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# Humanities/Art/Technology Research Center's *Post-Apocalypse*: Assembling and Describing the Post-Natural

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## **Assembly**

The Anthropocene — an era defined by the catastrophic effects of human action upon the natural world — has been widely documented and extensively discussed across the environmental sciences and the environmental humanities. The crises that compose it are simultaneously global and geologic, implicating communities across the planet and impacting the deep histories of the earth. Its scale, in other words, is not only catastrophic but exceedingly difficult to grasp. Existential threats at the level of the planet tend not to feel like existential threats at the level of the person. As a result, there has been a grave mismatch between the magnitude of the problem and the flimsiness of the response. Indeed, with characteristic good humor, anthropologist and sociologist of science Bruno Latour once referred to the Anthropocene as “that mix up of all mix ups” (“Waiting for Gaia” 7).

For Latour, the key to sorting out this mismatch is scale — more importantly, how it works. In a 2011 lecture given at the French Institute in London, Latour asks how scale — understood as a rule-bound system of calibration — is produced using various techniques and tools of measuring and modeling (“Waiting for Gaia” 5). Because scale allows for commensurability between the very large and the very small, renewed