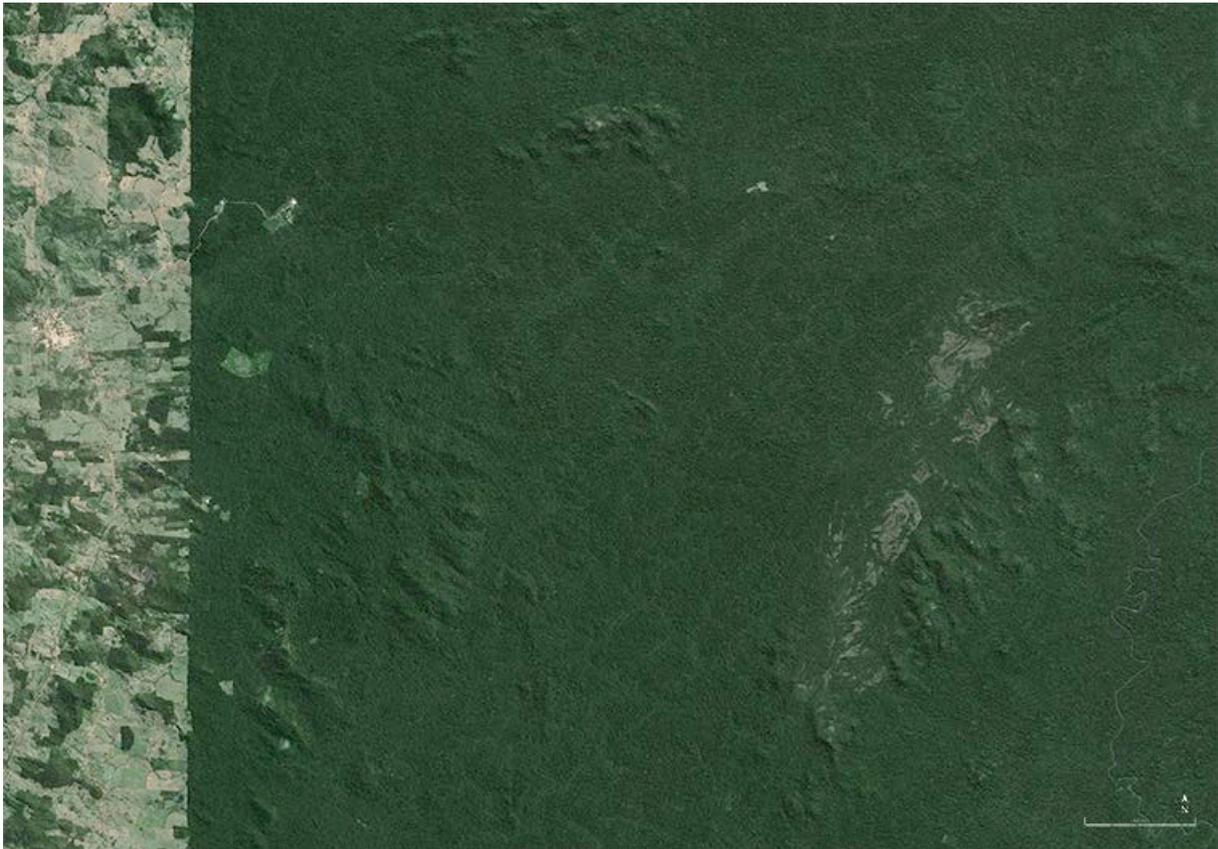


David Weber-Krebs

INTO THE BIG WORLD



CONTACT

Management Ingrid Vranken: ingridvranken@gmail.com

Distribution Bold: helga@boldbxl.be

Credits

Concept, Direction, Text David Weber-Krebs

Performance Katja Dreyer, Noha Ramadan

Sound Design Peter Lenaerts

Light Design Jan Fedinger

Dramaturgy Jonas Rutgeerts

Dramaturgy and Research Marie Urban

Stage Lotte Betting

Advice Lars Kwakkenbos

Production Daria Bubalo

Design Publication Stéphanie Desmadryl

Management Ingrid Vranken

Distribution Bold

With special thanks to: Amsterdams Funds for the Arts, Anne Breure, Niki Hadikoesoemo, Maximilian Haas, Sandra van der Hel, Jan-Philipp Possmann, Terry van Druten, Jean-Baptiste van Zeebroeck, Fridolin Weber-Krebs and Emily Williams.

An Infinite Endings production in co-production with Kaaitheater, STUK and wp Zimmer.

With the support of the Flemish Community, Pianofabriek Kunstenwerkplaats, and Kunstencentrum BUDA.

