

THOMAS WOOD ARTIST STATEMENT

In existence for nearly 300 million years, extinct now for 250 million years, Trilobites were once the most common and diverse animals living on the planet. Because of their past abundance, wide geographic distribution, and robust exoskeleton, these marine arthropods form a large part of Earth's fossil record. I take them as a representation of a phenomenon that has repeated itself half a dozen times in the history of the planet: mass extinction. In this work the trilobite serves as a *memento mori*, a reminder of our impermanence on a scale that transcends the individual. These images are intended to evoke a feeling of time travel into our deep biological past. Mandy Turner and I made the plates and worked every print as though it were a singular, individual painting, a sedimentary layering of inks, paper, ground stone, and pigment, evoking the rich quality of an imaginary fossil.