

The Last Calendar

Your companion for the 356 days of 2012

A project by Bigert & Bergström for Cabinet Books

2012

Introduction

A calendar is a clean slate for predictions, the grid that guides us through time. One could view the entries in a calendar as small-scale prophecies, since we can never know for certain if all our meetings, dinners, and trips will actually take place, but strangely enough, most of the things we mark on our calendars do in fact come true. Of course, we yearn for the reassurance of a life in which a known present leads seamlessly into an anticipated future, yet we also chafe at the deterministic contours of our existence—as the calendar fills up, its matrix now traps us in the geometry of our own planning. Who hasn't looked at the upcoming weeks of activities and dreamed of a way to erase all these looming *plans*? The risk of boredom is ever-present.

In the final analysis, however, this distinctly modern sense of ennui with a life that is prescribed, even when we ourselves prescribe it, is ultimately trumped by the comfort that a filled calendar offers us. Planning has always been imperative for individuals and communities seeking to ensure their survival. Originally, prognostic instruments were crude, and those individuals dedicated to foretelling the future were considered holy mediators between mere mortals and the divine figures who determined their fate. The ancient practice of augury—a method for predicting the future from the flight of birds or the entrails of animals—is just one example of the human need to discover patterns within the formless flux of nature, to create meaning from even the most chaotic and turbulent structures of matter. Almost anything could be used by the spiritually receptive to discern what the gods had in store for us. Clouds and coffee; fig leaves and bones; ash, the boiled heads of donkeys, the movement of beetles: the inventory of raw material for divination is endless.

As the nature of the divine changed with the emergence of religions that promised cyclical regeneration or life after death, the scale of such predictions became increasingly grandiose. With the rise of eschatology, it became possible to conceive of the end of the world itself, because such a cataclysmic event could thus be understood as the basis for the realization of a new and better world (here or in heaven). Secular versions of these totalizing narratives of destruction—caused by fatal astronomical trajectories, for example, or by alien invasions—gradually emerged as well. Some of these at least afforded us the minor satisfaction that, though doomed, we would nevertheless go out as the acme of earthly evolution. Today, even this small consolation has been withdrawn as we slowly come to understand that we have precipitated a global environmental disaster that might well put an end, once and for all, to our collective calendar.

One symptom of our refusal to confront our responsibility for the incremental but very real crisis we find ourselves in is our continuing appetite for scenarios in which the end comes suddenly, dramatically, and—most importantly—in ways that are beyond our control. Witness the many believers who heeded Harold Camping's misbegotten warnings that the world would end on 21 May 1988, and later on 7 September 1994, 21 May 2011, and 21 October 2011. We are writing this a few days before this last date, and we are assuming Camping's track record will hold. We've therefore decided to focus on next year's hot pick for the apocalypse, based on an "interpretation" of the Maya Long Count calendar, the current cycle of which ends, as does this calendar, on 21 December 2012. To commemorate this (next) finale, we offer a calendar on which we have helpfully marked some of the many days previously imagined to be humanity's last. Featuring the art of Bigert & Bergstöm photographed by Charlie Drevstam, think of this calendar illustrating various methods of divination as a guide to the days of the coming year, whether or not they are our last.



Molybdomancy: Divination through the observation of molten lead

January 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 2000: Cerferino Quinte, the leader of the Christian "Tunnels of Salvation" cult, constructs an underground warren of fifty-one tunnels in the Philippines to shelter his followers from the "all-consuming rain of fire" he predicted would end the world on New Year's Day.	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 1998: German psychologist Heide Fittkau-Garthe predicts the world will end at 8 pm on this day. She holds a last supper with her followers on the Spanish island of Tenerife the evening before, but the group's plan to commit suicide and soul-travel to a new world via spaceship is foiled when police arrest them.	9	10	11 1973: David Berg, founder of Children of God, proclaims: "Nineveh Shall Be Destroyed!" God misses Berg's literary allusion to the biblical story of Jonah and the whale and decides not to smite humanity with a comet on the predicted date.	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4