SHOWS

STUK Kunstencentrum 04, 05.11.2014 (première)

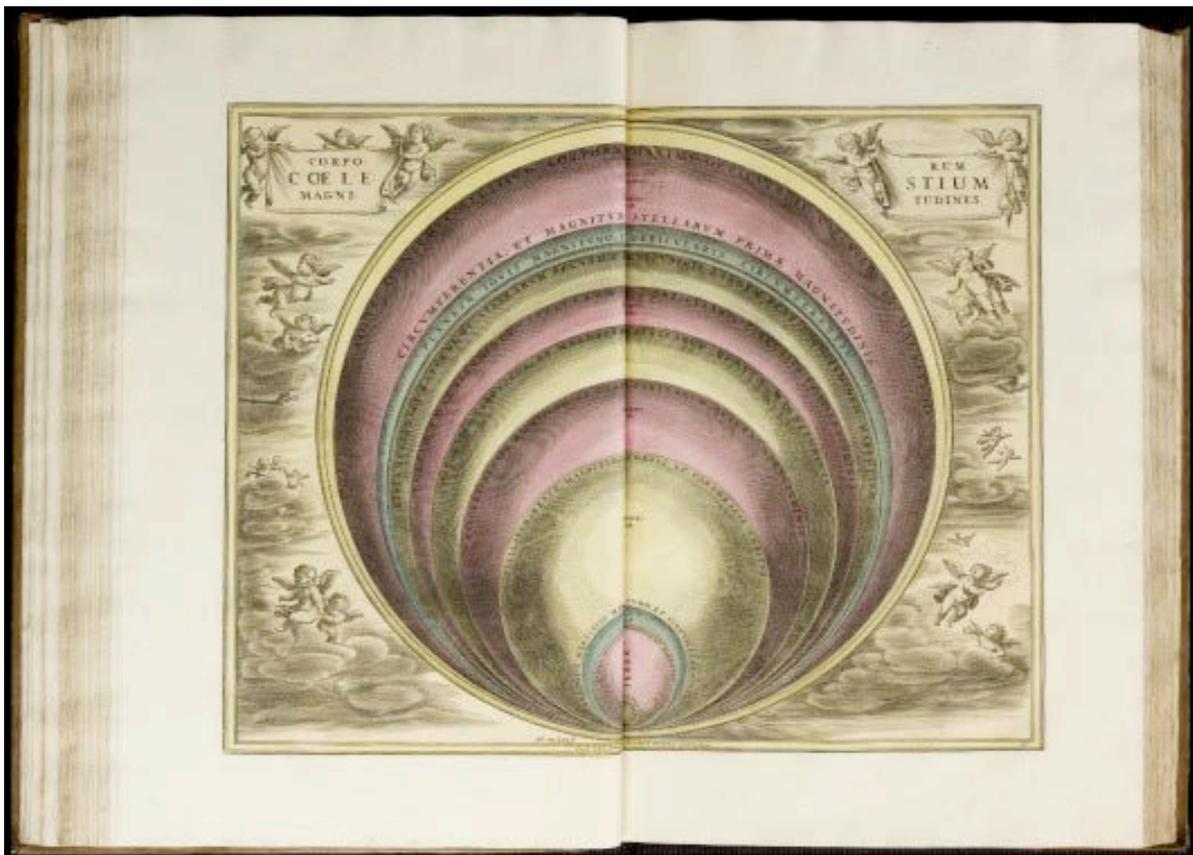
Kaaitheater 10, 11.02.2015

De Brakke Grond 27, 28.02.2015

Synopsis

In *Into the Big World* we experience a world where everything is observed, named, categorised and therefore domesticated. We become acquainted with different species, sub-species, families, genera and taxonomies. We get to know all the plants on the Island of Jamaica, the 24 species of short-tailed crabs in the Red Sea and the hermaphrodite aquatic plant known as water-lily. Gradually however knowledge becomes more complex as the world does not longer present itself as a stable unity but instead as a system where everything is connected to everything.

Into the Big World places the eighteenth century encyclopedic project as the seed of Modernity. A worldview where the world was seen as a whole that needed to be known through all its aspects and conquered; a time away from the obscure dogmas of religion and autocracy towards the lights of knowledge, positive sciences and democracy. Where has this worldview brought us? Can we still observe the world from a distance, when we are its main agents of transformation?



