

Artist's installation gets inspiration from Carrie Furnace

May 21, 2014 12:00 AM



"Coronal Mass Ejection" by Scott Hocking in the exhibition "Detroit Artists in Residence" at Mattress Factory.

By Mary Thomas / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

A post-apocalyptic industrial site? The remnants of a centuries-old extraterrestrial probe gone afoul? Scott Hocking's "Coronal Mass Ejection" invites interpretation as a visitor roams through the gallery-sized, site-specific work installed in the lower level of the Mattress Factory through June 1. It's part of the exhibition "Detroit: Artists in Residence," which is at the North Side museum through June 29.

Mr. Hocking was born in suburban Detroit in 1975 and has lived in the Motor City since 1996. While in Pittsburgh to work on his installation, he visited Carrie Furnace in Rankin and was "transfixed by the one remaining hot-metal train car -- known as a torpedo or submarine car -- that was used to transport molten iron across the Monongahela," he writes in an artist statement. The Mattress Factory work combines elements of the torpedo car, Pittsburgh's history and alchemical processes. The work's title is derived from 2013 being a "solar maximum" year, the most intense of the sun's 11-year solar cycle.

"Detroit and Pittsburgh are part of the same industrial activity that seems to be a dying age. Pittsburgh is just a little ahead in terms of reinventing itself. What I don't want to happen is for the artwork to be seen as 'all about Detroit.' I try to get at bigger ideas," Mr. Hocking wrote.

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