Myomancy: Divination through the observation of mice

February 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31	1 1524: A June 1523 prediction by London astrologers of cataclysmic floods for the following February causes some twenty thousand Londoners to flee their homes. The Prior of St. Bartholomew builds a fortress at Harrow and amasses enough food and water to sustain him and his brethren for two months. No rain falls; astrologers claim they miscalculated by one hundred years.	2	3	4 1962: Jean Dixon—psychic, astrologer, and syndicated columnist—predicts this to be the day on which planetary alignment will cause the world's destruction. The Antichrist is to be born next day. A busy week.
5	6 1925: The angel Gabriel appears to Margaret Rowan, a prophet of the Reformed Seventh-Day Adventist Church, in a dream and reveals that Jesus will return to Earth on this date on a hill in Hollywood, California. When he fails to appear, she lays the blame on the flashbulbs of the assembled photographers.	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 1420: Czech preacher Martinek Hausha convinces his fellow Taborites—a militant Bohemian group deemed heretical by the Catholic Church—that the world will end sometime between 1 February and 14 February.	15	16	17	18
19	20 1524: Johannes Stöffler, German astronomer and mathematician, prophesies in 1499 that a flood will destroy the planet on this date. The ark market booms. Count von Iggleheim, a German nobleman, builds a three-story ark on the Rhine.	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28 1763: In early 1763, Londoner George Bell—former corporal in the Life Guards and convert to the Methodist movement started in the 1730s by John Wesley—begins publicly preaching that the world will end on 28 February of that year, a position that earned him Wesley's condemnation. After Bell's prediction fails, his many followers return to Wesley's teachings.	29	1	2	3



Eleomancy: Divination through the observation of oil

March 2012

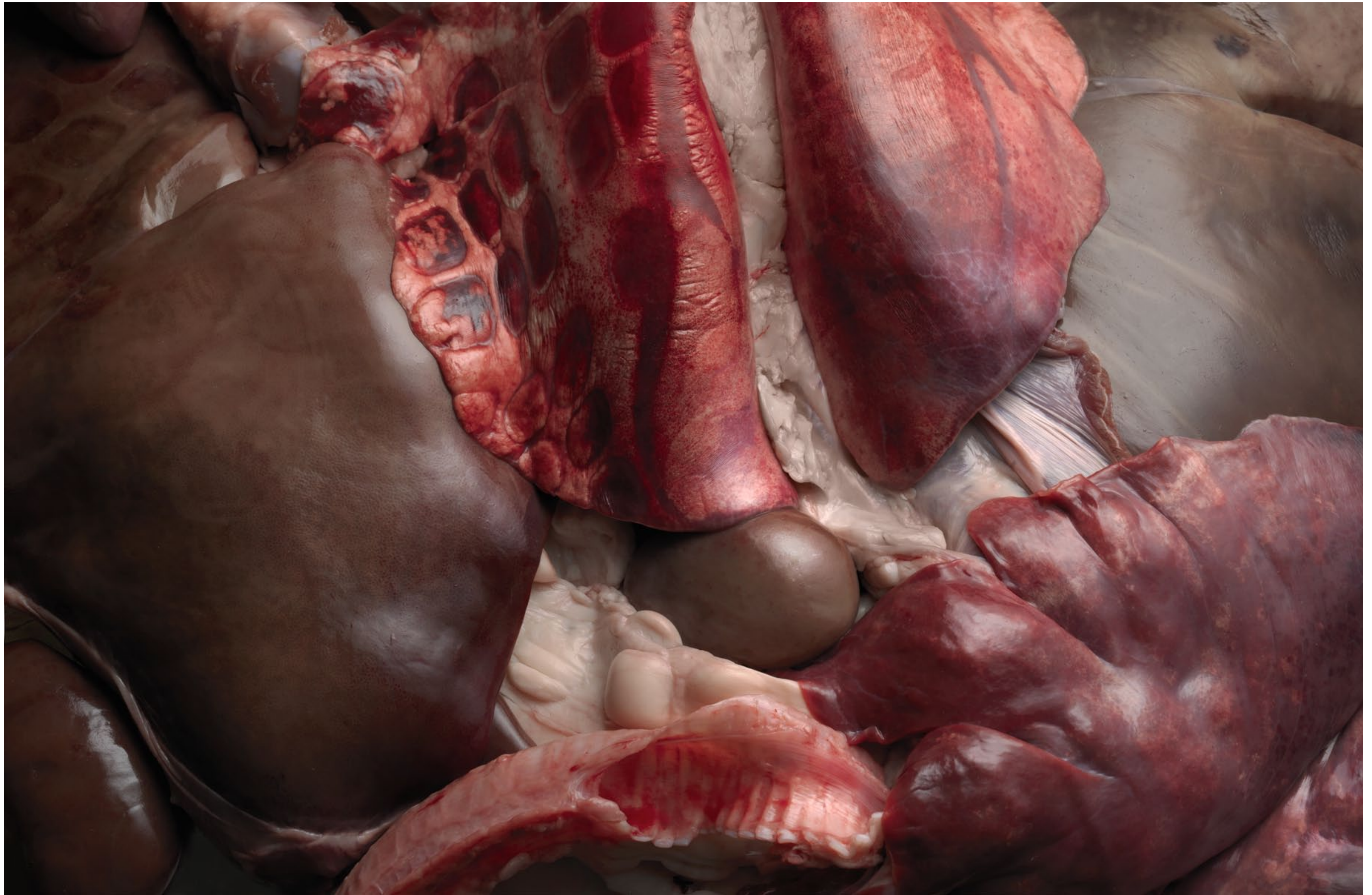
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10 1982: In 1974, John Gribbin and Stephen Plagemann, two Cambridge-educated astrophysicists, publish the bestselling book <i>The Jupiter Effect</i> . They hypothesize that the alignment of the planets on the same side of the sun in 1982 will trigger catastrophic earthquakes worldwide—one slated for 10 March around San Andreas, California, is predicted to destroy Los Angeles.
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21 2008: In December 2000, a British group called the Lord's Witnesses announces that an analysis of "Bible codes" had revealed this date as the beginning of Armageddon. This, of course, can only transpire after the United Nations has seized control of the world on 24 April 2001—666 Hebrew months after its founding.	22	23	24
25 1970: Apocalyptic computists from the kingdom of Lotharingia (in modern-day Switzerland) predict in the 960s that the Apocalypse will begin on this date, which would see the coincidence of the anniversary of several crucial biblical events, most notably the Annunciation and the Crucifixion.	26 1997: Marshall Applewhite joins thirty-eight members of his "Heaven's Gate" cult in committing suicide in Del Mar, California with sedatives, vodka, and plastic bags. Applewhite had alleged that the world was about to be "recycled" and mass suicide would allow his group to escape to a UFO hiding behind the Hale-Bopp comet.	27	28	29	30	31 1998: Hon-Ming Chen, leader of the Taiwanese cult Chen Tao ("The True Way"), prophesies that China will invade Taiwan. A nuclear holocaust will ensue, decimating the earth's population, though God will deliver his followers from imminent danger by sending a "Godplane."



