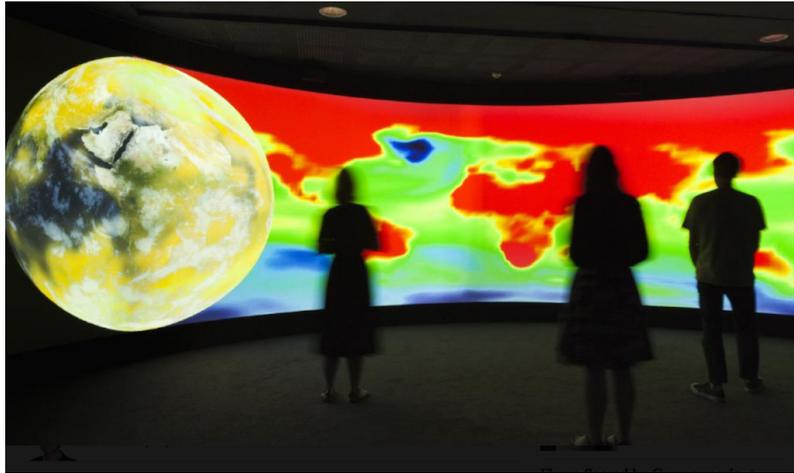


## Drift Towards Disaster Installation\*



An item entitled *Drift Towards Disaster* in a recent issue of the *Weekend Australian Review* deserves wider attention. What makes it different from so many other treatments of 'growth,' 'the environment' and 'human impacts' is that it refers to an installation coming to the Art Gallery of UNSW from the Fondation Cartier in Paris. An introductory video by Paul Virilio deals with recent population upheavals (which are said to be 36 million in 2008 alone). This is followed by 'a curved diorama on which changing projections convey some idea of the reasons for these vast population displacements.' Further sections cover environmental changes such as global warming and sea level rise. The whole installation brings together a vast amount of information in visual form and, in so doing, provides a way of coming to grips with, and powerful critique of, our collective addiction to endless growth and development.

I've long argued that dominant cultural values help to explain the rather odd - if not perverse - fact that news broadcasts often end with 'business and finance.' As if they were the last word on everything. This installation demonstrates yet again that we have the technology - but apparently not the insight or will - to provide the public with relevant, high quality information about things that are more important than stocks and shares, i.e., the condition of the primary Earth Economy. This is at least as vital to our collective wellbeing as conventional updates of purely economic indices. The installation was conceived as an art project by Diller Scofidio + Renfro but it has many wider uses. If indeed we finally have a credible worked example we should not only learn from it but also start looking for places where others can appreciate them and digest their many implications more fully. A university gallery may be a good place to start but the applications are obviously go much further. The underlying idea can take many forms and serve many different constituencies. How long, therefore, before we see properly curated variants in schools, town halls, community centers, libraries and the like?

Sam Alexander very kindly tracked down the url for this item:

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/review/exit-from-fondation-cartier-paris-drifting-towards-disaster/news-story/43c25e9593eb0e0857e0ba34d89e7c8e>

\*Christopher Allen, *The Weekend Australian Review* 4-5th February, 2017, pp. 10-11.