Project

Natural history is nothing more than the nomination of the visible. Hence its apparent simplicity, and that air of naïveté it has from a distance, so simple does it appear and so obviously imposed by things themselves. One has the impression that with Tournefort, with Linnaeus or Buffon, someone has at last taken on the task of stating something that had been visible from the beginning of time, but had remained mute before a sort of invincible distraction of men's eyes. In fact, it was not an age-old inattentiveness being suddenly dissipated, but a new field of visibility being constituted in all its density. M. FOUCAULT, *The order of things*, 1966

David has already been working for a longer period on the question of knowledge and the different systems that aim to create and deal with this knowledge. This research has played an important role in David's artistic practice since 2010, resulting in a series of works for theatres and museums¹. The performance *Into The Big World* constitutes the culmination of this research. Here we will revisit its original inspiration and give an outline of its development until its final shape.

The time of Enlightenment and the Teylers Museum



The project started in 2010 when David was artist in residence at the Teylers Museum in Haarlem, a museum named after Pieter Teyler van der Hulst (1702- 1778) a wealthy Haarlem silk manufacturer and banker. As a good son of his time he was fond of arts and sciences. From the idea that knowledge could enrich mankind he assembled a vast collection of artefacts, instruments and books. After his death his heirs decided to turn the house of Pieter Teyler into a place for the Arts and Science. The first museum in the Netherlands was born.

¹ *Trough Teylers*, produced by De Nieuwe Vide in coproduction with Teylers Museum (July 2010). *Into the Big World*, in the Veemtheater, *Recollection*, Tent, Rotterdam (2012), *The collection (immersion)*, as part of the group exhibition *Wahre und Wissen*, Weltkulturen Museum, Frankfurt/Main (2014).

In the museum David discovered an object that has fascinated him ever since: the catalogue of the museum's library. Unlike contemporary libraries and their digital database, Teylers Museum still has a hand written catalogue, in which all the book titles are listed, with comments regarding the nature of the topic, the methods used, the quality of the writing etc. He took the numerous titles of the books as literary material for the construction of a long litany composed as an elaborate performative poem. The titles became sentences. *Into The Big World* strolls over the surface of those books. They are not being opened. Only their titles are utilized. Taken as such they are impregnated of a stunning poetic potential, which is provoked by the richness of the world they are the witness of. It becomes something funny, fascinating and moving. When pronounced aloud today, the sentences become the summary of a comprehensive and accomplished world, and of a beautiful, almost mythical world.

The Anthropocene



Photograph by Edward Burtynsky

Developing the research on 'knowledge' and 'knowledge making' further David wondered what could be the contemporary pendant of the historical image of the world that is evoked by the Teylers catalogue. He came across a new, but already widely spread theory stating that human behaviour in recent centuries has influenced the earth's crust and atmosphere so significantly as to constitute a new geological era: the Anthropocene.

Human production of carbon dioxide is the main motor for climate change, deforestation leads to erosion on a massive scale, there is not a single river in the world, the course of which is not manipulated by mankind and mass pollution has led to the emergence of 'The Plastic Continent', an island of marine debris in the Pacific Ocean with an area of several square kilometres. All this has led eminent geologists to state that we have entered into a new geological era.

In the Anthropocene humans are not only the main instigator for the transformation of Nature, they are also the main 'victims' of this transformation. This relation between human and nature affects our understanding of the world a great deal. *The anthropos* is no longer only observing nature; he is also interfering in that nature while feeling how this interference affects him. This awareness makes the Anthropocene unique: "... *the most striking feature of the Anthropocene is that it is the first geological epoch in which a defining geological force is actively conscious of its geological role.*" (Palsson et al., 2013). The human being is both researcher and topic, both observer and observed.

Consequently it is the most important dichotomy of Modernity, which is put into jeopardy: the division between Nature (and its 'unalterable laws') and the ever-changing human Cultures. The Modern project has been a project of domesticating everything on the planet and the planet itself. It has become more and more difficult now to draw a clear line between cultural artefacts and natural phenomena; between what is 'human made' and what is 'naturally created'.

The Performance

The performance *Into the big World* places the time of the Enlightenment and its encyclopaedic (or taxonomic) project as the seed of Modernity and ultimately of the Anthropocene. It takes the shape of a poem, or a recital, performed by two female performers. They are guiding us gradually through different stages of knowledge. The performance starts in the dark. We only hear the voices of the two women, telling us what they experience. They take us on a tour through a paradise-like garden full of plants with vibrant colours and incredible odours, fascinating animals and vivid landscapes. Guided by their voices we see, smell and feel the surroundings. Gradually however the position of the women changes. Their discourse shifts from a sensitive description of things, to categorizing them. The particular plants are positioned within a framework of other plants and are considered in relation to their usefulness, their edibility and their position they take within the taxonomic world of plants. The performers become knowledge-machines, producers of the massive and exhaustive system of classification of all things to be found on Earth (plants, animals, fossils, minerals...)