Patatomancy: Divination through the observation of potatoes

April 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 1999: Ed Dames, a former military officer in Star Gate, the "psychic espionage unit" of the United States military, predicts that solar flares will destroy Earth. Dames also predicts an AIDS epidemic in the US—from babies drinking infected cow's milk.	4	5 1761: In 1761, two minor earthquakes shake London within a span of twenty-eight days. A soldier named William Bell hypothesizes that another earthquake—one far more cataclysmic—will destroy the world twenty-eight days later. Londoners flee the city in panic. When his prophecy fails, he is promptly institutionalized in Bethlem Royal Hospital.	6 800: In his <i>Commentary on the Apocalypse</i> , published in 786, Spanish monk Beatus of Liébana predicts that the Apocalypse will arrive in fourteen years. On 6 April 800, Easter Sunday, his followers fast until the ninth hour (3 pm) in preparation for the event.	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 1959: In 1935, Victor Houteff, expelled from the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Los Angeles, moves to Waco, Texas, with his own splinter group, which he names the Davidian Seventh-day Adventists. Following Houteff's death in 1955, his wife, Florence, prophesies that the Second Coming will arrive on 22 April 1959, causing the group to break into smaller factions.	23 1990: Elizabeth Clare Prophet, of the Church Universal and Triumphant, predicts a Soviet nuclear attack on the United States on this date. Her followers hide in Montana bomb shelters on 32,000 acres of ranchland. The Soviet Union collapses and the US government arrests several church members for weapons violations.	24	25	26	27	28 1583: Based on previous predictions related to the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, English almanac writers John and Richard Harvey predict the rise of a cataclysmic wind heralding the Day of Judgment. The Bishop of London brews a storm of his own, condemning them during a sermon at the outdoor pulpit at St. Paul's Cross in London.
29 1992: During a broadcast of the Christian radio program "Praise The Lord" on 29 April 1989, Doug Clark announces that World War III, the "War to End All Wars," will begin in exactly three years. Clark had previously referred to Henry Kissinger as the "Antichrist."	30	1	2	3	4	5



