

Australian landscape architect Richard Weller at the Venice Biennale



View of the installation: What we Cant Live Without: Not the Blue Marble (left), Hotspot Cities (center) World Park (partial, right).Credit Francesca Garzilli.

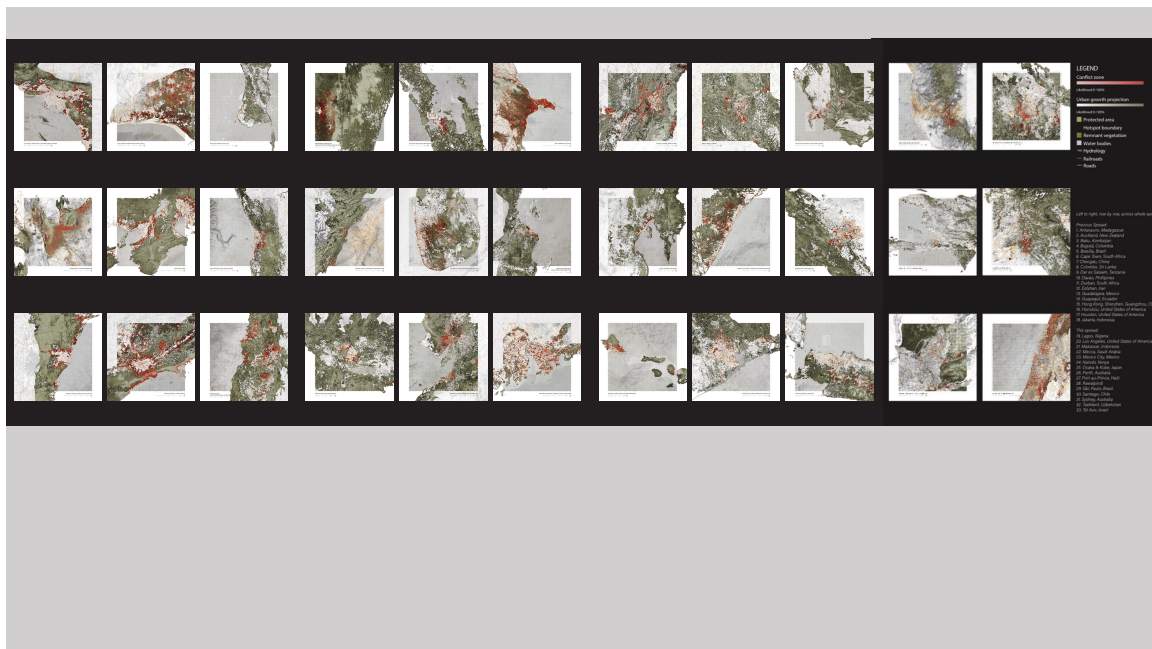
The theme of the 17th International Architecture Exhibition [La Biennale di Venezia](#), curated by architect Hashim Sarkis Dean of Architecture and Planning at MIT is titled “How will we live together?”

At Sarkis’s invitation, Richard Weller, who is professor and chair of [the Department of Landscape Architecture](#) at the Weitzman School of Design at the University of Pennsylvania and adjunct professor at UNSW and UWA in Australia will present three pieces of work as part of the [As One Planet exhibition in the Central Pavilion](#).

Weller’s installation steps back from the question of how will we live together and begins instead with the title: “What We Can’t Live Without”. As he explains it “We can’t live without biodiversity and yet we are actively perpetrating the 6th extinction. Biodiversity is

not just saving pandas, though that too is important, it is a proxy for healthy ecosystems. Without healthy ecosystems there can be no healthy society. The loss of biodiversity is a defining issue —if not *the* definitive issue —of our times; it is one that cuts across local, regional and global scales of reference and it is one that cut to the heart of what it means to be human at the dawn of the Anthropocene.

These three scales are reflected consecutively in the 3 parts of the installation 1) The Hotspot Cities Project, 2) The World Park and 3) Not the Blue Marble. The Hotspot Cities are 33 of the largest and fastest growing cities in the world’s most biodiverse regions, the so-called ‘hotspots’. Each city is represented by a map showing (in red) where its forecast 2050 growth is occurring in direct conflict with endangered species and remnant habitat. This according to Weller is not a fait-accompli; it can be mitigated by design.



‘Hotspot Cities’ x 33

Credit: Richard Weller, Zuzanna Drozd, Nanxi Dong.