However, something strange happens with the performers. Though by and large gaining knowledge and even power, they become vulnerable and fragile, and thereby their knowledge appears irrelevant. It literally overwhelms the performance, it is too heavy, too complex, and the 'old' categories that were holding everything together blur gradually away. There occurs a Great Acceleration where things loose their old connections and new connections need to be made. Here the positions are reversed: it's no longer the human being that tells something about nature, but it is nature telling something about human beings. This results in a final tableau, a mute image where nature is gaining the upper hand. As a snow machine is starting to produce snow that whirls on the stage the spectator is left with the question who has the last word: human or nature.

About the creators

David Weber-Krebs was born in Liège (B) in 1974. He is a writer, theatre director, filmmaker and performer. His work crosses the boundaries of conceptual art, literature and performance. He has produced and presented his work in theatres, art spaces and Museums such as at De Appel in Amsterdam, Kaaitheter in Brussels, HAU in Berlin and Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt. David creates situations engaging the spectator in a complex game between getting absorbed or merging with an art piece, while at the same time keeping a critical distance towards it. He lives and works in Brussels.

Katharina Dreyer was born in Berlin and studied at the Utrecht School of the Arts in the dept International theatremaking and performing. Since her graduation she has been working as a performer with different international groups/ choreographers and makers (Ivana Müller, Jean-luc Ducourt, Miet Warlop, Superamas, Mette Edvardsen, Mette Ingvardsen, Sanja Mitrovic, David Weber-Krebs and others). Since 2008 she is making work under her own name, sometimes in collaboration with Bernard van Eeghem.

Noha Ramadan Noha Ramadan is a dancer, choreographer and dramaturge living between Amsterdam and Berlin. Her recent piece *Deeply, Really, Truly* (Martini/Ramadan 2013) is a choreographic 'speech act' on the art of public apology. She will premier a new solo *Los Angeles* in Berlin, January 2015. Noha performs regularly in the work of others such as David Weber-Krebs, Martin Nachbar, An Kaler, Diego Gil and Ivana Müller. She recently edited Issue 3 of Critical Dialogues, published by Critical Path, Sydney.

Peter Lenaerts is fascinated by empty spaces and invisible sound, sound that doesn't scream for attention but sneaks into the listener's ear unnoticed; sound without ego, pure sound. He strongly believes that in a culture dominated by visuals, nothing is as powerful, intense, and rewarding as closing your eyes and simply listening.

Jan Fedinger is a visual artist and visual designer with an emphasize on the field of light art and lighting design. In his work in collaboration with artists like David Weber-Krebs, Jeftha van Dinther, Jan Maartens, Rodrigo Sobarso and Aitana Cordero, among others, he developed his own way of communicating through light with an audience. In both theatre and installation-art Jan Fedinger is seeking to challenge his audience perception by using light on both a conscious and unconscious level. Seeking to create environments that eventually haven't yet been perceived but only dreamed of.

Jonas Rutgeerts is dramaturge and performance theorist. He studied philosophy at the University of Leuven and dramaturgy at the University of Amsterdam and is currently working as a PHD-researcher at the department of Philosophy at the University of Leuven. He collaborated amongst others with Needcompany, Toneelgroep Amsterdam, Emio Greco | PC, Ivana Müller, David-Weber Krebs, Clément Layes and Sanja Mitrovic.

Marie Urban has a degree in theater studies from Paris and Montreal and a diploma in cultural studies from Marseille and Hildesheim. She works as a freelance assistant director among others with Philippe Quesne, and as a dramaturge, with the prison-theatre *Aufbruch* and Chang Nai Wen. From 2009 on, She works together with David Weber-Krebs and the visual artist Alexander Schellow, conducting artistic research for various projects since 2009.

Lars Kwakkenbos (°1975, Viersen, D) lives and works in Brussels and Ghent (B). He studied History and Art History at the University of Leuven (B), the Université François-Rabelais in Tours (F) and the Freie Universität and Humboldt-Universität in Berlin. Since 2000 he has been publishing on visual and performing arts and (landscape) architecture in various media. Since 2008 he is working as a lector at KASK-Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Ghent and collaborating on the dramaturgy of the Kunstenfestivaldesarts in Brussels.

STICHTING
INFINITE ENDINGS

Board Marijke Hoogenboom
Marten Oosthoek

Distribution Bold: helga@boldbxl.be

Technical support Martin Kaffarnik: mkaffarnik@gmail.com

Other questions: David Weber-Krebs: davidweberkrebs@yahoo.fr