Extispicy: Divination through the observation of animal entrails

May 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	1	2 1994: Much of the earth's population will be killed in the Battle of Armageddon, a thermonuclear war predicted for this date by Neal Chase of the Baha'is Under the Provisions of the Covenant (BUPC).	3	4	5 1997: In his book <i>Ice: The Ultimate Disaster</i> , Richard Noone predicts that a planetary alignment on this date will result in a dramatic shift in the earth's axis, causing enormous sheets of polar ice to head toward the equator. Noone hypothesizes that this planetary conjunction will result in another apocalyptic ice age.
6	7	8 1999: According to an astrological pamphlet published in India, the alignments of eight of the solar system's planets will cause widespread natural disasters. Sixty thousand workers in the Gujarati town of Alang—which had been devastated the previous year by a cyclone—flee their homes, causing \$6 million in damages to the shipyard at which they work.	9	10	11	12
13	14	15 2003: A Japanese cult called Pana Wave, whose members wear white to shield themselves from electromagnetic waves that they allege are propagated by communists, predict that a tenth planet will approach the earth. Much to the group's chagrin, the intruding planet fails to appear, the globe's axis does not tilt, and no earthquakes devastate the planet.	16	17	18 1910: International panic erupts when Halley's Comet is predicted to hit Earth. People buy gas masks and "comet pills." Germans publish postcards depicting imminent doom. New Yorkers pray in the streets and in parks.	19 1780: On "New England's Dark Day," the sky blackens from noon until the following night, causing widespread fear. Connecticut legislator Abraham Davenport interprets it as "The Day of Judgment." In 2007, scientists demystify the phenomenon—Canadian forest fires, strong winds, and low barometric pressure had blanketed the area in smoke.
20	21 2011: As clocks around the world strike 6 pm, no earthquakes devastate the planet; two hundred million people do not ascend into the heavens. Harold Camping, the president of Family Radio, disappoints followers, who had quit their jobs, donated money, and sold all their belongings in advance of the End.	22	23	24	25 2006: The "Day of Destiny," according to Eric Julien of the Expolitics Institute, an organization researching the "political implications of extra-terrestrial presence." Julien predicts that aliens will send Comet 73P Schwassman-Wachman 3 crashing into the Atlantic Ocean and that the resulting tsunamis, two hundred meters in height, would kill millions.	26
27	28	29	30	31 1998: Marilyn J. Agee announces this day as the world's last in her 1998 book, <i>The End of The Age</i> . Agee bases her predictions on biblical readings, placing the date purposely on Pentecost, equating the Christian holy day celebrating Jesus's appearance to his apostles fifty days after his resurrection to the fifty years since Israel's founding in 1948.	1	2