For more information see <https://hotspotcitiesproject.com>

The World Park is proposal to create a 21st century equivalent of the national park but in this case across 55 of the world’s most biodiverse nations. The World Park is formed by contiguous tracts of ecologically restored land from Alaska to Patagonia, from Australia to Morocco and from Namibia to Turkey. The catalysts for this are walking trails linking the territory together. The purpose of this is to enable people to “walk the world” but also to create continuous habitat so that biodiversity can migrate and adjust to the pressures of

climate change. Unlike national parks which excluded humans the World Park is about actively including people in the labor and management required to reconstruct ecosystems on regional scales.

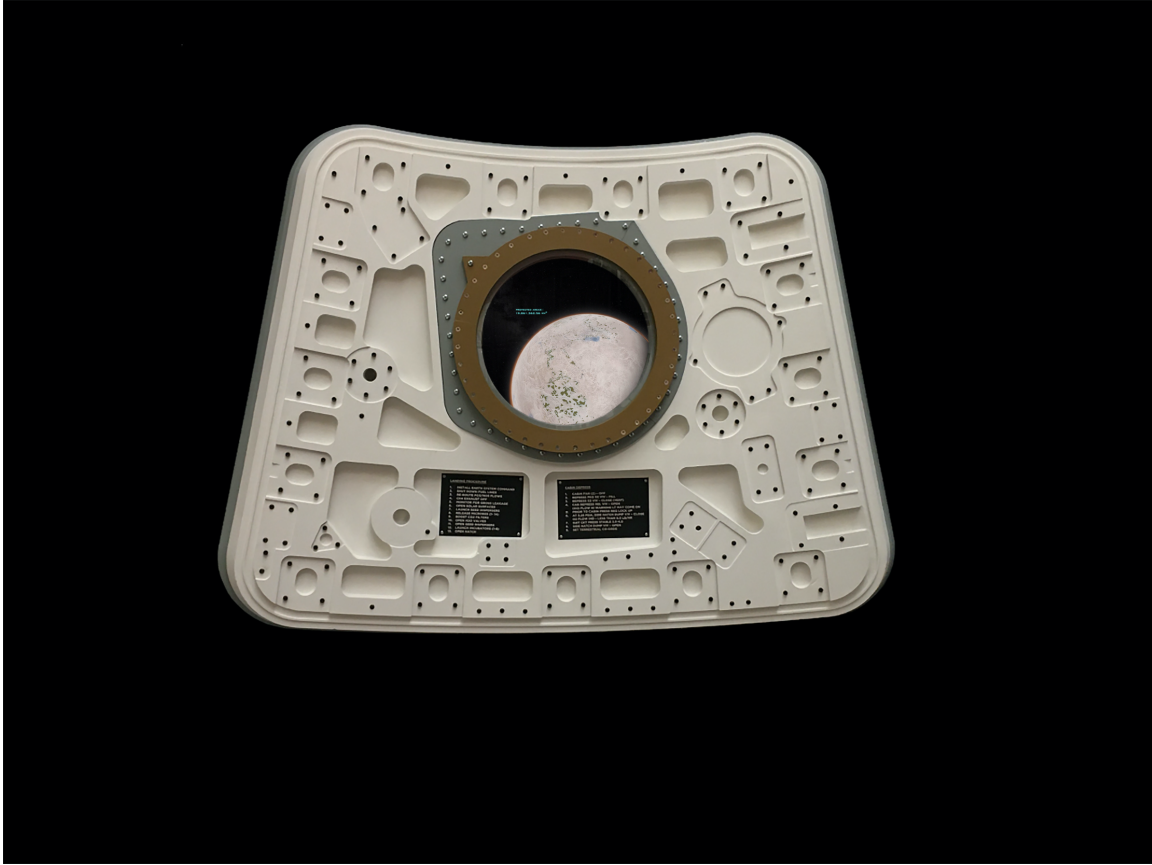


‘World Park’ – (one of three trails, here from Australia to Morocco)

Credit: Richard Weller, Shannon Rafferty, Lucy Whitacre, Tone Chu, Misako Murata.

For more information see: <https://theworldpark.com>

At the planetary scale an artwork titled ‘Not the Blue Marble’ involves a simulation of the Earth in a distant future when only small fragments of protected areas are habitable. The simulation is set within an exact replica of the Apollo 11 hatch – not the door the astronauts opened to step on the moon, but the one through which they had to exit to reenter the earth.



Not the Blue Marble

Credit: Richard Weller, Chieh Huang and Tone Chu.

Team

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