social and political change. Sotheby’s has called Guariglia “one of the most prominent cultural figures working to address climate change.” *REDUCE SPEED NOW!*, Guariglia’s 2019 Somerset House UK commission deploying ten highway message boards in the institution’s neoclassical courtyard, brought together the critical voices of international activists, poets, and philosophers on the ecological crisis. His 2017 solo exhibition at the Norton Museum of Art in West Palm Beach, Florida, debuted work originating from an ongoing series of missions flown with NASA over the glaciers of Greenland. The exhibition traveled to the Fisher Museum of Art in 2018. ***WE ARE THE ASTEROID*** premiered at Storm King, New York, in 2018 as part of the

exhibition *Indicators: Artists on Climate Change*. Iterations of the project have been displayed in Chicago, Houston, and Aspen, as well as various sites across New York in partnership with the Mayor's Office of New York City and the New York City Parks Department. Guariglia is a recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts grant and is a Howard Foundation fellow at Brown University, a Woods Hole Research Center fellow, and an artist in residence at the Anchorage Museum.

**Timothy Morton** is the Rita Shea Guffey Chair in English at Rice University and the author of many books and essays on philosophy, ecology, literature, music, and art, notably *Dark Ecology: For a Logic of Future Coexistence*, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World*, and *The Ecological Thought*. Morton has also written extensively about the literature of Percy Shelley and Mary Shelley, Romanticism, and eco-theory.

###