Meteoromancy: Divination through the observation of meteorological phenomena

June 2012

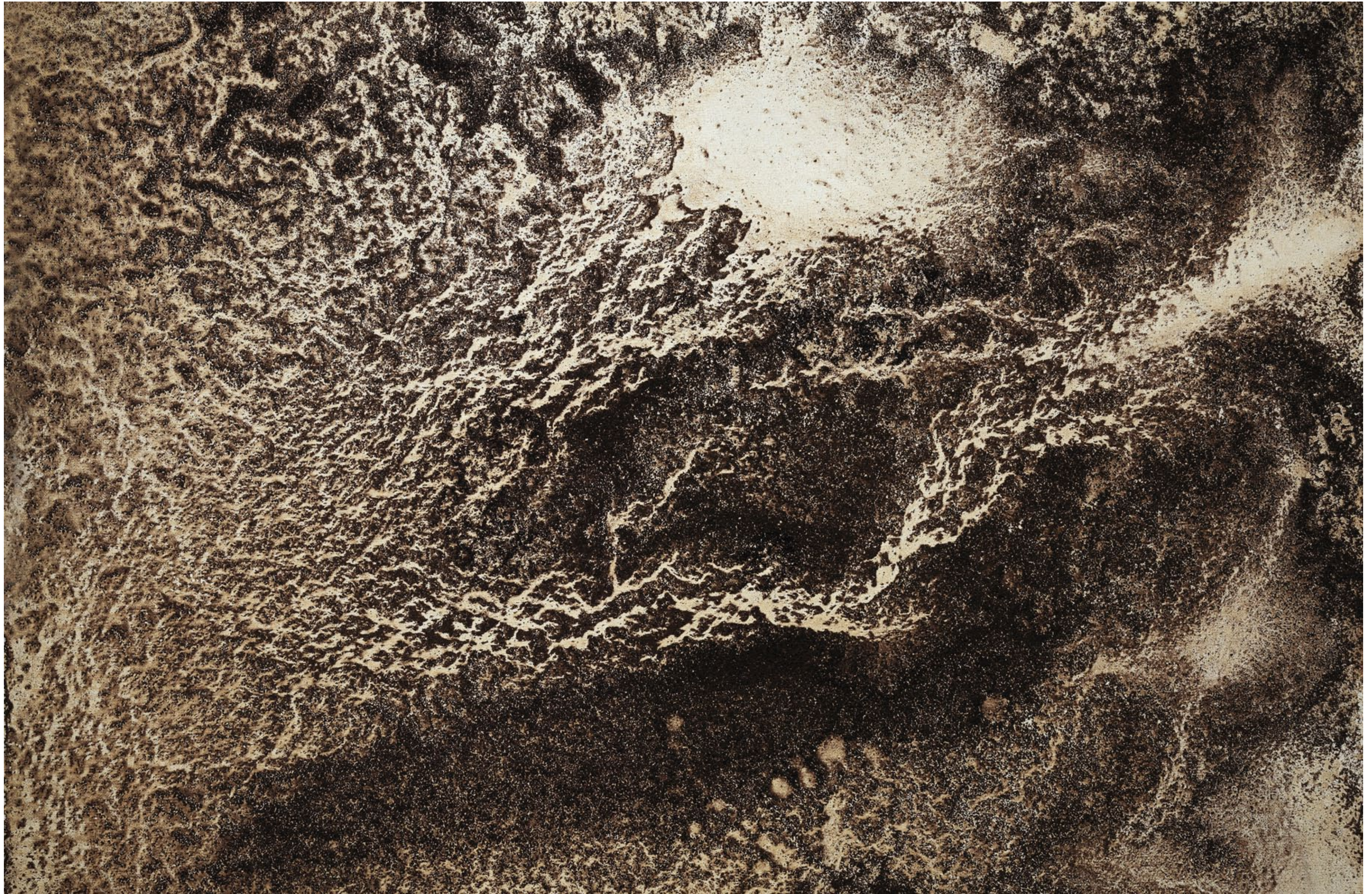
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9 1994: John Hinkle, the pastor of Christ Church in Los Angeles, tells congregants that the Resurrection will occur on this day. After his prophecy fails to come true, Hinkle claims that the Resurrection only began to materialize in the "spiritual realm."
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21 1982: Benjamin Crème, British artist and leader of Share International, announces in a <i>Los Angeles Times</i> ad that on this date Christ will begin to reveal himself in the form of Maitreya, the "World Teacher" whom he had met in London in 1977.	22	23
24	25	26	27	28 1870: American Irvin Moore publishes <i>The Final Destiny of Man</i> in 1869, predicting that Armageddon will begin on this date. Moore, who denies the existence of Hell, foresees the fall of France and the rise of Jerusalem as conditions for the beginning of Christ's reign on earth.	29 1981: Reverend Bill Maupin and his fifty followers in the Lighthouse Gospel Tract Foundation prepare for "Rapture Day" in Tucson, Arizona. Highlight of the day: an electrical storm.	30



Phyllomancy: Divination through the observation of leaves

July 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 1556: A Swiss medical student named Felix Platter, studying in France at the University of Montpellier, records a rumor circulating in the city that the end of the world will begin on the feast day of St. Mary Magdalene.	23	24 1999: Japanese author Akio Cho publishes a book detailing the exact time of the Apocalypse—5 pm—based on the prophecies of Nostradamus, the sixteenth-century French seer.	25 1994: Self-appointed nun and astronomer "Sister" Marie Gabriel Paprocski publishes a full-page ad in London's <i>Guardian</i> newspaper on 4 February 1992, informing the public that Jupiter will collide with Halley's Comet by mid-July 1994, causing a world-ending "cosmic explosion." She revises her assessment in 1993, predicting that the collision will occur by 25 July.	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4



Cafeomancy: Divination through the observation of coffee grounds

August 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6 1999: Predicted day for the return of David Koresh, leader of the Davidian Seventh-day Adventists, who will arrive with two hundred horsemen and lead only his followers to redemption. During the "Waco Siege" of 1993, Koresh and his followers had engaged in a fifty-one-day battle with agents from the FBI. The violent conclusion of the siege left close to a hundred people, including Koresh, dead.	7 1847: German weaver George Rapp travels to America and forms a utopian, wandering collective called the Harmony Society. Rapp predicts, incorrectly as it turns out, that the Second Coming of Christ will take place before his death, which occurs on this day.	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17 1987: New Age religious leader José Argüelles links modern man's struggles to the Gregorian calendar. Unless 144,000 people tune into the rhythms of nature and adopt his Maya-influenced "Dreamspell" calendar, Armageddon will ensue. To prevent this fate, Argüelles holds a multinational meditation ceremony called "Harmonic Convergence" on August 16–17 for his followers.	18
19	20 1967: After visiting a spaceship from Venus and exploring its interior, George van Tassel reconstructs it as a domed machine called "The Integration." The author of <i>I Rode in a Flying Saucer</i> and organizer of spacecraft conventions, van Tassel also claims that the Apocalypse will begin with Soviet nuclear attacks on southeastern United States on this date.	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1



Trochomancy: Divination through the observation of wheels

September 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10 2008: The debut of the Large Hadron Collider at CERN outside Geneva, Switzerland, raises concerns that the collisions of super-accelerated protons will create antimatter and produce a black hole, potentially creating a new Big Bang and destroying the world.	11 1999: As reported in the 9 March 1999 edition of <i>Weekly World News</i> , Phillip Berg, Madonna's spiritual advisor and head of the Kabbalah Centre in Los Angeles, predicts that the End Times will begin on this date, "when a ball of fire will descend, destroying almost all of mankind, all vegetation, all forms of life."	12 2006: Nuclear Armageddon will erupt in the Middle East near the Euphrates River on this day, declares Yisrayl Hawkins, leader of a Christian cult called the House of Yahweh based in Abilene, Texas. Hawkins cites the signing of the Oslo Accords at the White House in 1993 as the first step toward nuclear war.	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21 1945: In 1938, Charles Long, a reverend from Pasadena, California, awakens during the night to the sound of writing. He sees a date scribbled on a blackboard in his bedroom: 1945. A voice later whispers the precise time and date of the Apocalypse—5:33 pm on 21 September.	22
23 1186: In 1179, an English astronomer named John of Toledo warns that the Apocalypse will begin in the afternoon of this day based on his prediction that all the planets will be aligned in the constellation of Libra. News travels to Constantinople—the Byzantine emperor walls up his windows, while in England the Archbishop of Canterbury proclaims it a day of atonement.	24	25	26	27	28 1992: The predicted day of the Rapture, according to Rollen Stewart. Dubbed "Rainbow Man," this prophet-of-imminent-doom would appear at major sporting events—the World Cup, the World Series, the Olympics, and the Super Bowl—wearing a multi-colored Afro wig. Stewart is currently serving three life sentences for holding a hotel maid hostage.	29
30	1	2	3	4	5	6



Tasseography: Divination through the observation of tea leaves

October 2012

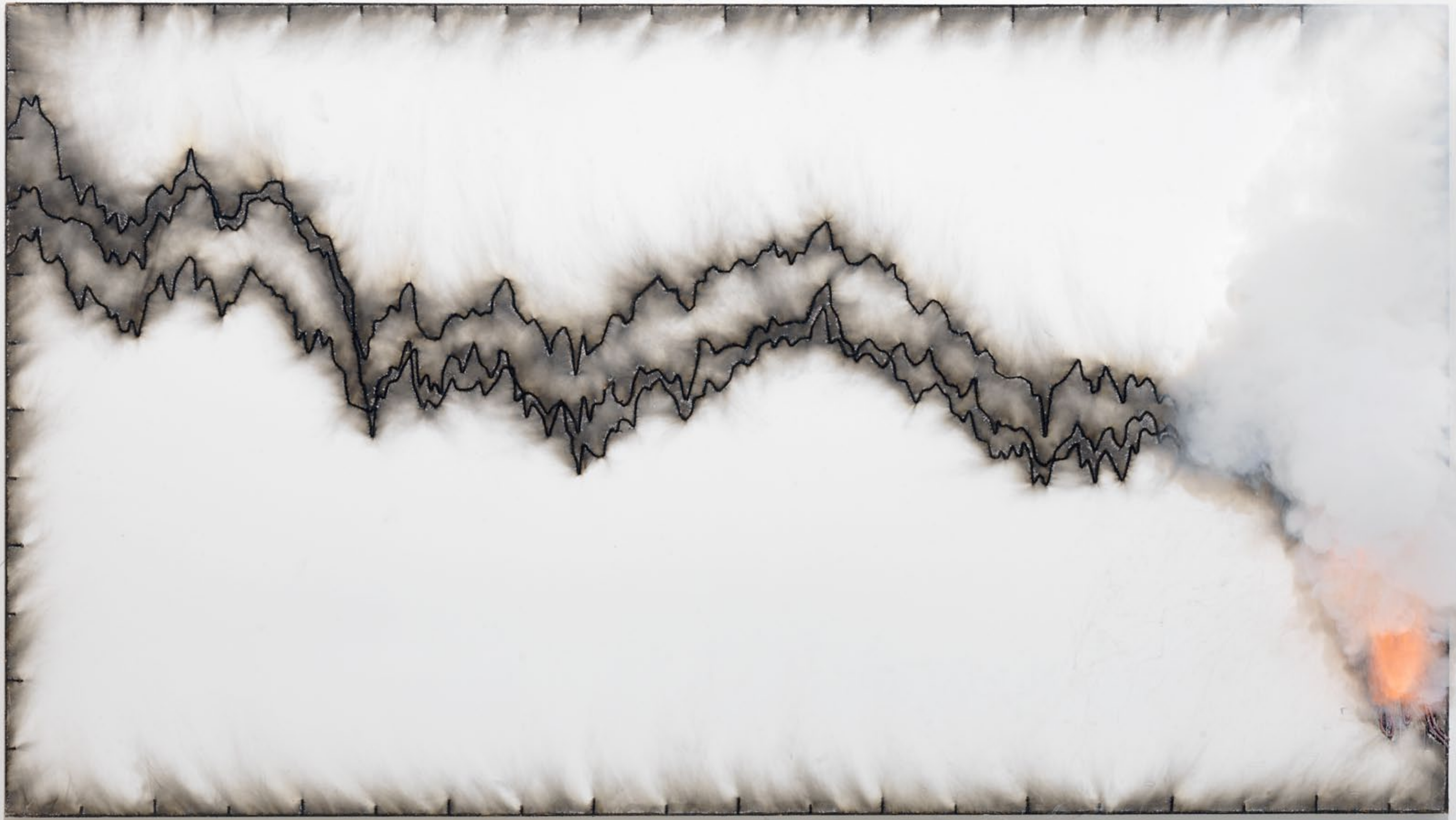
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10 1998: Monte Kim Miller, the leader of Concerned Christians, prophesies that the Apocalypse will begin with an earthquake devastating Denver. Miller predicts that his death and resurrection (three days later) will occur in Jerusalem in December 1999, bringing about the Second Coming of Christ. Members of the group relocate to Israel but are deported.	11	12	13
14 1820: John Turner meets prophetess Joanna Southcott—who claims to be carrying the second Christ in her womb—in 1774. After she dies, he becomes a Southcottian leader in Bradford, England, and sets an apocalyptic prediction for this date. When his prophecy fails, his followers abandon him for a new leader.	15	16 1736: An early follower of Newtonian physics, Cambridge professor William Whiston predicts that a comet will approach Earth on this date and alter its axis; vapors from the comet's tail will lead to a torrential downpour and floods. Londoners flee by boat on the Thames River.	17	18 1533: Michael Stifel publishes a manuscript entitled <i>Ein Rechen Büchlein Vom End Christ</i> , which asserts that the Apocalypse will occur exactly at 8 am on this date. Stifel, a biblical scholar and mathematician, bases his prediction on the Book of Revelation. When his fellow citizens in Lochau, Germany, fail to die, they flog him.	19 1814: Spiritualist Joanna Southcott makes the claim that she, by virgin birth, will bear the second Christ on this date, leading to the Second Coming. The time for the birth passes, and Southcott dies soon after. An autopsy reveals that she had experienced a false pregnancy.	20
21	22 1844: One of many dates proposed for the end of the world by William Miller, founder of the Millerite movement, a group that grew out of the Second Great Awakening in the United States. Between the 1820s and 1840s, the group's "camp meetings" attracted over one million participants anxiously awaiting the Second Coming of Christ.	23	24	25	26	27
28 1992: Lee Jang Rim, the leader of a Korean congregation convinced of the imminent Rapture, announces that the Second Coming will occur on this date. When the appointed time passes, Lee is arrested after Korean police determine that he had defrauded followers out of over \$4 million, some of which he had invested in bonds not slated to mature until 1993.	29	30	31 1914: In 1877, Charles Taze Russell, founder of the group that later became the Jehovah's Witnesses, begins preaching that Christ had returned in 1874, and would rule invisibly for forty years. Soon after WWI began, he and his followers connect the conflict to the Battle of Armageddon.	1	2	3



Glaucomancy: Divination through the observation of owl pellets

November 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 1900: The Brothers and Sisters of Red Death, a two-hundred-year-old cult from Kargopol, Russia, believe the world will end on this date, and 862 of its members prepare to perform a collective sacrifice by immolating themselves. Authorities in St. Petersburg send troops to stop them, but not before some one hundred succeed.	14 1993: The Great White Brotherhood is a cult led by Maria Devi Christos and Yuri Krivonogov, who urge children and young adults from Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus to leave their families and join them. Christos, born Maria Tsvihun, claims her crucifixion and resurrection, as well as the Last Day of Judgment, will occur on this date.	15	16	17
18	19 1795: Date predicted for the end of the world by Englishman Nathaniel Brassey Halhed, an Orientalist scholar and prophet of doom. A talented philologist, Halhed is also a follower of the messianic pamphleteer Richard Brothers, and vigorously defends him before parliament—an act that results in Halhed being forced to resign his seat in the House of Commons.	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29 2003: In 1989, Shoko Asahara—leader of Aum Shinrikyo, a Japan-based New Age cult—predicts that WWII, an apocalyptic nuclear conflagration, will occur between 30 October and 29 November 2003. A Tokyo court later convicts Asahara for orchestrating the 1995 sarin gas attack in the city's subway, which killed 13 and injured more than 5,500.	30	1



Pyromancy: Divination through the observation of fire

December 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
25	26	27	28	29	30	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 1993: James T. Harman, the author of <i>The Coming Spiritual Earthquake</i> and <i>Don't Be Left Behind</i> , uses the date of Israel's admission into the United Nations in 1949 as the basis for his calculation that this is the day on which the Rapture will come.	10	11	12 1998: Serial prophetess Linda Newkirk predicts that "USA will be invaded by Russia, China, an Arab Alliance, and even the UN and NATO ... at around 1:45 am on this date." Millions will die in the United States and the war will eventually engulf the entire planet.	13	14	15
16	17 1919: Albert Porta, a University of Michigan meteorologist, causes widespread panic—and a handful of suicides—after asserting that the conjunction of six planets on this day would produce a "magnetic current that would pierce the sun, cause great explosions of flaming gas and eventually engulf the earth."	18	19	20	21 2012: The end of the world as we know it ... according to the New Age interpretation of the Maya Long Count calendar—the current cycle of which ends on this date.	

The Last Calendar is an art project by Bigert & Bergström for Cabinet Books.
All works Bigert & Bergström, 2011.

Photography: Charlie Drevstam (January–May, July–December); Bigert & Bergström (June).
Thanks to Björn Keller for the individual photographs of potatoes (April).
Design: Richard Massey
Research: Samuel Shuman
Editors: Jeffrey Kastner & Sina Najafi

Thanks to Joshua Bauchner, Sara Clugage, Claire Lehmann, Naomi Mishkin, Dale Pendell, and Alexandros Stavrakos.

For additional information, see www.cabinetmagazine.org/lastcalendar.

ISBN: 978-1-932698-53-4

Printed and bound in Belgium by Die Keure.

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Cabinet Books is the book imprint of Immaterial Incorporated, a non-profit 501(c)3 organization whose core activity is the publication of *Cabinet*, a quarterly magazine of art and culture.
For more information, see www.cabinetmagazine.org.

The following pages give you the chance to let friends and strangers know of the impending apocalypse. Choose which side to show, depending on your level of confidence in our forecasting, and cover the other side with a suitably shaped piece of stiff cardboard. Attach to any piece of wood or pipe that is comfortable to carry (see Figure 1). Dress appropriately, and take your chosen message to the streets.

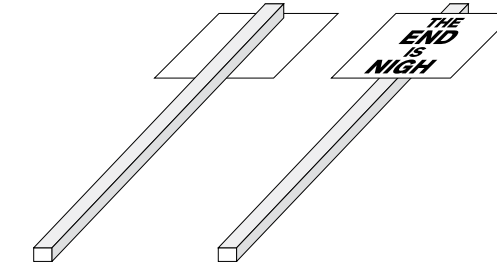


Figure 1. Attach sign to any piece of wood or pipe that is comfortable to carry.

**THE
END
IS
NIGHT**

**THE
END
IS
HERE**

ISBN 978-1-932698-53-4 \$18.00
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